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Education and Skills Committee
The Scottish Parliament
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By email: es.committee@parliament.scot

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Dear Convener

I am writing to inform the Committee of the publication, earlier today, of the report of the independently chaired review into the implementation of Additional Support for Learning. The report is available on the Scottish Government's website:

- Report: <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839608247>
- Executive summary: <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781839608254>

As the Committee will recall, I asked Angela Morgan to Chair the review in September 2019 and report the review's findings, jointly, to Scottish Ministers and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). The review's remit included implementation across early learning and childcare centres, primary, secondary and special schools, including enhanced provision, services and units.

The Scottish Government is fully committed to improving the experiences of children and young people with additional support needs. I welcome the findings of the report and would like to put on record my thanks to Angela Morgan and to all those who contributed to this important work.

This report suggests several areas for improvement in how we can best support our children and young people to flourish in their learning and beyond. Therefore, we must give its findings full and careful consideration. I can confirm that the Scottish Government will work in partnership with COSLA and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland to agree actions to address the report's findings and recommendations.

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In welcoming this report, it is important to acknowledge the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on our children and young people, their families and those who support them. It is therefore vital that consideration of this report is undertaken within the context of plans to transition back to a greater level of face-to-face education and consideration of the individual needs of children and young people to ensure that they are fully supported during their transition back to school and beyond.

This report and the engagement that informed it, was undertaken prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. As I am sure the Committee will agree, all those involved in the education of children and young people are working incredibly hard to ensure that their learning and support continues. It is therefore important to stress that the report's findings should not, in any way, detract from their significant efforts during this very difficult time.

In light of the above considerations, I can confirm to the Committee that the Scottish Government will publish a full response to the report's recommendations in the autumn of 2020.

Yours Sincerely

JOHN SWINNEY

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