Support for Learning: All our children and all their potential

A progress report from the Scottish Government and COSLA

What's happening to improve additional support for learning in Scotland?

In 2020, an important report called "**Support for Learning: All our Children and all their potential**" was published which set out what needs to be done to improve children's learning support. The report is often referred to as the ASL Review. For the latest update visit the Scottish Government website.

The main finding from the report was that Scotland has good legislation and guidance on additional support for learning, but more could be done to make sure that all children receive the support they need when they need it. The report set out recommendations for what should be done to make this a reality.

The Scottish Government and COSLA* agreed with all the recommendations and created an Additional Support for Learning Action Plan to drive work forward and to report on how things are going.

This is a summary of their second annual progress report which was published in November 2022. For the full report visit the Scottish Government website.

What progress has been made?

"**Support for Learning: All our Children and all their potential**" made a number of recommendations across four important areas:

1. Children and young people's engagement, participation and rights
2. Parents and carers engagement, participation and rights
3. Teacher and practitioner professionalism
4. Leadership and improvement.

Twenty-four of the actions have been met fully and progress is being made on many of the others.

*COSLA stands for the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

To drive forward work, the Scottish Government has set up an Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Project Board. An ASL Network has been set up to support the Project Board in making the right decisions. The Project Board, with support from the ASL Network, will create and deliver a communication plan to promote children's rights to additional support for learning, information on how to access the right support and how people can support action to meet the remaining recommendations.

Both 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.

"Scotland should be proud of our approach to supporting children and young people in their learning. It has inclusion at its heart and promotes values of acceptance, equality, equity and kindness"

Shirley-Ann Somerville
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Councillor Tony Buchanan
Children and Young People Spokesperson

November 2022

What progress has been made to improve children and young people's engagement, participation and rights?

Recommendations about children and young people focused on raising the profile of children with additional support needs, their rights, experiences, views and successes.

Three out of fourteen actions about children and young people have been met and work is underway on the other eleven.

Action taken:

- The Young Inclusion Ambassadors — a group of young people with additional support needs who share their experiences of school to help make positive change, continued to share their vision statement of what school should look and feel like. The vision statement has been included in learning programmes for teachers and support staff.
- Other projects the Inclusion Ambassadors have worked on include: a resource pack to help staff in schools support pupils with additional support needs to have their say about their education; a guide about how pupils with additional support needs want people to speak to them and why it's important to them; the Success Looks Different awards which offered schools an opportunity to share how they celebrate the achievements of pupils with additional support needs. The Inclusion Ambassadors picked the winners of the awards.
- Services that support children and young people and their families have continued to be funded and, in some cases, received extra funding. These include national support services such as Enquire, Let's Talk ASN and My Rights, My Say.
- Funding has been provided for projects and research involving, considering or promoting the importance of listening to children and young people about education and support including gypsy traveller children and those living in Armed Forces families.
- The Scottish Government has considered potential changes that may be needed to additional support for learning law in Scotland to make it compatible with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

What's next?

Over the next 18 months:

- The Inclusion Ambassadors will continue to be funded so that children and young people are involved in the design and development of Scottish Government policy.
- Children and young people will be fully involved in the **Hayward Review** — the independent review of qualifications and assessment, and the **National Discussion on Education Reform**.
- Enquire will develop social media campaigns and accessible resources to raise awareness of children's legal rights to additional support for learning.
- The My Rights, My Say service will continue to raise awareness and support children aged 12-15 with additional support needs to exercise their rights.
- New research with children and young people with complex additional support needs will be carried out to understand their experiences of education and support.
- Including the views of children and young people will remain a priority for local authorities and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) with specific involvement through COSLA's Children and Young People's Board.

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What progress has been made to parents and carers' engagement, participation and rights?

Recommendations about parents and carers focused on supporting positive relationships between families and schools and increasing parents' and carers' involvement in decisions about additional support for learning policy and provision.

Four out of thirteen actions about parents and carers have been met and work is underway on the other nine.

Action taken:

- Parents and carers are now represented at all Scottish Government groups about additional support for learning.
- Enquire received extra funding to enhance advice for parents and carers which included improvements to advice for families on children's rights to additional support for learning as well as practical advice to help schools and families work together.
- The Scottish Government continues to fund other organisations working closely with parents and carers including **STEP (Scottish Traveller Education Programme)**, **Dyslexia Scotland** and **CALL Scotland**.
- As part of the ongoing development of **Parent Club**, a Family Support Directory providing signposting for parents and carers to organisations, benefits and information was established and information for families of children with additional support needs was improved.

What's next?

Over the next 18 months:

- Positive examples of joint working between families, schools and local authorities will be promoted through the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) Collaborative Improvement Programme.
- Local authorities will keep under review information about additional support for learning for families and make sure it is widely available.
- Enquire will develop its service to reach as many parents and carers as possible including those who face barriers to accessing advice and information about their children's rights.
- Action will be taken to work with early learning and childcare partners to make sure parents and carers are aware of their children's rights to additional support as early as possible.

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What progress has been made to teacher and practitioner professionalism?

Recommendations about teacher and practitioner professionalism focused on making sure teachers and other educational professionals have the right approach and relevant training to support children with additional support needs.

Nine out of eighteen actions about teacher and practitioner professionalism have been met.

Action taken:

- A review of pupil support staff roles was carried out including direct work with children and young people to find out what they wanted from the staff who support them. Following this work, a **Pupil Support Staff Professional Learning Framework** was created to help support staff access professional learning.
- Information in the **Stepping Stones** learning programme, which supports newly qualified teachers, was refreshed.
- Revised **standards for teachers**, with specific mention of additional support needs including autism and other neurodiversity, was published. The changes to the standards were reflected in a new and improved **Framework for Inclusion**.
- **National Guidance on an Empowered System**, which sets out how to improve children and young people's lives and experiences of school, was published.
- Enquire created new resources for teachers and support staff, including e-learning modules on children's rights to additional support learning and building positive relationships with families.

What's next?

Over the next 18 months:

- New research will be carried out into how to make the best use of pupil support staff. A new pupil support staff vision and values will be created after consultation with school staff.
- Further work and consultation will be carried out on setting up formal qualifications and professional registration for classroom assistants.
- The career pathways for teachers who want to focus on additional support for learning will be made easier to increase the number of specialist additional support for learning teachers in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government and partners will consider ways to improve training on additional support for learning for early learning and childcare practitioners.
- An autism module for trainee teachers, piloted at the University of Strathclyde last year, will become part of all teacher education courses across Scotland.
- A new Principles into Practice programme for planning and delivering support to young people moving into adult life will be developed and piloted next year.

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What progress has been made to leadership and improvement?

Recommendations about leadership and improvement covered a wide range of areas including how ASL Action Plan recommendations are taken forward and the right training is available to headteachers and local authority staff.

Eight out of thirty-one actions about leadership and improvment have been met and work is underway on the remaining twenty-three.

Action taken:

- Education Scotland, which is responsible for quality and improvement in Scottish education, has been raising awareness of the ASL review and recommendations with its staff. It published the "Rights, Reviews, Promises and Inclusion for All" evaluation tool to move forward action on ASL Review recommendations.
- Additional support for learning now forms part of the Association of Directors of Education Scotland leadership programme.
- The Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools will now consider the information needed, at national and local level, about relationships and behaviour in schools to improve the learning experiences of children and young people with additional support needs.
- The Scottish Government website has been improved to include more information for children and young people with additional support needs, their families and the professionals who work with them, to signpost to services that can help and support them.

What's next?

Over the next 18 months:

- Changes will be made to the Code of Practice (that sits alongside the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004) to make sure schools and local authorities are fulfilling their duties towards children with additional support needs.
- A draft National Measurement Framework will be created to make sure there is a clear framework for recognising and celebrating the successes and achievements of children and young people with additional support needs. The Project Board will talk to children, young people, parents and carers about the best way to share this information.
- A pilot to improve the training provided to headteachers about supporting children with complex additional support needs will begin in 2023.
- COSLA and the Scottish Government will work with organisations overseeing the spending of public money (Audit Commission and Audit Scotland) to make sure that children with additional support needs are not at a disadvantage due to lack of additional support in school.

Scottish Government

ENQUIRE

Advice and information about additional support for learning in Scotland

Enquire - the Scottish advice service supported the Scottish Government to create children and young people / parent and carer-friendly versions of the Additional Support for Learning progress report 2022.