

Additional Support for Learning Action Plan

3rd Progress Report

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List of Acronyms

ASN: Additional Support Needs

ASL: Additional Support for Learning

COSLA: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

ADES: Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

NIF: National Improvement Framework

NMF: National Measurement Framework

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child

YAI: Young Ambassadors for Inclusion

NCNN: National Complex Needs Network

IWE: Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities

ITE: Initial Teacher Education

ELC: Early learning & Childcare

GTCS: General Teaching Council for Scotland

SQA: Scottish Qualification Authority

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

NIH: National Improvement Hub

ARC: Association for Real Change

SAGRABIS: Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools

BISSR: Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research

GIRFEC: Getting it Right for Every Child

IEP: Individual Educational Programme

CSP: Coordinated Support Plans

CPL: Continued Professional Learning

SSC: Social Services Council

Foreword

Scotland's approach to supporting children and young people in their learning has inclusion at its heart and promotes values of acceptance, equality, equity, and kindness. It seeks to deliver the values of the National Performance Framework – that children can grow up loved, safe and respected to realise their full potential.

Angela Morgan's [review of implementation of additional support for learning \(the ASL Review\)](#) in 2020, was a significant moment for Scotland's Education. The broad engagement undertaken as part of the review, had the voices of children and young people, parents and carers and professionals at its heart. It provided the opportunity to hear first-hand their experiences of how additional support for learning is being implemented across Scotland. The ASL Review confirmed that the intention of additional support for learning legislation and policy was right. However, it highlighted that improvements are necessary to ensure we are translating that intention effectively into practice, across Scotland.

To achieve the meaningful change that Angela Morgan envisioned, we must accept that we cannot continue to view additional support for learning as a minority area or in a separate silo within the framework of Scottish Education. Maintaining the visibility of children and young people with additional support needs through continued co-creation and collaboration with them and their families, is critical to delivering the change we all want to see. In accepting the recommendations from the ASL Review, the Scottish Government and COSLA, signalled our strong commitment to this and we remain dedicated to improving the experiences of children and young people with additional support needs, their families and carers, and those who support them.

The Additional Support for Learning [Project Board](#) has oversight of delivery of the ASL Action Plan and has a wide stakeholder membership. This governance structure was established in June 2022, to ensure transparency in the delivery of our work and to ensure our accountability and that of our partners, including COSLA, ADES and Education Scotland. Accountability is achieved through regular discussion, challenge and delivery progress. regular scrutiny of the work plan and prioritisation of any areas of concern and progress on short, medium, and long-term actions.

We remain grateful to the ASL Project Board and to all of those involved in delivering the work of the ASL Action Plan and Additional Support for Learning in Scotland for their contribution to supporting and improving outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs.

Introduction

We committed to publishing regular updates on our progress towards delivery of the actions set out in the ASL Action Plan. To date, reports have been published in [November 2021](#), and [November 2022](#) respectively.

This is the third Progress Report. The report sets out progress made towards delivery of the actions set out in the ASL Action Plan between November 2022 and June 2024 and has been developed in partnership with COSLA and ASL Project Board members. It also provides an indication of the key areas of focus that will be considered and delivered by the ASL Project Board members until the end of this Parliamentary term, in March 2026. To complement the Progress Report, an updated ASL Action Plan will also be published at the same time. This will include the most recent up-dates on the work that the ASL Project Board are taking forward to deliver on the specific actions agreed, to meet the recommendations set out in the ASL Review.

During the reporting period for this third Progress Report, the Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People's Committee undertook an Inquiry into Additional Support for Learning. The [Committee's final report](#) was published on 15 May 2024, and a formal response was provided by Scottish Ministers on 10 July 2024. The ASL Project Board welcomed the important work that was undertaken by the Committee, and on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, agreed to give serious consideration to the asks, urgings and recommendations made in the Committee's report, on the ASL Action Plan specifically.

It is important to note, that it was not possible to reflect the Committee's recommendations, nor any progress made towards them, within this current Progress Report. As already stated, the reporting period is November 2022 to June 2024 and this report provides a retrospective up-date on the progress made during this time. However, the ASL Project Board have given careful consideration to those recommendations that align with the scope of the work of the ASL Action Plan, and where appropriate have strengthened the content of the ASL Action Plan to reflect this focus. This will be reflected within the up-dated ASL Action Plan that will be published alongside this Progress Report.

The ASL Project Board will be cognisant of the wider recommendations made by the Education, Children and Young People's Committee, to ensure that the focus, alignment, and delivery of both strands of work, continues to deliver meaningful change and supports our vision to improve the experiences of children and young people with an additional support need.

Progress Report Structure

In order to ensure ease of reading and visibility in progress towards the achievement of the recommendations of the Morgan Review, this report is structured to align with the 9 themes and recommendations of the Morgan Review report. This approach has also been taken within the updated ASL Action Plan to ensure a consistent approach.

Summary of progress

This third Progress Report sets out a summary of the progress made towards delivery in pages **9-27**. The up-dated ASL Action Plan, sets out the full detail of progress made against each individual action, as considered by the ASL Project Board. There has been a consistent level of progress made towards delivering the actions set out in the ASL Action Plan. The table below highlights the total number of actions, those that have been completed and those that are still pending.

Actions List – Count Log

Total Number of Actions	76
Actions Completed	40
Actions Still Pending	36
% of Actions Completed	52.63%

Children and Young People's View

The ASL Action Plan has an overarching recommendation to co-create and collaborate with children, young people and their families, because this will support more coherent, inclusive and all-encompassing policy making. This in turn, will improve the implementation, impact and experience. To enable this, children and young people must be listened to and involved in all decision making relating to additional support for learning. We have heard that children and young people with additional support needs would like to see the breadth of their achievements fully recognised. The Scottish Government has established the Success looks Different Awards to achieve this, and the case study below demonstrates the impact of this Award in practice.

Case Study – Success Looks Different Awards

In 2023, the [Inclusion Ambassadors](#), presented schools and nurseries with Success Looks Different Awards. The awards recognise how nurseries and schools support, celebrate, and include pupils with additional support needs. The entries received in 2023 have included a focus on the central pillars of inclusive practice including; Relationships, including pupils in celebrating success, Creativity and innovation, Student leaders, Whole school celebrations, focus on the whole learner, Community connection, Positive communication, Meaningful and inclusive awareness raising events. The information below is drawn from the applications and those awarded as part of the success looks different awards in 2023.

Relationships and recognising success

Schools and nurseries achieved good relationships and recognising success by • creating space and time for staff to build relationships with their pupils • learning about their needs and interests • individualised planning which recognises the different goals, capabilities, and learning needs of each pupil and building relationships with families and the wider community.

Including pupils in celebrating success

Applicants included pupils in celebrating their success by • offering a range of ways to celebrate success from whole-school assemblies to individualised postcards sent home • creating opportunities for pupil's voices to be heard through pupil-led groups • curriculum choices and showcasing the importance of relationships in enabling staff to understand how and what their pupils would like to celebrate.

Creativity and innovation

Schools and nurseries achieved creativity and innovation through offering a range of different awards and programmes on a variety of different topics, from • outdoor learning to digital skills • providing pupils with curriculum choices • giving them autonomy to pursue their own interests and making use of technology • other resources to provide engaging and creative opportunities.

Student leaders

Examples of positive practice on Student Leaders included • including pupils in developing school values showed schools' commitment to meaningful inclusion and whole-school pupil participation • pupil councils, committees, and groups were utilised to bring about school-wide change and create new opportunities for success • meaningful action based on pupil's feedback: buying resources requested, engaging in new projects, listening and recording pupil contributions as part of planning.

Whole school celebrations

Good practice examples of whole-school celebrations included approaches such as: • Investing in a whole-school culture of inclusion through school values, school-wide activities and initiatives, and staff training • Celebrating awards that recognise pupils who have exemplified their school's values, like kindness, effort, inclusion and community • Sharing pupil success with the wider community through schoolwide newsletters, staff updates, and social media channels.

Focus on the whole learner

Applicants focussed on the whole learner by: • Offering alternative environments within school – sensory spaces, break-out spaces, places for rest and relaxation • Creating pupil-led focus groups and curriculum choice groups to support pupils to engage with areas of interest or find common ground with their peers • Training for all staff on topics such as attachment, de-escalation and self-regulation, BSL (British Sign Language) and Makaton, and pupil participation.

Community connection

Schools and nurseries achieved Community Connection by: • Communicating pupil successes through social media, newsletters, and school online platforms • Building relationships with families and other agencies to ensure a true 'team around the child' approach • Inviting the community to engage with the school, such as guest speakers, joint projects and learning opportunities with local charities.

Positive communication with parents, carers and families

Examples of Positive communication with parents, carers and families include: • Emails, texts, and postcards sent to parents and carers to celebrate their child's successes, no matter how big or small • Inviting families to engage with school celebrations, such as assemblies, graduations, and open evenings to showcase children's achievements.

Meaningful and inclusive awareness raising events

We heard how schools and nurseries achieved meaningful and inclusive awareness raising events by: • Whole-school engagement with events such as Autism Acceptance Week and Dyslexia Awareness Week • Pupil-led focus groups on issues such as children's rights and neurodiversity, whose ideas and feedback are used to support activities and school-wide initiatives.

Recommendation 1: Vision and Visibility (Vision Statement & Measurement)

9 Actions are Completed

We have an inclusive approach to Education in Scotland and strive to ensure that inclusivity is experienced by all children and young people. We cannot continue to view additional support for learning as a minority area or in a separate silo within the framework of Scottish Education. Maintaining the visibility of children and young people with additional support needs through continued co-creation and collaboration with them and their families, is critical to delivering the change we all want to see. To enable this visibility, we have established and strengthened our [Additional Support for Learning Network](#) to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders are involved in the development and delivery of ASL policy. The ASL Network meet three-times per year, to support the work of the ASL Project Board, and the delivery of the ASL Action Plan. This Network of key stakeholders from across our education system at national, local and third sector level, will enhance our ability to share and communicate developments with ASL policy into practice. It also offers a clear process through which to inform the ASL Project Board of positive developments, challenges, and areas for progress.

To support the delivery of actions by the ASL Project Board, and the work of the ASL Network, ASL Project Board members have worked with partners to undertake a mapping exercise of ASL Policy. This mapping exercise has captured the breadth of policy development that is aligned to additional support for learning and ensures that ASL Project Board members can consider fully, the potential impact of their work on wider developments, both in education policy, but also beyond.

As a next step, the Scottish Government will work with Education Scotland to develop a programme of internal engagement and awareness raising with colleagues in the Learning Directorate and wider government, including Children and Families Directorate and Directorate for Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice, which will seek direct engagement by children and young people with additional support needs, where appropriate. This will build upon work underway more generally to ensure that policy linkages across Scottish Government policy are appropriately made and have raised awareness of ASL Action Plan across the learning and education reform directorates.

Linked to this mapping work, the ASL Project Board have been mindful of the changing education landscape in response to a suite of reviews that have been undertaken in education since the ASL Review was published (2020). This includes the National Discussion – All Learners in Scotland Matter: [‘It’s Our Future – Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment; Report’](#) (Hayward Review), [‘Independent Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape’](#) (Withers Review) and wider education reform proposals. To ensure that additional support for learning policy is fully visible and has the high-profile it deserves, Scottish Government Officials team’s leading these reviews continue to consider how to ensure that the voices of children and young people with additional support needs are listened to.

It is clear from the various outputs from these reviews, that additional support for learning features prominently in all of them. There is a clear recognition from the education system, that as additional supports are more widely recognised and the number of children and young people with an additional support need grows, we all need to respond to this challenge. To ensure that visibility is maintained, the National Improvement Framework continues to provide the strategic framework for the improvement of education services in Scotland and includes actions and measures on additional support for learning. These considerations link closely to the developments underway on a National Measurement Framework for additional support for learning, and therefore the conversation is ongoing. ASL Project Board members have also engaged with the National Improvement Framework (NIF) Team in Learning Directorate, to ensure that the development of the National Measurement Framework for additional support for learning and the progress made to progress this work, is recorded, monitored, and discussed at a national level, as part of the NIF.

The ASL Project Board shares the ambition set out by Angela Morgan (2020), that our education system should support all children and young people to flourish and reach their fullest potential. Work has been underway to consider how a National Measurement Framework for Additional Support Needs can be created to capture the range of successes and achievements of children and young people with additional support needs. This is a complex piece of work, that has required careful consideration to ensure that the different learning outcomes, progress and achievements of each child with additional support needs can be evidenced and celebrated. We have begun the initial stages of preparing for this work to ensure that it can be developed and maintained appropriately. The next phase of this work will require the Monitoring and Analysis sub-group to work with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government, to develop a paper outlining options, challenges and timescales associated with the development of the Framework, for consideration by ASL Project Board members. Once we are in a position to publish a first iteration of the National Measurement Framework, ASL Project Board members will work with partners to consider how the information that is collected can be presented in an accessible and meaningful way.

We know the important role that our pupil support staff play in supporting our children with additional support for learning needs. Our National Pupil Support Staff Working Group has continued to consult on their engagement programme, to ensure that all local authority staff had the opportunity to participate in how this programme was developed and delivered. An evaluation report, setting out a review of the role and deployment of pupil support staff across all 32 local authorities, has been published, enhancing knowledge of the support that is available: [Pupil Support Staff Engagement Programme - July 2023 \(education.gov.scot\)](https://www.education.gov.scot/publications/pupil-support-staff-engagement-programme-july-2023/). Further evaluation and proposals are planned regarding the potential registration and accreditation of these staff, and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills is currently considering the outcomes from this work. Work will continue to be undertaken by the Support Staff Working Group to develop a vision and values for the profession, to support Pupil Support Staff.

Recommendation 2: Mainstreaming and Inclusion (Integration of Additional Support for Learning into the Independent Review of Curriculum for Excellence)

2 Actions are Completed

As part of our commitment to ensuring that the work of the ASL Action Plan is linked to strategic educational developments, we have committed to ensuring clear line of sight to the Scottish Education Council. As part of this we have strengthened the approach to the governance of the delivery of the ASL Action Plan. Scottish Ministers and COSLA have a joint agreement in place for the delivery of the ASL Action plan, and in 2022, the ASL Project Board was established. The ASL Project Board, co-Chaired by the Scottish Government and COSLA, has oversight of delivery for the ASL Action Plan and has a wide stakeholder membership. This approach provides accountability through discussion, challenge, and delivery progress. This governance structure has been established to ensure transparency in the delivery of our work and to create accountability of Ministers and our partners, including COSLA, ADES and Education Scotland. It also allows regular scrutiny of the work plan and prioritisation of any areas of concern and progress on short, medium, and long-term actions. The ASL Project Board meets on a bi-monthly basis to consider progress towards delivery of the ASL Action Plan. This approach enables clear and transparent information about the delivery of the ASL Action Plan to be shared with strategic partners, and to inform our related policy work.

Professor Hayward submitted her [final report](#) from her Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment in June 2023. Scottish Government and COSLA have been working with all ASL Project Board members, their partners and stakeholders and all action owners, to provide opportunities for children and young people with additional support needs to be involved fully in the review process, helping to ensure that our qualifications and assessment approach meets the needs of all learners, and provides support for those children and young people with additional support needs. The proposals set out in the final report are still being considered, and ASL Project Board members are mindful that changing qualifications will have broad ramifications for the whole education system, including children and young people with additional support needs. The ASL Project Board will continue to support opportunities for engagement throughout the next stages of this work to help any change or improvements that we do make to enhance the learning and teaching and to create better outcomes for our children and young people with additional support needs.

Audit Scotland have recently confirmed that they will undertake an [audit of Additional Support for Learning](#). This work relates to one of the sub-actions of this theme's recommendations.

Recommendation 3: Maintaining Focus but Overcoming Fragmentation (Leadership and Strategic Planning & Fully Integrated Policy Making)

6 Actions are Completed

As one of the key sources of information to overcome fragmentation on ASL policy, the Scottish Governments website: [Additional support for learning - Schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot) has been reviewed and refreshed to provide enhanced information on additional support for learning. This includes improved signposting for children, young people, parents and carers and professions to the extensive services that currently exist. Services range from advice, information, support and representation to professional learning and resources on additional support for learning. The ASL Project Board continue to build on this work to consider how this information can be shared consistently with local authorities, and onwards to individual school level. This consistency is critical to ensure that there is equitable access to information, support, and guidance to empower children, young people, parents and carers and the profession to make informed decisions about their education.

Progress towards an inclusive leadership approach for ASL policy is well underway, with ADES consulting with its members on the inclusion of additional support for learning within its leadership programme. This consultation highlighted that inclusive leadership is a common theme for all local authorities and this approach has now been incorporated into their [Collaborative Improvement Programme](#). Education Scotland launched their [Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework](#) in December 2023. The Framework aims to support anyone working with, and/or supporting children and young people in an educational context. This includes those who work with adult learners, parents, carers, families and in community learning contexts. The Framework uses three levels; Informed, Skilled, and Enhanced. The Framework aims to:

- Simplify the professional learning landscape for inclusion, wellbeing, and equalities.
- Support capacity building and a common understanding, language and skills for all educators.
- Provide high quality, up-to-date opportunities, which can be adapted to suit the local context. Local authorities will be able to incorporate the Framework into their own professional learning programmes.
- Support individual educators to plan their own professional learning.

ASL Project Board members remain committed to ensuring that children's rights are embedded and effectively underpin the implementation of our ASL policy, and the actions set out within the ASL Action Plan. We have considered, and continue to reflect, on the impact of the incorporation of the UNCRC on the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#), as well as additional support for learning policy, practice, and guidance. We will continue to monitor its interaction with, and potential impact, on our ASL work. To maintain the focus on meaningful participation,

the Scottish Government continues to fund and support the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion (YAI). The YAI support the delivery of our ASL Action Plan, but also help to shape wider education policy. Over the past year alone, the YAI have engaged with key stakeholders on a range of issues, including, the National Discussion: [All Learners in Scotland Matter - national discussion on education: final report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#), Hayward Review: [It's Our Future - Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment: report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#), Wither's Review: [Skills delivery landscape: independent review - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) [Wither's Review](#), National Transitions Strategy, and school uniform policy.

At a delivery level, ASL Project Board members are seeking to expand and consolidate opportunities for participation of children and young people. Education Scotland engage with children and young people with additional support needs on a regular basis, to inform and shape a number of their workstreams. This includes shaping their Corporate Plan, understanding the impact of poverty and the proposed development of the national Digital Academy, and associated subject choices.

Some further good examples of this working well include [primary research](#) undertaken by Humanly on complex additional support needs, which included the direct participation of children and young people. The next phase of this work will consider how to ensure that their involvement continues in the shaping and delivery of any actions taken forward. Research was also undertaken with the Gypsy/Traveller community, including children and young people to seek their views and experiences on education, to improve their engagement and participation in school life. The findings of this research are due to be published towards the end of 2024. Education Scotland continues to work with the National and Education Transitions Officer, funded by the Scottish Government, to develop professional learning information and resources which aims to support learners from Armed Forces families (Serving, Reserve and Veteran) and inform and support local authorities with the Armed Forces Covenant legislative duties pertaining to education.

More broadly within education policy, the Scottish Government are considering, with partners, how to establish a sustainable mechanism for engaging children and young people in the development of policy, and guidance and to ensure the voice of learners is embedded within any new governance structures as well as the wider reform programme.

As a key guiding principle, the ASL Project Board members, in particular, the Scottish Government and COSLA, seek to create opportunities to enable parents and carers to be meaningfully and consistently involved, and fully listened to in the development of ASL policy. Our drive is to create a fully integrated policy-making landscape. As key partners in policy development, parents and carers are represented in all of our key stakeholder groups on ASL, and more broadly in education policy. Where groups are in place for decision-making purposes, opportunities are created to ensure that parents and carers knowledge, experience and views are represented through a leading official on those groups. Education Scotland and ADES also regularly engage with parental organisations, and we are working collectively to ensure that opportunities for engagement and participation are highlighted across Scotland, and this involvement is sustained. The Scottish

Government is fully committed to strengthening their approaches to parental engagement to ensure there are a range of opportunities for parents and carers to shape and influence policy development, this will be supported by a new National Parental Panel that will support a range of opportunities for parents and carers to shape and influence policy development. The ASL Project Board will engage with this National Parent Panel once it is established.

Work is also ongoing to encourage local authorities to establish parent groups of those who have children with additional support needs. We recognise that this will support enhanced collaboration and communication on additional support for learning, for parents and carers throughout their child's learning journey. The ['Learning Together' National Action Plan](#) was published in December 2023, and the ASL Project Board members are currently considering how we can share this with all local authorities and at school level too. Further work is planned to consider how the plan has been implemented locally and the impact that the actions have delivered.

To further enhance collaboration and communication with parents, carers, and the wider profession, ASL Project Board members are currently drafting a joint letter, which will be issued to all Local Authorities. This will highlight both the existing organisations and resources that are in place to support additional support for learning and identify and highlight any proposed plans to improve this over the next 12-months. This will assist in delivering our goal to provide consistent information to all partners and will offer an opportunity for ASL Project Board members to invite partners to highlight additional organisations and resources that they engage with. The ADES ASN Network already offer an existing route, which successfully supports information sharing. A good example of this in practice, is the work undertaken by the ADES ASN Network to engage with Local Authorities, by identifying and sharing examples of work through the Collaborative Improvement visit process. It is hoped that the joint letter from ASL Project Board members at this stage in the delivery of the ASL Action Plan, will expand existing awareness.

Recommendation 4: Resources (Audit Scotland & Role of Grant Aided Special Schools)

0 Actions are Completed

The ASL Project board is engaging with Audit Scotland regarding audit work about children and young people with ASL needs. [Audit Scotland scope](#) for this planned work, to be conducted on behalf of the Auditor General for Scotland (regarding national government) and the Accounts Commission (regarding local government). The report will likely be considered by the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee in due course. The ASL Project Board will also consider the report in relation to its scrutiny and delivery of the ASL Action Plan.

ASL Project Board members continue to explore the opportunities that arise from the Commissioning strand of the Doran Review. Sharing the expertise of all professionals who support children and young people with complex additional support needs in specialist settings through the wider education system, is an important step towards supporting improvement in the experiences and outcomes of these children and young people. Education Scotland facilitates a National Complex Needs Network (NCNN) which focuses on medical complexity, in which all 32 local authorities and some independent establishments are members. Professional learning is a key area of focus for the NCNN and the Network is currently working with wider partners to develop professional learning resources, specifically to support tracking, moderation and assessment of learner with complex additional support needs. The Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework provides strategic level direction and support on continued professional development on ASL.

We recognise that approaches to local commissioning can influence the experiences of children and young people with additional support needs. ASL Project Board members committed to considering how local commissioning can support enhanced support for children and young people with additional support needs, following the Doran Review considerations. Whilst work in this area continues to evolve and progress, local commissioning has developed considerably since the [Doran Review](#), Strategic Equity Fund and Pupil Equity Fund have been in place. In addition, a greater alliance with the Third Sector has also become a key feature of local commissioning, enhancing collaboration, and consistency in provision.

Recommendation 5: Workforce Development and Support (Teacher Education and Development & Pupil Support Assistants)

11 Actions are Completed

The ASL Project Board believes that the values of inclusion and inclusive practice should be a core part of every teacher and practitioner's role. At the time of the Bute House Agreement, the Scottish Government committed to working with COSLA and partners to explore the development of an accredited qualification and registration programme for pupil support staff. ASL Project Board members have been actively engaging in this work, and the Scottish Government has established a working group to explore and consider possible options. To help improve equitable access to appropriate professional learning and information across Scotland, in 2021 the [Pupil Support Staff Professional Learning Framework](#) was developed and published by Education Scotland. This has formed part of the ongoing national work led by the Scottish Government to support Pupil Support Staff which includes the [Pupil Support Staff Engagement Programme](#). This Framework is being refreshed to link with the Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework. The Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework and Pupil Support Staff Professional Learning Framework, currently provide a national provision for all educators and can be used and adapted for context by ITE universities, local authorities and ELC establishments.

We have the right foundations in place to support our priorities on professional learning opportunities. The GTCS refreshed their [Professional Standards for Full Registration in 2021](#) to include a reference to additional support needs throughout, and they now make specific reference to autism, dyslexia and other neurodevelopmental needs. Guidance to support professionals in adopting and implementing these standards, is also in place and the Framework for Inclusion: [National Framework for Inclusion \(gtcs.org.uk\)](#), was also revised to reflect the refreshed GTCS professional standards.

The ASL Project Board continue to consider what additional professional learning opportunities can be offered to our teaching profession. ASL Project Board members acknowledge that there is more than one approach to addressing the issue of staff training and have remained committed to exploring options regarding initial teacher education, as well as taking further steps to improve the support available for teachers in other areas. ASL Project Board members are in the process of planning a mapping exercise to determine what professional learning is currently available across Scotland at a national, local, and school level. The Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework, developed by Education Scotland in partnership with others, will be a key driver for supporting this work, and for exploring further options going forward. This Framework will continue to evolve by responding to feedback from teachers and practitioners, in addition to the changing education landscape.

For those working in an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting, additional support needs have now been introduced as a standalone unit for the SQA's Next

Generation Higher National (HN) Childhood Practice Award pilot. This pilot will continue across 2024/25 and the ASL Project Board will be monitoring its progress and impact to inform its next steps in this area. The pilot is complemented by new ELC signposting tools that have been developed to highlight key support, learning and resources relating to ASL, and children's speech, language, and communication development. In addition, there will be investment in a new programme of work to support early intervention in speech and language for children and their families over the next two-years. The Programme supports early intervention in speech and language for children and their families and builds confidence and capacity for those staff working in early learning and education settings. It also offers an opportunity to join up this area of expertise with other key public services, including health visiting.

The Scottish Government have recruited 6 FTE Early Language and Communication Leads, in collaboration with Education Scotland. These posts focus on facilitating and supporting multi-disciplinary collaboration across areas such as education, health and family support to improve outcomes for children and young people from pre-birth to starting primary school. They are developing national resources for speech, language, and communication development in young children, explore what is working well, identify gaps and share information and expertise. The Scottish Government are also funding two pilot projects with the Scottish Book Trust which aim to encourage ELC settings to build upon their language environments through an additional focus on reading and sharing stories. These focus on enhancing the literary experiences of young children in ELC settings and we continue to support young children's speech and language development through our investment in universal national programmes such as Play Talk Read and Bookbug. Both programmes support children's language, learning and social skills through the provision of play, talking and singing. ASL Project Board members will monitor the progress and impact of this investment to inform their next steps in addressing the needs of children and young people with speech, language and communication needs through Professional Learning and Development.

Recommendation 6: Relationships between Schools and Parents

7 Actions are Completed

The ASL Project Board continue to promote good examples of joint working with parents, schools, and local authorities through current improvement routes. Education Scotland continue to work on [Collaborative Improvements with ADES](#), all 32 local authorities are engaged and 7 include a focus on Additional Support for Learning. Work is ongoing with scrutiny and inspection colleagues to discuss further support and development of this work and Education Scotland continue to engage with ADES to consider how the next phase of this work will be linked to the ADES self-evaluation approach being developed. The information from these reports is currently made available through the National Improvement Hub (NIH) and ASL Project Board members will be focusing on increasing the number of local authorities engaging in this process going forward.

To enhance the information and signposting provided to parents and carers on additional support for learning, the Scottish Government has included information and signposting on additional support for learning within [Read, Write, Count packs](#). These are provided by the Scottish Book Trust to every child in Primary 2-3 in Scotland. The next steps for the ASL Project Board are to undertake a mapping exercise to capture the universal resources provided to families. This will enable us to explore opportunities to up-date the content of these resources to reflect additional support for learning. This work builds on earlier engagements with the Parent Club, who have published a Family Support Directory to signpost parents and carers to organisations, benefits, and information across a range of topics, including additional support for learning.

Following a successful pilot initiative in partnership with the Association for Real Change (ARC), a [Principles into Practice](#) Framework has been established and is available across Scotland. The purpose of this framework is to improve the experiences of children and young people with additional support needs to make the transition into young adult life, and to ensure that they are at the centre of all transition planning for their future. However, the principles have a broader application and have also been adopted in the transitions between primary and secondary and transition out of foster care. The Scottish Government continues to support ARC, who will continue to offer practical support for more local authority areas to implement the Principles into Practice Framework to improve transition planning. Project Board members will continue to monitor the implementation and impact of this work.

The ASL Project Board has considered the value that the National Advice and Information Service for additional support for learning ([Enquire](#)) already brings to parents and carers, as well as teaching professionals and practitioners across Scotland. Further investment in this service was secured from the financial year 2021-22, to ensure that the service is effectively resourced to meet the needs of those using the service, and the increasing demand across the system. The investment to provide this service is on-going. In addition to Enquire, the Scottish Government fund ['Let's Talk ASN'](#) to provide advocacy and legal advice to parents,

carers, and young people over the age of 16, in relation to references to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland. To support individual young people, the Scottish Government continued to fund and support the Children's service – ['My Rights, My Say'](#). This service supports children and young people aged 12-15 to access advice and support to enable them to be fully involved in decisions about their education and to exercise their rights under the ASL Act. The Scottish Government manage the contracts and grant arrangements for each of these services and has an established framework in place for measuring outcomes and impact of each service. This information is regularly considered by the ASL Project Board. Project Board members are currently developing a communications strategy, which will include ways that each of these services can be promoted to ensure that awareness is raised across the education system.

As a key mechanism and important route for parents and carers in the dispute resolution process, mediation continues to be promoted at a national and local level. Local Authorities continue to ensure that the benefits of mediation services are highlighted and have processes in place to regularly review their Service Level Agreements with mediation providers. This approach supports Local Authorities to ensure that the service they are offering to parents and carers, is achieving best value and is having the desired positive impact for children and young people. The ASL Project Board are currently mapping the mediation providers across Local Authorities, to ensure that this information is available on Enquire, and accessible by parents and carers.

Recommendation 7: Relationships and Behaviour

2 Actions are Completed

The ASL Project Board recognises that the education landscape has changed and continues to evolve at pace since the ASL Review and subsequently, our ASL Action plan, was published in 2020. It is important that we continue to review policy areas that interconnect with additional support for learning, to ensure that any developments remain in line with emerging knowledge and developments. One key area of focus within the ASL Action Plan is the work on relationships and behaviour in schools. ASL Project Board members engaged with the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) to review their Terms of Reference considering the Morgan Review. The remit of the group has been updated to include the provision of advice in the context of relationships and behaviour to national and local government and other relevant stakeholders on matters. This includes the development and delivery of measures to improve the educational experiences of children and young people with additional support needs.

In addition to the updated Terms of Reference, several ASL Project Board members are now represented on SAGRABIS and SAGRABIS members are also part of the the ASL Project Board. These connections at a strategic and delivery level, have created opportunities to ensure that any work that is taken forward in both policy areas is cognisant of the progress and developments taking place elsewhere. As a Project Board, we have been considering the relevant findings from the [Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research](#) (BISSR) that was published in November 2023. The findings of the BISSR research are wide ranging and complex, with actions required at national, local and school level, which will be set out within the Joint Action Plan on Relationships and Behaviour. The ASL Project Board will consider the actions in relation to additional support for learning as a next step and will discuss and agree on how we can take forward these actions, to support the delivery of our work.

Recommendation 8: Understanding Rights (Rights & Coordinated Support Plan Review)

1 Action is Completed

ASL Project Board members recognise the value of planning mechanisms that offer an opportunity to consider a whole-life perspective for children and young people with additional support needs. When implemented effectively, the '[Getting it Right for Every Child](#)' (GIRFEC) policy means that we can meet the needs of all learners, including those with additional support needs. It is through this universal offer of support for all children and young people that we will achieve inclusion in its widest sense. Since the introduction of the refreshed GIRFEC Policy and Practice Guidance in September 2022, ASL Project Board members have continued to engage in this work and support the development of the GIRFEC Child's Plan Practice Statement, which complements the guidance, and helps to support practitioners and managers implement and embed GIRFEC into their everyday practice. The statement reflects the relationship and alignment between statutory and non-statutory plans and clarifies the roles and responsibilities practitioners involved in the development and monitoring of a child's plan.

To improve the support available for children and young people with additional support needs to reach their fullest potential, the ASL Project Board members agreed to refresh the Supporting Learners' Code of Practice. This refresh will ensure that local authorities and schools are fully supported to fulfil their duties under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. The Code of Practice Working Group has been re-established to undertake this refresh, working collaboratively with partners to deliver this guidance. Initial priorities have been the accessibility of the guidance, its recognition and incorporation of wider education policies, including GIRFEC and The Promise. ASL Project Board members are alert to the shifting policy and legislative landscape (including the incorporation of the UNCRC) and will continue to ensure that further progress reflects this over the next 12-months, prior to consulting on a refreshed Code of Practice.

Work is ongoing to draw these elements together to support local authorities to incorporate any findings into their improvement and strategic service planning at a local level. This includes the development and reporting on local Children's Services Plans, Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Annual Education Plans.

Revision of Part 3 Children's Services Planning Statutory Guidance will take place over 2024-2025, to reflect a number of significant changes which have taken place across Scotland's legislative, policy, and delivery landscape, with an impact on the context and approach to improving outcomes for children, young people and families. Revision of Children's Services Planning statutory guidance will be undertaken working closely with key stakeholders and relevant policy areas. This will provide an opportunity to articulate the relationships between different local strategic planning and reporting requirements, including those relating to ASL, as well as highlighting opportunities to integrate planning where this makes sense to local duty holders and partners, including the children, young people and families who live in that area.

This work links closely with the ASL Project Board's commitment to deliver a National Measurement Framework for additional support for learning. ASL Project Board members are thoughtful about the interactions between the wide range of improvement planning that is already in place at a local level, which could be drawn into this broader planning approach. We are also mindful that sufficient time to become accustomed to any proposed changes and the impact that this may have on different schools and local authorities. This work remains a priority for the ASL Project Board and is routinely discussed and Project Board meetings, as the National Measurement Framework evolves.

Recommendation 9: Assurance Mechanism and Education Scotland

4 Actions are Completed

Following the implementation of the ASL Action Plan in 2021, the Scottish Government and COSLA have introduced and embedded a refreshed approach to governance and accountability, as set out earlier in this report, to ensure that our joint work to support improved experiences and outcomes for children and young people remains on track and is being delivered.

A range of work is underway to drive improvements in processes, practice, and outcomes at all levels of the system. Since 2021, awareness raising sessions and discussions with all Regional Improvement Teams have taken place to support staff awareness and understanding of the recommendations within the ASL Review (2020) and the actions set out within the ASL Action Plan. The clear purpose of these sessions has been to identify and share good practice to help support new ways of working where this is appropriate, and these sessions will continue throughout the lifetime of the ASL Action Plan. In addition to this, HM Inspectors examine how well schools and centres meet the needs of children and young people requiring additional support in all inspection activity. In doing so, they take account of the findings of the Additional Support for Learning Action Plan. HM Inspectors are systematically reviewing their scrutiny frameworks and inspection activities to ensure they align closely with the expectations set out in the ASL Action Plan.

ASL Project Board members have continued to engage with teachers and ELC practitioners to ensure that they are able to access the support and expertise from other professionals when this is required. A good example of where this is working well, is the suite of ELC continued professional learning (CPL) modules which includes 'Building confidence in identifying and response to additional support needs' and Supporting the development and progression of children's early language and literacy'. These resources are being embedded in the Social Services Council (SSC) Open Badge learning scheme and will continue to be available free of charge. A National Directory of Continued Professional Learning has also been established and provides a range of further learning materials. These resources, coupled with Education Scotland's Inclusion, Wellbeing and Equalities Professional Learning Framework offer a suite of opportunities to enhance understanding, knowledge, and expertise in additional support for learning. The focus of the ASL Project Board will be the continued promotion of these resources and the direct impact on practice.

The opportunities offered by using improvement methodologies continues to be considered by the ASL Project Board. The methodologies employed by local authorities and schools is varied and Project Board members are currently considering how to draw these methodologies together, to consider how best to promote good practice where it exists. To support this work, Education Scotland continues to develop its knowledge on improvement methodologies.

Case Study – Integrating effective support for children with additional support needs into the expansion of early learning and childcare

Hillend Children's Centre is an integrated and inclusive setting and offers placements to children with Additional Support Needs across Inverclyde, and mainstream provision to children residing in the local area. Hillend is run by Inverclyde Council and believes in a nurturing and inclusive environment where children will feel secure, happy and where their individuality will encourage them to play, grow and learn together. Respite support is also available for parents of children with Additional Support Needs from birth to age three, Hillend Children's Centre is specifically targeted for children with the most complex additional support needs.

The wellbeing of children and their families is at the heart of everything staff at Hillend Children's Centre do. This begins with a home visit and carefully planned setting visits. Recognising the impact Covid-19 had on the wellbeing of young children, home visits form part of the induction process for all children joining the setting. This allows staff to observe children in their own environment and start to establish strong relationships with families as early as possible, supporting a partnership approach to learning and development.

The setting has three playrooms, two of these playrooms have been specifically designed to meet the needs of children with additional support needs. The Sunflower room is the provision's complex additional support needs room, it provides individualised curriculum for each child within the playroom. The Snowdrop room focuses on communication and language. Snowdrop supports children's understanding of language through visual stimulus for their timetable and as a means of communication. Both rooms have an extensive range of equipment available to support children access all areas of the curriculum appropriately. The Bluebell room is an integrated mainstream room. It allows all children in the nursery to work together with consideration and plans to ensure that individual children's needs and learning styles are met. The setting also has a quiet room and specially designed sensory room that enhances sensory experiences for children. Lunchtime is an opportunity for all the children at Hillend to come together, lunch is served in the dining room that is situated in a building within the vast outdoor garden area.

Sensory stimuli are present throughout the setting. Visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli are used on the door of the playrooms, and in other areas throughout the setting. For example, the word and a picture of a sunflower, a push button 'sunflower' audio recording and an artificial sunflower are placed at the child's level. Visual stimuli are used by children in the Snowdrop rooms to independently plan their daily activities and as a means of communication.

Hillend also maintains close links with a range of specialists and professionals from a number of other agencies through an ASN Forum, including Educational Psychologists.

Leadership and ownership are also demonstrated across the entire staff team and staff feel empowered to develop and deliver training activities. All staff are allocated actions from the settings corporate learning plan and become the owner of this. During a recent open day celebrating the completion of the refurbishment, staff were confident and had a clear perspective when articulating the provision available at Hillend, and when leading tours.

The setting continuously worked closely with children and their families to ensure their wider support needs were met, this also includes a transport service. Using a dedicate nursery mini-bus, children can be transported to an address of a family member or blended placement within Inverclyde.

Staff within the setting are cognisant of the pace of the day, and the amount of time children can manage in the nursery environment. Children accessing ASN provision do so on a morning or afternoon basis, and in a different model to mainstream provision, with funded hours being spread across the full- year.

All staff at Hillend Children's Centre encourage parents, carers, and families to become involved in the life of centre. Stay and Play sessions, workshops, Grandparents Days are just some of the activities used to engage parents and families in all aspects of their child's learning and development. Handwritten two-way home link diaries are standard practice and, parents also formed part of a working group to develop the Values, Visions and Aims.

Staff know the children and families very well, which allows them to have a clear understanding and knowledge of children's individual needs. The ethos of Hillend is based on honesty and trust. The centre listens to parent concerns or views of the delivery of provision, feedback

Conclusion

This 3rd Progress Report sets out the work of the ASL Project Board and delivery of the ASL Action Plan, to address the challenges in the system. This work has continued at a steady and consistent pace since we set out our commitment and associated measures to implement the recommendations of the Morgan Review in October 2020. We recognise that there are some concerns in the system about the pace of delivery, and growth in the complexity of need. However, Angela Morgan was very clear that her recommendations were not a quick fix and that cultural change to deliver improvements in ASL implementation, and to ensure meaningful change for children and young people, will take time.

The ASL Project Board has regular opportunities to consider emerging needs and the evolving education landscape, in the context of ASL policy and the delivery of the Action Plan. This is critical to ensure that progress towards implementation of the ASL Action Plan, and the actions that we take, are relevant and respond to needs of children and young people, parents and carers and the wider education system. Since October 2020, 40 of the 76 actions have been completed and whilst there is still much to do to deliver the remaining actions by the end of this parliamentary term, we are fully committed to achieving this. In broad terms, there are three priority areas of focus for the ASL Project Board over the next 18-months, which will support the delivery of the remaining actions set out in the ASL Action Plan:

1. Communication
2. National Measurement Framework
3. Refresh of the Code of Practice

The ASL Project Board and the ASL Network will continue to meet over the next 18-months to ensure delivery of the remaining actions in the ASL Action Plan and to ensure that the positive impact of this work is demonstrated. The next Progress Report will be published in March 2026.

Parents and Carers' View

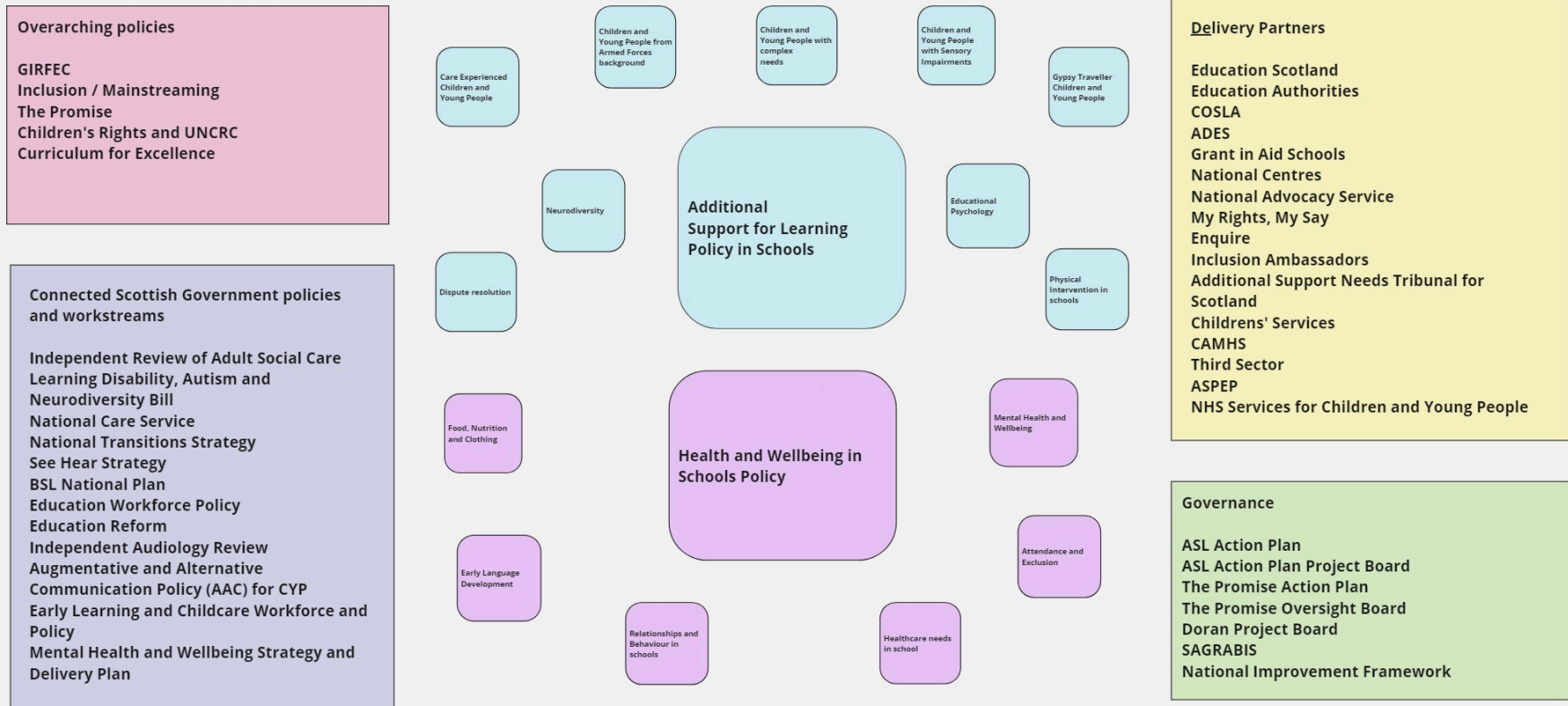
Top tips for engaging with parents and carers of children with an additional support need

- Be kind and welcoming ✓
- Ensure parents feel comfortable and supported ✓
- Maintain professionalism ✓
- Engage as equals ✓
- Recognise parents as the experts in their child and respect them in this role ✓
- Actively seek the views of the parents and the child, rather than making assumptions about parent's knowledge, their circumstances, or intentions ✓
- Be open, honest and transparent ✓
- Accessibility is important: do parents have any disabilities? Use plain English, rather than educational jargon, and explain any terminology ✓
- Ask parents and carers if they would like support at meetings e.g. a friend or an interpreter ✓
- Make sure any resources are accessible and user-friendly so parents can support their child's learning journey ✓
- Encourage open and honest conversations ✓
- Don't assume automatic trust or respect – earn it ✓
- Additional support needs are a whole-school responsibility: an inclusive environment must be created in which diversity is respected ✓
- Consider the full context of the family ✓
- Provide resources and assistance without judgement ✓
- Show empathy and understanding ✓
- Work together, with a focus on the child or young person ✓
- Listen actively and be responsive ✓
- Celebrate successes ✓
- Be culturally sensitive and aware ✓
- Check your unconscious biases and prejudices ✓
- Provide regular updates ✓
- Be available to meet parents at times, in ways and in places that work for them ✓
- Make sure parents know what meetings are about in advance and ensure they have access to all the information that you have ✓

- Help parents to make connections with one another for mutual support and information-sharing, if parents would like this ✓
- Offer flexibility and remain responsive to the needs and requests of both the child and parent ✓
- Seek training to understand the impact of intersectional inequalities including poverty, racism, disability and gender-based violence ✓
- Seek training to understand how barriers may impact on a parent's ability to engage in their child's education to ensure supportive approaches if parents don't show up to parents' night, respond to a phone call, or the child is not submitting homework ✓
- Offer holistic, whole family information and support ✓
- Address issues, concerns and requests quickly and collaboratively with the child and parent ✓
- Remember children's rights include parents as the champion of their child ✓
- Be child-centred, focussing on meeting the child's needs and recognising the position of a parent in that child's world ✓

ANNEX A: Additional Support for Learning Policy Map

Additional Support for Learning Policy Map





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