EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

32nd Meeting, 2009 (Session 3)

Wednesday 2 December 2009

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 2.

1. **Autism in education**: The Committee will take evidence from—

   Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years, Kathryn Beattie, Policy Manager, Support for Learning Branch, and Ryan Gunn, Head, Care and Support Branch, Scottish Government.

Eugene Windsor
Clerk to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda item 1**

Paper by the clerk
Introduction

1. This paper introduces members to the Committee’s second evidence session on the issue of autism in education.¹

2. The Committee held its first evidence session at its meeting on 25 November 2009. Further information relating to this evidence session is available on the Committee’s web pages.²

Autism in education

3. A number of specific issues relating to autism in education have been identified for discussion at this evidence session. These are—

   • Process by which children/young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed;
   • Support for families with children/young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system;
   • Support for children/young people with ASD at school;
   • Teaching methods which best support children/young people with ASD;
   • Support available for teachers/ head teachers of pupils with ASD;
   • Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics;
   • Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/young people with ASD in the classroom;
   • Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school exclusion.

4. The Committee invited written comments to assist its consideration of this issue and submissions received are attached at Annexe A.

Action

5. The Committee is invited to consider the submissions included in Annexe A and take evidence from the witness panel.

Emma Berry
Assistant Clerk
Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

¹ Autism in education evidence sessions, Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee web pages—
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/ellc/inquiries/AutismInEducation/AutismInEducation.htm

² Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee web pages—
Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

32nd Meeting, 2009 (Session 3), Wednesday, 2 December 2009

Autism in education

List of written submissions received

Angus Council
Association of Additional Support for Learning Officers
* Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists
Dumfries and Galloway Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
East Lothian Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Falkirk Council
Fife Council
Glasgow City Council
* Inverclyde Council
Moray Council
NHS Highland
NHS Orkney
North Ayrshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Scottish Borders Council
Shetland Islands Council
* South Ayrshire Council
Stirling Council
West Lothian Council

* indicates those submissions circulated with the papers for the Committee’s meeting on 25 November 2009 (paper ELLC/S3/09/31/1).
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM ANGUS COUNCIL

The education of children and young people in Scotland with additional support needs is governed specifically by two statutes, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts of 2004 and 2009.

The central thrust of this legislation is to ensure that the additional support needs of all children are assessed, identified and met. This duty is laid on all education authorities and applies regardless of the cause or nature of these difficulties and notwithstanding the existence of any plans, statutory or otherwise.

As the current ASN awareness campaign “Just Ask” puts it, additional support needs address a diverse range of issues – from bullying to bereavement, divorce to dyslexia. We are required to identify and address all barriers to learning regardless of their cause.

While this broad definition causes insurmountable difficulties to statisticians, it is nevertheless an enlightened and progressive view of education which the education community in Scotland is pleased to endorse.

By implication, any perspective which is based on categories of disability or models of deficiency is at odds with the current view. The fact that powerful pressure groups lobby relentlessly for specific groups of children which they themselves define, should not force us back into a deficit view of children where labelling and an outmoded view of “assessment” and “diagnosis” regains the ground it lost with the introduction of the current legislation.

Children receive a “diagnosis” of autism spectrum disorder from health professionals. As an education authority we are required to provide adequate support for these children. It should be noted however that we are also required to make effective and adequate provision for children who display similar behaviours but may not have, nor ever have, a medical diagnosis. In other words, the diagnosis serves no useful educational function. A careful assessment of the needs of the individual child and the tailoring of support to meet these will ensure that the educational needs of all children are met and the requirements of the Act satisfied.

The engagement of parents in the planning and evaluation of their child’s education is central to the work of the education department. In the specific area of additional support needs, this has an additional focus through the close parental involvement in the formal programmes of review and planning for Individualised Educational Plans (IEPs) and Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs). The point here is that the involvement of parents in planning to meet the educational needs of their child are enshrined within current arrangements and there would be no purpose in a specific focus on any individual cause of barriers to learning.

This partnership planning and review process also engages with a wide range of partner agencies through the Staged Intervention Process and this in turn
impacts on the support provided to and the teaching approaches adapted to meet the needs of all pupils with additional support needs. A narrow focus is again unnecessary and indeed unhelpful to this process.

At all levels, individual members of staff (both teaching and support), school, cluster, and authority wide, the continuing professional development strategy of Angus Council seeks to identify the development needs of all staff and meet these through a wide range of activities. These range from peer support to bespoke programmes constructed to meet the needs of staff in an individual school or cluster, to participation in national and international training events and conferences.

This strategy seeks to develop the skills and confidence of staff to meet the wide range of challenges across the educational provision made by Angus Council and contains an appropriate focus on developing the skills of teachers and support staff to meet the additional support needs of all pupils. The challenges and opportunities presented in teaching children with Autism Spectrum Disorder feature along with numerous other causes of additional support needs.

In session 2008 – 2009 a full day training event on Autism Spectrum Disorder was held for all Support for Learning Assistants in Angus.

The classroom context is of major significance for all children with additional support needs where the difficulties they experience will at times impact on the learning of others. In Angus one response to this is input from the behaviour support teams who engage with staff to review their management of pupils and their classroom. This develops increasingly effective strategies which contribute to the inclusion of children with a range of barriers to their learning. This is done in a way which not only ameliorates the impact of negative behaviour, but further enhances the educational experience of other members of the class through the development of understanding and tolerance.

Issues relating to dispute resolution and matters relating to temporary exclusion are dealt with through existing procedures for all children.

In short, any attempt to separate out any individual barrier to learning from the breadth set out in the Act is at best unhelpful and at worst dangerous. One obvious implication would be the emergence of a further layer of bureaucracy, especially if this were enshrined in statute. There are those who feel that the current legislative framework is already unnecessarily burdensome and the development of further specific legislation would significantly worsen this situation.

It would also be reasonable to assume that should legislation be passed with a specific focus on autism, then provision for further sources of difficulties including dyslexia and ADHD would quickly follow.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING OFFICERS

The education of children and young people in Scotland with additional support needs is governed specifically by two statutes, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009.

The central thrust of this legislation is to ensure that the additional support needs of all children are assessed, identified and met. This duty is laid on all education authorities and applies regardless of the cause or nature of these difficulties and notwithstanding the existence of any plans, statutory or otherwise.

As the current ASN awareness campaign “Just Ask” puts it, additional support needs address a diverse range of issues – from bullying to bereavement, divorce to dyslexia. We are required to identify and address all barriers to learning regardless of their cause.

While this broad definition causes insurmountable difficulties to statisticians, it is nevertheless and enlightened and progressive view of education which the Association of Additional Support for Learning Officers (ASLO) is pleased to endorse.

By implication, any perspective which is based on categories of disability or models of deficiency is at odds with the current view. The fact that powerful pressure groups lobby relentlessly for specific groups of children which they themselves define, should not force us back into a deficit view of children where labelling and an outmoded view of “assessment” and “diagnosis” regains the ground it lost with the introduction of the current legislation.

Children receive a “diagnosis “of autism spectrum disorder from health professionals. As an education authority we are required to provide adequate support for these children. It should be noted however that we are also required to make adequate and efficient provision for children who display similar behaviours but may not have, nor ever have, a medical diagnosis. In other words, the diagnosis serves no useful educational function. A careful assessment of the needs of the individual child and the tailoring of support to meet these will ensure that the educational needs of all children are met and the requirement of the Act satisfied.

The engagement of parents in the planning and evaluation of their child’s education is central to the work of all education authorities. In the specific area of additional support needs, this has a particular focus through the close parental involvement in the formal programmes of review and planning for Individualised Educational Plans (IEPs) and Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs). The point here is that the involvement of parents in planning to meet the educational needs of their child are enshrined within current arrangements and there would be no purpose to a specific focus on any individual cause of barriers to learning.
This partnership planning and review process also engages with a wide range of partner agencies through the staged intervention processes already established in all local authorities. This in turn impacts on the support provided to pupils and the development of teaching approaches to better meet the needs of all pupils with additional support needs. A narrow focus is again unnecessary and indeed unhelpful to this process.

At all levels, individual members of staff (both teaching and support), school, cluster, and authority wide, the continuing professional development strategies of local authorities seek to identify the development needs of all staff and meet these through a wide range of activities. These range from peer support to bespoke programmes constructed to meet the needs of staff in an individual school or cluster, to participation in national and international training events and conferences.

This strategy seeks to develop the skills and confidence of staff to meet the wide range of challenges across the educational provision made by schools and ensures an appropriate focus is maintained on developing the skills of teachers and support staff to meet the additional support needs of all pupils. The challenges and opportunities presented by teaching children with Autism Spectrum Disorder feature along with numerous other causes of additional support needs.

The classroom context is of major significance for all children with additional support needs where the difficulties they experience will at times impact on the learning of others. One response to this is input from behaviour support teams who engage with staff to review their management of pupils and their classroom environment. This develops increasingly effective strategies which contribute to the inclusion of children with a range of barriers to their learning in a way which not only ameliorates the impact of any negative behaviour, but further enhances the educational experience of other members of the class through the development of understanding and tolerance.

Issues relating to dispute resolution and temporary exclusion are dealt with through existing procedures for all children.

In short, any attempt to separate out an individual barrier to learning from the breadth set out in the Act, is at best unhelpful and at worst dangerous. One obvious implication would be the emergence of a further layer of bureaucracy, especially if this were enshrined in statute. There are those who feel that the current legislative framework is already unnecessarily burdensome and the development of further specific legislation would significantly worsen this situation.

It would also be reasonable to assume that should legislation be passed with a specific focus on autism, then provision for further specific sources of difficulties for example dyslexia and ADHD would quickly follow.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COUNCIL

Please note the lists detailed in response to the statements below are indicative but not exhaustive.

Process by which children/young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed

Locally it is the Communications Disorders Assessment Team (CDAT) that is responsible for diagnosis across Dumfries and Galloway. CDAT is a multi agency group of professionals from health and education with training and expertise in ASD diagnosis as recommended in Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guidelines 2007 and the Public Health Institute of Scotland (PHIS) 2001.

Support for families with children/young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system

Within Dumfries and Galloway there is a range of mainstream schools, mainstream schools with learning centres and one special school available for parents to choose from. Parents whose children have Additional Support Needs are offered an Additional Support for Learning Pack, which gives written information about all available support services. Parents are encouraged to visit schools personally and with their child and can also ask for advice and support from a range of professionals and agencies in order to come to a decision.

Support for children/young people with ASD at school

Within Dumfries and Galloway, support for children and young people with ASD is considered from a range of perspectives and developed in response to their individual profile and needs. It is recognised that these supports often benefit many children and so would be accessed by any child with an identified need, whether they had a diagnosis or not. Supports would include:

- input from specialist staff
- partnership working with parents
- changes to environments and facilities within school/class including consideration of sensory differences and low distraction
- curricular differentiation and adaptation
- use of communication systems such as PECS and visual supports including schedules, systems and structures
- access to training and advice
- use of Individualised Education Programmes
- use of Co-ordinated Support Plans where there are other agencies involved

Dumfries and Galloway has also recently developed a good practice audit tool which assists the review and development of support
Teaching methods which best support children/young people with ASD

Teaching methods and approaches are supported by collaborative working with parents and other agencies and professionals. These would include:

- development of daily and social routines
- use of reward system using individuals' motivators
- alternating and building difficult tasks with calming activities and physical breaks
- implementation of the principles of TEACCH in order to give predictability of what will happen, with whom, how long it will last and what will be next
- good day/bad day curriculum depending on individuals' presentation and circumstances
- embedded or explicit behaviour and learning contracts
- copying of child/young person, encouraging copying of good role model, use of modelling and parallel play
- developing situational, emotional and consequential understanding using range of tools such as Comic Strip and Social Stories
- use of video, IT, laptops and computer programmes
- using alternative recording systems

Support available for teachers/head teachers of pupils with ASD;

Supports available would include:

- access to a range of training including post graduate courses and local and national conferences
- access to advice and support from a range of staff including, pre-school educational visitors, additional support for learning teachers, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, Autism Spectrum Disorders Integrated Network (ASDIN), educational psychology and education officers
- linking in with colleagues through GLOW
- approved internet websites
- shadowing and collaborative work with staff across and out with the region

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

There are a number of impacts on classroom dynamics, many of which benefit other children and young people. These would include:

- need for increased planning and a predictable structure
- visual supports and breakdown of tasks
- clear and explicit boundaries
- predictable and consistent consequences of behaviour
- focused consideration of possible underlying factors of behaviour
promotion of citizenship
understanding and respecting of difference
improving self esteem of peers because of their involvement in helping and supporting others

However, behaviour can pose a challenge and can be distracting, which may result in disruption and less time for other pupils with increased stress on teaching and non-teaching staff.

**Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/ young people with ASD in the classroom**

There is a range of strategies including:

- effective communication and consistency of approach between all involved
- positive problem solving approach
- tools and strategies which help staff to understand and manage the possible underlying factors of behavior
- use of time out systems
- access to quiet/safe room

**Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions**

There is a range of stepped approaches including:

- discussion with class/head teacher
- discussion/involvement of other education professionals, health, social service or ASDIN staff
- school review groups
- area review groups
- involvement of other bodies/agencies such as CRANNOG, Looked After Core Groups, children’s hearing system
- independent mediation and advocacy services
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Process by which children/young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed.

Various

- Local authority multi – agency team
- Community Autism Team
- Learning Difficulties Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team
- Child and family psychiatry
- Private medical centres

Support for families with children/young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system

- Local authority staged intervention process
- Education authority headquarters personnel
- Education support services [learning support / outreach support / home visiting]
- Psychological Service
- Pre-Scat
- Authority liaison group
- Placement prioritisation group

Support for children/young people with ASD at school

- Special schools
- Language and communication resources/units
- Outreach service
- Learning support service
- Psychological service
- Short term advice and response team

Teaching methods which best support children/young people with ASD.

- Structure and organisation of classrooms – reduced stimuli
- Augmentative communication systems
- Repetition and overlearning
- Minimising language
- Predictability
- Differentiation

Support available for teachers/ head teachers of pupils with ASD

- External modules
- Within – authority social communication skill training
- Catalogue of courses
• Continuous professional development
• Psychological service
• Outreach service
• Short term advice and response team

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

• Helps to foster inclusive ethos in schools
• Opportunities for pupils to learn about ASD
• Channels resources toward pupils with ASD
• Varying levels of disruption to learning of other pupils

Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/ young people with ASD in the classroom

• Local authority staged intervention policy
• Management of behaviour is taken into account in the design of appropriate teaching programmes

Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions.

• Complaints procedure
• Local authority appeals process
• Mediation
• Additional Support Needs Tribunals
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

Assessment and diagnosis of the condition – Children/Young People are assessed and diagnosed at the communication clinic, which is lead by Health.

Children/young people and families are supported to find the best education resource, through the advice of the educational psychologist and any other agencies involved. As part of staged intervention and assessment there is also the early years assessment team, which is a multi-agency team which looks to transition to school for children / young people with ASD.

Within East Lothian, there are two bases within mainstream schools that provide specialist provision for children/young people with ASD: One for primary and one for secondary. There are also two bases which provide education for children/young people with severe and complex needs. Some of these children/young people also have a diagnosis of ASD. Many children and young people with ASD are educated with support in their local mainstream school.

There is an outreach teaching service, which offers advice and support to teachers and Head Teachers in the management of children/young people with ASD in the school. There is also support available from the Educational Psychology Service, the education support officers for ASL, music therapist, speech and language therapist and external agencies. CPD opportunities are available for education staff.

In relation to resolving disputes, the council encourages head teachers to try to resolve all issues at a local level and where appropriate getting advice and support from centrally based staff. The authority has a complaints procedure which also encourages local resolution, but there are times when such issues have to be dealt with at authority level. The Education and Children’s Services Department also has a service level agreement with Common Ground Mediation, which is an independent mediation service. Referral to Common Ground is open to everyone, but it is expected that steps will have been taken at local level to discuss the difficulties before considering it.

In terms of appealing school expulsions, the Council has policy and procedures which apply to all children and young people. The legislation in relation to children and young people with additional support needs is considered as part of this.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

If parents wish a diagnosis, children and young people with ASD are referred to the Community Autism Team for a multi-agency diagnostic assessment. However, the reality is that support in school is neither enhanced nor delayed until a diagnosis is sought. A diagnosis of ASD can help assist parents and families access wider supports beyond school or education.

East Renfrewshire is a fully inclusive authority and in that regard school staff together with the Psychological Service provides support to children and young people with communication difficulties in the widest sense. The education department has built capacity in schools over a number of years so that teaching and support staff are more confident and competent in working with children and young people with ASD type behaviours. The introduction of school ASD advisers has been effective in providing teaching staff with practical support in working with children and young people. Training for ASD advisers is comprehensive and on-going. This session the training programme will be improved to reflect the developing skills and expertise of these staff. Training covers the following broad areas:

- ASD awareness
- ASD – support strategies and teaching methodology
- Social skills and social play groups
- Social stories
- Transitions
- Communicating with parents
- Resources to support learning and teaching
- Planning to meet the needs of pupils with ASD

This session training for pupil support assistants will include strategies to support ASD pupils.

Whilst this mainstream support is effective for most children, some children’s needs are best met for a period of time within the council’s specialised provision. The Carlibar Communication Centre (CCC) and the Pre-School Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU) provide an alternative education setting, either part-time or full-time, to individual children. Referrals to this service are made by the Psychological Service in consultation with schools. Placements are allocated on the basis of need. This service is regarded as an intensive placement in order to assess fully the child’s strengths and needs. It is fully expected that the child or young person will return to a mainstream setting and therefore transitions is an important part of the work of the CCC/PSADU.

For children and young people with more severe autistic spectrum disorders, the Council’s specialist provision, Isobel Mair School, provides full time placements for primary and secondary pupils.

In addition, the Council has an outreach service for those pupils who are deemed either as not requiring a placement in the PSADU/CCC or for those
who have been previously placed there and are being reintegrated into mainstream. Referrals for the outreach service are also co-ordinated through the educational psychologist. A senior educational psychologist co-ordinates and tracks referrals.

Developments in the area of ASD are co-ordinated by the department’s ASD strategy group. Membership of this group comprises a quality improvement officer, psychological services, head teachers and senior managers from the CCC/PSADU and outreach service. In the main, school staff manage effectively support to pupils with ASD. The main source of advice is through the educational psychologist and is detailed in planning documents such as IEPs.

Every school has a copy of the autism toolbox and ASD Advisors are encouraged to refer to this for further advice on resources and support strategies. Numerous approaches to supporting pupils with ASD are applied throughout schools. These can be clustered under the headings of environment, transitions, teaching and language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control external stimuli</td>
<td>Teach change (visual prompts / change cards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(auditory, visual, touch, smell)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradually build up exposure to stimuli</td>
<td>Regular breaks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a separate quiet area</td>
<td>Clear structure and routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual timetable/work trays</td>
<td>Aware in advance of changes to routine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical organisation of the room</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodate visual learning</td>
<td>Use neutral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Stories</td>
<td>Positive statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly identify emotion</td>
<td>Use meaningful incentives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistency of approach</td>
<td>Avoid rhetoric or sarcasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and reinforce rules</td>
<td>Avoid incidental language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer support/ encourage social responsibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regulate and use obsession to motivate / alleviate stress/provide a hobby where appropriate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicitly teach behaviours that develop friendship skills (e.g. waiting, turn taking)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM FALKIRK COUNCIL

Assessment and diagnosis

Up until a few years ago, children and young people who presented with an autistic spectrum disorder were diagnosed either at the Sick Children’s Hospital, Edinburgh or at Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Yorkhill, Glasgow. Since the setting up of a specialist Autistic Spectrum Disorder team in NHS Forth Valley, children and young people are diagnosed either in Stirling or Falkirk. The last few years have seen a significant rise in the number of children and young people being diagnosed in Falkirk. It could easily be assumed that this is directly related to the setting up of the local team, but it should be noted that this is a pattern across most of Scotland.

The procedure for the assessing of children who may have autism spectrum disorders, and diagnosing their difficulties, is summarised in the 2006 document, Framework for Assessment and Diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder in Children. It is a joint publication of:

- NHS Forth Valley
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Falkirk Council
- Stirling Council

The framework recognises the contribution that school assessment plays in diagnosis, and therefore has two similar but separate pathways for pre-school and school-age children.

Support for families

The support offered to the family of a child or young person depends to a large extent on the age of the child is diagnosed. Pre-school children are supported by the SureStart Pre-Five Educational Support team and NHS Forth Valley Speech and Language Therapy Service. Both of these services offer advice on educational placements which will be best suited to meet the needs of the young child. When required, one of the SureStart team will visit educational establishments with parents. Many children and young people are already attending a school when diagnosed. Where appropriate, school staff can give advice on the range of educational establishments in Falkirk that support children or young people with autism spectrum disorders. Children and young people with autism spectrum disorders are supported in:

- local mainstream schools
- a local mainstream schools with Enhanced Provision
- an autism base in one primary and two secondary schools
- two primary bases for children with a complexity of difficulties
- one special school for young people with a complexity of difficulties
- out of authority schools occasionally
It should be noted that the vast majority of children and young people who receive a diagnosis remain at the school that they were attending at the time of diagnosis. Support is primarily provided by staff from the school which the child attends with additional support where required from Education Psychology Services. Some children and their families will receive additional support from NHS Forth Valley Speech and Language Therapy Service at transition, at times of difficulty or need. Other therapy services and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services offer support when required to maintain the child in an educational establishment.

**Support and teaching methods**

Thorough assessment will inform interventions to support the needs of an individual with autism spectrum disorders. These may include:

- Picture Exchange Communication System
- Makaton
- Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-Handicapped Children
- Visual supports
- Social stories
- Comic strips
- Timers
- Video Interactive Guidance
- Applied Behavioural Analysis

In addition some children and young people will receive additional personal support from identified members of school staff.

**Staff development**

Staff development for those working with a child or young person with autism spectrum disorders is provided:

- in schools from the Additional Support for Learning team, speech and language therapists or Educational Psychology Services
- in sessions for staff from across the authority delivered by the Additional Support for Learning team
- through a three day training courses for staff from across the authority delivered by the Scottish Society for Autism
- national training courses, such as the Picture Exchange Communication System
- national conferences or events such as those organised by the National Autistic Society

**Impact on classroom dynamics**

In many instances the impact of the child with autism spectrum disorders in a classroom is a positive experience for the other pupils. Resources that
support the child will often assist many of their peers. In addition it teaches other children tolerance of those who are different. At times the impact can be negative but this is rarely always the case. Throughout the child or young person’s time in school they are regularly part of a multi-agency review process which seeks to ensure that the appropriate support and strategies are in place. If, as part of this review, it is identified that this setting is no longer appropriate the child or young person, and no further adjustments can be made, the situation will progress to the next stage of Falkirk Council’s Staged Intervention process with the approval of the parents or carers.

**Behaviour management**

Many of the strategies used in behaviour management throughout the educational sectors are as appropriate for the child or young person with autism spectrum disorders. However it is extremely important that an environmental analysis is carried out where a child or young person with autism spectrum disorders is struggling to manage their behaviour. This may point out sensory issues which require to be dealt with and minimise inappropriate behaviour. It is equally important that a check of the language and messages conveyed in the situation or incident are looked at to ensure that triggers for inappropriate behaviour have not unwittingly been conveyed to the child or young person.

**Mechanisms for resolving disputes**

In all cases the mechanism for resolving disputes will be the same as those for other the children and young people with other additional support needs. However these will take account of the child or young person’s difficulties. Staff involved will ensure that they understand the situation and seek to find strategies to resolve the difficulties. Similarly, the procedures for appealing school exclusions will be the same as for other children; however, Falkirk rarely excludes children with additional support needs.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM FIFE COUNCIL

Process by which children/ young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed

Given the complex nature of autism, a multi agency process of assessment, identification and diagnosis is likely to generate best outcomes for children and young people. Multi-agency involvement ensures that all aspects of a child’s life are given appropriate consideration, and support plans can be co-ordinated more effectively as a result. Our only caveats would concern the potentially negative effect of the extended waiting lists that can be associated with multi-agency processes, and the need to ensure that assessment, identification and diagnosis lead to practical and functional interventions, and are not seen as an end in themselves. Additional educational support can be deployed according to assessed educational need, in advance of formal diagnosis.

Support for families with children/ young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system

Our experience is that families will most effectively be supported through well managed planning processes located within schools. These processes should ensure that parents have access to high quality information about Council policy and practice in this area, and should be underpinned by robust and effective quality improvement strategies. It is our experience that an ASD Strategy Group, incorporating a range of partner agencies and parents, can be highly effective in supporting this process. In this regard we are aware that families can be very effectively supported by groups such as NAS, and as a Council we consider it important to maintain strong working relationships with such organisations.

Support for children/ young people with ASD at school

Effective support requires a high level of teacher and support staff awareness of the nature of autism, coupled with access to relevant strategies and resources. In achieving these it is likely that support services, such as a peripatetic ASD support service and an Educational Psychology service, will play a vital role. It is also important that school staff are able to easily access resources such as the Autism Toolbox, and materials produced by organisations such as NAS and SSA.

Teaching methods which best support children/ young people with ASD

It is important that teachers have access to a range of strategies and methods which have been demonstrated to be effective in working with children and young people with autism, and are able to select the most appropriate approach for individual pupils. No one specific method is likely to fit the needs of all. It is also important that staff have access to a range of resources and materials which are not ‘autism specific’, but could be very relevant to the needs of an individual pupil.
Support available for teachers/ head teachers of pupils with ASD

Teachers and head teachers of pupils with ASD require access to high quality training and ongoing support. While this should address issues raised in relation to individual pupils it should also serve to develop the skills of staff, and in more general terms, build the capacity of schools to meet a range of needs. This principle would apply to all children with additional support needs, and not just those with autism.

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

Classroom dynamics are complex, and are impacted on by a range of factors, only one of which might be a pupil or pupils with autism. It is more helpful to support schools to become skilled at identifying that range of factors impacting on dynamics, and to develop strategies which minimise any negative effects, than to focus on any individual group.

Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/young people with ASD in the classroom

Effectively managing and supporting the behaviour of pupils with autism in the classroom is dependent on a good understanding of the nature of any difficulties which a pupil might experience, coupled to the ability to deploy a range of relevant strategies. The former is likely to be enhanced by good general knowledge about autism and a specific understanding of an individual pupils’ needs. Together these contribute to a functional analysis model which enables relevant and effective solutions to be developed in response to patterns of behaviour.

Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions

Processes for resolving disputes and appealing school exclusions are no different for pupils with autism than for other pupils with ASN. Our policy and practice is to prevent and minimise disputes with parents by ensuring their full involvement as partners in the planning and decision making process. Where disputes do arise, we strive to resolve these at as early a stage as possible, in a way which addresses parental concerns and maintains an effective working relationship. We would not expect pupils to be excluded from school as a result of their Additional Support Needs.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

Process by which children/young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed

Over the last year within Glasgow’s five strategic planning areas assessment and diagnosis of autism has been developed through the establishment of Locality Autism Group. The benefits are principally:

- They are multi-agency building on the prior good practice of the Community Autism Teams
- They build on any previous case assessment done are flexible and promote the least intrusive form of intervention
- They narrow the professional gap between health ‘diagnosis’ and educational ‘assessment’
- They make the clear link between the above and the necessary follow-up supports following diagnosis/assessment

Support for families with children/young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system

- In each area of the city there is a Language and Communication Area Consultation Group where children and young people can be discussed in more depth. The LCCACG comprises a Senior Educational Psychologist (EP), Speech & Language Therapist and the Coordinators of the local primary Language Unit and Autism Unit.
- The majority of cases being discussed at such a forum are for advice in supporting parents and schools in maintaining youngsters in mainstream.
- Where a recommendation is made for consideration for specialist placement these are forwarded to a City Panel for consideration of appropriateness.
- When a recommendation for a move to specialist placement is made there are clear guidelines for parents to work with EPs and others to identify the most appropriate resource.

Support for children/young people with ASD at school

- Supports mainly come from trained teaching and auxiliary staff within the schools.
- A transition group is held for those children moving from primary to secondary school. This prepares children for the move as well as providing them with a forum to discuss their concerns along with children with similar additional support needs.
- Transition Passports.
- Many schools run SULP groups (Social Use of Language Programme), which focus on developing appropriate communication skills. This is often supported by SLT colleagues.
The Circle of Friends Programme is another very useful tool, particularly for those ASD children who are keen to socialise with their peers.

Teaching methods which best support children/young people with ASD

- Children with ASD tend to be very visual, concrete learners and respond to visual prompts such as visual timetables. They require clear, precise instructions often augmented by visual supports such as timers etc.
- Some specialist provisions may use more staff dependent methods such as TEACCH or ABA.

Support available for teachers/head teachers of pupils with ASD

- The Glasgow Standard of Provision and Good Practice for Children and Young People with ASD is held in every school and is an excellent and comprehensive resource for HTs and teachers.
- All head teachers can consult with their link EP re pupils with ASD. EPs are also available to consult child development officers (CDOs) and pupil support assistants (PSAs) etc as necessary.
- In each area there are ASD support and development groups for teachers, CDOs and PSAs working with children who have ASD or are on the waiting list for assessment. These are usually held in Psychological Service bases and are run by a senior EP, a speech and language therapist and the Coordinator of an Autism Unit or Early Years Development Centre. The groups meet on a regular basis (approximately once every six weeks) and discuss strategies for supporting children with ASD. There are separate groups for early years and primary.
- An ASD support and development group for the ASL sector has been running for several years and is held centrally in Education HQ over six twilight sessions. It is run by a senior EP and the coordinator of an Autism Unit.
- In addition a secondary ASD support and Development group is being piloted in one area and is being evaluated. It is likely, given initial feedback, that this will be replicated across the city.

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

- Impact on classroom dynamics varies tremendously with level of functionality of the child, age and stage of the child, experience of teacher and PSA/classroom assistant (when involved), familial supports and factors external to school.
- On a positive note, many of the supports that a child on the spectrum requires are generally useful supports for other children; particularly those with language based difficulties rather than formal communication difficulties per se. Also, some children with
attention/concentration issues and SEBN will benefit from such supports.

- From that point of view, the impact of a child can be positive in creating a classroom dynamic/ethos that is positively framed for children who have a range of issues from ASD through to SEBN.

- Classroom dynamic is heavily influenced by the age of the child – generally the younger the child the higher the level of integration (but not exclusively). As children mature and change in how the structure and organise their own peer relationships, children on the spectrum can become increasingly isolated with all the concomitant effects such isolation may have. As children get older they have an increasing communicative complexity and fluidity of peer relationships, again, this can have a negative impact on the classroom dynamic as the ASD child struggles to maintain previous relationships and friendships.

- There is some evidence that gender can play a mitigating role with some girls managing to sustain peer relationships for longer. Again, as with all these things, it depends on the functional level of the individual concerned and the supports they are receiving.

- Where a youngster is struggling with functionality, the impact on classroom dynamics can be tremendous. Not least caused by the fact that the classroom teacher may be faced by a distressed and distressing child (if behaviour is physically challenging/aggressive) on a daily basis where “normal” sanctions and approaches to emotional and behavioural management are having a limited impact. Such youngsters can be very demanding of the teacher’s personal resources. Where a child is finding the mainstream context a challenge – be it because of sensory issues, or poor motivation to communicate or any of a myriad of challenging behaviours, the constant wear of managing such a youngster can impact on other children.

**Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/young people with ASD in the classroom**

- Often the behaviour of a child with ASD tends to be functional, i.e. it can be about control, confusion but more often that not it is about stress and anxiety. A functional analysis is a good way of trying to establish the function of a behaviour and a simple ABC (antecedent, behaviour, consequence), or similar, checklist can be a useful way of clarifying the reason for the behaviour.

- Obsessive behaviours are often a means by which the child can cope with the demands of school. The objective then is to allow the child ‘time out' to carry out these behaviours or to provide another more appropriate behaviour to take its place.

- Children with ASD often have significant sensory issues which can result in distressing behaviour such as head banging. Again the objective is to be creative in finding an alternative more appropriate way of satisfying the need.

- Social stories and comic strip conversations are a very useful way of reducing, or often eliminating, problem behaviours, or indeed to introduce positive behaviours.
Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions

- Within Glasgow Education Services (recently updated) Management Circular 8 there are clear guidelines for taking account of any child or young person’s additional support need - including ASD - in the context of behaviour management within an establishment generally.
- In addition within MC 8 there are clear guidelines and mechanisms for resolving disputes and appealing against exclusion should this become necessary.
Autism is a major concern within education.

Part of the difficulty relates to the broad range of behaviours which can be included under the term autism and/or Asperger. Children with ASD can experience severe difficulties in education. However, many children with ASD can function well in a mainstream setting and are barely noticeable in class while others find "fitting in" extremely difficult. Coupled with a general lack of understanding on the part of class teachers the problem is exacerbated.

Getting a diagnosis is difficult and seems to take a long time and although some children are diagnosed before they start school, it seems that several children are not spotted until they have started formal schooling.

Given that some would estimate that the incidence of ASD is 1:100 an authority like this could have approximately 135 children/young people with ASD.

Locally, experience would suggest that the majority of parents are happy, and keen, to have their child with ASD educated alongside their peers. However, they are less happy to have them educated in a mainstream setting when the child moves on to secondary. Secondary education can be extremely difficult for a child with ASD. Within a first year timetable, the child with ASD may be expected to adapt his or her social patterns to suit six or seven different adults. Frequently, none of the adults is expected to adapt his/her social patterns to suit the child with ASD. Similarly, an exam driven approach does not make life easy for a child with autism. In secondary education in particular, there is a need for a severely modified and very structured approach to the school week for some of the children, though not all. Providing this level of flexibility is difficult within existing resources and within existing systems.

Another aspect is the need for respite care for parents. As the children mature, become bigger and have different needs the strain on the family increases and the benefits of residential education become more attractive. Many families would be happier to educate their children in the local school if co-ordinated respite care could be provided. While families support and obviously love their child, the difficulties of looking after a teenage child with ASD can place a huge burden on parents and siblings.

Children with ASD can change class dynamics though this is not always negative as some children with autism are good at following rules and carrying out clearly defined instructions. They can demonstrate very rigid adherence to rules of behaviour though the downside of this is that they do not tolerate any variation in behaviour. This requires the teacher to know the child, understand the condition and be both tolerant and alert to his/her own practices.

In both primary and secondary, the need is to develop awareness, understanding and tolerance for the children with the condition. This is best
done by enskilling all school staff and developing autism supportive approaches in all our schools. Although the training would be autism specific it must be acknowledged that the type of training would be beneficial to many children and teachers. It should also be remembered that, while some techniques and approaches are useful in working with children with ASD, the children themselves are all individuals and what works for one will not work for another. The teacher or support worker needs to adapt training to suit individuals. This will require a substantial training programme designed to effect cultural change and will take a number of years to implement.

Similarly, statistics on violence and aggression would indicate that a substantial proportion of incidents are committed by children with ASD. The difficulty is that, for many children with autism, physical approaches are the means by which they communicate unhappiness and/or discomfort. They also do not always “see” others in corridors and spaces and will barge past people. The recording of incidents of violence can often create a “wrong” perception of the child with ASD. Again, this can be dealt with by developing understanding of the condition and ensuring that staff who work with children with ASD can have the skills to keep themselves safe and defuse situations.

In summary, the main difficulty lies in people’s awareness and understanding of the condition. A simple and often proposed solution is to educate children with ASD separately. This is not a genuine solution and would not suit many children with the condition. The more complicated solution, and one which is better in the long term, is to ensure that staff in schools can understand and adapt their behaviour to the needs of the child with ASD. This is probably easier in primary than in secondary largely due to the different approach to structuring the day. However, the issue could be ameliorated in secondary by raising awareness and understanding of the condition through staff development.
Assessment and diagnosis

Within the Highland partnership with Highland Council there is a clear process and integrated pathway whereby children and young people with suspected autism spectrum disorder (ASD) undergo a locality based assessment through a multi-agency multidisciplinary approach across integrated children’s service partners supported by the Getting it Right for Every Child procedures. If the health and education staff can come to a conclusion, the child/young person will be diagnosed or otherwise in the locality. If for any reason there are more complex difficulties or co-morbid conditions and the locality team cannot come to a conclusion then the child is referred to a central specialist team the Integrated Children’s Services Autism Team (ICSAT). In the process of assessment the family are provided with information on Autism and other services by Children in Highland Information Point (CHIP+). At diagnosis families will be offered verbal information from the assessment teams and information from National Autism Society (NAS) including the Next Steps booklet. Localities have developed autism integration groups to share information and there are parent support groups in some areas.

Within Inverness, the recently opened autism centre, the Pines, provides facilities for assessment and has enabled the co-location of multi-agency professionals who are based together on the one site. These include clinical psychology, speech and language therapy, social work, autism outreach education services, dietitian, occupational therapist and community paediatricians. The National Autism Society and CHIP+ (Child Health Information Point) are also on site. Parent courses like Help! and Early Bird are offered but there are challenges in delivering these equitably in rural and remote areas.

Support for education/support in school

Highland Council have a policy and strategy for the education of pupils with ASD. Children and young people are supported in school according to their needs irrespective of whether they have a diagnosis. CHIP+ provides information for parents on the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act. In schools the SPELL approach is used which incorporates the TEACCH principles. Younger children may have support like visual timetables or the Picture Exchange System (PECS). Health professionals like speech and language therapists support schools in these and preschool children may have involvement of the preschool visiting service. Schools are also able to involve educational psychologists and autism outreach education services (AOES) for further advice on individual children. There is information on the Highland council website about both professionals and for other approaches like peer awareness. All schools are encouraged to access the Autism Toolbox, which is available on the Support for Learners website and provides useful information on strategies and training materials to help support pupils with ASD.
Teaching methods

Teaching methods involve strategies like those mentioned above but are tailored to the individual child including for example, SPELL booklets and personal passports. Most children with ASD will have a Child’s Plan incorporating an individual education plan (IEP). There is a range of provision from mainstream, support bases, special units and special schools. However, it is one of the challenges of the area about how ranges of services can be provided in the rural and remote areas. Another challenge is the provision of education for able pupils who cannot manage mainstream and have more challenging behaviour.

Support for staff

There is a tiered approach with levels of training available to school staff ranging from autism awareness at level one, specific strategies including the SPELL training at level two through to specialist courses. This training is multi-agency. There is access to advice both within education provided, for example by educational psychology and AOES or via relevant health professionals. Particular areas like transitions are planned and prepared for. The Highland Council, in consultation with partner agencies, young people and parents have recently developed a Transitions Guide and Transitions Bridge to facilitate this process.

Support for the classroom/behaviour management

Where a child or young person’s behaviour impacts on other pupils support is available to all those involved. This can involve raising peer awareness through to seeking advice from specialist professionals. Issues around behaviour are often addressed through a solution-focused approach. It is important to recognise that if there are difficulties in school the whole family may be affected and a wide range of services may be needed, short term or longer term. These can be coordinated within the GIRFEC approach and a lead professional will be identified from the involved professionals to take this forward and compile a Child’s Plan. In some cases this may incorporate a Co-ordinated Support Plan.

There is an autism advisory group (AIG) which includes education psychology, AOES, clinical psychology, speech and language, social worker, occupational therapist as well as other relevant professionals to support locality services including school staff in working with children and young people who present with particularly difficult challenges. CAMHS services will be involved in supporting families in partnership with education in particular circumstances.

Dispute management

Highland Council and NHS Highland support CHIP+ to provide information for families about the ASL Act. They can support them at meetings and refer onto other services like for example, advocacy. An autism pack for schools,
parents and professionals is in the process of being updated by CHIP+ in consultation with relevant professionals and parents.

There is a staged approach within and between agencies to respond to and manage parental concerns under the Getting it Right for Every Child procedures. Each agency has its own processes with regard to managing and seeking solutions to disputes with parents. Where there is a Child’s Plan in place, a dispute between parents and an agency or agencies can be taken to the Area Service Managers Group who will advise and direct staff accordingly. Where these disputes concern Additional Support Needs and provision of additional support, falling under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, there is a clear pathway for parents and professionals to follow. Most disputes can be and are resolved locally, at school level or area level. However, parents can access mediation, dispute resolution and Additional Support Needs Tribunals should they wish to do so to help find an agreed way forward. Parents are advised of their rights within these processes, which are clearly outlined in guidance and information leaflets.

There are guidelines in Highland Council for avoiding exclusions and clear policies for action should this not work. There is a staged policy for dealing with parental concerns or grievances in addition to those in the ASL system.

**Argyll and Bute Partnership: NHS Highland/Argyll and Bute Council**

**Assessment and diagnosis**

There is a process of local assessment for children with suspected diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. There is a referral pathway in place for the CHP, but children are seen close to where they live. The teams were all trained in the use of ADOS. Structured autism specific questionnaires are used and assessments are also videoed to allow for review and also to facilitate second opinion or team peer review. Teams are made up of a variety of professionals, but always include a speech and language therapist.

We are closely supported by Autism Argyll in this work. Families are always provided with a pack of written information following diagnosis (devised in conjunction with Autism Argyll).

Parents are offered the Hanen "More than Words" Intervention by SLT as first line intervention to support their communication with the child or young person.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM NHS ORKNEY

Process by which children/young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed

In Orkney, children are assessed by a multi-disciplinary team including the health visitor, paediatric occupational therapist, paediatric physiotherapist and speech and language therapist. If further assessment is required, this is undertaken in liaison with the education psychologist. This process is in line with SIGN guidelines.

Support for families with children/ young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system

We have a Homelink service provided through the Orkney Islands Council Education Department. Additional support is available through the health visitors and education psychologist. The paediatric therapists work with the school and families to provide further advice and support. In Orkney we have an ASD Parent Support Programme. This is provided on a multi-agency basis by trained staff and is a new programme which started in autumn 2009.

Support for children/young people with ASD at school

The school health service provides routine screening, health advice and support to all children as part of the universal service to all school age children in Orkney. The school nurses do not have specific skills or training in the autism and do not run a specific service for children with autism. The school health team has an identified gap in service for a dedicated nurse for children with additional needs.

Teaching methods which best support children/ young people with ASD

Managed through the Orkney Islands Council Education Service.

Support available for teachers/ head teachers of pupils with ASD

The Paediatric Therapists work with families and teachers to provide further advice and support. They can recommend particular equipment to support the child’s learning needs.

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

Managed through the Orkney Islands Council Education Service.

Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/ young people with ASD in the classroom

Managed through the Orkney Islands Council Education Service but paediatric occupational therapist sometimes involved in supporting sensory issues.
Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions

Managed through the Orkney Islands Council Education Service.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Process of diagnosis

Diagnosis follows a process of clinical assessment undertaken by a range of paediatricians, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists within the local NHS trust.

It is important to note that educational duties are not dependent on clinical diagnosis but accurate assessment of need. The Additional Support for Learning Legislation and Code of Practice make it clear that it is the profile of individual need to which education authorities must respond where determining levels and types of support to be provided.

Support for families

The processes of staged intervention and focused assessments within the ‘Additional Support for Learning’ arrangements offer very robust guidance and support in determining what a child or young person needs in order to benefit from education.

To cover needs across a spectrum or continuum, experience and research indicate that a range of levels and types of support is necessary to tailor appropriate responses for individuals.

Many children and young people do very well in their local mainstream school (the natural default position within legislation (2000 Act)) with some additional support. The use of technology, classroom assistant and support teacher input combines to address the majority of needs.

Use of an ASD communications base in a local primary school or enhanced provision within a designated secondary school adds to options available if a child or young person requires a higher level of input or a quieter setting. This provision can be accessed either full-time or as a split placement. Again, allocation will be tailored to the shared and agreed understanding of need.

Children who require very high levels of support can be placed, taking account of other needs (for example, cognitive ability) in one of the authority’s four special schools.

Children presenting with the most challenging needs/behaviour will be placed in one of our special schools with exceptionally high levels of staff both in terms of ratios and also levels and types of training.

The appropriate headteachers and educational psychologist will work closely with parents/carers to determine the most suitable package of support/educational placement for a child or young person.
Support for children/young people at school

So much has already been said on this subject. The level and type of support is a response to a shared understanding of what an individual child or young person needs in order for them to benefit from education.

The levels of support run from mild, which may include support for PSD, the use of technology and some support in class from a trained classroom assistant, to severe, which involves support from three specially trained staff members in a one to one setting in a special school. All levels in-between are considered as part of staged intervention. The question starts with general knowledge about ASD and its impact on learning and then moves to the assessment profile and considers, “What does THIS child/young person with ASD require?”

Teaching methods

All mainstream, specialist unit or special school teachers within the authority who are or will be (in relation to planning for progression) teaching a child or young person with ASD undertakes a three-day TEACCH course run for the authority by staff from the National Autistic Society. Over the past four years, almost 200 teachers have been trained.

The training includes the use of visual timetables, visual prompts, structuring activities, transition between tasks (starting and finishing, etc.). We have found over the past four years that this detailed level of planning of the learning environment has made most of our mainstream classes appropriate settings for children with ASD to learn.

For specific individuals, further focused consultation with an educational psychologist or education officer is needed to make adjustments to approaches or to resources in order to effect a better match between need and intervention.

Support available for teachers

The TEACCH training already mentioned offers a very high and well evaluated level of support for teachers. In addition, the Scottish Society for Autism offers a range of one-day courses for teachers and for classroom assistants. Three such one-day courses have been run three times each year: topics include inclusion in the mainstream class and dealing with very challenging behaviour.

Classroom assistants with specific training are allocated to work with the class/subject teacher to support a child or young person. Training has included CALM training where it is felt that diversion, de-escalation or even restraint may be required on occasions.
Technology is also allocated to children and young people where this may help. Laptop computers with a range of appropriate learning-based software are distributed.

Every school has also been allocated visual/tactile support materials for developing literacy (Phonix and Sentifix). Boardmaker is also widely used to support communication.

The Psychological Service offers Solution Focused training to schools. One to one sessions with teachers are also provided to construct solutions to any enduring difficulties.

A quality improvement officer with a sound background in Additional Support for Learning is also available to teachers and to schools to offer advice.

**Impact on other learners**

One of the assessment measures used when we determine levels of need for support or appropriate educational placement is the impact on other learners (and on staff). Most learners with ASD integrate well with their peers in mainstream schools.

Some aspects of ASD can present as challenging or disruptive behaviour.

One to one support within a clear, visually structured environment reduces distress for the child/young person with ASD and helps settle behaviour.

On the whole, other children and young people are very supportive and tolerant where they have grown up alongside children who present different types of behaviour.

Clinical or educational psychologists frequently undertake whole-class or whole-school input with staff and pupils to explain why, at times a specific child may behave differently.

**Dealing with challenging behaviour relating to Autism Spectrum Disorders**

We have one young person in a mainstream secondary, by parental request, who is supported by two members of staff (constant 2 to 1 support). Another child has two hours, mid-day out of school with outdoor education staff. This activity calms him and enables him to contain his behaviour.

A range of measures are used to reduce distress and to enable a child or young person to manage their behaviour.

Children presenting very high levels of aggressive behaviour have their educational needs met in one of our special schools where all staff are skilled and have specialist training.
Mechanisms for dealing with disagreements / resolving disputes

In line with our Additional Support for Learning Framework, the authority operates a staged process of resolving disagreements:

- Informal/formal discussions with staff immediately involved in working with the child or young person
- Discussions with ASfL Co-ordinator within the establishment
- Discussions with head of centre, headteacher
- Case review by the school’s designated quality improvement officer
- Investigation by school's designated QIO and the QIO with responsibility for Additional Support for Learning
- Mediation (Common Ground Mediation Services)
- Independent adjudication
- Reference to ASN Tribunal

Since enactment of the current legislation, the authority has had no references made to the Tribunal and has had three references for independent adjudication

In 228, the authority published the outcomes of a major survey conducted for the authority by Children In Scotland. This survey showed very high levels of customer satisfaction (80%) by both parents/carers and children and young people with ASN.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Children and young people learn in different ways and may require additional support for a variety of reasons at different times in their education. For some children and young people, the support they require will be of a long-term nature, whereas for others it may only be for a temporary period in their schooling. Children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder are likely to need long term additional support, that is, provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the same age in schools.

It is recognised that without this support, children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) would be unable to benefit from school education and achieve their full potential.

It is North Lanarkshire Council’s aim that all children and young people have their additional support needs identified and met to ensure that they have every opportunity to become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

Children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder benefit from North Lanarkshire’s translation of The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 in our Policy into Practice guidelines, in place in every educational establishment. Every establishment has received training in respect of these guidelines and is supported by one of six additional support managers. Managers also link with other agencies, parents and children/young people and support establishments to adhere to the duties and responsibilities under the Act. Three managers (one from each of the additional support bases) also participate in the ‘getting it right for children/young people with autism’ strategy group – a multi-agency group including representatives from the Educational Psychological Service, Social Work, Speech and Language Therapy Service, Pre-five Support for Learning and ‘Hope for Autism’ – a voluntary organisation. This group has responsibility for ensuring a strategic approach to the provision of training and support for all establishments and staff working in partnership to support children and young people. This group also links with:

- The ASD Forum: A group consisting of a representative from every specialist establishment catering for autism and language disorder in North Lanarkshire.
- The Children’s Services Strategy sub-group which considers children and young people with additional support needs.
- The six locality planning groups.
- Additional support managers, integration manager, child protection officer, education officer (support for learning) and a range of staff who work for the support for learning department.
• Quality Improvement Service.

This ensures that:

• Children and young people benefit from a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to meeting their needs.
• Additional support needs are identified as early as possible.
• Provision for children and young people is planned through a systematic approach of assessment, implementation, review and evaluation of next steps.
• Roles and responsibilities are clarified for professionals working with our children and young people.
• The views of pupils and their parents/carers are taken account of when making decisions which affect them
• Information in respect of effective provision is shared across departments within Learning and Leisure.

Strong links with the Children’s Services Strategy Group, locality planning mechanisms and the organisation of multi-agency working facilitates the sharing and creation of resources for a best value and more seamless approach. This ensures that children and young people enjoy the right to feel safe, healthy, nurtured, included, accepted, respected, responsible and active within the learning environment.

Identification and assessment

Since factors will impact differently on children/young people it is important to tailor supports to the needs of the individual, and not make general provision for all children/young people with a diagnosis such as autistic spectrum disorder. A diagnosis of, for example, Asperger Syndrome helps to inform the assessment process. However, further information is required to ensure that support will be appropriate and proportionate to the needs of each individual child or young person, regardless of diagnosis. The duration of such support will vary accordingly to the needs of the individual child/young person and their situation.

Placement within specialist schools and units are allocated where a process of assessment has indicated that there are additional support needs that cannot be met within the local mainstream establishment.

Assessment extends beyond the formal medical diagnosis and children/young people’s learning and support needs are assessed under four categories:

• Health and disability
• Home circumstances
• Social and emotional
• Learning environment

This is a dynamic process that considers information from:
• Norm referenced tests
• Criterion referenced assessments
• Checklists of behaviours and skills
• Pupil profiles and previous records
• Parents
• Consultation with other professionals
• Examples of past and current work
• Minutes of review meetings and case conferences
• Psychological assessments
• Children and young people

Assessment enables staff to build a profile of:

• The child/young person’s needs as a learner
• Curriculum issues
• Social skills and relationships
• Emotional behaviour

Diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome or autistic spectrum disorder is often carried out by Lanarkshire Autism Diagnostic Service (LADS). Referrals are made jointly by speech and language therapists in partnership with the community paediatrician, educational psychologist or child and family clinician.

**Staged Intervention**

In North Lanarkshire Council, all educational establishments adopt a model of staged intervention to identify, assess and support children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder. This provides for:

• A record of intervention and achievement for individual children/young people as they progress through school
• An inclusive approach which involves parents, children/young people, relevant staff and support services
• Agreed learning and support plans which record the needs of individual children/young people
• A solution focussed approach to resolving issues early and at the least level of intrusive intervention
• A structured monitoring and review cycle

**Stage 1**
At this initial stage additional support needs are met from within the resources of the classroom and may include differentiation, the adoption of a particular teaching style, the provision of visual timetables or the use of home-school diaries.

The class teacher in discussion with others, plans for, evidences and monitors this intervention.
Effective teaching and learning is promoted as a sound foundation for meeting the support needs of all children and young people. The largest and most accessible resources we have are within our classrooms and playrooms. Effective management of the resources at this stage allows for the least intrusive and the most inclusive methods of support.

North Lanarkshire also provides support through a variety of initiatives available to all establishments, for example, PAThS, Circle Time and Circle of Friends.

Stage 2
At this stage, additional support needs are met from within the resources of the school, not normally found in the classroom. These resources may include the use of a support for learning teacher, specialist examination arrangements, flexible and personalised curricular packages, college placements, or advice from other appropriate agencies.

The class teacher, in discussion with others, plans for, evidences and monitors this intervention.

Where this support, however, is intensive and enduring (likely to last more than 12 weeks) and it is essential to facilitate access to an elaborated, reinforced or extended curriculum, an additional support plan (ASP) will be required.

This plan is drawn up by the class teacher who co-ordinates the long-term and short-term targets. Targets are set according to pupils needs (for literacy, numeracy and personal and social development). Training has been provided for every educational establishment and exemplars provided, to ensure that personal and social targets for children/young people with autistic spectrum disorder are considered for the triad of impairments. Where required, support is outlined for positive outcomes in:

- Social imagination and flexibility of thought
- Social communication
- Social interaction

At this level of individualisation, the head teacher or designated senior manager has the overview of all children/young people with additional support plans.

Stage 3
At this stage other services within education, but outwith the school are involved in the child/young person's plan, for example, sensory support service, educational psychology service or the micro-technology service. Support may include interactive video guidance, the use of social stories, counselling and support for staff and parents.
The plan is drawn up by the class teacher who co-ordinates the long-term and short-term targets. At this level of individualisation, the head teacher or designated senior manager has the overview of all children/young people’s additional support plans.

**Stage 4**
At stage 4 it is recognised that a child/young person may require additional support from services out with education, for example, speech and language therapy services, social work services or occupational therapy services.

A small number of children/young people may have additional support needs arising from complex or multiple factors which require a high degree of co-ordination of support from the education authority and other agencies. For these pupils a co-ordinated support plan (CSP) will be required.

All services and agencies involved with the child/young person will play a part in the drawing up of the CSP. The CSP co-ordinator will arrange the meetings and write the CSP. A CSP is a statutory document that is subject to regular monitoring and reviews for those children/young people who meet the criteria.

**Specialist provision**
Provision for children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder is enhanced through the establishment of a joint partnership agreement for the delivery of speech and language therapy services. This agreement extends the previous service level agreement, ensuring a quantity of provision and outlines quality indicators to support a quality provision. Close working and collegiality is required to ensure that:

- Formal arrangements are agreed between education staff and therapists
- There is effective two-way communication
- Collaboration is recognised and valued
- Working partnerships are ensured

**Outreach Service**
Findings from research from the language and communication team within psychological services have shown how other education authorities use outreach services. In consultation with the ASD Getting it Right for Every Child strategy group and education officer (support for learning) it was agreed that support should be pooled from existing resources available across Learning and Leisure Services, in order to provide support and training to build staff confidence within mainstream provision.

**Roles and responsibilities**
Within all establishments, support for children/young people with autistic spectrum disorder can be provided from a wide range of professionals
**Senior Management Team**
The team will ensure an overview and the effective management of provision for pupils needs through:

- Staffing and deployment of staff
- Staff roles and responsibilities
- Resources
- Accommodation
- Budgets and finance
- Curriculum
- Links with external agencies

**Teachers**
Teachers are responsible for educating pupils in their class and:

- Respond to individual needs
- Use a range of assessment techniques and teaching strategies to support children/young people
- Consult with children/young people, parents and other staff and agencies as required to ensure appropriate interventions
- Review regularly, and in consultation, the progress that has been made
- Establish next steps, as appropriate

**Teachers - Support for Learning**
Support for learning teachers in schools:

- Promote the staged intervention process and a whole school approach to support for learning
- Work in consultation with school staff and agencies
- Maintain detailed records of strategies/interventions and communicate these to the classroom teacher
- Support the process of additional support planning and co-ordinated support planning
- Provide support/advice and staff development

**Classroom assistants**
Classroom assistants in schools help to raise attainment and work directly under the supervision and direction of the class teacher. Although classroom assistants do not have a teaching role, they can perform a number of duties in the classroom, some of which may include supporting learning.

**Additional support needs assistants (ASNAs)**
ASNAs in schools support access to the curriculum for all pupils. They always work under the supervision and direction of the class teacher. They are allocated to school in line with North Lanarkshire’s Council’s resource allocation procedures. Support is specified for a particular pupil and in response to meeting particular needs. Flexibility will be clarified where an assistant meets the needs of more than one pupil in the class and or where an assistant is withdrawing support and encouraging pupil independence. Duties may include:
• Assisting with mobility of pupils, their personal care and handling of special equipment
• Promoting strategies to raise achievement
• Conducting learning tasks as directed by the class teacher
• Providing pastoral support for pupils
• Liaising with all staff to support pupils
• Participating in relevant staff development
• Consulting with class teachers over progress of pupils

Transitions

All children and young people go through transitions in their education. Early or timely planning is required to ensure continuity and progression between stages, breaks in education or a change in circumstances. Care is taken to plan for effective transitions for children/young people by:

• Adhering to legislative timescales
• Effective communications between establishments and agencies
• Shared joint assessment of support requirements
• Ensuring continuity of support
• Informing and involving children/young people and their parents/carers
• A focus on solutions, not problems
• Specifying the least intrusive methods of support required to meet anticipated needs
• Discussing and passing on information held in files, pupil profiles etc.
• Follow-through.

Managing transitions often involves a higher number of professionals, therefore the process of planning for additional support has to outline the liaison between sectors in education. Where other agencies are involved, the co-ordination of support has to outline the ways in which professionals across other agencies will work together to meet and support a pupil’s needs both in the current educational establishment and the establishment that the child/young person will transfer to.

Under current legislation, at least twelve months before the change schools are required to:

• Seek advice/information from all appropriate agencies
• Seek and take account of the views of the child/young person and their parents/carers
• Inform the child/young person and their parents/carers of decisions made
• Take account of this information and make necessary arrangements before the change takes place

At least six months before the change is about to happen schools will:
• Decide what agencies need to be informed of the child/young person’s needs
• Inform involved agencies of the date of transition, the child/young person’s support needs and the provision to be arranged to enable the smooth transition (with the necessary consents).
• Provide the parent/carer and the child/young person with copies of any information passed on to the appropriate agencies, for example, any other local authority, health board, colleges of further and higher education

**Staff development**

Opportunities are provided for staff to increase and extend their skills, knowledge and to reflect upon the professional development they require to meet the needs of children/young people with autistic spectrum disorder. Staff have access to development opportunities within and outwith the school setting. Opportunities include:

• Introductory course – Support for Learning
• Whole school awareness raising-Autistic Spectrum Disorder
• Support advice for individual teachers in respect of individual children/young people
• Planning for additional support needs
• Co-ordinated support plans
• Additional support for learning legislation
• Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
• College courses – autism (additional support needs assistants)
• College courses support for learning – HNC and HND
• TEACH
• National Autistic Society conferences
• University accredited modular programmes
• Training will be offered to staff from other agencies through locality planning groups.
• Specialised training opportunities for staff who work with children and young people who have autistic spectrum disorder as well as severe learning difficulties.

Training to staff is offered across the three sectors, early years, primary and secondary. A full day introduction to ASD is followed by four half day workshops. These five sessions will be repeated from January to May 2010 and topics are enhanced with materials from the Autism Toolbox.

The strategy group intends to conduct an audit of all establishments to identify children and young people with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders. This database will be extended to include training and support to establishments that have identified pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The group is also exploring the possibility of extending this database with follow up information in respect of leaver destinations.
Full Involvement

In all establishments, at all stages of intervention, the importance of full involvement of parents/carers and children/young people is recognised and acknowledged. They play a key role and hold information that supports positive outcomes and contribute to North Lanarkshire Council’s consultation on improvements in provision.

Involvement is important:

- When a pupil has been identified as having additional support needs
- When there is a change in a pupil’s circumstances that requires a review of provision
- On a regular basis to review short term and long term targets
- To ensure that support packages are planned with the child/young person and not for the child/young person

Parents/carers and children/young people are also encouraged to contribute to their plans, discuss any concerns and to initiate a review if necessary.

Resolving disputes

The Additional Support for Learning Act allows parents/carers and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder the right to a supporter or advocate. Schools and establishments aim to develop good relationships and enable lines of communication that respects the concerns raised and resolves such concerns at the earliest level. Where schools are unable to resolve a complaint then the matter can be referred to the additional support manager within the locality. A more formal mediation service is also available through ‘Resolve’. This service is voluntary, confidential, and offers solutions where both parties are prepared to move towards a joint solution. Where less formal arrangements do not resolve the complaint then individual cases may be considered through:

- Independent adjudication: for disputes in respect of a child/young person’s additional support needs.
- Additional Support Needs Tribunal: for disputes in respect of co-ordinated support plans.

Where children/young people with autistic spectrum disorder are considered for exclusion from school, schools and establishments must seek advice from the education officer (support for learning). Young people and their parents/carers are informed of their right to appeal any decisions in respect of exclusions. Appeals are heard by the Education Appeals Committee.

Continuous improvement

Self-evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching and support for pupils is the responsibility of all staff in all establishments. Establishments receive support and advice from additional support managers and quality
improvement officers. Quality indicators described in “How Good is Our School 3” are used to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of provision of support for learning within the school.

In practice this will include:
- Observation in classes.
- Consulting class teachers and support for learning teachers, and where appropriate, any other staff working closely with children/young people.
- Monitoring attainments, achievements and support plans.
- Consultation with parents/carers.
- Consultation with children and young people.
- Evaluations on training, support and development delivered to staff by professionals on a multi-agency basis.

Additional support managers and quality improvement officers remain vigilant to the possibilities offered within A Curriculum for Excellence, which promotes an innovative approach to curricular planning, participation and personalisation. It is the core responsibility of all staff to fulfil the outcomes within literacy, numeracy, and health and well being, and this will further enable effective provision at stages one and two of the staged intervention process, for children/young people with an autistic spectrum disorder.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

The key strength of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 was to remove categories of impairment and to recognise the need instead to identify children's additional support needs regardless of cause. It aimed to give children with social and emotional difficulties similar status in terms of the law as those with learning difficulties in respect of having their needs met. To separate out a particular group on the basis of a diagnosis will lead to a hierarchy where increased focus will be given to particular groups at the expense of others, therefore undermining the equality which was intended by the original Act.

Parents may feel less concerned about having the needs of children with ASD specifically recognised in law if local systems for identifying ASD were made more efficient and effective. While education authorities are charged with meeting children's needs regardless of cause, many parents find it helpful to their understanding to have a cause identified. Were this to happen earlier and more efficiently, there would be improved partnership working without anxieties and distrust developing when parents do not feel their child's needs are being recognised. The Autism Toolkit provides a helpful staff development resource to ensure that staff are well informed about particular considerations in meeting the needs of children on the autistic spectrum.

We therefore support the submission made on behalf of the Association of Additional Support for Learning Officers (ASLO).
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

Assessment and diagnosis

Multi-agency team was set up a number of years ago to provide a diagnostic service for children and families in Scottish Borders and works very well. The team follow guidelines as set out by Health. Follow up is offered by CAMHS service and by education support team.

Education team see all children with diagnosis and some pupils who may not have a diagnostic label for whatever reason but all involved with the child agree their needs are best understood within the autism spectrum.

Support for families and children and young people

Following diagnosis parents are offered follow up appointments through the Autism Team/CAMHS. Information packs are also provided at point of diagnosis including information on a local support group. Specialist education service also follows up newly diagnosed children and liaises with any local agencies already involved, e.g. home-visiting service. Education had developed a five staged support approach to ensuring all children and young people have equal access to support in schools. Families will have the support of various agencies including educational psychology; specialist autism team; other agencies connected to Borders autism team.

Support for children/young people with ASD in school

A specialist team set up to support ASD in schools is essential and should be a ‘stand alone’ service with staff suitably trained and experienced. Packages tailored as much as possible to individual needs which may include a place within a primary specialist base. All pupils have time within their week in their local mainstream school and base teachers support this placement. An outreach team is also set up to support pupils in mainstream. Other specialist agencies e.g. speech therapy; occupational therapy will support children and staff in the child’s setting. At secondary level pupils are supported either through outreach team or in LS base/ complex needs base. Buddy systems are in place and Inclusion groups are also developed for pupils who find classroom activities difficult to access.

Teaching methods

Specialist service should employ a variety of ASD friendly strategies including TEACCH approaches; visual schedules; social stories; PECS to suit all types of pupils. A number of staff should be trained in all or some of the above. The most significantly affected pupils in specialist bases are supported within small groups of no more than 6 pupils and have a high staff/pupil ratio because of their needs. The ASD service has developed autism-friendly curricular programmes in language and communication/personal and social development including sex education. A few pupils in mainstream also have
1-1 assistant support to enable them to access the curriculum and social activities within the school.

Support available for teachers/HTs of pupils with ASD

A variety of CPD courses on autism have been developed for mainstream staff by the specialist team. Guidelines on managing ASD have also been produced for all teachers in the authority. Regular meetings around the child are held to allow for individual discussion. Spectrum liaison group meets three times per year where a multi-agency group meets to discuss and ‘problem solve’ individual referrals. This may include mainstream staff. Mainstream staff should have access to a ‘key’ person with ASD knowledge.

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

Children can have huge impact on class dynamics particularly where additional support is not available. Lack of understanding from staff and peers can make situation more difficult. Apparent ‘normality’ of pupils can be very deceiving and cause misunderstanding from all levels of staff but often management. The nature of difficulties can make experienced staff feel deskilled. Challenging behaviour is often the result of poor handling and management usually due to lack of understanding. Each child with ASD can present with very different strengths and needs which makes generalisation very difficult to support.

Approaches to dealing with behaviour

All behaviour has to be seen in the context of autism. Understanding of the condition is essential if behaviour management is to be successful. One of the main dangers is taking a strategy and applying it without real understanding of the cause. People tend to want ‘quick fix’ and this is usually not appropriate. A long period of observation may be necessary to see connections and causes. Very challenging behaviour cannot really be managed wholly in mainstream and requires a specialist approach and even there may require a very structured environment for pupils to settle and cope with stresses and triggers. The most challenging behaviour is often from ‘asperger’ type pupils who otherwise would be best placed in mainstream.

Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions

Mediation available but in the norm most disputes are handled by frontline staff successfully which is by far the best way to manage and support good relationships. Local support group available for support if required.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

Process by which children/Young people with ASD have their condition diagnosed.

The staged intervention process that the Schools Service in Shetland follows applies to all children and young people with additional support needs, including those with social communication difficulties and ASD, including Asperger Syndrome. School staff follow an ASD referral pathway when they have concerns that a pupil might have ASD. They will contact the Education Psychology Service for an informal consultation to discuss possible next steps. The school, after consulting with parents, may then either make a referral to our ASN outreach service, where we have a full-time outreach teacher with specialist qualifications in ASD, or to a speech and language TTherapist. Either of these routes of referral could lead onto the ASD diagnostic pathway, involving identification of difficulties by a clinical psychologist.

Support for families with children/young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system

In Shetland, our expectation is that most pupils with ASD will have their difficulties addressed by the school they would normally attend, with support from our outreach service, ASN teacher(s) attached to each school and ASN auxiliary staff if this is needed. Pupils with a greater level of need can be supported in our two specialist support units, one for primary and one for secondary, located in Lerwick. Very occasionally, we fund provision on the mainland in a specialist school, if it is decided that this is appropriate.

Support for children/young people with ASD at school

All of our schools have allocated time with an ASN teacher. Additionally, if a child/young person requires additional support because of their level of need, the Schools Service will fund additional support needs auxiliary hours to the school, following an agreed process linked to our staged intervention process. Depending on level of need, some pupils will have their needs met through use of an Individual Education Plan, while others may need a Coordinated Support Plan. Reviews and targets for Individual Education Plans will be set and are monitored by the Schools Service. Coordinated Support Plans operate within current legislation for them under the ASL Act 2004, and reviews are monitored by the Schools Service

Teaching methods which best support children/young people with ASD in the classroom

Training is organised for teachers of ASN in methods which best support pupils with ASD. As part of their role, they are expected to cascade this information to the staff in the schools to which they are attached. ASN Staff have received a training day in the Autism Toolkit, and there is at least one copy of this in every school. Additionally, the outreach specialist teacher in
ASD will visit schools, sometimes with an education psychologist, to advise on access to the curriculum and strategies to support a specific pupil. Depending on level of need an outreach support professional may visit particular pupils on a regular basis. The Education Support Officer for Additional Support Needs, in consultation with other outreach support professionals, may also visit schools to advise on provision and strategies. CALL Scotland have a contract with the Schools Service in Shetland and visit on a regular basis to go into schools and advise on ICT provision for specific pupils, some of whom have ASD. They also run training courses for ASN Staff when making their visits.

Support available for teachers/head teachers of pupils with ASD

Support is available as outlined above.

Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics

This is an issue of which our teaching staff is well aware. Schools can request support from the Education Psychology Service, who have outreach professionals specialising in Emotional Literacy. They may also request support from our Behaviour Support Unit, operating within our Schools Service, or from our specialist outreach support staff. A training day for ASN staff was recently given on emotional literacy. Additionally, some schools now have their own nurture groups. The outreach professionals from the Education Psychology Service are running follow-up courses during the next two terms in emotional literacy, and there will be an opportunity for ASN teachers to share examples of good practice at their next training day.

Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/young people with ASD in the classroom

As outlined above, schools have access to a number of professionals in order to receive support. An Outreach Support Group of professionals from Social Care and Education meet regularly and will discuss support for individual pupils, if appropriate permissions have been given. Very occasionally, a young person may not be able to sustain attendance at school, and in these cases, they may receive support from a home link teacher, or they may attend full-time at the Behaviour Support Unit for a period of time. If the young person is nearing the end of statutory education, their school, with appropriate permissions, may request a placement at our Bridges unit, which is a specialist placement for young people in transition between school and adult life who for a number of reasons, may not be able to attend school full-time, although they may still access some provision at their secondary school while at this placement. Whilst still on the school roll, a young person at Bridges will have the same access to the provision outlined above as their peers.

Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions

Shetland schools have an excellent record of harmonious relationships with parents. However, where a school is in dispute with a parent, there are clear
stages of support for parents and the school, initially at school level, then at School Service level. An independent mediation service may be used, followed by dispute resolution by independent adjudication, if necessary.

An excluded person comes into the category of pupils who have additional support needs. Schools follow local guidelines, issued in 2005, that must be followed when a school is considering exclusion. These are consistent with guidelines issued by the Scottish executive in 2003. Schools support excluded young people in a range of ways – by sending work home, by using internet links to provide and correct work, by releasing staff to support the young person if appropriate, and by linking with other agencies (e.g. the Home-Link teacher) to ensure effective home-school links during a period of exclusion.

Shetland is a small authority and expulsion is rare. However, if a placement on the islands breaks down for a pupil to the extent that it is no longer viable, the Additional Support Needs Management Team will consider options on the mainland.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM STIRLING COUNCIL

Pre school children are referred to the Community Early Years Assessment Team (CEAT) for co-ordinated assessment by a number of professionals. Agreement on diagnosis is made and parents informed in a multi agency CEAT meeting.

If the diagnosis is unclear or the child is older, they are referred to CAMH (Children and Adolescent Mental Health) by a health professional or educational psychologist. The Forth Valley agreement means the diagnosis is made by a joint assessment, speech and language therapist, CAMH and educational psychologist. Staged Intervention meetings are used as a forum for gathering and sharing information.

Post diagnosis information is given to the family e.g. SIGN guidelines and NHS information for parents and carers ASD. Currently, we are developing a local information sheet to accompany this information, with an identified person as the educational contact.

The Staged Intervention process is Stirling Council’s response to meeting the needs of young people with ASN. A Staged Intervention meeting would be called with the parents, young person and appropriate persons there. Children under three are supported by Outreach Services, who work with young people from 0-18.

Within Stirling authority, young people can access specialist provisions at Callander Primary School or Riverside Primary School or for secondary education, St. Modan’s High School. These provisions are specialist provisions within mainstream schools. Emphasis across the school to create an ASD friendly environment. They offer small classes with a high level of adult support and staff with specific ASD qualifications and knowledge. Young people may also stay in their mainstream school and be supported by the outreach service. The outreach service has four teachers, one co-ordinator and one support for learning assistant.

The outreach service delivers staff development to all schools who support a young person with ASD. They have produced a folder of support materials. As part of the staff development, strategies to support the young person are discussed. Various strategies support our young people and are specific to their needs. Children under five access the STAR (Stirling Autism Response) Programme. This is carried out at home with the family.

All headteachers can access support from the outreach service and regular staff development is offered. There are ASD training opportunities on the annual calendar – generally five afternoons and annually one day with an international speaker. Approximately 35 staff across the authority attend the annual Scottish Society for Autism (SSA) Conference. Outreach services also respond to specific requests for staff development.
In line with the Disability Discrimination Act, young people with Autism Spectrum Disorders are not excluded if their behaviour is a result of their disability. In the event of a dispute between the school, parents and young person, local authority guidelines would apply.
WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

Process by which children/young people with ASD have their condition assessed and diagnosed

West Lothian Education Service has a robust process in place (‘the Continuum of Support’) for assessing and identifying additional support needs, and carrying out appropriate educational planning for pupils. Where needs are identified which could be linked to ASD or social communication difficulties, professionals such as, ASD outreach teachers, educational psychologists, community child health practitioners, speech and language therapists and other allied health professionals join school staff to carry out an integrated assessment. A protocol for a multi-agency assessment has been devised by educational psychologists to identify the needs of young people with a range of difficulties in ‘social communication and interaction’.

Children in West Lothian can also be referred to the child development clinic and the ASD clinic at St John’s Hospital where a formal diagnosis can be made. Partnership working is well developed and assessment information shared across the identification and diagnostic pathways. In line with the guidance in the HMIE document *Education of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, allocation of support and resources in West Lothian is not restricted to those pupils with a formal diagnosis of ASD.

Support for families with children/young people with ASD in finding the best form of education and support through the education system;

The Continuum of Support referred to above, is designed to involve parents, children and young people throughout the educational process. They are fully involved in a range of planning meetings e.g. IEP review meetings, CSP reviews, Integrated Assessment Meetings. Increased communication and support for parents has recently been offered in the nursery autism classes at Beatle Nursery and in addition West Lothian has increased the support from the Pre-school Home Visiting Teaching Team for families of children with Autism. Home visiting teachers, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and the social policy disability team can offer advice about ASD resources in West Lothian. Parents are encouraged to visit schools before they decide which ASD provision they think may be best for their child. Voluntary Agencies such as Signpost offer advice and support to families and mediation is offered by Common Ground Mediation Service.

Support for children/ young people with ASD at school

Pupils are supported by a range of school and education service staff, including class teachers, support for learning teachers, pupil support workers, ASD outreach teachers, ICT team, educational psychologists, allied health professionals, and community child health practitioners.

An enhanced transition programme is provided for P7 pupils moving from the autism resources in Dedridge and Balbardie primary schools. This is
supported by a transition booklet, *Getting to know my new School* produced by the ASD Outreach Team. This has been very well received by West Lothian schools.

The ‘Set up to Succeed’ project is an innovative project which provides autistic pupils with challenges in an out of school setting. The project helps pupils to overcome difficulties with communication, flexibility of thought, social relationships and sensory difficulties. There is a focus on health and wellbeing including first aid training, within the context of A Curriculum for Excellence. Pupils can work towards three separate awards, John Muir Award, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and Forrest School training.

West Lothian has a range of school provision to support children and young people:

- Additional support within a mainstream setting
- Specialist ASD resources within mainstream primary schools (Balbardie and Dedridge primary schools)
- Specialist ASD resources within mainstream secondary schools (St. Kentigern’s Academy and James Young High School)
- Beattie Special School Campus and Pinewood Special School (provides placements for pupils with a diagnosis of autism as well as other significant learning needs).
- Cedarbank Special School – ASD Centre (an ASD resource within a special school to meet the needs of vulnerable secondary pupils)

**Teaching methods which best support children/ young people with ASD**

Pupils are supported by strategies designed to meet their specific needs. Autistic friendly strategies such as visual timetables, social stories, a clear and structured approach, group work/video interaction guidance designed to develop social and communication skills, additional support in areas of difficulty (e.g. creative writing), arrangements for unstructured time (intervals, transition between classes etc). Where required the curriculum is adapted to take account of pupil needs, e.g. particular learning needs, possible motor difficulties, sensory difficulties etc. Approaches such as PECS and TEACCH are also used where appropriate.

For pupils with ASD, aspects of the environment can assault the senses and create confusion and fear. In structuring the physical aspects of the environment, account must be taken of the following difficulties arising from ASD:

- Sensory distortion (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory)
- Perceptual distortion (of light, shade, colour, movement)
- Executive function difficulties (personal organisation and planning)
- Central coherence difficulties (arranging the details/making connections)
- Inflexibility of thought and action (leading to difficulties in making transitions)
It is also important to take account of the visual learning style of the majority of pupils with ASD.

**Support available for teachers/ head teachers of pupils with ASD**

See above under heading of ‘support for children/young people with ASD’ for the range of professionals who support children and young people and their school staff.

West Lothian has developed the ‘Focus on Autism’ Strategy, which promotes and supports the Education of pupils with ASD. The Council have a service level agreement with the Scottish Society for Autism, who were involved in the development of the strategy and the Implementation of the resulting Action Plan. Effective links with the Children and Families Disability Team have been made and this offers support to school staff, provides advice which is consistent and based good practice and helps to ensure that approaches and strategies are linked across the separate areas of the child’s life. West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership Allied Health Professional team has produced a therapy target bank. This useful tool is particularly helpful to school staff in planning (e.g. IEPs) for pupils with a range of special educational needs including autism.

The Council quality assurance programme includes review of specialist ASD resources. The review team includes specialist staff from Scottish Society for Autism, Educational Psychology, Education Officer ASL. The review process identifies good practice and areas for development. An important part of the review is speaking to pupils and obtaining their views. The review results in the production of an action plan aimed at improving the learning of the children and this is supported and monitored by Education Services.

‘Promoting Excellence – Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Social Communication Needs’; A multi-agency working party developed this framework for schools, with the aim of providing advice and strategies in the management and support of pupils with ASD. The framework is aligned with West Lothian Council’s Continuum of Support. All headteachers will receive training on the framework during a series of seminars planned for this session.

There is a commitment to professional development of staff. CPD for staff is provided by multi agency partners on an annual basis this training is offered at a number of levels. Ongoing training for staff has also been provided by Scottish Society for Autism and outreach services staff. The Council currently supports two members of staff studying for the postgraduate certificate in autism at Strathclyde University.

**Impact that pupils with ASD have on classroom dynamics**

Many pupils with ASD are able to cope well in school with appropriate support. They make good contributions to classroom activities, particularly
those demanding logic and attention to fine detail. However, difficulties with social interaction, mis-reading social situations, focus on narrow range of interests and conversation topics, ridged interpretation of rules, anxiety related to change etc, can cause difficulties and misunderstandings within the class and school setting.

Sensory issues can also impact on classroom dynamics, where the pupil’s aversion to noise, touch, hearing or smell can require in a classroom environment which may feel restrictive to other pupils.

Pupils with ASD can become frightened, stressed and anxious by things which would not normally have an effect on the majority of pupils. This anxiety can lead to withdrawn challenging, repetitive or unpredictable behaviour. This can be distressing not only for the pupil with ASD but for the teacher and other pupils. This can have an impact on classroom dynamics.

**Approaches to dealing with behaviour of children/young people with ASD in the classroom**

The previous sections on teaching methods and impact on classroom dynamics provide information on approaches which are helpful and also give details of the features of ASD which give rise to challenging behaviour, distress and anxiety in some pupils.

It is important to build on pupil’s strengths and look for features in the environment that maximise learning opportunities and minimise stress and anxiety typically:

- Space that ensures freedom and clarity of movement
- Adjustable lighting and heating
- Good acoustics
- Adequate furniture and storage that is fit for purpose
- Furnishings and colour that both stimulate learning and promote a calm atmosphere

ASD behaviours are often difficult to understand and need to be considered within the context of the pupil’s ASD rather than simply as a ‘behaviour problem’. Often the pupil is trying to communicate something and effective support should be based on examining why the behaviour is occurring and suggesting changes to the situation in which it occurs. The answer is not necessarily to remove the pupil from the situation completely, rather to consider what needs to be done to reduce the stress, to try to develop good communication strategies and thus give the pupil the opportunity to build more effective coping strategies. It is clear no one approach suits all and different strategies and approaches are required to meet individual pupil needs.

**Mechanism for resolving disputes and appealing school expulsions**

Good communication with parents on all issues involving our pupils is best practice and fosters good relations between school and home. On occasion,
however, there are situations where effective communication with parents/carers is more difficult. In these circumstances, headteachers are required to make every effort to involve parents in finding a solution to progressing a way forward. At the earliest signs of this type of difficulty the school's education officer is available to provide support and guidance. This may involve an appropriate officer attending a meeting with school staff and the parents/carers by way of a mediatory approach. This has proven to be an effective method of de-escalating issues and avoiding the need to involve a more formal independent Mediation Service. West Lothian Council's Education Services also offers parents/carers an advocacy service through direct contact with the Support Services Manager and/or the Principal Support Officer based within the Additional Learning Needs Team. In accordance with the duties on Education Authorities contained within the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, West Lothian Council also provides independent mediation, free of charge, to families with children who have additional learning needs. This service is provided by the Edinburgh based organisation, Common Ground Mediation.

In line with government guidance on exclusion from schools, where a parent of a pupil is dissatisfied with the exclusion of his or her child, the parent has the right of appeal to the authority.

Conclusion

The commitment from West Lothian Council to meet the needs of all of their pupils, to encourage them to achieve their potential and to raise educational standards has impacted directly on the educational progress and development of young people with autism.