



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Stephen Kerr
Education, Children and Young People Committee Convener
Stephen.Kerr.msp@parliament.scot

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Dear Convener

Learning Estate CO2 Monitoring

I am writing to update the Education, Children and Young People Committee on the outcome of CO2 assessments being undertaken by local authorities across Scotland's learning estate.

Background

As the Committee will be aware, an agreement was reached with COSLA and ADES representatives at the start of August that local authorities would ensure that all schools and ELC settings had access to CO2 monitoring, whether fixed or mobile. This was to support the goal of assessing the ventilation in every local authority learning, teaching and play space in Scotland using CO2 monitors and/or (where CO2 monitoring was not appropriate) other appropriate means such as airflow digital modelling. Local authorities were asked to complete this work by the start of the October break wherever possible, subject to monitor supply constraints. The policy was agreed prior to the return of schools in August and updated Scottish Government COVID-19 Guidance was published on 26th August 2021.

Our guidance supported the use of either fixed or mobile monitoring to undertake these assessments. The wording also reflected intelligence that indicated supply constraints could make completion by the target date of October break challenging for some local authorities, while nevertheless retaining that ambitious goal to help drive as much progress as possible ahead of the winter months.

Guidance also asked local authorities to ensure the information they gathered as a result of these assessments was used to inform actions to improve ventilation in schools where required.

Our current guidance on ventilation in schools is well-regarded and has received positive feedback from stakeholders and experts. Previously many local authorities have already reported progress in addressing ventilation issues in the school estate using this guidance, much of which has been in place since last year.

Funding



A Scottish Government funding package of £10m to support the delivery of this policy was also confirmed with COSLA Leaders at the end of August, against the background of the agreed policy aim.

In providing allocations to local authorities, we have made clear that the £10 million of funding should only be used for the intended purposes in line with Scottish Government guidance. These comprise of:

- £7.00m capital for the purchase and installation of CO2 monitors (of which £0.37m is for monitors for private and third sector day care of children services). This funding may also be used to reimburse those authorities who have already purchased / installed CO2 monitors, strictly for the costs of the devices only.
- £3.00m revenue to fund associated additional staff, training or consultant resource requirements.
- After the above has been prioritised, it is permissible to use this funding to contribute to the costs of any remedial action required that has been identified by monitoring, in line with the guidance set out in Reducing Risks in Schools.

Annex A sets out the funding allocation for each local authority.

To provide collective assurance that the shared goal of assessing all school and ELC settings, including all learning, teaching and childcare spaces, for ventilation issues is being achieved, local authorities have been asked to report on progress in making use of this funding. The key points from those reports have informed the detailed update set out below and in the Annex to this letter.

By the end of November 2021, local authorities have also been asked to confirm the total amount of allocated funding that has been used for the agreed purposes. I will be happy to provide a further update to the committee at that stage if members would find that helpful.

Overall assessment

Based on information provided by all local authorities, I can confirm the following progress.

As of 15th October, which was the date set for updates from local authorities against the October break target date, local authorities had reported completing initial CO2 monitoring of the following overall percentages of learning, teaching and play spaces across Scotland:

- 85% of primary school spaces
- 83% of secondary school spaces
- 75% of ASN school spaces, and
- 72% of local authority early learning and childcare (ELC) spaces

This represented a total of 79% of all planned assessments of learning, teaching and play spaces in Scotland (c.41,000 of c.52,000 identified learning, teaching and play spaces) by the start of the October break.

To support those assessments, local authorities had purchased and deployed (or were awaiting delivery of) c.22,000 monitors.

While all local authorities reported making progress, some local authorities were unable to complete initial assessments of 100% of their learning, teaching and play spaces by the start of the October break. These reasons include: global monitor supply constraints leading to delivery delays, availability of contractors to install fixed devices and time required to carry out re-calibration of devices to appropriate CO2 ppm levels. It was not possible to undertake assessments over the holiday period, as spaces must be under normal occupancy for assessments to be meaningful.

Urgent work is continuing in relevant local authorities in the period after the October break to complete initial assessments where this is required. My officials are continuing to stay in close contact with these local authorities and offering support wherever appropriate to help ensure that initial assessments in these remaining councils are completed within as short a period as possible. Based on further local authority updates and forecasts, the total overall planned initial assessment of learning, teaching and play spaces across Scotland is at:

- 83% today (29th October) with 24 local authorities at 100% complete;
- And is expected to rise to 95% by the following Friday (5th November) with 31 local authorities at 100% complete; and
- 100% by the next week (12th November) with all 32 local authorities at 100% complete.

An overview of the total percentage of assessments undertaken (or expected) by each local authority is provided at **Annex B**. Please note that this information is based on the latest local authority returns available at the time of writing. Figures will be changing on a daily basis as assessments are undertaken by remaining local authorities.

By the completion of this exercise, all schools will have access to CO2 monitoring (whether fixed or mobile), which is a key part of the requirements set out in our guidance. This will be confirmed with local authorities as part of final reporting processes.

Local authorities have also confirmed they are working to support their private, voluntary and independent sector ELC partner providers, including by purchasing and making available CO2 monitors for their use.

I hope members will recognise that, while monitor supply delays and logistical challenges have resulted in the ambitious completion date not being met in all areas, this nevertheless represents significant overall progress on the part of local authorities in ensuring their learning estates have been assessed for potential ventilation issues to help mitigate the risks of COVID-19. I am aware that this has been, and continues to be, a very significant endeavour for their teams, and there has been very positive joint work and collaboration throughout this process via the ADES Resources network and the Scottish Heads of Property Services (SHOPS).

I would like to record my thanks for all the hard work local authorities have done on this issue to date.

Assessment Outcomes

Throughout the reporting cycles local authorities were asked to detail any ventilation mitigations or remedial action arising from the CO2 monitoring exercise. Areas of potentially poor ventilation could be identified by reference to the Reducing Risks in Schools Guidance, which makes clear at what level of CO2 concentration remedial action should be considered.

Local authorities have reported only limited instances of remedial action being required in their learning estates as a result of initial CO2 monitoring. Where actions have been required, they have most often been simple measures such as repairing windows or ensuring that there is no obstruction to maximum opening. Inappropriately occupied spaces have also been identified and arrangements made to relocate to other spaces with the appropriate levels of ventilation. In very occasional instances additional fan systems have been required where no other ventilation was available, for example, where internal non-occupied spaces had been adapted to be used as sensory rooms. Occasional use of additional mobile fans to assist airflow has been identified in large rooms with low ceilings. In addition to identifying building issues, feedback has indicated that the use of CO2 monitoring has helped inform how ventilation can be adjusted to achieve a balance between fresh air flow and room temperature.

Instances of higher than expected CO2 levels were sometimes examined and found to be the result of users not following guidance on providing ventilation by opening windows. Local authorities also reported assisting users to understand their environments by providing information sheets and video instructions.

Next Steps

It has been made clear to all local authorities, through ongoing dialogue and through the grant funding being provided, that ensuring longer term best practice and improvement, as well as value for money from this investment, is essential. Discussions are already underway to consider longer-term actions and next steps beyond these initial CO2/ventilation assessments. We are working with ADES, SHOPS and other partners to ensure that suitable longer-term strategies are in place across all local authorities.

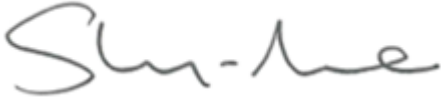
We understand that a quarter of local authorities (8) have already adopted an approach of deploying one monitoring device in every learning, teaching or childcare space. Other local authorities have to date indicated a preference for a mobile monitoring strategy, drawing on their experiences of the initial assessments to ensure appropriate risk-based coverage and are formulating future plans.

Feedback received over the winter months will be collated and shared to identify seasonal variations and help inform longer term approaches to ventilation in the learning estate. Local authorities have indicated that they will continue to carry out repair and maintenance works and where necessary, plan for upgrade works as the need for them becomes evident.

As a legacy from the COVID pandemic, our ambition is to have learning environments that are the healthiest they have ever been.

I hope this report is helpful and addresses the key points the committee raised with me when I appeared before you on 6th October.

Yours sincerely



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

Annex A – Local Authority Funding Allocations

Local Authority	Revenue	Capital	Capital (Private & Third Sector)	Total
Aberdeen City	£101,000	£224,000	£18,000	£343,000
Aberdeenshire	£156,000	£345,000	£24,000	£525,000
Angus	£64,000	£142,000	£11,000	£217,000
Argyll & Bute	£49,000	£109,000	£6,000	£164,000
Clackmannanshire	£28,000	£62,000	£2,000	£92,000
Dumfries & Galloway	£83,000	£184,000	£9,000	£276,000
Dundee City	£81,000	£179,000	£11,000	£271,000
East Ayrshire	£69,000	£152,000	£4,000	£225,000
East Dunbartonshire	£69,000	£153,000	£11,000	£233,000
East Lothian	£61,000	£135,000	£9,000	£205,000
East Renfrewshire	£69,000	£152,000	£9,000	£230,000
Edinburgh, City of	£220,000	£487,000	£48,000	£755,000
Eilean Siar	£18,000	£39,000	£1,000	£58,000
Falkirk	£90,000	£199,000	£8,000	£297,000
Fife	£210,000	£465,000	£13,000	£688,000
Glasgow City	£321,000	£709,000	£47,000	£1,077,000
Highland	£140,000	£310,000	£14,000	£464,000
Inverclyde	£43,000	£95,000	£3,000	£141,000
Midlothian	£55,000	£122,000	£11,000	£188,000
Moray	£52,000	£114,000	£8,000	£174,000
North Ayrshire	£77,000	£170,000	£6,000	£253,000
North Lanarkshire	£203,000	£449,000	£16,000	£668,000
Orkney	£15,000	£33,000	£0	£48,000
Perth & Kinross	£79,000	£174,000	£10,000	£263,000
Renfrewshire	£99,000	£218,000	£15,000	£332,000
Scottish Borders	£64,000	£141,000	£7,000	£212,000
Shetland	£17,000	£38,000	£1,000	£56,000
South Ayrshire	£60,000	£133,000	£5,000	£198,000
South Lanarkshire	£187,000	£413,000	£20,000	£620,000
Stirling	£54,000	£119,000	£6,000	£179,000
West Dunbartonshire	£53,000	£117,000	£5,000	£175,000
West Lothian	£113,000	£248,000	£12,000	£373,000
TOTAL	£3,000,000	£6,630,000	£370,000	£10,000,000

Annex B – Ventilation Assessments Carried Out By Local Authorities

Local Authority	Complete by 15 th October		Complete by 22 nd October		Complete by 27 th October		Targeting Completion by 29 th October		Targeting Completion by 5 th November		Targeting Completion by 12 th November	
	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total
Aberdeen City	1,659	99%	1,659	99%	1,667	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aberdeenshire	2,441	99%	2,441	99%	2,441	99%	2,441	99%	2,455	100%	-	-
Angus	875	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Argyll & Bute	861	98%	861	98%	876	99%	881	100%	-	-	-	-
Clackmannanshire	790	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dumfries & Galloway	1,332	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dundee	1,463	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
East Ayrshire	1,080	89%	1,118	96%	1,169	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
East Dunbartonshire	1,027	80%	1,027	80%	1,027	80%	1,027	80%	1,282	100%	-	-
East Lothian	1,063	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
East Renfrewshire	262	22%	262	22%	262	22%	262	22%	1,208	100%	-	-
Edinburgh	1,941	54%	1,941	54%	2,026	56%	2,026	56%	3,605	100%	-	-
Eilean Siar	383	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Falkirk	1,582	99%	1,593	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fife	3,241	94%	3,241	94%	3,327	97%	3,327	97%	3,445	100%	-	-
Glasgow	909	20%	1,283	29%	1,701	38%	1,701	38%	1,701	38%	4,476	100%
Highland	900	25%	900	25%	900	25%	900	25%	3,598	100%	-	-
Inverclyde	792	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Midlothian	1,103	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moray	703	57%	703	57%	864	70%	1,232	100%	-	-	-	-
North Ayrshire	1,147	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
North Lanarkshire	2,907	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Orkney Islands	293	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total	Spaces	% of Total
Perth and Kinross	1,523	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Renfrewshire	1,830	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scottish Borders	924	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shetland Islands	526	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Ayrshire	712	67%	1,067	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Lanarkshire	2,966	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stirling	788	75%	788	75%	1,050	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Dunbartonshire	653	66%	653	66%	779	79%	779	79%	989	100%	-	-
West Lothian	2,092	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
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