

Improving additional support for children in school



a progress report from the Scottish Government and COSLA

**“Scotland should be proud of our approach to supporting
children and young people in their learning.”**

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Councillor Tony Buchanan

Children and Young People Spokesperson

In 2020, an important report was published about how well additional support for learning was working in schools. The report made recommendations about what should be done to improve children’s learning support. The Scottish Government and COSLA* agreed with all the recommendations and created an Additional Support for Learning (ASL) action plan. They also agreed to provide regular updates on progress.

This is a summary of what is in their second annual report.

*COSLA stands for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities



What's been going on in the last year?

In the last year, lots of work has been done to make sure that everybody working with children and young people takes time to understand their needs, to listen and involve them in decisions and share their successes.

Here are some examples:

Inclusion Ambassadors

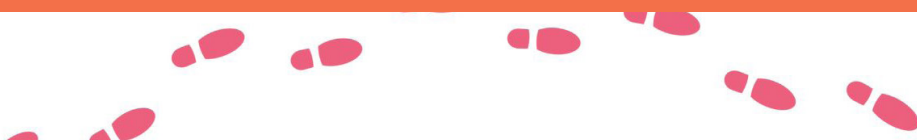
The Inclusion Ambassadors are a group of pupils from across Scotland who all have additional support needs. They meet regularly to share their views and experiences about what works well at school and what could be better.

In 2021, the group created their Vision Statement setting out how they think schools can help pupils feel more included and supported. It's important because it shapes what the Inclusion Ambassadors do and keeps attention on the importance of listening to children and young people and involving them in decisions.

Time has been spent making sure people know about the Vision Statement. This includes sharing information online and adding it to teacher training.

The group have also been working on other projects including:

- The launch of the Success Looks Different awards. Schools were given an opportunity to share how they celebrate the achievements of pupils with additional support needs. The Inclusion Ambassadors picked the winners of the awards.
- The creation of a resource pack that will help staff in schools support pupils with additional support needs to have their say about their education.
- The creation of their own space on Reach.scot where they can share what they're talking about and how other pupils can get involved.
- The creation of a guide about how pupils with additional support needs want people to speak to them and why it's so important.



Making sure useful advice and support is available

Here are some of the services that have been given money, or extra money, to help children and young people with additional support needs and their families:

These groups are made up of people who work with children with additional support needs as well as parents and carers. Children and young people will be actively involved so their views are at the heart of all the work the groups do.

- = **Enquire** and **Reach** provide advice and information about children's rights to extra support in school and how to make sure it is put in place.
- = **Let's Talk ASN** provides support and legal help to parents, carers and young people over the age of 16 to sort out disputes about additional support for learning.
- = **My Rights, My Say** helps children in Scotland aged 12-15 with additional support needs to be involved in decisions about their education.

"My Rights, My Say / Partners in Advocacy supported me over the last 2 years when I wasn't able to go to school. They were my voice and helped me move forward with getting my education in a way that was right for me."

Quote by a child supported by My Rights, My Say

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Scottish Government has looked at potential changes that may be needed to the law in Scotland to make sure that children's rights in the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are respected. This means the promises made to children in the UNCRC are kept.

Bringing experts together

A group has been created to help shape what will be done to make sure children get the extra help they need in school. The group includes parents and carers as well as organisations who support children and young people with lots of different additional support needs. The group will work with children and young people to make sure lots of different experiences, views and voices are heard.

What else has happened?

Lots of other work has been going on with parents, carers, teachers and other adults who support children with additional support needs. This includes:

- Training for pupil support staff on additional support needs and how children want to be supported in school.
- Making sure that people learn about additional support needs when they are training to be teachers as well as continuing to learn throughout their careers.
- Making sure that people making decisions about additional support in schools and headteachers have the right approach to children with additional support needs and the right training.

What's next?

Involving children and young people in the ASL action plan and in decisions about their own education and support is still a top priority.

Over the next 18 months, children and young people will be given the opportunity to have their say when changes are being made to the way education or support is provided including:

- What education in Scotland should be like?
- How pupils learning is assessed and changes to exams?
- What is needed to help children who need a lot of support?

Work will also continue to make sure children's views are heard when local authorities are making decisions about education and support.

To read the full progress report visit the Scottish Government website.

