Submission from:

Gillian Horribine (Educational Psychologist, Perth and Kinross Council)

Linda Corlett (Lecturer for the MSc Educational Psychology, University of Dundee)

Matthew Musset (Depute Principal Educational Psychologist, Aberdeen City Educational Psychology Service).

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Scottish Parliament’s Education and Culture Committee: Call for written submissions on the Scottish Government's Education (Scotland) Bill.

Please find below, a response from three individual Educational Psychologists in relation to the above. Comments from each psychologist are embedded in the questions you have raised. We did not have much time to respond so have focussed on key areas.

Should further opportunity to respond to the Bill arise, we would welcome it and believe we could offer a fuller, more detailed contribution. In addition, I believe the Scottish Division of Educational Psychologists, as a branch of the British Psychological Society, would also welcome the chance to contribute in the future (please note, the response below is not an SDEP response, but a collated one from 3 Educational Psychologists).

With kind regards,

Gillian Horribine (Educational Psychologist, Perth and Kinross Council)

Linda Corlett (Lecturer for the MSc Educational Psychology, University of Dundee)

Matthew Musset (Depute Principal Educational Psychologist, Aberdeen City Educational Psychology Service).
**Attainment**

1. What improvements in attainment, in achievement and in reducing inequalities of outcome do you consider the Bill in itself could deliver? What would be a desirable level of improvement?

   Gillian Horribine:
   
   Equipped as equally as peers with the skills required to contribute to the global job market.

4. What specific actions will education authorities be able to take to reduce inequalities of outcome that they are currently unable to take?

   Gillian Horribine:
   
   Hopefully more of the good work they are doing, with clearer focus on recommendations outlined in the document ‘Closing the Attainment Gap in Scottish Education’.

7. Should the Bill contain sanctions in the event that the Scottish Government or local authorities fail to achieve the policy intention of reducing inequalities of outcome? If so, what sanctions would you suggest are appropriate?

   Gillian Horribine:
   
   We would need to be confident that measurement of inequalities of outcome are valid and measure what is needed (e.g. development of pupil skills).

8. Do you have any views on the consultation and reporting requirements set out in this part of the Bill?

   Gillian Horribine:
   
   I believe that the nature of reporting will be important – How will the reports be analysed/used? What will the feedback mechanism be? What will they be asked to report on specifically? Who will process them?

   Matthew Musset:
   
   Generally agree with this promoting equity section, with 2 yearly reporting expectations, which would reinforce other relevant legislation. I wonder if there should be greater emphasis put on targeting LAC here.

9. The Bill focuses on reducing inequalities of outcome resulting from pupils’ socio-economic disadvantage. Should all examples of inequality of outcome be addressed?

   Linda Corlett:
   
   More time to respond to this call for Evidence may have allowed time to gather and cite evidence in relation to whether the Bill could go further than focusing on ‘inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage’ to include other forms of inequality such as the effects of ethnic minority and other diversity issues. For instance trainee EP research thesis has outlined an authority led initiative to explore the relationship between ethnic background and attainment.
Additional Support for Learning

16. What will be the outcomes of extending rights under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 to children aged 12 and over with capacity? Please give practical examples.

Linda Corlett:

It may not include for example a pupil between 12-16 who although not regarded as having ASN in relation to learning but may (perhaps due to ASD but which has not been deemed to be a developmental disorder) not have the social communication ability and understanding to exercise those new rights (I have been working with a 15 year old with just such issues recently). EPs may be well placed to contribute to the deeper understanding of both ASL and ASN as concepts.

In relation to (3) (“But a child or young person is not to be treated as lacking capacity by reason only of a lack or deficiency in a faculty of communication if that lack or deficiency can be made good by human, electronic or mechanical aid (whether of an interpretive nature or otherwise”), the section would not capture all such children since some may not be identified as having ASN e.g. child of 12-15 with a diagnosis of ASD. However, could the last section be used in a broader sense e.g. in support of such an ASD child through using human aid to support interpretation in communication? Or would the legislation be too narrow in definition?

Matthew Musset:

The key change is in relation to greater involvement of CYP from 12 years old, assessed by LA to have capacity and to be in their best interests. CYP from 12 years could then ask for ASN assessments and CSPs, and be more active in disputes. This is in keeping with other legislation in relation to rights and voice of CYP. It will be difficult to predict the projected impact of this on services and legal processes.

17. Do you agree with the proposal that not all of the rights in the ASL legislation should be extended to children (see paragraphs 49 and 50 of the policy memorandum)?

Linda Corlett:

Points 49 & 50 of the Policy Memorandum do say that ‘Capacity will be determined by the responsible education authority…’ and that ‘Guidance to education authorities on determining capacity and best interests will be produced’. Consideration may need to be given to the implications for services and assessment here.

18. What are your views on the statutory children’s support service proposed by the Scottish Government?

Linda Corlett:

A comprehensive support system would be required but it is to be independent and also will seek children’s views (p12 sections 54, 55 and 56 of Policy Memorandum). EPs are tasked with seeking and representing children’s views within the GIRFEC framework as is.
Gillian Horribine:
Consideration would need to be given to ensure views are meaningfully gathered, communicated, regularly reviewed and included in planning.

**Chief Education Officer**
Matthew Musset:
It is not clear whether the CEO role would be a post, or a role assigned to a senior member of LA staff.

**Registering teaching staff**
21. *How would grant-aided schools, independent schools and their pupils benefit from their teaching staff being registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland? What different or new skills would such teaching staff acquire as a result of registration? Is it likely that attainment would improve in the schools in question?*

Gillian Horribine:
It is unknown whether attainment would improve but it might work somewhat towards aligning outcomes for C/YP.

**Learning and childcare**
Matthew Musset:
Extending EL+C, under kinship arrangements for 2 year olds, would be a sensible idea.