

Petitioner submission of 19 October 2022

PE1953/B – Review Education Support staff roles

In my time working as an ESS (Education Support Staff or Support for Learning) I have worked with disabled young people (YP) with additional support needs. I have been threatened with knives, attacked, dealt with YP of whom self-harm/suicidal. YP with profound nonverbal autism. These YP are in contact with multi agencies such as Educational Psychologists. YP who have court cases and have been sexually abused. YP whose parents have been imprisoned are in care/ secure units.

The YP ESS come into contact with are the most volatile and, vulnerable YP in our society.

We are absolutely essential to their education, support, care and well being. Thus workforce absolutely has to be **professionally regulated, registered and remunerated.**

A mass-exodus of talented and professional workers are leaving in search of better careers. Very vulnerable YP are being left behind.

Right now I am campaigning for Glasgow City Council to increase their overtime rates for supported study to more than £6.42 per hour.

Earning such a low income, I thought I'd try doing overtime. My school offered Supported Study in evenings. Surprisingly, I was paid £6.42 p/h.

I queried this with HR. I've looked at councils Multiple Additional Duties Form and, have found **three of these duties are paid below the minimum wage.** I am happy forwarding this to the committee for them to consider it.

This is a prime I'm sure but, sadly not an isolated example of how ESS workforce are bitterly overworked and chronically underpaid. To a loosely legal threshold.

The job that ESS should be considered a **skilled, professionally registered and regulated job** that is absolutely essential to very vulnerable YP in our schools and our society.

New Information Furthered Below

- To clarify what I mean by ESS I am referring to what some councils may refer to as Support for Learning, Additional Support Needs Assistants and Pupil Support Officer.
- The SPICe briefing made the point that ESS are not included in SNCT agreements, this is true.
- SPICe referred to 'national bargaining.' Unfortunately there is no national bargaining for ESS. It differs from council to council. For example, Edinburgh City Council can pay up to 26K per annum for a Pupil Support Officer whereas, Glasgow City Council offers up to 14K for a Support for Learning Worker. As the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills rightly pointed out on submission 02/08/22.
- This has and is causing a number of Equal Pay claims for Scottish Councils. It will cost Glasgow City Council up to **1 billion by 2024**. Other councils will follow suit, it has the power to potentially bankrupt some councils.
- **Professional Regulation:** The SPICe briefing also referred to a proposal for the GTCS to be replaced in a 2017 Education Reform

Bill. I am not asking for radical changes such as scrapping of the GTCS.

- **I am simply asking the committee and stakeholders it is in communication with to kindly** consider that ESS work closely with Additional Support Needs children and are trained working with different disabilities such as Autism, ADHD, Down Syndrome and Dyslexia they should have the right to **professional registration with the SSSC and GTCS.**
- With the right qualifications (SVQ, HND) ESS would be eligible for SSSC registration and eligibility should be considered for **GTCS registration as Additional Support Needs Officers.**
- This would make it more likely to include ESS in SNCT agreements and thereby, save Scottish Government hundreds of millions in Equal Pay Claims lodged in Education by Trade Unions.
- This would ensure children are being supported professionally and properly under legislation:
 - Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act (2004)
 - ASL Act 2004
 - Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014
 - Equality Act (2010) Section 6
- Planning for Children and Young People with ASN and disabilities should and does require additional planning for learning.

- Such as, Individualised Educational Programmes (for those needing extensive modifications to curriculum and learning), a Child's Plan and a Coordinated Support Plan.
- ESS should have involvement in the planning and support plans. ESS work with these children everyday of whom Educational Psychologists regularly come into schools for.
- There are a number of qualifications already being offered across colleges aimed at training ESS more adequately in Scotland such as Clyde and Kelvin College in Glasgow that offers a PDA Level 6 in Education Support Assistance.
- In most Scottish councils ESS pay varies and, despite a person having a professional qualification. Having studied for several years, there is no remuneration. (Excluding Edinburgh City Council and North Lanarkshire)
- Without the ***proper regulation*** and ***professional qualifications*** required for such jobs children with additional support needs and disabilities will not receive the adequate care they so urgently deserve and need.