



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

2nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 5)

Wednesday 20 January 2021

The Committee will meet at 8.30 am in a virtual meeting.

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take items 3 and 4 in private.
2. **Additional Support for Learning review:** The Committee will take evidence from—

Eileen Prior, Executive Director, Connect;

Andrea Bradley, Assistant Secretary, EIS;

Ken Muir, Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland;

Cheryl Burnett, Co Vice Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland;

and then from—

Jennifer King, Education Manager (ASN, Educational Psychology & Inclusion) and representative of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland;

Laura-Ann Currie, Head of Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equality, Education Scotland.

3. **Review of evidence:** The Committee will consider the evidence it heard earlier.
4. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme.

ES/S5/21/2/A

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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

Agenda item 2

SPICe briefing paper

ES/S5/21/2/1

Submissions pack

ES/S5/21/2/2

Agenda item 4

PRIVATE PAPER

ES/S5/21/2/3 (P)

**Education and Skills Committee
Additional Support Needs Review
20 January 2021**

INTRODUCTION

[On 18 November 2020](#), the Committee took evidence on the findings of the review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) in schools from Angela Morgan who led the review.

The independent review was announced by the Scottish Government in January 2019. The review report, '[Support for Learning: All our children and All their Potential](#)' ("The Review") was published in June 2020. The Review itself cautions against focussing on one or several areas of the report, and Ms Morgan urged readers "to read all the themes, as they are so interconnected." The Review identified nine themes and these themes do not map directly onto the areas of the remit. The remit for the review is reproduced in Annexe A of this paper.

The [Scottish Government published an Additional Support for Learning: Action Plan on 21 October](#). The Scottish Government stated that it, COSLA and ADES are "collaborative partners in this action plan". For ease of reference this response is attributed to the Scottish Government in this paper.

In 2019, the Scottish Government established the [Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group](#). The group's purpose is to "provide advice to Scottish Government, the Scottish Education Council and Scottish Ministers on key issues relating to the implementation of Additional Support for Learning."

The Committee agreed to take evidence from the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), the EIS, Connect, and the NPFSS. In addition, the Committee will take evidence from the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) and Education Scotland.

The Committee has also received submissions from [Connect](#), [A24 Scotland](#) and the [Socialist Educational Association Scotland](#) prior to the evidence session in November.

The SPICe briefing for the meeting on 18 November ([Paper 1 of the briefing pack](#)) set out the background to the Committee's work in this policy area as well as the relevant legislation. In the interests of brevity, this paper does not cover the same ground in detail.

CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY

The key aspect of the Review was in relation to values and culture. The Review set out four Key conditions for delivery. These are—

- Values driven leadership;
- An open and robust culture of communication, support and challenge – underpinned by trust, respect and positive relationships;
- Resource alignment, including time for communication and planning processes; and

- Methodology for delivery of knowledge learning and practice development, which incorporates time for coaching, mentoring, reflection and embedding into practice. (p27)

The review stated—

“Unfortunately, we cannot assume and take for granted that all individual professionals are signed up to the principles of inclusion and the presumption of mainstreaming. Evidence emerged in the course of this work, which raises the deeply uncomfortable fact that not all professionals are. Values and beliefs, culture and mind-set are fundamental and there is more work to do in this regard.” (p40)

Throughout the review is concerned with communication, good relationships and kindness in public service. Ms Morgan told the Committee in November—

“I found many dedicated, skilled and inspiring professionals who are enormously committed to children and young people who have additional challenges. I found that the system is overly dependent on those individuals, and it is fragmented and inconsistent.” (Col 2)

Ms Morgan’s set out her view that the concept of mainstream school should be updated to reflect the needs of all children, and that provision should be flexible and child-centred. This would appear to be a conceptual shift from additionality to universality. A similar argument was made in the [December report of the International Council of Education Advisers](#) who argued for a move toward universal design for education, both to support the education system to perform during the pandemic and to “improve and transform high quality education for all in other ‘normal’ circumstances”. The ICEA stated—

“Universal design is a widely used principle in inclusive education. Originating in architecture, the idea of universal design is that buildings should not be constructed for [able-bodied] users and then adapted for [disabled people]. Rather, from the outset, a building should be designed so that it can be used and enjoyed by the maximum number and range of users.” (p7)

In the most recent summary [school statistics published in December](#) show that just under a third, 32%, of pupils were identified as having at least one additional support need in September 2020. This continues the trend of gradual increases in the percentage of pupils identified with ASN (up from 31% in 2019) – it is an open question as to the extent that this trend reflects changes in identification and recording practices in schools or increases in need. Members will be aware that the definition of ASN is very broad. Ms Morgan argued that levels of need and the numbers of children with additional support needs are both increasing; she [told the Committee in November](#) that this was due to “the pressures that have been well rehearsed over the past years, such as social media, the higher rates of mental distress that that causes, and increasing inequality.” (col 8)

More detailed statistics based on the pupil and teacher censuses are published around March every year. The 2019 census reported that around 93% of children identified as having an additional support need spend all their time in mainstream classes.¹ The Review reported that—

“Whilst the curriculum is designed to enable differentiation in order to most effectively support children and young people to learn, in practice many teachers

¹ Pupil census table 1.6

expressed a range of concerns about how this is operating in practice and their skills and capacity to effectively provide curriculum differentiation.” (p25)

The Review also discussed the balance between universal and specialist provision. In November, Ms Morgan said—

“There is a tricky balance between inclusion and specialism, and I comment on that in my main report. We need both—we need to be careful and understand that, if we were to develop a different concept for mainstreaming that was more genuinely inclusive, we would need to ensure that the specialism was not lost.” (Col 9)

Adapting teaching to suit a variety of different needs, learning styles and interests is the everyday work of teachers. The [GTCS' current standards for registration](#) make regular reference to registered teachers' practice being aimed at the needs of all learners, and for example Standard 3.1.3 is on teachers employing “a range of teaching strategies and resources to meet the needs and abilities of learners”. [Updated standards are expected to be enacted from August 2021](#). These new standards are more explicit in how they approach teachers' duties toward inclusive education. For example, teachers are required to “create a safe, caring and purposeful learning environment which is welcoming and inclusive, well managed and well organised.” (Standard 3.2.1) The updated Standards also state—

“A core component of teachers' professional commitment is understanding the needs of all learners. Some children and young people may have a barrier to wellbeing and learning associated with a range of circumstances such as the learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health need, and social and emotional factors. This includes learners with additional support needs such as: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD); Autism; Developmental Coordination Disorder (Dyspraxia) (DCD); Dyslexia; and Tourette syndrome. Teachers recognise, see and acknowledge the value in everyone and have a deep awareness of the need for culturally responsive pedagogies. They promote equality and diversity, paying careful attention to the needs of learners from diverse groups and in upholding children's rights.” (p5)

The EIS' 2019 report, [Additional Support for Learning in Scottish school education: Exploring the gap between promise and practice](#), argued that on occasion too much can be expected of teachers to meet all of the challenges of meeting all the needs in a classroom. It said—

“Of concern ... is an assumption within some Local Authorities that all teachers can somehow meet a complex array of additional support needs through routine differentiation, and without additional resource.” (p8)

The EIS' 2019 report also raised concerns about a “a creeping undervaluing of specialism”. It said—

“We believe that an issue which requires further attention is the undervaluing of the roles of both ASL/ASN Teachers and ASL/ASN Assistants, which in part we would suggest is linked to a societal undervaluing of work which is predominantly carried out by women, often (wrongly) perceived as something that 'anyone could do', where the skills involved are not fully understood or respected.” (p12)

Issues with culture were noted in the Committee's 2017 report on ASN, [How is Additional Support for Learning Working in Practice?](#) (see for example recommendation 15).

The Review noted that, while planning processes are important, they are a means to an end – ensuring the support is provided to the child. The Review stated—

“A very significant level of energy is being devoted to child planning processes. This complies with process targets, but does not necessarily result in active delivery of support. This causes disappointment, frustration and anger for children, young people, and their families and a sense of failure and helplessness for staff.” (p28)

Ms Morgan told the Committee on 18 November that resource issues are at play in the lack of progress following plans being made. (Col 10) Ms Morgan made a broader point that the aim of services should be to support families rather than to simply comply with legislation or guidance. (Col 20)

Compliance, however, has also been an issue the Committee has explored. The Committee has also heard that key professionals are not well-informed about legislative duties and policy. May Dunsmuir, president of the health and education chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland told the Committee in February 2019—

“From the tribunal's experience, it would appear that, quite simply, not enough people in education understand what a [Co-ordinated Support Plan] is. They are unaware that, when the criteria are met, there is an obligation to provide a CSP. I speak to people from a wide range of education authorities, and the majority believe that they have a choice. ... [the] matter at play here is the absence of knowledge and the absence of understanding of the legal obligations.” (cols 6 &7)

Ms Dunsmuir also explained that she would on occasion have to remind education authorities that the tribunal is a “judicial institution that makes legally binding decisions” and—

“When it comes to how to overcome what is happening in practice, we have available a useful and well set out code of practice that gives a range of examples and a great deal of information for educational authorities to follow. However, my experience in the tribunal is that when, for example, a headteacher is asked to comment on why they are not complying with a section in the statutory code of practice under the 2004 act, they will be unaware that the code exists.” (Col 20)

Recommendation 1.1 of the Review called for a “national, overarching Vision Statement for success for children and young people who have additional support needs must be developed by the end of 2020, with the full involvement of children and young people.” And Recommendation 3.1 stated—

“There must be clear values-driven leadership, shared communication, support and challenge at all levels of the system to ensure that the experiences and achievements of children and young people with additional support needs are visible and continue to be improved.”

Both of these were accepted by the Scottish Government. The Review also recommended that various bodies or groups take account of its findings, e.g. the Scottish Education Council, Education Scotland, the OECD in its review of CfE.

The Review made a number of Recommendations in relation to teachers' professionalism, education and on-going development. (Recommendation 5.1) The Review's focus was on the capacity and practice of all teachers rather than specialist teachers. The Scottish Government's response stated—

“The Scottish Government will seek to work with Local Government and partners to ensure that we build on and develop the suite of resources that are already available to teachers to support them to meet the needs of children and young people within their schools.”

The Committee made recommendations in relation to the content of Initial Teacher Education in 2017. The Committee had intended to undertake a short inquiry on ITE in the Spring of 2020, but these plans were disrupted by the pandemic. The Scottish Council of Deans of Education provided an update to the Committee for this inquiry. It's [submission](#) stated—

“SCDE has been closely involved in discussions and initiatives relating to inclusion and ASN. The Committee will be aware of the fact that, on the issue of Autism in particular, all [Higher Education Institution] providers have agreed baseline content in their ITE courses working collaboratively with a number of stakeholders, including NAS [the National Autism Society] and NAIT [National Autism Implementation Team]. Notwithstanding, the degree to which ASN can be covered at the depth suggested by [the Committee in recommendation 8 of the 2017 report] remains a challenge and SCDE has strongly advocated for further training by local authorities during induction year and as part of CLPL [career-long professional learning]. Initial Teacher Education is exactly that: initial. It is the start point of a learning journey not the end point.”

The SCDE's submission (and the Scottish Government's response to the Review) refer to the [National Framework for Inclusion](#) which aims to “ensure that all students and teachers are appropriately guided and supported from the outset and throughout their careers towards gaining the required knowledge and understanding of inclusive education.”

While the recruitment to ITE courses and the content of the courses are a matter for the higher education institutions themselves, the [GTCS produces guidelines for ITE](#). These guidelines set out the GTCS' “policy on the content, nature and duration of programmes leading to teaching qualifications.” ITE courses are also intended to be partnerships between the HEIs and local authorities, which are responsible for much of the learning that takes place on students' placement.

Teachers are also required to undertake continual professional learning and, as employers, local authorities mostly responsible for making provision for teachers to do so. It is also part of a teacher's continual registration at the GTCS through its [Professional Update](#) system. The GTCS website states—

“Professional Update was launched by GTC Scotland in August 2014 for all fully registered teachers. Teachers in Scotland are required to engage in professional learning, self-evaluate this learning using the GTC Scotland Professional Standards, and maintain a record of this learning using their online profile on MyGTCS (or another system agreed by their local authority). The Professional Review and Development (PRD) discussion is also an integral part of the process. Every five years confirmation of this engagement is required by the teacher and their line manager in order to maintain full registration.”

Education Scotland also provide a suite of professional learning with a particular focus on leadership. In response to the Review's recommendation 3.1 which called for values-based leadership, the Scottish Government stated—

“Alongside the continued investment in values based leadership, the Scottish Government will work with Local Government and relevant partners, including GTCS, Education Scotland and partners in Health and Social Care to build on existing work and seek both nationally and locally, opportunities to develop and promote additional professional learning and leadership.

“ADES will consult with its members on the locus of additional support needs within its leadership programme”

The focus on a cultural shift in respect of supporting children's ASN has a parallel in the Scottish Government's plans for reform of the education system more broadly. As members will be aware, the Scottish Government this session had plans for structural change and cultural change within the education system. The aim is to develop a more empowered and collaborative culture at all levels, including parents/carers and learners. [Education Scotland's website provides more details on the Empowered System](#) including guidance and the Headteachers' Charter.

Much of the work of the Scottish Government's Action Plan in response to the review will be taken forward by the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group. The Action Plan states—

“To ensure that the delivery of this action plan has the intended impact for children and young people with additional support needs, [the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group](#) (ASLIG) will agree robust implementation and outcome measures for each recommendation which relate to the National Improvement Framework. Progress against these measures will be reported on by October 2021.”

ASLIG is made up of representatives from local government, 3rd Sector, parent groups, unions and children's groups.

The Committee may wish to explore with the panels—

- **How far from an “open and robust culture of communication, support and challenge – underpinned by trust, respect and positive relationships” is the Scottish system. What has prevented that being the case?**
- **Who is responsible for the culture in schools or education departments? How does one go about changing attitudes and cultures and how long would this be expected to take?**
- **How far can a universally designed system meet the needs of all learners? What is the balance of specialist and universal support and how can schools and local authorities demand-led services?**
- **Whether and how the role of the teacher changed in the past ten years? Has the support network, continuous professional development, an initial teacher education kept pace with any new demands?**

- **How far can teachers employ differentiation in classrooms? How does a teacher access additional support when required and what barriers are there to this? How do parents feature in this process?**
- **How do GTCS, local authorities and Education Scotland utilise information gathered through the professional update process to identify systematic gaps in professional learning? How are resources allocated to reflect any such work?**
- **Whether the panels agree that pressures “such as social media, the higher rates of mental distress that that causes, and increasing inequality” are significantly increasing the number of children unable to benefit from school education without additional support. If so, what research has been carried out to identify the causal links and appropriate policy responses?**
- **How has ADES and the inspectorate been monitoring the additional support been provided? What evidence is there of local authorities or Education Scotland identifying the issues raised by Ms Morgan and acting upon them over the past 5 years?**
- **Whether the panels are content that the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group are the right forum to discuss how to take forward the recommendations of the Review? Whether any proposals will or should be subject to detailed consultation?**

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of the [Committee's work in 2017](#) was the testimony from parents and carers and teachers. The Committee stated—

“A strong theme of evidence from parents and teachers however was the gap between the experience envisaged of inclusive education and the experience of the children they supported in practice.” (para 47)

The Committee’s 2017 report also noted that some parents were very positive about the support their children had received. The Committee also received evidence that, on occasion, parents and carers could expect levels of supports that were not necessarily required (para 52). The Committee also noted that the parent or carer’s efforts could be instrumental in accessing support from the local authority. The Committee highlighted to the Scottish Government concerns that this could mean that less deprived families were able to access greater levels of support. (pp25-27) The Committee’s report also highlighted that lack of resources could hinder processes of identification and support.

The Review summarised the experiences of parents and carers it had engaged with as being characterised as being in fights or battles with the local authority. The provided a broad narrative of parents and carers’ experiences where they had been negative—

- hope and belief that a request for help to a public service would be responded to;
- frustration with lack of information and restricted communication;
- hurt and anger at being ignored or dismissed; and
- loss of confidence and trust.

The Review recommended that—

“Schools and local authorities must work in partnership with parents and carers to develop, and deliver, ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and cooperation.” (first bullet of Recommendation 6.1)

There were a number of recommendations under Recommendation 6.1 of the review including a recommendation on strengthening support services for parents and carers and mediation. The Scottish Government’s response indicated that engaging with parents and carers would be included in the new national measurement framework. It also stated—

“In support of work to enhance partnership working locally, the Scottish Government will seek to publish a revised, cross-portfolio summary of the national offer on family support, including how to ask for help, and the principles of good support. We will work with partners to ensure that this is kept under review and captures the wide-ranging support that is available to families of children with additional support needs.”

The Review stated that there is substantial evidence that supporting the needs of children works well in some areas and that this is “primarily due to the commitment and determination of individuals among teachers and school staff, senior school leadership teams and service managers.”(p40) The review reported that often parents or carers found that the involvement of an empathetic and committed individual could make a significant positive impact. (p47)

[Scottish Government research](#), published in March 2019, reported that parents and carers were “broadly positive about their child’s experience of school”. Concerns were raised, however, about resources, continuity and consistency among other things.

The Review’s main focus is on cultural and system change, which is examined in more detail in the previous section. The Review highlighted that different actors in the processes can feel powerless. It said—

“Parents and carers who feel powerless in the system, might be surprised to hear how powerless teachers and school staff often feel. There were many examples of practitioners feeling upset and stressed at being unable to source expertise and support. That sense of powerlessness included the significant number of parents and carers who contributed to the Review, who are themselves school staff or other public service professionals, with an insight into systems and processes. Despite those insights, these parents and carers reported having no greater success in developing positive communication and involvement in decisions about their children than those without that knowledge.” (pp47-48)

The first substantive part of the Review addresses the experiences of children and young people. It said—

“Children and young people want to be included in their schools and communities. They feel it is important that those working in schools are aware of additional support needs and sensitive to their individual needs. Schools should have a whole school approach to inclusion, respect children and young people’s rights and support individuals to achieve their potential. This will be of benefit to all children and young people and can be achieved by talking with and listening to them.”

And the Review recommended—

“Children and young people must be listened to and involved in all decision making relating to additional support for learning. Co-creation and collaboration with children, young people and their families will support more coherent, inclusive and all-encompassing policy making, which improves implementation, impact and experience.”

This recommendation was accepted by the Scottish Government and noted the recommendation aligned with work to incorporate the UNCRC.

The Committee noted during its report in 2017 that—

“The Committee acknowledges that it only heard from those who wanted to respond to its call for views, and so naturally comments centred around what needs to improve.”

The Review included a similar caveat. It noted that “poor experiences do motivate people to speak out” and continued—

“However, the responses received affirm that the very complex challenges of meaningful inclusion and meeting additional support needs are a work in progress in Scotland.” (p11)

As well as poor experiences motivating participation in the work of parliamentary Committees or Government commissioned reviews, one might also expect the severity or types of barriers to learning faced by the pupil to be a motivating factor as well. As noted above, the definition of ASN is broad, potentially including for example: being a “more able pupil”; having English as an additional language; having visual or hearing impairments; or, and this is the largest category, “social, emotional and behavioural difficulty”². Professor Riddell [told the Committee in 2019](#)—

“The ‘social, emotional and behavioural difficulty’ category is highly stigmatised. No parent lobbies for their child to be counted under it, because they feel that that would say, ‘bad child’ or, ‘bad family’. It is a punitive category.” (Col 27-28)

The Review reported that groups advocating for support for children or representing children with certain conditions being in competition for visibility. The Review continued—

“Consequently, whole groupings identified in the additional support for learning legislation are invisible and have been completely overlooked. ... The pressures in the system and the lack of visibility is also increasing stigma, exclusion and inequality within Additional Support for Learning. There is evidence of developing perceptions around children and young people who are viewed as either more or less ‘deserving’ of attention and support. This is particularly noticeable in language around many of the children and young people with social, emotional or behavioural needs whose parents are perceived and described as ‘inadequate’ or just ‘bad’.” (p66)

² In 2019 49,012 pupils were identified in this category, 70% of whom were boys. Pupils can have more than one reason for support and “social, emotional and behavioural difficulty” may be a secondary category for a number.

The Review highlighted the importance of public services working collaboratively with parents who will advocate for support for their children. It said—

“For committed staff, endeavouring to maintain their professional integrity, the key delivery conditions already noted, are essential. Where openness and transparency are not in place, the risks are of a culture of blame and/or a culture that lacks robust accountability for practice with vulnerable children and young people. These are significant issues, which are extremely uncomfortable to raise. They must be aired and considered. Not to ascribe fault or blame, but to assist in understanding the fundamental problems that this Review has been established to consider.” (p28)

Again, it is perhaps useful to consider this issue in the context of wider policy frameworks. The 2018 [National Action Plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home](#) sets out three key principles—

1. That our priorities and our approach should be guided by the needs and interests of the child and their family.
2. That parents are the primary educators of children.
3. That it is only through positive *relationships* – relationships between families, and those working with children and young people, relationships based on trust, mutual respect and partnership - that we will achieve our aims.

The Action Plan includes a number of Goals along with associated Actions. Under Goal C on improving communication with parents, there were a number of actions at the national level in relation to guidance and advice available; at a local level, three key steps were identified for local authorities to undertake—

- Identify effective and appropriate communications channels to reach ALL parents.
- Produce guidance and support on how effective communication with parents can be achieved.
- Involve parents in meaningful ways in informing local authorities’ policies and strategies.

Members may wish to explore with the panels—

- **How far the negative experiences of parents and carers resulting in frustration, hurt, anger and lost of trust is indicative of all parents of children with additional support needs or if there is a relationship between the type or complexity of need and the parent’s experiences?**
- **Do local authorities and schools treat parents and carers as partners in a child’s learning. What can be done to support this and why do some parents not experience this? What evidence does the local authority or Education Scotland gather on how successful local authorities are at maintaining positive partnerships?**
- **How do local authorities ensure that children and their parents or carers are aware of their rights to dispute resolution under the 2004 Act? How does Education Scotland monitor this and what recourse is there if parents find that they are not being provided with the necessary information?**

- **How are children included in decision-making? What progress is being made in this respect?**
- **Are parents, carers and young people themselves routinely told that they have been identified as requiring additional support because of social and emotional needs? What would this support typically entail and how are positive relationships and partnership approaches maintained?**
- **Are local authorities and schools better or worse at engaging and involving parents and carers of children with ASN than parents or carers of children who do not have an identified ASN?**

RESOURCES

The remit of the Review was explicit that the relevant issues would be considered within existing resources.

The debate provision of ASL is often tied to resources and allocations of budgets, at a local authority level and the Scottish Government's local government settlement. This is often presented alongside the perception of increasing numbers of children with ASN and those children's needs becoming more complex.

A breakdown of reported spending on additional support for learning by local authority for 2018-19 can be [found here](#). The information was provided as a Written Answer in response to a question from Miles Briggs MSP in February 2020.

[Public Petition PE1747](#) seeks "adequate funding to support children with additional support needs in all Scottish Schools". This petition was recently referred to the Education and Skills Committee. The submissions from the Scottish Government and COSLA set out the familiar territory of debate on the funding for local government. The [Scottish Government's submission](#) to the Public Petitions Committee dated 5 November 2019, stated—

"The Scottish Government's policy on local authorities' spending is to allow them the financial freedom to operate independently. As such, the vast majority of the revenue funding is provided by means of a block grant. It is the responsibility of individual local authorities to manage their own budgets and to allocate the total financial resources available to them, on the basis of local needs and priorities, having first fulfilled their statutory obligations and the jointly agreed set of national and local priorities."

[COSLA's submission](#) to the PPC stated—

"The proposal to resolve this by the provision of funding that is essentially 'ring-fenced' is in our view not the solution and will simply lead to cuts in other areas. Local Government should be adequately funded so that it can decide the best way to provide the wide range of services for our communities; many of these services are outwith schools and support children and young people with Additional Support Needs."

The Committee's 2017 report concluded—

"Looking more broadly at additional support for learning, the evidence points at a number of ways in which resources are not currently sufficient to support those with

additional support needs in mainstream schools. The most notable factors are the reduction in the number of specialist staff in classrooms, the reduction in specialist support services and the reduction in special school places.” (p17)

The [EIS' 2019 report](#) said—

“Teachers have reported that the current climate, of under-investment in ASL, is having an impact across the whole learning population, and is detrimental to the wellbeing of the teaching workforce; the wellbeing of young people; and the educational experience for many young people.” (p21 of the EIS report)

The [2019 Scottish Government research](#) found that central local authority staff and teachers considered that “special schools and support bases remained reasonably well resourced while mainstream schools - which were coping with increasing needs - saw their resources reduce”. It also found that from its interviews—

“Parents and carers with children at mainstream primary schools (both with and without ASN bases) had some concerns about resources - including availability of pupil support assistants, concerns in class support may be withdrawn and concerns that the buildings were quite run down.”

The Scottish Government has provided an additional £15m to local authorities to support additional ASN classroom assistants. [A letter from the Cabinet Secretary to the Committee in February of this year](#) provides details on the agreement between the Scottish Government and local authorities and the allocations.

The Review could not avoid a discussion on resources and one of its nine themes was on this topic. It recommended that Audit Scotland “use the key themes in this report and the associated findings from Audit Scotland’s audit of educational outcomes to inform the scope of their national performance audit on outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs.” (Recommendation 4.1) The Report noted that constrained budgets have wider impacts than simply support not being available. The Review reported—

“School staff perceived that access to other public services, especially in health and social work, was requiring significantly higher thresholds. They saw this as preventing access to the services children and young people need.” (p36)

The Review also argued that there is “a risk of need being defined by support provided”. The Review also suggested that that constrained resources can have other effects on how children’s needs can be prioritised, with a focus on “on the children and young people who are most visible”. (p30) The Review reported that—

“Expenditure on Additional Support for Learning comprises one of the areas of most unpredictable local authority spend associated with legal entitlements. However, senior figures in public sector finance confirmed that it tends to be overlooked at corporate level in local authorities due to the focus on the other very real challenges of providing adult and older people services.” (p35)

Connect’s submission to the Committee said—

“Angela Morgan’s report made it crystal clear that one of the most intractable challenges for children and families are attitudes and values: unless these change, so all children are truly valued equally and their parents’ role as advocates also

valued, nothing will change in our schools. While resources are important, money does not change attitudes.”

The other aspect of budget scrutiny in the parliament is how outcomes are measured. Importantly there are also statistics on outcomes for children with ASN, for example in terms of positive destinations or qualifications. However, an important factor in interpreting outcomes for pupils identified with ASN is the extent to which the cohort of pupils identified with ASN is stable, in terms of its make-up and the types of barriers to learning.

The review criticised what it saw as an over-emphasis on “attainment through qualification”. It recommended—

“A national measurement framework for additional support for learning must be developed to ensure that there is no reduction in aspiration and ambition for all children and young people to achieve to the maximum of their learning potential. The National Improvement Framework must be revised to ensure parity for additional support for learning ... The test measures must recognise that qualifications are not relevant learning objectives for all children and young people and those children and young people are not failures because of that.”
(Recommendation 1.2)

Recommendation 1.2 covers a total of six bullet points. The Review also called for a new indicator in the National Performance Framework to include “achievement measures that go beyond the current narrow parameters of attainment and qualifications”. It also suggested that the new ASN learning assistants be strategically deployed with reference to research in this regard.

All of the recommendations under Recommendation 1.2 were accepted by the Scottish Government. The response said that the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group is seeking to develop a national measurement framework which “will seek to record outcomes for children and young people and the impact of different support interventions.” This group appear to have had sight of the Review’s recommendations at [its meeting in January](#). The minutes for that meeting indicate that the group members were asking questions around how to integrate with existing data sets and how new data would be used. The group “agreed that a culture shift is required”.

Members may wish to explore with the panels—

- **To what degree the ambitions of the Review are realisable under the current funding settlement?**
- **Whether the balance of funding for specialist ASN support against other funding priorities is correct? Should more ASN support be provided at the expense of other education services, if so which ones? What is the role of parents and carers in these strategic decisions?**
- **Would it be possible for ASL funding to be ringfenced and disentangled from other education budgets? How consistent are local authority finance returns in how they identify spending on ASL?**
- **How volatile is spending on ASL?**

- **What has been the effect of the additional funding ASN classroom assistants? How is this being measured and against what targets?**
- **How do local authorities measure and report on the efficacy of spending on ASL? How does this affect local strategic thinking?**
- **How can success be measured based on an individualised basis and whether this can reflect the quality of education in schools or local authorities?**

TRANSITIONS

The Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions) (Scotland) Bill ("The Bill") was introduced by Johann Lamont MSP.

Ms Lamont lodged the final proposal on 18 June 2020. The final proposal received support from a total of 53 supporters from across all parties represented in the Scottish Parliament. Ms Lamont introduced the Bill on 30 September 2020.

The Education and Skills Committee has been designated the lead Committee at Stage 1. That Committee launched its call for views on 16 November 2020 which closed on 11 January 2021. The Committee will consider its approach to the Bill, including oral evidence sessions, at a future meeting, but could explore some of the issues relating to the Bill with today's panels.

The Bill is in two substantial parts.

Part 1 would create a duty on Scottish Ministers to "prepare, publish and implement a strategy in relation to improving transitions to adulthood for children and young people with a disability". This "National Transitions Strategy" would be required to be reviewed every three years.

The would provide a duty on certain bodies (local authorities and others) to undertake actions and make arrangements to meet the aims of the strategy. (s1(d)) The Bill also makes provision for Scottish Ministers and certain public bodies to "comply with the National Transitions Strategy" in exercising their functions under the Bill.

Part 2 would create a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare and implement a transition plan for every disabled child and young person "within the local authority". The Bill provides that each child's plan would normally need to be in place at least 3 months before the individual's 16th birthday and the transition plan would run up to the individual's 26th birthday unless it is ended sooner. (s 7)

The Bill makes provision that a minister is given responsibilities for the transition to adulthood of disabled children.

Taken as a whole the Bill seeks to create greater coherence and consistency in supporting disabled children into adulthood.

Members may wish to explore—

- **Whether there is merit in having bespoke policy relating to the experiences of disabled young people?**

- **Whether transitions plans for disabled children would complement existing planning processes?**
- **Any other comments on the Bill.**

Ned Sharratt
SPICe Research
14 January 2021

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP www.parliament.scot

Remit and themes

Remit

The following is an extract of The Review, pages 7 and 8.

The remit for the Review was agreed between the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and representatives of each formed a Steering Group. The remit of the Review made clear that: the principle of presumption of mainstreaming for children and young people was not under review; and the relevant issues would be considered within existing resources.

The remit of the Review was to consider the implementation of the legislation:

- *how additional support for learning (ASL) works in practice, across early learning and childcare centres, primary, secondary and special schools (including enhanced provision, services and units);*
- *where children and young people learn within the balance of the provision set out above, recognising that not all local authority areas have all of those provisions;*
- *the quality of learning and support, including overall achievement and positive destinations achieved postschool;*
- *the different approaches to planning and assessment to meet the needs of children and young people;*
- *the roles and responsibilities of support staff, teaching staff, leadership role, education authorities and national agencies; and*
- *the areas of practice that could be further enhanced through better use of current resources to support practice, staffing or other aspects of provision.*

The Review began in September 2019 and concluded in February 2020 with the submission of this report and recommendations to Scottish Ministers and COSLA.

Themes

The main body of the Review's report was organised into nine themes:

Theme 1: Vision and visibility

Theme 2: Mainstreaming and inclusion

Theme 3: Maintaining focus, but overcoming fragmentation

Theme 4: Resources

Theme 5: Workforce development and support

Theme 6: Relationships between Schools and Parents and Carers

Theme 7: Relationships and behaviour

Theme 8: Understanding Rights

Theme 9: Assurance mechanism and inspection

Education and Skills Committee

2nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 5), Wednesday 20th January 2021

Additional Support for Learning Review

Submissions pack

A link to the Additional Support for Learning review report is noted below.

[Additional Support for Learning Review- Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential](#)

A link to the Committee's webpage on Additional Support for Learning, listing the evidence and correspondence we have received so far on the review is [here](#).

The Committee received the following new submissions:

- [Education Scotland](#)
- [EIS](#)

Education Scotland

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE FINDINGS OF THE MORGAN REVIEW

Introduction

1. Education Scotland welcomes the review of the implementation of additional support for learning and the resulting recommendations.
2. The report clearly identifies the need to improve the implementation of the legislation and guidance, acknowledging that there is no fundamental deficit in the principle and policy intention of the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) legislation. The challenge is in translating this into practice for all our children and young people who experience barriers to their learning.
3. The OECD¹ report (pg. 79) described Scottish Education as “highly inclusive”. Education Scotland are clearly cited on our role in delivering the vision and intention of the legislation, which is regarded as country leading (see European Agency for Special Needs in Inclusive Education (EASNIE) Country [reports](#)). Angela Morgan’s review provides us with further clarity about what needs to happen to make this a reality for all our children and young people.
4. We are committed to building on our work in relation to inclusion and supporting children and young people (CYP) with Additional Support Needs (ASN). We will take account of the Report and work with our partners to ensure meaningful engagement and to identify gaps in resources, professional learning, and practice at both operational and strategic levels.

Context

5. Education Scotland’s Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities (IWE) team have an important role in implementing the wider agenda of inclusion for all children and young people. The team consists of four Senior Education Officers (SEO), one Education Officer (EO), and is led by the Head of IWE.
6. Each member of the team works in a Regional Improvement Team comprising a broad range of staff with remits for Community Learning and Development, Curriculum Innovation and Practice, Attainment Advisors, National Improvement, Developing the Young Workforce, Professional Learning, and Digital e-Learning and Support.
7. The IWE SEOs are responsible for supporting schools, education authorities and the Regional Improvement Collaboratives to implement inclusive practice. They also contribute to the National agenda, influencing policy, informed by their understanding and knowledge of practice across schools and Local Authorities (LA). It is this group of professionals who will be key drivers within the organisation to implement the

¹ [Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective - OECD](#)

findings from the Review. However, in keeping with the main findings, inclusion needs to be owned by everyone, it needs to address the holistic needs of children, young people and their families within the context of lifelong learning. To do this, all staff within Education Scotland will continue to work in partnership to deliver the recommendations outlined in the report.

What are we doing to improve inclusion and ensure more effective implementation of the legislation and guidance?

8. Angela Morgan's report emphasises that the themes identified and resultant recommendations in her Report are all interconnected. They cannot be acted upon in isolation. As such, Education Scotland will continue to work across all of the themes identified in the report, and almost all of the recommendations to support schools, Local Authorities and Regional Improvement Collaboratives as stated in 9.2.2. 'The whole is greater than the sum of the parts'.
9. We believe that inclusion applies to all children and young people. To implement the legislation we need to have strong universal practice so that we can ensure consistently high quality teaching and learning and support for all. Our starting point for improvement is therefore to strengthen the universal offer for all CYP, to prevent some additional support needs from arising and remove the barriers preventing CYP from reaching their potential. This involves building on our existing professional learning resources through the lens of the Review. This will include the following resources:
 - [Embedding inclusion, equity and empowerment](#)
 - [Online Professional Learning on Inclusive Education;](#)
 - [Inclusion in Practice: The CIRCLE Framework – Secondary](#)
 - [Introduction to Inclusive Education for Support Staff](#)
 - [Professional Learning resource to support whole school inclusive practice](#)
 - [Dyslexia and Inclusive Practice](#)
 - [Compassionate and Connected Community*;](#)
 - [Multiagency collaboration to improve health and wellbeing*2](#)
 - [The Autism Toolbox\)](#)
10. We will need to place a greater emphasis on working alongside senior officers, and practitioners to improve outcomes for our most vulnerable CYP ([Gypsy Travellers](#), [Complex additional support needs](#), [Care Experienced](#), [Young Carers](#), [Children from Service Families](#)). Our recent work during the Covid 19 pandemic, has demonstrated the power of bringing professionals together to share practice and to support and challenge each other's practice. (see [Additional Support Needs Wakelet](#), [Re-connecting school communities Wakelet](#); [Supporting Young Carers in Education during COVID 19](#); [Positive Mental Wellbeing](#); [Transitions from an ASN Perspective](#))

*Professional learning for educational practitioners - requires GLOW login.

11. Getting it Right for all Learners ([Getting It Right For All Learners during Covid-19](#)) has recently been produced by Education Scotland to re-focus educators on the principles underpinning Scotland's curriculum and the ASL legislation. The approach will be a key driver in taking forward the spirit of Angela Morgan's report, and specific recommendations related to the themes 1, 2, and 3. Staff across each Regional Improvement Team worked on the tool and will be the Inclusion Champions for their Region. The approach draws on the [refreshed narrative](#) and the [resources](#) provided by Education Scotland to revisit the core principles and practice which underpin the Curriculum for Excellence, and which support inclusion. Key drivers for improvement are Leadership, Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment. In this way, ASN, is not seen as an afterthought, (as noted in the Report), but as part of good practice which takes account of every child's needs.
12. As stated in the report (Theme 1 and 8), the participation of children and young people is key to ensuring that their needs are met (Overarching Recommendation: Children and Young People Participation). We have, and continue to work with schools, and education authorities to improve the participation of all children and young people ([Learner Participation in Educational Settings](#) and [How Good is OUR School?](#)), and in particular those with ASN ([Young Ambassadors for Inclusion](#)). For example:
- Learner participation training for learners. Digital sessions have been developed as a direct response from schools to train children and young people to become confident in contributing to school improvement.
 - Young Leaders of Learning – This programme was developed to involve children and young people in school improvement, including visits to other schools. Prior to the first lock down a very successful try out in two ASN settings took place. The potential to develop the programme to be delivered remotely is being explored. Our most recent work has focused on ensuring that all educators and others are aware of and putting into practice the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (themes 1 and 8).
 - [Recognising and Realising Children's Rights](#) – professional learning resources developed to support the schools to reflect on what a rights based approach looks like and what they need to do to enable this to happen. A series of online webinars have been piloted/delivered in the Northern Alliance which included a group of ASN practitioners. These training resources will now be made available for delivery by Education Scotland through the other regions or local authorities.
13. Education Scotland staff work across many national bodies such as The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), The Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and The Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists (ASPEP). We also work with senior managers responsible for supporting CYP with ASN in local authorities. Our engagement in Implementation groups such as Scottish Advisory Group for Relationships and Behaviour in Schools

(SAGRABIS), ASL Implementation Group (ASLIG), Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), Gypsy Traveller Ministerial Working Group, Scottish Service Children's Strategy Group (SSCSG), Young Carers Working Group (YCWG), Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP), and Youth Justice Improvement Partnership (YJIB); all allow us to influence policy, and to support professional learning and good practice. For example:

- Joint work with ADES on the measurement of achievement and attainment, and possible application of improvement methodology (recommendation 1.2).
- Engagement with SAGRABIS to provide a comprehensive resource of practical approaches to developing positive relationships (themes 6, and 7 ([Supporting Relationships and Positive Behaviour](#) - draft).
- Work with Health colleagues in NHS Education for Scotland (NES) on supporting CYP who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (Themes 6 and 7).

14. An important part of our work in supporting the recommendations and to overcome fragmentation (theme 3) is our input into the development of national policy and guidance to support the ASL legislation. Working across Scottish Government policy colleagues across Directorates on The Promise, Mental Health, Support and Wellbeing, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), staged intervention and implementation of the UNCRC, and Care, Protection and Justice helps us to provide cohesion across workstreams. It also enables us to support the implementation at school and local authority levels, and make explicit the synergies across areas of legislation and practice.

15. Prior to the pandemic we were involved in re-writing the guidance for the implementation of the ASL Act. The key focus was to bring together GIRFEC, and the staged intervention guidance related to the ASL Act, thereby avoiding confusion around the Child's Plan, from Getting it right for every child, and the Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) arising from the legislation. We will resume this work as part of the recommendations and in partnership with ASLIG (p18, par 7 and 8.; theme 1).

16. Education Scotland recognise the importance of positive relationships between schools, parents and carers. We also firmly believe in the need to develop relationship approaches to manage behaviour and support our most vulnerable children and young people. To this end, we have already provided professional learning and resources in Nurture, Self-regulation, attunement strategies, and the identification and prevention of the impact from Adverse Childhood Experiences theme 7. We will build on this work to refresh our approaches, with particular attention to the findings in the Report ([Applying Nurture as a whole school approach, Nurture, ACES's and Trauma Informed Practice, Compassionate and Connected Classroom](#)) and experiences from the pandemic.

17. Parents need support to help their children reach their potential. This is particularly the case for those who have children with severe and complex learning difficulties. We have produced resources, working closely with the special sector, to help parents help their children, particularly during lockdown ([Learners with Complex Additional Support Needs: Resources and guidance for parents to support their child's learning at home](#)). We will continue to develop the co-production of resources, with specialists in the education sector. We will also try to encourage the use of specialist knowledge in special schools and Units to support the mainstream sector better.
 18. We agree that health and wellbeing is critically important in helping CYP to feel included, safe, and valued. When schools were closed during Term 4 session 2019- 20, and on children's return in August 2020, mental health and transitions were particular areas of concern for children and young people with additional support needs ([Resources for School Staff to Support Positive Mental Wellbeing of Children and Young People](#)). Our work during this time will be further developed to ensure greater consistency across schools. Inspection evidence will help us to identify where this is most needed. This will help us to intervene early and prevent further harm.
 19. Education Scotland staff have continued to work alongside Regional Improvement Collaboratives, local authorities, and schools to support recovery through bespoke support. Regional Improvement plans have been amended to take account of the current situation and local authorities have reported a focus on staff and learner wellbeing as being a key priority at this time. The examples below, demonstrate how practitioners are using the national materials and thinking to inform the delivery and dissemination of positive mental health and wellbeing approaches in each region. We will continue to build on this work.
- **South East Improvement Collaborative**

The [Inclusion and Equity Professional Learning Programme](#) is offered through partnership between Education Scotland's South East Regional Improvement Team and the South East Improvement Collaborative and will be available from November 2020 – March 2021.
 - **Tayside Regional Collaborative**

Tayside Regional Collaborative has developed an [Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Children and Young People](#).
 - **The West Partnership**

The West Partnership recovery plan includes a collaborative

learning network for early years and primary colleagues with a focus on nurturing and supporting pupil wellbeing. The aim of the network is to learn about the challenges facing practitioners and to share how these are overcome.

20. HM Inspectors are also well sighted on the implications of the Report on their work. Of note is the following:

- HM Inspectors are currently undertaking a national overview of remote learning across Scotland. The purpose of the national overview is to learn what is working well, identify challenges or issues facing schools and local authorities. This will include what is working well and challenges in supporting children and young people with additional support needs.
- HM Inspectors have studied the key findings and recommendations of the Review. An initial audit of current scrutiny and inspection practice has taken place. Consideration is being given as to how current approaches can be strengthened in line with the findings of the Review. This will form a key component of future scrutiny and inspection practice. HM Inspectors will undertake further career-long professional learning to support this process.
- Future scrutiny and inspection activity will continue to have thematic inspections on specific areas of practice. Future thematic inspection and review will include a specific focus on aspects of additional support for learning. The findings of this scrutiny activity will provide evidence of progress in line with the recommendations of the Review. It will also support improvement in schools and local authorities.

Conclusion

21. Education Scotland recognise that we have a key role in delivering the vision and intention of the ASL legislation and welcome the findings of the Morgan Review. We are committed to building on our work in relation to inclusion and supporting children and young people (CYP) with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in partnership with Scottish Government and others and ensuring that we do all we can to support children and young people to reach their potential.

EIS

EIS Submission to the Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament in relation to the Additional Support for Learning Review

The EIS, Scotland's largest education trade union, representing teachers across all sectors and at all career stages, welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament in relation to the Additional Support for Learning ('ASL') Review.

Background

It was with some reluctance that the EIS supported the call for an independent review of ASL implementation in January 2019 - reluctance because we were of the view that a wealth of evidence already existed about the need for greater resourcing to deliver the ambitions of legislation in this area, including the presumption to mainstream the education of children with additional support needs. We were concerned that a review at that time would simply stall government action to address the issues that the EIS and others have been raising for some time. Disappointingly, having supported the call and engaged strongly in the process, our view is that the Recommendations fall short of identifying the resourcing barriers which are preventing an extensive array of educational policy, underpinned by comprehensive legislation, from being effectively implemented in practice.

Under-Investment and Resource Issues

The Recommendations are prefaced by a statement suggesting that what is needed is a 'feedback loop' that enables those with responsibility for implementation of the ASL legislations to receive feedback from the children and parents as a means of enhancing support to children with additional needs and thereby improving their outcomes.

It is strange that there is no reference in this preface to the fundamental relationship of resourcing to children's experiences of education and, of course, their outcomes, despite the fact that the EIS provided significant evidence to the Review around under-funding of ASL and lack of resources amidst a backdrop of rising levels of need.

The EIS has long cited the well-evidenced gap between theories of inclusion, the law and policy on children's rights, and the daily practice in our schools. This gap stems from the significant under resourcing of provision to allow well-intentioned policies to be implemented effectively in practice. Teachers across the country have raised serious concerns about the stretched nature of support for additional learning needs, both in terms of the ASN sector and for pupils with additional needs in mainstream settings. There are not enough staff in the Scottish education system to support these needs, and those who are there have too little time; often too many different additional support needs to meet within large classes; too little dedicated time for professional learning in this area; and too few resources to meet the array of needs before them.

Rather than address these issues directly, the Review recommends that Audit Scotland (accountants and statisticians, not educationalists) should consider this crucial element of ASL implementation. The Institute believes that this is an opportunity missed to effect real and meaningful change. With more than 1 in 4 pupils

identified as having additional needs, (those needs now are likely to have been compounded by the impact of COVID-19) we believe that the Review ought to have focused directly on the issues of underfunding and the key issue of the need for more support staff, more specialist teachers and greater dedicated resources.

Undervaluing

Worryingly, the Recommendations also appear to take conflicting views on the value of Pupil Support Assistants ('PSAs'), on the one hand implying that such staff should be better remunerated and provided with professional learning, and on the other implying that spending on PSAs does not provide best value for money.

In 2019, the EIS, in the publication, 'Additional Support for Learning in Scottish School Education: Exploring the Gap between Promise and Practice.' (embed link), highlighted that further attention should be given to the undervaluing of the roles of both ASL/ASN Teachers and ASL/ASN Assistants. It was highlighted at that time that this was in part linked to societal undervaluing of work which is predominantly carried out by women, and which is often (wrongly) perceived as something that 'anyone could do', with the skills involved not being fully understood or respected. It is disappointing, therefore, to see this approach apparently perpetuated in part in these Recommendations.

Failure to Acknowledge Challenges and Existing Good Practice

The Recommendations repeatedly highlight that there are issues with implementation, a principle which is accepted by all. However, rather than identify resource constraints as being key to this, the Report implies that attitudes and lack of understanding and/or will on the part of schools and teachers is the problem.

This approach takes little cognisance of the falling number of staff working in ASL. Teacher Census data demonstrates that the general trend over recent years has been a decline in the numbers of staff with specialist roles, e.g. Behaviour Support, ESL (English as a second language) or Learning Support. ASN teacher numbers have fallen by a staggering 19.5% in the last ten years. Data provided by the Scottish Government has shown that across Scotland, in 2010, there were 3,524¹ Full Time Equivalent Additional Support Needs (ASN) Teachers; by 2019 that figure was 2,836² – a decrease of 688 FTE ASN teachers.

This decline must be regarded in the context of increasing need. Statistics show the year on year increase in the number of children with additional support needs in primary and secondary schools in Scotland. In 2020, 226,838 children are recorded as having additional support needs; nearly a third of the pupils in our schools.³ And we know that the impact of the pandemic will only increase these numbers and the level of need in the years to come.

Despite these challenges, classroom teachers across Scotland and others who work with them, strive every day to ensure that children and young people enjoy and achieve at school, using a wide range of inclusive approaches.

The Recommendations fail to recognise the existing good practice ongoing in the Education system in relation to ASN provision, for example in taking an assets-based approach to Child Support Plans and joint working between schools, parents

¹ [Motions, Questions and Answers Search - Parliamentary Business : Scottish Parliament](#)

² [Motions, Questions and Answers Search - Parliamentary Business : Scottish Parliament](#)

³ [Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

and other core agencies in the child planning process, instead implying a deficit model of provision across the board.

In order to deliver an education to all children that is inclusive and addresses learners' individual needs, the Institute had hoped that the Review would have recognised that schools must be sufficiently staffed and resourced in order to ensure that each child's needs are known to teachers. Each member of staff must have access to and protected time for professional learning, be afforded the time to plan how to meet the diverse needs of pupils and must be able to access the expertise of specialist colleagues when needed. Regard must also be taken of the fact that special schools and special units have a role to play in meeting the needs of pupils, where appropriate, and also require investment.

Wider Achievement

On a positive note, the Review Report recommends that the measurement frameworks which capture achievement, such as the National Improvement Framework ('NIF'), need to be more inclusive of children with additional support needs, capturing their progress which will often not be wither in full or in part, attainment-based.

The EIS welcomes this recommendation and has long advocated that evaluation of young people's progress should be much more inclusive in order to capture what progress in learning and achievement looks like for *all* children, including those with additional support needs.

Status of ASN Teaching

The EIS agrees the need for parity of career progression for teachers with ASN specialism though does not support the recommendation that there should be a first teaching qualification in ASN. We believe that this would too quickly narrows the career opportunities for student teachers who, on entry to ITE have, understandably, quite limited knowledge of teaching as a career and of additional support needs as a specialist field. Furthermore, we are of the view that specialism in ASN should stem from a firm foundation of knowledge, skills and experience in teaching more generally, acquired through completion of a teaching qualification and subsequent school experience. That said, we are of the view that greater focus on ASN within ITE is required for all student teachers. In terms of career pathways and progression, the EIS called for ASN specialism to be considered within the Career Pathways Review, the findings of which are now being deliberated by the SNCT. We see ASN teaching as an essential and valuable specialism which should be recognised within Scotland's career pathways for teachers.

Conclusion

The EIS had hoped that the ASL Review would provide the opportunity, which it has long sought, for all key actors in the Scottish education system to come together to develop a collective response to the barriers to effective implementation of the ambitious legislation and policy in ASL which we have in Scotland.

We hoped that the issues highlighted in '[Additional Support for Learning in Scottish School Education: Exploring the Gap between Promise and Practice](#)' could be addressed and measures put in place to stop the detrimental impact which the climate of under-investment in ASL is having on the educational experience for many

pupils; the wellbeing of children and young people; and the wellbeing of the teaching workforce.

Regrettably, this has been an opportunity missed and we would urge the Committee to reflect on the fact that it is not the refined guidance and focus contained in the Recommendations of the Report which schools require to meet the need of pupils; it is additional investment.

As we highlighted back in 2019, “Inclusion on the cheap” is not acceptable. Scotland’s children and young people, and their teachers, deserve better.’