

Aberdeen: Supporting our learners with additional support needs

Introduction for young people and parents

What are additional support needs?

Needs which require support, which is different, or more than other children normally get.

A child or young person is considered to have additional support needs if they are unable to benefit from or unlikely to benefit from school or pre-school education without help which is additional to, or different from, the educational provision made generally for their peers. Children and young people who are looked after by Aberdeen City Council are held as having additional support needs unless we determine that they do not require additional support in order to benefit from education.

What are some of the factors that give rise to additional support needs?

Additional support needs can be caused by different things

Four categories can be used to help us understand and consider what can be done to help:

■ **Learning environment:**

Can include barriers to learning, achievement, being part of the life of school. Consideration should be given to ethos and relationships in school, what the curriculum is like or could be like, approaches to learning and teaching, use of technology, peer support.

Schools can support this by:

- monitoring and reviewing learning environments
- Asking children about difficulties and how these could be overcome
- having an accessible and simple environment
- use clear and accessible
- have a curriculum and experiences which meet the context of the school, and needs of our children and young people
- approaches to learning and teaching are up to date and appropriate and creative
- use of digital technology
- quality assurance and improvement planning embedded
- consider consultation: colleagues, partnerships, national advice, specialist

■ **Family circumstances:**

Can include bereavement, family breakdown, home disrupted by poverty, domestic abuse, parental alcohol, drug misuse, parental mental/ physical health problems, learner is a mother, young carer, from a family of Armed Services deployed into conflict, family affected by imprisonment, looked after, recently left care.

Schools can support this by:

- knowing our children, young people, families and communities well
- using understanding to consider potential barriers, how and who can deal with these
- listening to partnership agencies, joining up primary and secondary school info

- targeted resources including pupil equity funding as appropriate
- nurturing, protective activities and groups
- enabling effective relationships with key school staff
- considering support from appropriate agencies

- **Disability or health need:**

For example, where a child is a disabled child, sensory impairment, specific language difficulty, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, autism spectrum condition, learning difficulties. Mental health/ wellbeing issues: anxiety, eating disorders which have disrupted learning.

Schools can support these by:

- considering support ie what can be done or available in school
- consultation: child, young person, family, NHS, colleagues, agencies, specialist
- physical adaptation and resources to enable independence
- use specialist knowledge: colleagues, school nurse, partnership forum, child and adolescent mental health services, counselling services

- **Social and emotional factors**

Examples would include a child or young person who is being bullied or engaging in bullying behaviours, attachment difficulties, trauma affected.

Schools can support this by:

- having a clear, consistent ethos and policy followed by all
- enabling effective relationships with key people in school: eg staff, buddies, activities
- considering consultation depending on nature of factor and impact.
- voluntary, peer support, group, partnerships, support from appropriate agencies

There are many reasons why children and young people may need support to help them learn. Additional support needs can be long, short-term, or can be the help they need to get through a difficult time. As our children and young people are individuals, the support given will be based on individual needs and circumstances. This means that our children who may have similar additional support needs may be supported in differing ways.

What about wellbeing needs?

Wellbeing are the key areas that children and young people need in order to be ready to learn.

All services are working together in Aberdeen to make sure that every child enjoys being young and at the same time is Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These eight indicators, often shortened to SHANARRI – represent the basic requirements for all children and young people to grow, develop and reach their full potential. Further information: <https://www.aberdeengettingitright.org.uk/>

Does the Children & Families Service have a policy on provision for children and young people with additional support needs?

Aberdeen City Council operates a policy of inclusion. Information about how this is applied is available in our Guide to Children and Family Services ([Link](#)). Further information as to

how children and young people are supported in schools is available from your Head Teacher.

How do we identify if a child or young person has an additional support need?

We know our children, young people and families well and use this information to help us consider if there is an additional support need.

Sometimes children and young people may have their additional support needs identified at a very young age, for example if they have a medical condition or have support from specific agencies. For others, needs may emerge later.

Parents may recognise that their child is experiencing difficulties and seek advice through the school or NHS. Staff in schools assess learning as part of daily practice. They know their learners well: strengths, needs, progress and involve them in planning for learning. They regularly plan, record and report. This ensures action is taken as quickly as possible to identify barriers and consider any further assessment of needs.

Assessment is an ongoing process and schools will be able to identify most children and young people through our normal learning and reporting on educational progress. In Aberdeen our schools use a staged intervention process to help consider what supports and strategies are appropriate for our learners.

We identify by building a profile of the child/ young person, strengths by people who know them well which may include:

- Views of the child/ young person
- Views of parent
- Views of professionals
- Consider appropriate plans and strategies

When required we may ask other agencies to help identify an additional support need. This may be through advice, consultation, assessment and/or support. Parents views and the views of the child or young person will be part of this process.

What if I want an assessment?

Contact school.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, amended 2009 enables parents, young people or eligible children to request to arrange for an assessment or examination including educational, psychological or medical. This request should be to your child's school and in a recordable format ie writing, video and should state the reason for the request. We will acknowledge the request as soon as possible and the response to a request for assessment should be made within 10 weeks. The 10-week period begins when the education authority requests the assessment from the appropriate agency.

This right applies when we are proposing to establish whether a child or young person has additional support needs, or requires a coordinated support plan, or we propose to review an existing plan. The right to request an assessment applies at any time. Where it has been established that the child or

young person has additional support needs, another assessment may be requested if you consider this necessary.

There are times when we may decide not to arrange an assessment:

- may not be seen as being relevant given the child's or young person's circumstances
- may be unnecessary as there has not been a significant change in the child's or young person's circumstances since an earlier assessment was completed
- may be within an inappropriate timescale e.g. within a short time of a previous request
- may repeat recent assessments already carried out

Where we decide not to comply with a request for assessment, we will inform the person who made the request (the child, young person or parents) in writing, of our decision not to comply and explain why we are refusing the request. We will also inform the person who made the request about the right to access mediation services (in the case of young people and parents only) and dispute resolution arrangements and, where appropriate, the Tribunal. This process will not impact on our continuing to work together to support any additional support needs.

For more information please contact the appropriate school.

How do we provide support for a child or young person identified as having an additional support need?

Support depends on the individual child or your person and what they need.

As our children and young people are individuals, the support given will reflect individual needs and circumstances. This means that our children who may have similar additional support needs may be supported in differing ways.

Additional support generally falls into three overlapping headings:

- approaches to learning and teaching
- support from personnel
- provision of resources

In Aberdeen we use the staged intervention framework which includes:

- an emphasis on inclusion with early intervention in the most effective and least intrusive way;
- early and meaningful involvement and participation of the pupil and parents in the process; and
- effective, efficient and equitable targeting of resources.

Support for learners aged 5-18 years is categorised as follows:

Universal support: support delivered by class teacher through effective differentiation.

When appropriate the class teacher will be guided by other professionals in school with particular expertise.

Targeted support: support delivered by class teacher and other school staff. When appropriate, support will be provided by support services across Integrated children and family services.

Specialist/ Multi-agency support: support delivered by school and others. May be short term and help identify effective means of learner being fully included. In exceptional cases learners may be supported in another provision.

How do we ensure that we are meeting the needs of our children and young people?

Assessing and reviewing progress is part of our everyday learning in schools. This includes looking at where we can see improvements and what else needs to be considered.

Most children who have additional support needs are supported fully by their class or subject teacher who provides the learning environment, curriculum, resources and approaches to suit individual needs. Information will be shared with appropriate school staff who are working with the child/ young person.

Where appropriate, further planning may be required. This may include consideration of:

- the pupil in their learning environment
- identifying and understanding barriers to learning and their impact on the pupil's learning
- identifying areas of progress/strengths/interests
- working with the pupil, school staff, parents and partner agencies
- identifying strategies, routines, approaches, actions
- planning a programme of intervention

Personal planning may include: a strategy sheet shared with staff; an individual education programme or IEP, a personal learning plan; a care plan; a person-centred risk assessment or PCRA; a child's plan; a co-ordinated support plan or CSP.

What is the role of the named person?

The named person is someone already involved in offering support as part of their every day job.

This is normally the establishment contact: Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher, Guidance Teacher, Pupil Support Teacher for example. Support can include:

- building an understanding of the wellbeing of the child or young person
- working with the child, young person and parent to explore options to promote wellbeing and respond to identified needs
- providing direct advice or support
- connecting the child, young person and their parent to services which can provide support
- considering the need for joint support across services and coordinated planning

How do we use plans to support learning for those with additional needs?

All teachers plan for learners and their learning and review progress.

Personal Learning Planning includes frequent opportunities to discuss learning with an adult who knows them, helping to set goals for next stages in learning. All children with additional support needs should be engaged in personal learning planning, for many this will be enough to address additional support needs.

What is an Individualised Educational Programme, IEP?

An IEP is a plan for an individual with set targets to work towards, which is reviewed and updated to show any progress and next steps.

For those with needs that require extensive personalisation of the curriculum. Before an IEP is put in place consideration should be given to differentiation; organisation of opportunities to respond or complete tasks in different ways; individual or small group support from adult/ children; IT. Agreement of professionals that an IEP is appropriate, needs cannot be met through curriculum planning, differentiation or current supports alone. The IEP may include a SMART plan: how needs are to be met, learning outcomes, what specific additional support is required, over what timescale.

The IEP used to inform learning and teaching and is reviewed regularly by teachers and children as part of cycle. The needs of pupils are discussed as part of learning conversations and the timing of reviews supports transitions.

When do we use a Child's Plan?

This is a plan for children with needs who require support from more than one agency.

The team around the child will meet to draw up the child's plan. This should include the child or young person, parents and any other professionals who may provide support. In most cases, the plan will identify some targets for the child or young person's learning. If a child also has an IEP, this will be referred to in their child's plan. The plan will be reviewed at least once a year or more frequently depending on the young person's progress. Parents should always be involved in the review of their child's plan and should receive a copy.

What other plans might we use?

There are several plans which can be helpful for our learners.

A Young Carer's Statement: All children identified as young carers must be offered a Young Carers Statement. Range of health care plans for different areas within health eg medical, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, physiotherapy. Each plan informed by an assessment process with clear objectives and outcomes.

What is a co-ordinated support plan or CSP?

A CSP is a legal plan for those with significant additional support needs where other agencies are significantly involved and where that support needs planned well together.

This is a statutory plan for children/ young people with complex and enduring additional support needs who require significant, frequent additional support from education and other agencies to achieve educational objectives.

The CSP supports professionals work together to plan and coordinate roles and involvement to help children and young people achieve educational targets. It must be prepared even if parents disagree and is not linked to resources. A member of the school's senior management team, in consultation with parents, will liaise with other agencies to prepare the co-ordinated support plan and to arrange reviews which must begin at least 12 months from the date the plan was made or amended. Further information is available from

[Enquire](#).

How do I know if my child needs a coordinated support plan?

A meeting will be held in school and you will be invited.

Information from other agencies will be considered and the criteria for the CSP discussed.

What if I think my child needs a coordinated support plan?

Contact the school asking for a CSP to be considered.

You must do this in a recordable format ie in writing or video and state why you think a CSP is required. School will then advise you of the date for the meeting. The school will notify you within 8 weeks of the decision to consider the need for a CSP or not to progress the request. If it is decided not to progress your request, this is seen as decision not to prepare a CSP, and you can appeal to the Tribunal.

What if I think there needs to be a written plan?

Contact the school.

Where you think that additional support needs are significant and require a written plan, you should make the school establishment contact aware. This may be the Head Teacher, Guidance Teacher, Support for Learning team for example. They will then be able to discuss and agree any actions with you.

Any plan benefits from support and co-operation of parents. Parents bring a unique understanding and experience to the plan. The information you provide will help the amend, improve and implement the agreed plan. Your child's school can also provide advice where there may be ways to support the plan at home. Communication is an essential aspect of this, meetings and keeping in regular contact with school will help everyone have a shared understanding. If you have any concerns, make the establishment contact aware, please give our schools and Head Teachers the opportunity to address these.

What about attending a meeting?

Meetings help to get a full understanding for everyone involved.

In order to gain a full understanding of any support needs, strategies or actions, you may be asked to attend a meeting. These can be with the class teacher, support for learning, guidance teacher or may involve others including the head teacher, depute head teacher, school nurse, educational psychologist, social work, staff from specialist teams such as English as an additional language, vision support.

The invitation letter or email should tell you the purpose of the meeting and who has been invited. You may also wish to add things to discuss. You can also ask for any draft assessments or plans prior to the meeting.

Consider preparing for the meeting: identifying strengths or any concerns can be helpful. You can bring a supporter who can listen or take notes or an [advocate](#) who may take part in the discussion for you.

There will also be a record of the meeting, this may be a minute or the agreed plan: IEP or child's plan for example.

What if I want to discuss with someone not at school?

If you have a disagreement with the us about additional support needs, we ask that you contact the school in the first instance.

Parents, eligible children and young people can obtain advice, further information and support about how we meet additional support needs in Aberdeen, including support and advocacy services from a Quality Improvement Manager. Their contact details are available from the appropriate school.

What if I want to speak to someone who is independent?

There are a number of places to ask or find out more.

For information about additional support needs and your rights:

[Reach](#) is service for young people to help you understand rights to extra support in school.

Understanding what additional support for learning is can help when you are talking to your child's school about their learning or support needs. [Enquire](#) can:

- help you feel informed about your child's rights to additional support
- offer advice on how to work with your school to get the right support in place
- explain options for resolving disagreements

If you have a concern and don't feel it has been addressed, you can access independent mediation. This is a free service for parents and young people in Aberdeen. Parents can contact [SACRO](#) directly by phone 01224 560550 or email infoaberdeen@sacro.org.uk to make an initial appointment or to discuss whether mediation may be an appropriate route. Parents can also be referred by someone else, but the permission of the family involved is required as mediation is a voluntary process.

What if I want to make a complaint?

Please tell us as soon as you can.

If you are telling us about something for the first time, please give us the opportunity to put things right before complaining by contacting the school, if you have tried reporting the problem and it has not been resolved, you can make a [complaint](#).

What is the ASN Tribunal?

The ASN Tribunal deals with specific disagreements about additional support needs.

The [Additional Support Needs Tribunal](#) hears references (appeals) from parents and young people against decisions of education authorities regarding the provision of educational support under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.

You can appeal to the Tribunal if you are unhappy with:

- a decision to prepare or not prepare a CSP for your child
- a decision to continue or discontinue your child's CSP following a review
- the length of time it is taking to decide whether your child needs a CSP, to prepare the CSP or review the CSP. You can also appeal if the local authority fails to review your child's CSP after 12 months
- a decision to refuse your request to find out if your child needs a CSP, or your request to have an early review of the CSP
- some of the information in your child's CSP
- the failure to provide the additional support included in the CSP
- a decision to refuse a placing request where a CSP exists, or is required but not yet prepared, or if an appeal against a refusal of a placing request has not yet been considered

Even if no co-ordinated support plan is involved the Tribunal will hear appeals on:

- the refusal of a placing request to a special school
- failures over post-school transition duties
- issues related to disability discrimination of pupils

Eligible children aged between 12 and 15 years who have capacity to make a reference (and where their wellbeing will not be adversely affected) can also make two types of references:

- in relation to a co-ordinated support plan
- appeal against the education authority's assessment of the child's capacity or wellbeing

Where can I find information and support?

Your child's [school](#)

[School information](#)

[NHS Grampian](#)

[Education Psychology Service](#)

[Family Information Service](#)

[Aberdeen Parent Council Forum](#)

[Library service](#)

[Enquire](#)

[Social Work](#)

[Advocacy services](#)

[Mediation](#)

DRAFT