

# Falkirk

## 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.

### *Working well*

Falkirk Council's refresh of Staged Intervention has helped school and staff work more effectively across the range of provision. It is being increasingly referred to when considering how to support children.

We have examples of strong practice in a number of provisions. This ranges from very inclusive mainstream learning environments right through to our stage 4 – most specialist support centres and schools where highly effective practice has been observed. The key features of this are:

- Child centred
- Appropriate individualisation of learning
- Good quality assessment and intervention
- Sufficient opportunities to build on strengths and success
- Good quality teacher feedback
- When appropriate, a more tailored approach incorporating specific methods
- Good quality engagement with parents about progress and achievement

In Falkirk we have a good range of stage 3 and 4 provisions and resources in mainstream schools and have allocated additional and targeted resource to Primary this session for earlier intervention and to support the presumption of mainstreaming. We have 3 very good standalone settings for children with the most complex needs, Inclusion and Wellbeing school and outreach service 5-18; Windsor Park School and Sensory Service and HI/VI outreach 3-18 and Carronrange High School for severe and complex learners.

Many of our mainstream schools have universal and targeted support and learning zones, including nurture zones and reduced sensory stimulation zones.

We have Primary teachers working in Secondary to support early and first level learners, team teaching Literacy and Numeracy groups and across Social Subjects and developing the curriculum. Data demonstrates recovery and success of these approaches.

Our High Schools best practice is evidenced through high quality of transition information from Primary schools to enable Secondary resources/provision work for these learners. Devolved funding allows enhanced support to be developed in response to this.

Our ethos places the child at the centre; with transition planning from as early as P3 for some learners.

We have updated and modernised our ASN processes to ensure transparent and equitable allocation of resources to meet greatest need.

ASN leaders and school leaders have commitment to relationships and knowing the children with investment of time from High School to Primaries- this builds trust with parent too, hearing their story, and supporting the transition.

We have an Educational Psychologist targeted to stage 3 and 4 learners from Nursery and Early Years into Primary 1.

### ***Not working well***

To continue best practice and flexible response to meeting childrens' needs with the right support at the right time is increasingly challenging when demand increases and resources remain the same. Our devolved support for learning assistant hours are annual, temporary with no contingency budget for supply. With these jobs paid less than other jobs in the marketplace, it is hard to attract candidates to fulltime permanent roles and is almost impossible to secure temporary and supply staff.

Our children with Autism and neurodivergent learning needs are increasing, and they require reduced sensory learning environments and access to small group teaching. Our estate requires modernisation as a result. This requires capital funding.

Some of our settings can't adapt space to allow learning zones, this leads to costly Out of Authority placements requests.

It is a challenge to keep parents on board with mainstream schools when funds compromise bespoke packages and specialist or independent education appears better- more parents are now exercising their right to apply for independent special schooling.

Consistency and communication can be hard to maintain, with children moving from and across schools within and outwith cluster, with changing staffing, and changing leadership priorities.

Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is often used to prop up ASN resources. There is a risk to all our children with greatest need when the PEF funds end.

### ***Reasons/other comments***

Barriers- the time and space to effectively problem solve what to do about our most complex situations for young people. This is partly resource dependent and relies on enough staff, rooms and facilities and the space and time to think and be able to fully embed any specialist advice from educational psychology or speech and language therapy in their day-to-day practice.

Opportunities for employment and training with support often feel much more limited, particularly since Covid-19. Even with excellent practice in schools there can be limited suitable post-school destinations for children with the most significant barriers to learning.

There is an identified need to improve communications and expectations with parents at key transition stages.

For placing requests for Primary 7 into Secondary 1 and into Primary 1, the national legal timescale is too long and doesn't allow for timely transitions. This is creating inequity for some children with additional support needs.

Our current developments to support the presumption of mainstreaming is bringing uncertainty and anxiety to our entire system. It is reliant on additionality from the Scottish Government but these resources are not guaranteed year on year.

Inadequacy of stage 4 resources for mainstream schools- these cases pull on all existing resources in a mainstream school.

For all our settings, lack of funding or staff absences can lose good progress and gains made in improving outcomes for children and young people.

Currently the system is fragile due to threats to funding (PEF, Additional teachers, Local Authority budget decisions)

Our current specialist provisions are not as fit for purpose for the learners we have now. Safe and secure spaces for outdoor regulation and learning are required.

Political themes around funding means it is often ringfenced to different areas eg PEF which has been longstanding and is entrenched in our education provision- when it goes, we lose our investment in people. Too much funding is transient and causes risk in the system for sustainability for supporting learners. What will the future look like?

ASN funding needs to be built/ringfenced into CORE funding. Covid recovery was more complex for ASN learners as their outcomes were impacted more negatively; and as a result, their needs became more complex: ASN is now at 37%, school attendance has been worse for ASN learners.

Supporting learners' needs is a huge challenge- when will creativity and solution focused thinking not be enough in light of needs and funding mismatch?

Lack of resilience in parents and young people, how to parent and boundaries expectations after covid.

## **2. What are the barriers to supporting this provision? Any examples of good practice in this area;**

Sometimes our barriers are about our staff or parents understanding that the "best" option for the child is their current placement. There needs to be realistic understanding about what actually happens in more specialist provision. Sometimes, and more often than not, with a few adaptations the current placement can feel a lot better. This approach to tackling adversity feels tricky but usually builds resilience in better ways for the child than simply changing school.

Parental expectation is a massive theme at the moment. Now we all want parents to have high expectations for their child in education, but it does feel like these expectations are often far in excess of what is possible to achieve within the current resources of the public sector.

Support should be a continuum based on need- it is high level support in special education placements; to try and make resource more equitable in mainstream- budgets don't allow this and this removes early intervention and prevention.

Priority of resource always goes to health/medical or Safety first.

More children with higher level of need that not trained to support at practitioner level- especially Social, Emotional, behavioural needs (SEBN), dysregulated behaviours, National teaching practice and Initial teacher education (ITE) to prepare staff,

### ***Good practise***

There are examples of really good practice within our Enhanced Provision settings. In one primary school they offer a bespoke approach to educating children, differentiating and adapting appropriately, using small group and individual teaching approaches. The children are nurtured and cared for. We see examples in many other schools. This includes the dedicated workforce which includes the support assistants.

Classroom teachers working with ASN team members and Allied Health Professionals, we use therapy partners model.

Monthly learners meetings joint action discussion (responsibility of class teacher – but supported space and safe space to talk about it) Peer support and expertise- but time to release staff to support other staff in practice (especially with reduced Senior Leadership Team time in Primaries).

Spotlight- staff giving up free time to undertake special interest activities, link to family needs and involve specialist partners too.

One High School has brought in Exam.net- devices, using technology instead of SLFA time.

One High School has 'The Bothy' interventions in blocks of 6-8 weeks, buy in specialist services and staff using own additional training/expertise, matrix of what's available and refer pupils; eg kitbag training, Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB), peer support and small group short term interventions, reduces demand on pupil support staff to cases that require their expertise.

Parent Plus programmes successfully piloted for key transitions for children with 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**

- We have an ASN Parent Forum led by Parent chair and vice-chair who liaise with ASN Service on events.
- Joint training opportunities being explored with ASN Parent Forum
- All schools provide Family learning and engagement
- Parent Plus programmes run by ASN/Educational Psychology Service (EPS) /Children With Disabilities teams.
- Transition work
- School based events all the time to make early positive relationships with families (putting **relationships first**)

- Early Years informal – drop off, quick words, home visiting, targeted (Parenting class) Parents as Early Education Partners (PEEP)
- Partner agencies eg Family Support
- Ethos in Primaries that everybody out at school for arrival and end, massive commitment, engage parents at all times so when need a more focused conversation the relationship is already there.
- High Schools host parent events which entails showcasing of school and community/partners

If parents in conflict- flowchart of who would become involved and when, and signposting. They may disengage. Escalation can make this difficult and strain the relationship. Team Around the Child (TAC), good communication, agreed child plans targets; seeking parent and child's voice in all decisions affecting them. Staged Intervention framework.

Summit of how services support schools planned for January 2024. Join up partnership and closer links and therefore share Team Around Falkirk

Promote parents as equal partners in their child's learning,

Parent advocacy. Signposting to ASN Independent information is in every school handbook and at bottom of ASN Service email signatures.

Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSP's)

**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.**

Parents don't require to make a placing request for their child to remain in a mainstream placement, they can attend their catchment school if they wish. We use a placement change application process if a child is moving from stage 4 special education placement provision to mainstream, in 5 years we have had 5 cases agreed to move back to mainstream after parental request.

We also operate an internal process known as our placement change panel which enables us to prioritise our special education placements to greatest need. Team Around the Child assess the level of need and make application for a level of specialist education placement as appropriate to the needs of the child. This is in addition to parents' rights to make a formal placing request to a named specialist education placement provision.

Our forward planning team manage the recording of all formal placing requests but are currently unable to provide us with the information requested for specialist placements as it is not recorded in this way as our 22 special education provisions are within mainstream schools.

We can provide you with the total number of special education placements we currently have. These are effectively requested by parents through our placement change panel process or by having a formal placing request granted.

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Cohort (Nov 2023)</b>
Secondary Severe and Complex School	165
Secondary Additional Support Centres in mainstream schools	108
Secondary School Base for the Deaf in mainstream school	7
Primary Severe and Complex Wings in mainstream schools	83
Primary Additional Support Centres in mainstream schools	72
Primary Enhanced Provisions in mainstream schools	282
Primary School for the Deaf	7
Inclusion and Wellbeing Service 5-18	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>756</b>

We can provide data for placement change requests and declines for the following sessions as the data was not recorded prior to this. A parent who receives a decline may still have submitted a placing request and had this accepted or refused, our data is in individual casework and is too time-consuming to provide in the timescale given.

#### Placement Change panel requests

<b>Year</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Declined</b>
19/20	106	46
20/21	98	33
21/22	102	124
22/23	98	104

#### Known formal placing requests within Falkirk for Specialist Provision

<b>Year</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Declined</b>
21/22	4	4
22/23	6	13

#### Out-with Falkirk placing requests for specialist provision

Year	Accepted	Declined
21/22	1	1
22/23	1	8

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

My Rights My Say process, access to Advocacy workers, especially for Care experienced young people.

ASN blog- signposting to Enquire

ASN Enquiries- signpost to Mediation or other supports, ASN Adviser can support parent advocacy

Children and Young People participation group and UNCRC group working on voice and rights

School Handbooks

ASN Parent Forum session

Look at legislation and empower staff- Enquire modules available and co-designed with Falkirk Council. This empowers staff to work with empowered parents.

**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.**

We use our Staged Intervention framework. We use assessments of need, eg CAMHS, GIRFEC and Educational Psychology assessments. We provide annual guidance to staff for their annual recording of ASN into Seemis.

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

We have created new Enquire modules online and our Staged intervention framework signposts staff to Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) via our A-Z map of ASN training. We use our Authority wide in-service days and ringfence one per session minimum for all staff training in ASN.

- We are in the process of creating a leadership pathway in ASN and have mapped out an ASN pathway for Support for Learning Assistants (SFLA's).
- We have an active network for Support for Learning Teachers and participate in the SCERTS practitioners network
- We operate our CLPL using Training for Trainers models.
- Working time agreement is important to enable this
- EPS training
- IWS and ASN Outreach training

- Participating in learning and events through our ASN Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (FVWLRIC).
- We use our ASN Coordinators Forum to share good practice.
- Whole school approaches and training, case conferences,
- Some schools piloting Mark Burns- Osiris teaching model, leadership, bought in, cycle of learning including SFLA's (learning imperative) and some schools involved in the John Hattie work of flexible 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?**

- School first – TAC – partners
- Principal Teachers ASN, Pastoral Deputes,
- Link ASN adviser / link Educational Psychologist
- Enquire
- Independent advice
- Advocacy
- Mediation
- Council's Complaints Handling Procedure
- ASNTS Tribunal
- Head of Service
- Some parents go to local Councillors/MSPs, Cabinet Secretary, First Minister

**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?**

Teachers do look for more strategies – however the more effective approach tends to be to revisit the needs that underpin the difficulties or concerns and adapting the existing strategies rather than come up with a new list of approaches to try. This is often done well in consultation with the educational psychologists and other members of the Team Around the Child.

They can undertake further identified ASN training. Staff can access support via in school support from colleagues, ASN coordinators, Allied Health Professionals, and partners, or from their line manager.

They can request additional support or resource within school. If appropriate The school leadership team may agree to request Authority resource.

If unresolved, they can follow Falkirk Council employee formal processes, and seek union and HR advice, and request mediation,