

Enquire within

THE NEWSLETTER BULLETIN OF ENQUIRE, THE NATIONAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE SERVICE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Welcome to *Enquire within*, the newsletter for anyone who is working with - or has an interest in - children with special educational needs (SEN).

Available free on subscription (see back page), this publication aims to provide news and information on special educational needs, and to update you on the progress of Enquire, the new national information and advice service for special educational needs in Scotland. Enquire is run by Children in Scotland with funding from the Scottish Executive for three years.

This issue commemorates the launch of the Enquire, outlines the services it will offer and highlights a range of guides and factsheets for parents, family members, SEN staff working in local authorities and elsewhere, teachers and next year, children and young people with special educational needs. In future editions we will let you know what training is available near you and how four pilot mediation projects are progressing (see page 2). *Enquire within* will both act as an information resource and enable networking between groups and individuals. It will be

produced three times a year until 2002.

Whether you have a query relating to special educational needs, want further information about the service, or would like to receive future copies of Enquire within or some of our other publications, please get in touch. An enquiry / order form is provided at the back of this bulletin or contact:

Enquire, Children in Scotland, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG.
Tel: 0131 22 22 400.
Typetalk: 0800 959 598.
Fax: 0131 228 8585.



E-mail: Enquire.SENinfo@childreninscotland.org.uk
Internet: <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk>

Launch of new national service

On 1 November 1999 a new national information and advice service, Enquire, will be launched by Sam Galbraith, Minister for Children and Education.

Funded by the Scottish Executive for three years, the service will offer advice and information to parents, professionals, children and young people who have queries or concerns relating to special educational needs.

Enquire will be run by a trained staff of five based at Children in Scotland.

The key elements of the service will be:

- a telephone helpline on 0131 22 22 400 (typetalk 0800 959 598, e-mail: Enquire.SENinfo@childreninscotland.org.uk);

- publications including guides for parents and young people;
- training events in every local authority area;
- four pilot mediation projects.

Carole Moore, the manager of the project, is keen that the service is seen as part of a partnership:

"We are looking forward to working closely with a wide range of individuals and agencies, with parents and professionals, for the benefit of all children with special educational needs in Scotland.

"The service will provide an independent source of advice. If anyone wants to find out more about the project, access the helpline, sign up for our free bulletin or ask for a supply of our leaflets, posters or factsheets, please do not hesitate to contact us."

Children

IN SCOTLAND

CLANN AN ALBA



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Phone Enquire on 0131 22 22 400

Innovative Mediation Projects

Although many states in America, including Pennsylvania, Minnesota and Oregon, have developed SEN mediation services since the 1980s, the initiative is new to Scotland. Enquire will pilot four innovative mediation projects as part of its activities and will look at the role of mediation in negotiating difficult decisions involving parents and professionals.

"It is often the child or young person who loses out in disputes over educational provision, irrespective of outcome," explains Morag Steven,

Mediation Officer at Enquire. "The mediations projects will explore innovative ways in which the decision making process can remain supportive to the needs of the child or young person.

"Our vision is that the pilot mediation projects will compliment the range of existing local support networks and be a welcome new addition to methods of conflict resolution in the field of special educational needs."

Enquire places firm emphasis on the principle of partnership and working together for the good of the child with special educational needs. The service will be working closely with other voluntary organisations which provide information and advice on aspects of SEN and Enquire will itself be monitored and guided by an inter-agency steering group representing different areas of experience and expertise.

The next issue of **Enquire within** will focus on the subject of partnership and mediation.

Enquire by helpline

A key component of the new national service offered by Enquire will be a telephone helpline staffed by trained professionals. This dedicated helpline will give information and advice on special educational needs to parents, professionals, and others who have questions or worries about matters related to SEN, and to children and young people who have special educational needs themselves.

The helpline will be open 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday, on 0131 22 22 400. A voicemail answering machine will be in operation when lines are busy and outside office hours. Calls will be charged at normal rates.

The service can be accessed through Tynetalk on 0800 959 598 or enquirers can e-mail the service at Enquire.SENinfo@childreninscotland.org.uk

Those for whom English is not their first language are advised to contact their local authority interpretation service in the first instance. The interpretation service will link up with the helpline and translate for them in a three-way call.

The team of staff at Enquire are expecting to take calls on a wide range of issues, such as:

- how the education system works;
- the Record of Needs;
- Future Needs Assessment;
- what resources may be available locally;
- legal rights;
- choosing a school;
- the meaning behind jargon and terminology;
- other organisations which may be able to help;
- what families can do if they have problems or concerns.

The service aims to help parents and others to make informed choices for themselves.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Enquire is producing a range of publications to meet the needs of parents, children and young people, professionals and potential mediators. A general leaflet describing the service is already available and can be provided in a range of formats and languages on request. To order a supply of leaflets, whether in English, Gaelic, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese or Urdu, or in braille, large print or audio cassette, please complete and return the form on page 4 or contact Enquire, Children in Scotland, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG. Tel: 0131 22 22 400. Tynetalk: 0800 959 598 Fax: 0131 228 8585. E-mail: Enquire.SENinfo@childreninscotland.org.uk

In due course it is anticipated that leaflets and factsheets will also be available to download from the internet at <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk>

The factsheets which are currently available include one on the Record of Needs and another on Placing requests.

Enquire has also worked closely with the Scottish Executive to produce a new *Parents guide to special educational needs* and there are plans to publish a guide for young people by the summer of next year.

Before that, the spring will see the production of a guide and factsheet on mediation, associated with the four pilot mediation projects which are also described here.

To register an interest in any of these forthcoming publications, again see the form on the back page of this issue of *Enquire within*.

Training across Scotland

Funding from the Scottish Executive will allow Enquire to run an ambitious programme of training events across Scotland. The itinerary will include small seminars and training days as well as a number of national conferences.

A priority of the training programme will be to meet the diverse needs of different geographical areas. Two events will be held

in each local authority over the course of the next three years. The programme will provide an opportunity for local authorities to contribute and exchange examples of good practice and to identify and address local training needs.

The events will be reported in this bulletin, to notify readers about local training opportunities and to provide an insight into what constitutes good practice in special educational needs across the country.

Tynetalk Enquire: 0800 959 598

COUNTDOWN TO 1 NOVEMBER 1999

The intention to establish a national helpline for special educational needs was announced by Helen Liddell, then Minister for Education and Deputy Secretary of State for Scotland, in November 1998. The news came as part of a package of measures relating to special educational needs, revealed in Glasgow at *Special Citizens?*, a conference organised by Children in Scotland, Capability Scotland and Disability Scotland.

The Scottish Office, as it then was, put its money where its mouth was and a proposal for an information and advice service duly went out to tender. Children in Scotland was delighted to secure the contract in the spring of 1999.

"We are particularly pleased with the opportunity we now have to develop our services for children and families with special needs by offering a national helpline dedicated to special educational needs," said Bronwen Cohen, Director of Children in Scotland.

Four new staff were appointed to run and support the service: Carole Moore, service manager, Julia Wilson, training and development officer, Morag Steven, mediation officer and Wendy Brooks to provide administrative back-up. Sophie Pilgrim, special needs development officer, was already in post and had contributed significantly to the initial planning proposal for the service. Training and other preparations began.

In early September 1999, Sam Galbraith stated that "the Scottish Executive is committed to providing a world class education system for all Scotland's young people, where each child is given the opportunity to realise his or her potential. This is just as relevant to those with special educational needs as it is to all other children."



By the start of October, letters were going out to local authorities and specialist agencies about the service. A full mailing of publicity materials for teachers and professionals in the statutory and voluntary sectors was planned to coincide with a press launch with the Minister, Sam Galbraith, on Monday 1 November.

Reading the lead article of their October newsletter, members of Children in Scotland may have guessed that the name of the as-yet-officially-unnamed service was there in the headline. "SEN advice?" it asked them. "Enquire within..."

Enquire overleaf

For information about Enquire, or to subscribe free to this bulletin, or to order any of the publications listed opposite, please complete and return the form overleaf or contact:

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Tel: 0131 22 22 400. Typetalk: 0800 959 598

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Enquire by return

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Name: _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

please add me to the bulletin mailing list

Please send me the following

No. of copies _____

- Enquire information leaflet
Enquire information leaflet in following language/format
 - Braille
 - Audio cassette
 - Large print
 - Arabic
 - Chinese
 - Gaelic
 - Hindu
 - Urdu

- Enquire A4 poster
- Enquire postcard
- Parents guide to special educational needs
- Record of Needs (factsheet)
- Placing Requests (forthcoming factsheet)
- Your Future Needs Assessment (This booklet costs £2.95 per copy. All other publications listed are free).

Please make cheques payable to *Children in Scotland*.

Please tick the subjects in which you are most interested:

- Record of Needs
- Individualised Educational Programmes
- Appeals
- Dispute resolution/mediation
- Placing requests/choosing a school
- SEN provision
- Working with families/partnerships
- Other (please specify)

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