

Aberdeenshire Council

Can Aberdeenshire provide details on what parts of Additional Support for Learning provision are working well and what are not, and any reasons they can provide which might help to explain why aspects are working well or not.

Through our ongoing self-evaluation and as part of Aberdeenshire's ASN review the data collated following extensive stakeholder engagement activities indicated an overall good level of inclusive practice in Aberdeenshire schools. A great deal of work has been done to formalise procedures, policies and guidance to assist Education staff when supporting pupils with ASN. Aberdeenshire has committed staff who offer their expertise to support pupils to have their needs met.

Aberdeenshire has a range of supports that Education staff can access when supporting a pupil with ASN. These include:

- The Educational Psychology Service
- Other peripatetic education services such as; ASPECTS (Aberdeenshire specialist technology service), EAL Service, Sensory Support Service, School Counselling Service, ALEC (Aberdeenshire Life Education Centres)
- Multi-agency partners

The stakeholder feedback from the recent ASN Review identified the following areas for development to:

1. Build capacity within Aberdeenshire schools to ensure that pupils with additional support needs are present, participating, supported and achieving.
2. Ensure that the existing specialist provisions are targeted at those pupils with greatest level of need.

These areas for development are being addressed through:

1a Multi-agency partnership working to develop a suite of resources to support whole school inclusive approaches in primary and secondary schools. These include Autism, Dyslexia, Inclusive Communication, Restorative Approaches, Solution Focussed Approaches, Trauma Informed

Practice and Multi-Lingual Schools. These resources include professional learning frameworks and self-evaluation tools.

1b The development of the ASN Professional Learning Framework is being completed to inform the specific workforces within Education of the required training for their role.

1c Interventions have been developed to further meet the needs of pupils with ASN including the implementation of the CIRCLE resource in all schools in 2024-2025, the Aberdeenshire Framework for Pupils with Significant and Complex Needs and the development of a Play Pedagogy Hub to develop play-based opportunities within early years and beyond.

2 Practice guidance for primary and secondary specialist provisions and local forums is being updated to ensure the model is consistent within Aberdeenshire and that the application process for specialist provisions is equitable and transparent.

What are the barriers to supporting this provision?

any examples of good practice in this area;

Aberdeenshire has repurposed existing budgets to support improvements in ASN provision. However, the extreme financial pressures faced by local authorities means that simply retaining existing ASN supports and services will be an ongoing challenge. The numbers of children and young people presenting with complex additional support needs are greater than ever before, and parental expectation of what local authorities should put in place to meet their children's additional support needs are at an all-time high. Scottish Government investment has focused on services to advise parents (e.g. Enquire) and support parents to challenge local authorities. Whilst it is, of course, appropriate that parents are given appropriate routes to do so, there would perhaps be less requirement for an adversarial approach (i.e. ASN Tribunal references) if there was a greater focus on financially supporting education authorities to meet children's additional support needs in the first place.

Aberdeenshire has invested heavily in developing professional learning opportunities for the education workforce to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to meet the additional support needs of pupils. However, financial constraints make it very difficult to release non-teaching staff from schools to engage with the opportunities on offer.

How does the authority support good relationships with parents and young people, especially where there are disagreements around the provision of additional support for learning and reach collaborative agreement?

Through our "Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy" we support good relationships with parents and carers, ensuring they are welcomed to be actively and meaningfully engaged in their child's learning and life at school. This strategy details opportunities for parents, carers and schools to work in partnership through strong, mutually respectful relationships.

This coupled with our GIRFEC processes including Person Centred Planning processes providing all stakeholders the opportunity to be fully involved and have their views heard and taken account of, when identifying and planning for the meeting of children and young people's needs, results in a collaborative agreement being reached wherever possible.

Should relationships deteriorate mediation can be employed.

How many placing requests have been made over the last 5 years by parents or carers wishing that their children be educated in a specialist Additional Support Needs (ASN) unit or school. And how many placing requests have been made by parents or carers wishing their children to be educated in a

mainstream setting as opposed to a specialist ASN setting. The Committee would be grateful for the total numbers, along with the numbers of requests refused and agreed.

Parents/ Carers submitting Placing Requests for their child to be educated in an ASN specialist provision = 50 parental placing requests for specialist provision have been received since January 2019. 32 of these requests were refused.

Placing Requests for children to be educated in mainstream as opposed to specialist mainstream setting = 0 (as in accordance with legislation this would be their entitlement to attend their local school). A placing request is not required if a parent wishes their child to attend their local mainstream school.

How does the authority ensure that parents and young people are aware of the rights to various remedies under the 2004 Act?

All Aberdeenshire ASN related Policies and Guidance align with the 2004 Act and are available for public access on our ASN, Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing website. This includes guidance on Coordinated Support Plans where information on independent mediation services and Tribunal information is provided to Parents who are dissatisfied with Aberdeenshire Council's response to the Coordinated Support Plan process.

Identification and planning for the meeting of children and young people's needs through our GIRFEC processes ensure that appropriate support is planned for and provided as detailed within the 2004 Act e.g. the right to a 'Supporter' or 'Advocacy Worker'.

Immediately upon receiving a placing request for a specialist provision, parents are signposted to the "Let's Talk ASN" advocacy service and advised that they may appeal a placing request refusal via the First Tier Tribunal for Scotland.

The Committee is aware that there can be variations in approaches to identification of ASN across local authorities and between primary and secondary schools. The Committee would be grateful if you could briefly set out how you ensure that children's additional support needs are identified and Seemis records are updated to ensure accuracy of the data.

The GIRFEC approach supports a staged approach to the early identification and assessment of wellbeing needs, meeting these through a range of support which is proportionate and help to achieve improved outcomes for children, young people and families. This may be through Single Agency (Education) or Multi Agency assessment processes.

In Aberdeenshire, children's additional support needs are identified using the Staged Intervention Model. An assessment is made regarding the Support Level required by the child or young person with a support need (including nursery children in their pre-school year/stage N5).

Each year in March, schools are required to undertake a pupil needs analysis (PNA) to assess and record the Support Level for all children and young people who

require additional Targeted support (Targeted Support Level 1 to Intensive Support Level 3) arising from their additional support needs (ASN).

This exercise is carried out in line with Aberdeenshire's staged intervention model of support.

Within secondary schools, the principal teacher Additional Support for Learning (ASL) is involved in this process, and within primary schools the ASL teacher is involved along with the member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with responsibility for pupil support within the school. Moderation support is provided by Quality Improvement Officers and Educational Psychologists.

The Support Level is entered in the Staged Intervention Level field in the Personal tab within the Pupil Record in SEEMiS Click+Go.

Schools are required to update and maintain pupil records on Click+Go with any changes to ASN throughout school session.

How does the authority ensure staff have adequate training on Additional Support for Learning provision?

As part of the appraisal processes- Professional Review and Development (PRD) for Teachers and Personal Performance Plan (PPP) for education support staff, they would be signposted to appropriate and relevant training for their remit within school.

Under development are ASN Professional Learning Frameworks which sets out core training recommendations for a range of disciplines within the education workforce.

If parents/carers have a concern about the ASN provision in a mainstream school, what process can they follow to try and get it resolved?

Parents/carers are always encouraged to communicate directly with the school either in person or by phone call, email or letter. Each school has a Parent Council who could also support a parent/carer who had a concern but again the aim would be to promote open dialogue with school staff on the concern.

All Aberdeenshire staff are encouraged to have open and honest communication with parents/carers with the intention that any concerns are known and addressed as soon as possible.

If this is not successful a parent/carer can contact the school's Quality Improvement Officer, or the Principal Educational Psychologist / Service Manager (Inclusion, Equity & Wellbeing), whose

contact details can be found via Enquire. A complaint can also be submitted via the Council's Feedback Team, details of which are published on the Council website.

Mediation can be offered.

If they remain dissatisfied, they have the right to ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to consider their complaint.

Where the provision of ASN is not working in specific cases in schools, what can teachers do about that? Is there support that can be accessed? What happens if the matter cannot be resolved?

Where a teacher is looking to develop their understanding and practice to further support the meeting of a child or young person's needs, there are a range of supports they can access:

Consultation with the school's Middle and Senior Leader/s

Consultation with school/cluster's Additional Support for Learning staff

Consultation with Enhanced Provision or Complex Needs Provision schools

Access Aberdeenshire's ASN Policies and Guidance (Aberdeenshire ASN IEW Website)

Access the Aberdeenshire Framework for Pupils with Significant and Complex Needs

Consultation with the Educational Psychology Service

Consultation with other peripatetic education services such as; ASPECTS (Aberdeenshire specialist technology service), EAL Service, Sensory Support Service, School Counselling Service, ALEC (Aberdeenshire Life Education Centres)

Consultation with multi-agency partners

Currently under development within Aberdeenshire to further support school based staff:

Implementation of the CIRCLE Resource – by the end of academic session 2024-2025, all schools across Aberdeenshire will have implemented the CIRCLE Resource

Play Pedagogy Hub to support the implementation of Play-Based Learning within the early Primary years

ASN Professional Learning Frameworks for a range of disciplines within the education workforce

Framework of Interventions-research based interventions housed within a Sharepoint site and accessible to all education staff

Where it is felt that the matter has not been resolved then school senior leaders can contact their school Quality Improvement Officer for further advice who may in turn contact the Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing Team.