

PE1709/G

Petitioner submission of 16 January 2020

In response to COSLA submission of 18 December 2019.

“Local authorities are committed to ensuring that all children and young people get the right support at the right time to get the best from their education and providing a safe environment for all of our learners. “

And yet we have over 700 cases of children and young adults being injured, hurt, neglected in our ASN schools. Again, it would appear that COSLA has taken a viewpoint that fails to address the issues of why CCTV is being requested.

***“CCTV cameras, fixed or body mounted
We have a number of initial concerns about the proposal, which:***

- ***would invade the privacy of both children and young people and school staff and is not in line with the broader direction of policy which is focused on recognising and protecting the rights of children and young people,”***

A broad general statement with no evidence to back claims in regard to privacy breaches. Indeed, wherever we go today there is cctv whether we are on the high street is shops and stores, hospital and ambulance service, public transport and public buildings would I argue show a contrary acceptance of cctv. fears expressed are unfounded in the proposed introduction of CCTV if applied in the manner proposed in the original motion to North Lanarkshire Council by Councillors Baird and Beveridge.

- ***“could upset the established classroom environments and could impact negatively on the learning and teaching within our schools,”***

Another broad statement with no evidence, opinion and assumption.

- ***“questions the professional integrity and judgment of our teachers and potentially deter good people from working in schools if they are going to be constantly monitored by fixed cameras or required to wear body cameras,”***

Another broad statement with no evidence, opinion and assumption.

- ***“would require significant additional resources for the purchase, installation, training and ongoing monitoring of the cameras.”***

Not such a strange argument given that as the umbrella organisation for Local Authorities which are often looking for additional resources and yet no costings of implementing such a proposal in a school to support the statement.

“We have read with interest the submissions from unions who represent both support and teaching staff, and note they are generally not supportive of this proposal. The committee may also wish to consider seeking the views of

parents and carers of children and young people with additional support needs, national parent and carers organisations, and third sector organisations with an interest in additional support needs, to understand their views on the proposal.”

I fully agree with this aspect of COSLA” s response, there has to be input from those involved, the users of this service. Often the very people who know best the children and young people are the ones who have no voice when things go wrong or in informing the direction, improving policy are the parents and guardians.

“We understand that all behaviour is communication and that school staff need to have the knowledge and skills to interpret and respond in the right manner. Regrettably in some cases there will be situations where, as a last resort a child or young person may be restrained or secluded to prevent harm to themselves and others. It is important that school staff have the skills, adequate support and clear guidance to do this appropriately.”

I would agree wholeheartedly with this statement but what do we do when this fails and fail it does repeatedly both in staff support, skills, guidance and children are physically and criminally injured and no explanations’ or actions are forthcoming.

“The Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland Report:” No Safe Place” calls for separate guidance on restraint and seclusion and the recording of all incidents of restraint and seclusion. It has recently been agreed that refreshed guidance and consistent recording processes will be developed. COSLA are working with Scottish Government, Education Scotland, parents, children and young people, unions, teachers and Directors of Education to develop this. The Children’s Commissioner has been invited to participate in this process. Once work on the refreshed guidance and recording is complete it will be introduced nationally, and Education Scotland will report on this.

Full time social work support in all additional support needs schools

COSLA and all our member local authorities are fully committed to the provision of Additional Support for Learning and to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) by providing the right kind of support to enable all children and young people to be fully included and to achieve the best they can. Local authorities decide the best way to provide the wide range of services for our communities; many of these services are out with schools and support children and young people with Additional Support Needs.

Where an assessment determines that support is necessary from other agencies, in addition to education, a Coordinated Support Plan would be in place. In such cases support from social work or other services, such as speech and language therapy may be provided.

GIRFEC means support should be person centred and tailored to every child and young person’s individual needs. Social workers are deployed appropriately to meet demand and needs, in some cases this may be in schools.”

It is evident GIRFEC has failed for many children in ASN education, we have an education establishment which is in denial about the failings in its service otherwise the Children's Commissioner and his report would not have come to be. It was because of the cases like the Petitioners and others on use / misuse of restraint and seclusion in ASN schools and that the Human rights of these children have been broken/ breached and especially for the purposes of this petition calling for CCTV in order to facilitate and uphold the individuals rights under UNHCR articles 19 and 39.

“Schools come in different shapes and sizes and the number of pupils with Additional Support Needs will vary, as will their support needs. We would not be supportive of locating social workers in all ASN Schools regardless of demand. This would appear to be too prescriptive and would be likely to reduce the provision of this important resource out with schools. Our view is that local authorities are best placed to work out how best to deploy staff, including social workers, based on demand and available resources.”

The Social work presence within ASN environment's is additional too, not part of the current social work provision and to provide a continual and consistent SW support.

“Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Petition and we hope our views are helpful to the Committee in their deliberations on this issue. “

I appreciate the opportunity afforded me to respond to the COSLA submission and I felt it best to comment briefly on the statements made in its submission. I would also take the opportunity to express my disappointment in the COSLA submission as I feel it has missed an opportunity to engage fully to address the deficits within Policy and the benefits and security brought by **PE1709**. Rather COSLA addressed it from the position of an organisation reluctant to admit that there is issues within the current ASN educational status quo.

You can watch a short video relating to my petition on youtube. It is titled Petition1709.