Introduction

Local authorities and schools educate children with additional support needs (ASN) - including disabled children - in mainstream schools. Funding is available within general local government revenue for improvements to buildings, equipment and staffing to facilitate this. Almost 99% of all children in Scotland are educated in mainstream schools.

Some local authorities concentrate resources and specialist support in specific mainstream schools to help, for example, visually impaired or hearing impaired pupils from a broad geographical area cope successfully in normal classes. Many pupils who require additional support receive it from support for learning staff in their own school or from visiting staff from the authority’s central support for learning service.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 and 2009 require local authorities to prepare a co-ordinated support plan for each child and young person with ASN arising from complex or multiple factors. This applies when the child requires support from the local authority and from at least one other agency (such as a health board, social work department or further or higher education institution).

The key function of this strategic planning document is precisely to ensure effective co-ordination of support to enable the child or young person achieve educational objectives.

Definition of the Target Group(s)

Pupils recognised as having additional support needs constitute a broad group. ASN may arise from:

- The learning environment
- Family circumstances
- Speaking a language at home other than English
- Disability or health needs
- Social and emotional factors

The group also includes able pupils who require additional support to reach their full potential. A child or young person may have additional support needs for a short or a long period of time.

Local authorities have a duty to identify the additional support needs of each child or young person. They are also required to keep under review the additional needs identified and the adequacy of the support provided to meet them. They have to publish information about their arrangements for doing so.

Local authorities and schools identify most children and young people with ASN through their
arrangements for assessing learning and for monitoring individual educational progress. Where more specific assessment is required, this could include discussion with the parents and professionals involved and should build on other information available.

Such specific assessment procedures would normally identify need for and recommend effective multi-agency consultation and/or collaborative working. Typically the process would follow this path, though variations of it occur:

1. The teacher identifies a child who needs a greater level of attention or planning than is generally required

2. The teacher consults with and seeks help from other school support, such as management and support for learning staff

3. If action at this stage does not resolve the issue, the school, in consultation with parents, seeks information and advice from local authority services, such as a visiting teacher or educational psychologist

4. The teacher and the school use this information and advice in their practice with the child in school

5. If further action is needed, support from appropriate agencies outwith education may be required

In addition, the Acts give parents the right to request that their child be assessed for ASN and for a co-ordinated support plan. They can also ask for one or more specific types of assessment to be carried out i.e. educational, medical or psychological. The statutory code of practice relating to the 2004 Act - Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice [1] - and Circular 1/2009 [2] relating to the 2009 Act, both provide guidance for local authorities on their functions under the two Acts.

**Specific Support Measures**

The general aim is to identify the additional support needed by individual pupils to participate fully in education and to provide this support in a context of equality of opportunity for all pupils.

Pupils and students in mainstream education with additional support needs follow the normal pattern of primary and secondary education and experience the same range of learning and teaching methods as other pupils. The learning support teacher may be employed in the school or may work in a central local authority service supporting several schools. The learning support teacher has the key role in helping pupils with learning difficulties or ASN in mainstream schools by:

- Offering consultancy to the management team in the school or to class teachers on policies and practices related to ASN
- Working in mainstream classes alongside class or subject teachers to give support to all pupils, including those identified as having ASN
- Providing individual or small group tutorial support to pupils with ASN
- Offering advice to colleagues on the curricular programmes being provided
Providing, at the request of the head teacher, staff development and in-service training for colleagues

In many cases pupils with ASN will have Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs), which are used as a basis for planning - setting targets and ensuring that pupils make progress. In some cases an IEP may specify curricular modifications for a particular pupil. All teachers of a pupil with an IEP are expected to be aware of it and to take account of it. In all cases the methods used relate to the nature of the individual pupil’s needs.

Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Acts 2004 and 2009, local authorities have specific duties in relation to the identification of, and provision for, the 'complex' or 'multiple' needs which some pupils have. A key role is the provision of a co-ordinated support plan for the work of the local authority’s own services and of other agencies to make planning for the most vulnerable children and young people as effective as possible. Such agencies are health, social work, Careers Scotland/Skills Development Scotland and further and higher education institutions.

Depending on the needs of the pupils, many professions may be involved in their care and education. Psychologists, doctors, nurses, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers all have an important part to play in the care and education of some children. The developments to improve and co-ordinate effectively care of vulnerable children referred to under Rights of the Child and Child Protection are relevant.

The role of learning support assistants and auxiliaries is particularly important, especially when children require physical care or constant attention or help when travelling. In some cases, children’s needs may require other planning mechanisms, too, for example, an IEP or care plan. Multi-agency planning makes it possible to share information across a number of plans and to co-ordinate the support provided by agencies to achieve specific educational objectives.

**Legislative references**


---

**Source URL:**
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/special-education-needs-provision-within-mainstream-ed
Links