

# Dumfries and Galloway Council

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING INQUIRY – CALL FOR VIEWS

Thank you for your letter dated 25 October 2023.

We would respond to your questions as follows:-

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

### Working Well - Framework for Inclusion

In Dumfries and Galloway pre-Covid, we have been just above the national trend in the increase in children and young people being identified with Additional Support Needs. The unprecedented level of additional support needs has required a whole system change to our educational offer, with a hard shift away from models of additional support and towards a fully inclusive approach.

Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential (2020) underpinned this shift which we branded as our Framework for Inclusion, as our strategic approach to cultivate system wide and deeply embedded inclusion of all children and young people in education and an organisational scaffold to foster empowerment amongst education professionals to achieve this. Framework is not solely comprised of a series of tasks and activities to be completed, but articulates a way of working, thinking and prioritising actions and resources to meet the needs of all learners. It is our vehicle for delivering inclusive learning communities, where all children and young people are present, participating, achieving, and supported.

Framework for Inclusion focuses on the following areas for whole system change - Relationships & Rights; Resources; Policy and Procedure; Parental Involvement and Engagement; and Workforce Development.

- ***What are the barriers to supporting this provision?***

### Barriers to Working Well

Dumfries and Galloway is currently facing unprecedented pressures across Additional Support for Learning provision. The impact of Covid and its lockdowns, and the cost-of-living crisis on a system already under significant stress, has resulted in all services and supports being fully committed three-quarters through the financial year.

Our Dumfries and Galloway delivery model, based on the Presumption of Mainstream, requires a high level of support for children and young people with ASN to deliver early intervention and lower-level support in mainstream settings. Our rurality and population distribution requires a resource intensive model of small accessible provision across the region. An increase in complex needs post-Covid, along with the cost-of-living crisis, has resulted in existing capacity having to be targeted at a smaller cohort of children and young people with complex additional support needs.

Without the underpinning support to deliver Presumption of Mainstream, there is an escalation of need, and as needs increase demand for support increases. The consequence of this vicious cycle is unprecedented levels of need.

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

Our Education and GiRFEC planning procedures are well embedded, giving a voice to parents and young people in the development of education pathway plans and resolving disputes.

- **How many placing requests have been made over the last 5 years by parents or carers wishing that their children be educated in a specialist Additional Support Needs (ASN) unit or school. And how many placing requests have been made by parents or carers wishing their children to be educated in a mainstream setting as opposed to a specialist ASN setting. The Committee would be grateful for the total numbers, along with the numbers of requests refused and agreed.**

Dumfries and Galloway receive limited numbers of placement requests because of our model of small accessible provision across the region, as well as limited availability of alternative provision, both within the region or within proximity. Placement planning is more likely to emerge through a collaborative process around locally available resource, and consequently, there is less likelihood of friction and challenge about placement decisions.

ASL Placing requests	Academic Year 2019/20	Academic Year 2020/21	Academic Year 2021/22	Academic Year 22/23	Academic Year 23/24
Placing requests to Local Authority of children and young people with additional support needs	2	2	0	1	2
Number of ASL placing requests granted	2	0	0	0	2
No. of ASL placing requests refused	0	2	0	1	0

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

Dumfries and Galloway comply with statutory responsibilities to make information available on Additional Support for Learning, our website includes details on including links to national advocacy and support organisations.

A survey of parents and carers of children and young people with Additional Support Needs in November/ December 2022, included questions on parental understanding of ASL processes, provision, and communication channels. The subsequent “you said we did” document (enclosed) highlights some key messages about communication with parents and carers, including:

- a) Change communications for parents to include more video messages (with subtitles) and written documents.
- b) Create supporting documents for Additional Support for Learning.
- c) Create new information around understanding Curriculum for Excellence.
- d) Ensure that communication is also in alignment with our support partners within and external to the service.

- e) Look at how we can direct Parents to existing information that can help parents feel empowered when working with their children and the school.
  - f) Provide scenarios that will show why we work in the ways we do to meet the needs of the child.
- ***The Committee is aware that there can be variations in approaches to identification of ASN across local authorities and between primary and secondary schools. The Committee would be grateful if you could briefly set out how you ensure that children's additional support needs are identified and are records are updated to ensure accuracy of the data.***

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Stages of Intervention process provides the framework for the identification and support of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) of children and young people who experience barriers to learning. It provides the process by which to assess, identify, plan and review support for children and young people who have additional support needs.

We have restated our 4-tiered approach to Staged Intervention beyond Universal Support, through a set of documents targeting practitioners and parents.

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

Dumfries and Galloway is committed to ensuring all practitioners are confident in supporting children with additional support needs and the use of our Staged Intervention model. A professional learning framework, training packages and support materials have been developed to support teaching and non-teaching practitioners to increase their confidence in using support interventions. Our Framework for Inclusion includes the underpinning theme of Professional Learning.

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

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to working with parents and carers and have several options for resolving concerns.

- a) Parents have access to information, resources and useful links for parents and families through our schools' pages.
- b) Parents can discuss any individual ASL related concerns / issues with the school or ELC setting.
- c) We can be asked to "look again" if parents are unhappy, concerned or have questions about their child's additional support needs.
- d) If parents are dissatisfied, they can submit a complaint, comment or compliment.

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

The Dumfries and Galloway Stages of Intervention sets out the process for teachers to escalate assessment, planning and intervention dependent on need. Teachers have a clear road map as to how they can escalate unmet support needs.

In closing, it is worth noting that post-Covid our numbers have escalated. These have followed national trends and the census return prepared in October 2023 indicates that 39.4% of all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway schools have been identified with an additional support need. This figure is an increase of over **3%** from last year.

We trust this is helpful and if you require any further information please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gillian Brydson  
Director Skills, Education and Learning


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## Dumfries and Galloway Council: Support for Learning: All our Children all their Potential Survey Action Plan



Dumfries and Galloway Council Plan 2023-2028 outline the principles by which we work with our communities. Safeguard our future, support our citizens, Support our Communities and **Be a responsive Council**. These principles will shape how we deliver our four themes: **economy; travel, connectivity and infrastructure; education and learning; and health and wellbeing.**




The recent Dumfries and Galloway Support for Learning: All our Children all their Potential online survey is one strand of the work we are undertaking as the Education and Learning Directorate to seek views on the improvement of experiences of children and young people. The survey is based around the key themes of the Morgan Review - outlined below - and is one strand of our response to the Morgan Review and Promise and reflects our own developing Framework for Inclusion.

**Below are the 9 Themes that have been grouped under 7 Headings.**


Theme & Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p><b>Quality Assurance</b></p>	<p><b>62% of parents/carers</b> believe their children's needs are being met to a good to excellent standard. Where parents/carers have identified this not to be the case their view as to why this was;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuts/Finance led changes not child led decisions</li> <li>• Recognition of need AND</li> <li>• Ineffective communication</li> </ul>	<p>Engage with parents directly, and through this we will.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change communications for parents to include more video messages (with subtitles) and written documents</li> <li>• Create supporting documents for Additional Support for Learning</li> <li>• Create new information around understanding Curriculum for Excellence</li> <li>• Ensure that communication is also in alignment with our support partners within and external to the service</li> </ul>	<p><b>January 2024</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New information for Parents around decision making for schools and the local authority</li> <li>2. Updated Parental Involvement and Engagement Page with support links for ALL parents</li> <li>3. New Section for Parents regarding Stages of Intervention in Authority/School Handbooks</li> <li>4. Updated Supporting Learners Page with linked video/audio support</li> </ol>

Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p><b>Relationships &amp; Behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Rights and Relationships</b></p>	<p><b>30% of parents/carers</b> value of informal conversations for this being real time, face to face and about how well their child is progressing and achieving and seeing informal as the only source of information</p>	<p>This asks a question of us about how our more formal reporting and annual learning conversations support those families with additional support needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will look at two-way communication focusing on the value of pupil and parental voice.</li> <li>• We will change practice guidance to reflect this and share</li> </ul>	<p><b>September 2023</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Link to PIE strategy and Epstein Themes of engagement</li> </ol> <p><b>January 2024</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Appendix document created that support the Framework for Intervention that looks specifically at recording and reporting and how this enables pupils and parents' views and how this should enable positive relationships</li> </ol>
Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p><b>Understanding Rights</b></p> <p><b>Rights and Relationships</b></p>	<p><b>73% of parent/carers</b> felt that schools included the views of children and young people in making decisions about their wellbeing, their lives, and their future.</p> <p><b>54% of parent/carers</b> felt there is no clear pattern of inclusion for parents who have children with additional needs represented on the Parent Council</p>	<p>As we develop and share our programme of Rights Respecting Schools and Children's Rights work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will embed rights in Pupil Council Charters are also looking to ensure participation of children and young people with additional support needs</li> <li>• We will continue to work with local and national partners concerning Parent Councils to encourage the conditions for all parents to feel that they are able to participate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>September 2023</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Link to PIE strategy and Epstein Themes of engagement). Reflection of the different types of engagement needed for our school and authority engagement and involvement with Parents</li> </ol> <p><b>2. January 2024</b></p> <p>Sharing of practice regarding Rights Respecting Schools – Parental Ambassadors event as Part of Framework for Inclusion Sharing Practice day. Creation of materials</p>

Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p><b>Policy and Procedure</b></p>	<p><b>72% of parent/carers</b> voices show that the majority of parents felt that their child’s setting was inclusive. There was no specific correlation between the setting and the inclusivity, which we believe reflects the individual circumstances of child and setting.</p> <p>Regarding how included do you feel in the life of your child’s school, it was noted that there was a wide variation of views from <b>8% felt ‘not at all’ and 14% ‘extremely included’</b></p>	<p>Although data was positive for how children were included there was variation for Parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will look at how we can engage with Parents/Carers to ensure that they feel a part of the life of the school</li> <li>We will do this through family learning opportunities, but also through policy and strategies that look to break down barriers to engagement</li> </ul>	<p><b>March 2024</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy Review for Education Reflective of UNCRC</li> <li>Parental Involvement and Engagement - Learner and Parent Accessibility Strategy overview</li> <li>Review of information regarding transition planning in and between settings and stages of learning</li> </ol>
 <p><b>Creating and Realising the Vision</b></p>	<p>You identified that we need to review what information we share with you about how needs are met through Curriculum for Excellence with <b>32% of parent/carers</b> responding no clear understanding and remaining <b>68% of parent/carers</b> with yes, some understanding.</p> <p>Parents want their children to have enthusiasm and to be motivated to learn and need to understand what that learning looks like for their individual child</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review our central communication regarding Curriculum for Excellence and how this is shared with parents</li> <li>Look at how we can direct Parents to existing information that can help parents feel empowered when working with their children and the school</li> <li>Provide scenarios that will show why we work in the ways we do to meet the needs of the child</li> </ul>	<p><b>September 2023</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Parental Involvement and Engagement Page with support links for ALL parents</li> </ol> <p><b>December 2023</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Section for Parents regarding Stages of Intervention in Authority/School Handbooks</li> </ol> <p><b>January 2024</b></p>

			3. Strategic planning actions for FFI ongoing 2023-2025
Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p>Maintaining focus, but overcoming fragmentation</p> <p><b>Creating and Realising the Vision</b></p>	<p><b>45% of parent/carers</b> views highlighted that the learning environment which includes the school ethos, curricular arrangements, knowledge of and approaches to learning and teaching have the biggest impact on support need</p>	<p>We will look to develop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school workforce</li> <li>• staff training</li> <li>• family support</li> </ul> <p>to be reflective of the communities we provide services to</p>	<p><b>Annual Programme of</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional Development</li> <li>2. School Estate Review and Transformational Review with the consideration of Additional Support needs</li> <li>3. Whole Family Support action plan</li> </ol>
Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p>Resources</p> <p><b>Resourcing</b></p>	<p>We asked you about the partners who support you. As a service will we continue to develop our links with partners to ensure we are clear about roles and responsibilities, information sharing and transitions. <b>48% of parent/carers</b> highlighting National Health Service</p>	<p>We will ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/Carers are aware of support they can access whilst their child is in school and transitioning out of school</li> <li>• This is embedded through the work that the Council is undertaking for Whole Family Support and the Framework for Inclusion.</li> </ul>	<p><b>January 2024</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategic planning actions linked to Whole Family Support</li> <li>2. Framework for Inclusion ongoing 2023-2025</li> <li>3. Frequently Asked Question bank for parents</li> </ol>
Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p>Relationships between schools &amp; parents</p>	<p><b>57% of parent/carers</b> said that effective communication and meaningful information underpins your inclusion in the life of the school and your child' learning.</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that information for families is promoted, shared and is accessible for parents to engage when they need this</li> </ul>	<p><b>September 2023</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updated Parental Involvement and Engagement Page with support links for ALL parents</li> </ol>



<b>Parental Involvement and Engagement</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure consistency when working in partnership with others</li> <li>• work directly with Parents/Carers who responded to this survey to reflecting need.</li> </ul>	<b>December 2023</b> 2. New Section for Parents regarding Stages of Intervention in Authority/School Handbooks  3. Getting the ASL conversation right guidance for stakeholders
Theme/Heading	You Said	We Will	By When
 <p><b>Workforce Development</b></p>	You ranked the following as important interventions for your child, <b>38%</b> Learning Assistants / group and one to one, <b>36%</b> Teacher led learning and <b>10%</b> resourcing for diagnostic processes as the top three priorities.	We will continue to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share our communications for Parents/Carers to understand the allocation of spending for additional support.</li> <li>• explain how we work to support children and young people through the Stages of Intervention process.</li> </ul>	<b>September 2023</b> 1. The picture for understanding how the budget is allocated will include parental representation moving forward so we can ensure that views are reflected, and that information shared is parent friendly and accessible.  <b>January 2024</b> 2. Make clear what the roles and responsibilities are of all partners (teachers) who support children and young people (and their parents/carers) Whole Family Support model.