

# East Renfrewshire Council

## 1. **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.**

In East Renfrewshire, inclusion of children and young people with additional support needs is at the heart of our GIRFEC approach. In 2021/22 we undertook a review of ASL across East Renfrewshire and as part of this we gathered views of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers and staff. From the detailed review we have developed a 3 year actions plan of which we are currently in year 2. This action plan is shaping our work related to enhancing the experiences and outcomes of children with additional support needs.

We have strong relationships with our parents and carers and work in partnership to support children and young people.

The majority of children and young people with an additional support need are supported well within our mainstream settings through a differentiated curriculum which is designed to meet their needs.

We are seeing increasing numbers of children with an additional support need struggle to attend school and attendance for neurodiverse children and young people is not as strong as for others.

We have found the tribunal process at times to be challenging as there is a need to take account of local authority context, ie an understanding of pressures that local authorities face when making decision over placements that are in finite supply.

For staff who work with children with complex additional support needs and children with social, emotional and behavioural needs, staff resilience and wellbeing can be a challenge and supporting staff wellbeing is key.

## 2. **What are the barriers to supporting this provision?**

### **(any examples of good practice in this area)**

In East Renfrewshire our partnership working is a key strength and we have utilised close partnerships with colleagues in HSCP, wider council and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector to improve outcomes for children with additional support needs. An example of this is our Healthier Minds, multi-agency approach to supporting the mental health of our children and young people.

There are ongoing difficulties in accessing support from allied services such as CAMHS which is particularly challenging during a time of increasing need - we have found that services that could / should be supporting are under staffing, budgetary or capacity pressures.

With regards to the implementation of our own ASL review action plan, there are many aspects of which are intrinsically linked to the National ASL Action Plan and as such require national developments to be complete before we are able to fully take forward.

There is an increasing number of children with increasingly complex additional support needs and resources to provide specialist support are challenging. This is alongside an increasing number of parents/carers who wish specialist support for their children. Key to this is upskilling staff in order that needs are met within mainstream provisions wherever possible.

The financial challenges local authorities are facing have been well documented and in East Renfrewshire this has resulted in some difficult savings having to be proposed at a time where there is increased demand for services related to ASN.

**3. 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?**

In ERC we endeavor to work in partnership with families to ensure that we are providing the right support universally to all learners and in a targeted way to those children and young people who require additional support. Using our staged approach, we assess need and focus on planning appropriate and timely support. We seek the views of all stakeholders and actively encourage and involve them in planning, including collaborating with our colleagues from other agencies and services. Communication is key. Messages around positive and supportive engagement with parents/carers are delivered via professional learning and re-enforced at staff meetings across the authority. Our work with Parent Council chairs ensures that we share our values and commitment to working in genuine partnership with parents/carers.

Despite the best efforts of all to agree a way forward, there are occasions when agreement cannot be reached. When this situation arises, we are open to mediation and use our contract with 'Resolve Mediation' to support further dialogue in terms of seeking a solution which all parties are happy to agree to. Our experience of utilising this service has helped to maintain good working relationships with parents/carers.

Where parents/carers are dissatisfied with the service Education provides, we share the complaints process which allows for parents to make a formal complaint if they so choose. Whilst this option is always open to any parent/carer, we would try to maintain good relationships throughout all complaints procedures and avoid any adversarial situations arising.

**4. 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.**

Placing Requests to ERC specialist provision -

Accepted 0    Refused 20

Placing Requests to specialist provision out with ERC –

Accepted 2    Refused 2 \*\* Subsequently Granted at Tribunal

Placing Requests to ERC mainstream provision from specialist provision

Accepted 0    Refused 0

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

Parents and young people are signposted to Enquire for information about their rights under the 2004 Act. Information about mediation, dispute resolution and ASN tribunals are all easily accessible via Enquire. Our Quality Improvement Manager and Principal Educational Psychologist are points of contact listed within the Enquire website. School staff usually deal with requests about specific remedies under the 2004 Act by directing parents to the Quality Improvement Manager or by parents contacting her directly. All of our schools signpost Enquire on their websites and in their school handbooks. Parents and young people can also be signposted to local advocacy services such as Partners in Advocacy.

As mentioned, we hold regular ASN co-ordinator meetings and items such as this are discussed in order to support schools making this information available to schools.

**6. 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.**

*How we ensure that children's additional support needs are identified:*

In line with our national Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) policy and guidance, we have a process in place to identify children and young people who require support across all of our ELCs and schools. In all cases, our position is that assessment and intervention should be the least intrusive and most effective available that leads to the best possible wellbeing outcome. Any additional help and support provided should be appropriate, proportionate and timely, and be coordinated in such a way as to make the best use of each practitioner's skills, abilities and responsibilities. We also ask staff to carefully consider equity and equality in their approach to matters of reasonable adjustment where this applies to the provision of support and intervention for children and young people, and any specific requests from parents.

Our process begins with a wellbeing concern being raised in the event that a child is not reaching their potential or is experiencing a barrier related to wellbeing indicators and a wellbeing assessment is implemented in order to determine whether the child or young person requires any form of support or further action. Children and young people whose needs can be met at the universal stage do not require to have an individualised plan. In the case of an identified additional support need, the assessment of a wellbeing concern will lead to one of three outcomes: no further action required, an Additional Support Needs (ASN) profile being created or a Child's Wellbeing Plan (CWP) being created.

Where the support for a child or young person comes from two or more agencies and is likely to extend for a prolonged period, we initiate and follow the national guidance and legal process for consideration of a Coordinated Support Plan.

*How we ensure that Seemis records are updated accurately:*

The department has a clear commitment to recording and analysing data in order to plan effectively for improvement. Through our HT meetings, DHT Pupil Support Forums and ASN Coordinators Forum we routinely make our school aware of their responsibilities to update SEEMIS records. Therefore, we are confident that our SEEMIS data is accurate and live. Moderation activity and professional learning takes place within these contexts too, in order to strive for a consistency of approach. School leaders acknowledge their responsibilities to make sure data is accurate in order to allow us to track and monitor progress across key equity groups so that we can direct our resources appropriately and identify areas for improvement in support for ASN populations across all of our sectors.

Effective data gathering has been central to our ASL Review, and the development of important local services to meet additional support needs. These include our Healthier Minds, Learn Well and Early Years Outreach Services, as well as outreach and placement support services for children with social communication needs and those with social, emotional, and behavioral needs who benefit from enhanced nurture and trauma informed practice.

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

The authority continues to provide a comprehensive CLPL framework on all aspects of additional support for learning. This aims to build capacity amongst educational staff so that they are better equipped to meet the needs of children and young people with a range of additional support needs. The content is informed by an ongoing needs analysis, which includes dialogue and discussion at the following forums: the Literacy Assessment and Intervention Forum, the Autism and Neurodiversity Forum, the regular ASN Coordinators meeting, the Early Years subgroup and ASN practitioner network, and the CLPL workstream which was established following the local ASL review. These forums are facilitated by and include participation from a range of school and education staff, including the Quality Improvement team and Educational Psychology Service.

The CLPL framework includes an annual CLPL programme which is offered by the Educational Psychology Service, and the Healthier Minds Service and which also contains relevant training programmes from Education Scotland. The training sessions, programmes, and resources offered are underpinned by a relationship-based approach and focus on developing attachment-based and trauma-informed approaches; supporting neurodiversity populations (e.g. children and young people with autism, and with learning difficulties), and promoting attendance, engagement

and achievement. The CLPL are evaluated, and the outcomes are then used to inform further training and the application of new skills to practice.

**8. 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?**

Staged assessment and intervention is embedded within our GIRFEC approach. We work with parents from an early stage to ensure needs are met in a proportionate and timely way by looking at what schools can provide from a universal, targeted and intensive support perspective. We involve parents collaboratively in our assessment and planning process where children and young people need a single agency assessment that results in a Child's Wellbeing Plan.

Where parents have a concern about the ASN provision in a mainstream school, they are able to raise these concerns with the leadership team within the school. Where this has not resolved the concerns, they would then link with the Quality Improvement Manager and Head of Service (Equality and Equity) to work towards a resolution.

As previously mentioned, in East Renfrewshire we have a close working relationship with Resolve and where we are not able to allay parent/carer concerns we engage with Resolve to provide mediation.

**9. 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?**

Every school has an ASN co-ordinator who is supported by regular network meetings. Each school also has a link Education Psychologist provides advice, guidance, training and direct support related to meeting children and young people's needs. Both of these supports allow an opportunity for the Education Department to gather feedback and deliver professional learning based on needs and trends.

Where teachers believe that the provision of ASN is not working within their class, they would discuss this with their school leadership team. Support would be put in place based on needs, this could include resource such as targeted pupils support assistant hours, specific CLPL or team teaching to model practice. Following this direct support, should it be agreed that a child requires further support, a referral can be made to the ERC Education Resource Group (ERG) where further resource allocation will be considered. In line with our staged approach to assessment and intervention, the further additional supports that the department can consider if it is felt that the school require help to meet the needs of an individual include;

- Direct casework involvement from a member of the Educational Psychology Service
- Early Years Outreach Support Service
- Communication Outreach Support
- Behaviour Outreach Support
- Referral to Family First

- Referral to 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners such as Children 1<sup>st</sup>
- Referral to Healthier Minds Service
- Referral to the Learn Well Service
- Consideration of placement in a specialist service
- Placement in Isobel Mair School

There are a number of other supports in place for teachers and include access to health and safety personnel to consider Individual Risk Assessments, employee counselling and support via staff wellbeing activities.