

# Enquire within

THE SCOTTISH ADVICE SERVICE FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

## Welcome to Enquire

This issue of *Enquire within* features Enquire's annual conference report from *Making mainstreaming work*. Also included is information on our legal subscription service and a report on the activities of the helpline and information service.

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### Involving parents

#### The parents' guide to additional support for learning

In September, Children in Scotland is running ten consultation events across Scotland on behalf of Enquire.

The purpose of these events is to involve parents, carers and their representative groups in the consultation process. We want to update our popular and well-received *Parents' guide*, and produce a robust, user-friendly guide focussing on additional support for learning.

To find out more information or to book a place at these FREE events, please call Emma Thexton, Conference co-ordinator, on 0131 222 2438.

You can also book online at:  
[www.childreninscotland.org.uk/par](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/par)

The next issue of *Enquire within* will be published in November 2005, and will be an expanded bulletin to cover transitional arrangements in line with the changes in the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004).



## Making mainstreaming work – conference report now available

Important changes to Scottish legislation over the past few years have placed mainstreaming and inclusive practice high on the agenda for education. Inclusion and equality form one of the five national priorities in education set out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 (SSSA).

Section 15 of the SSSA placed a duty on every education authority to ensure that children are educated in mainstream schools unless certain, specified, exceptions apply. This has changed the pattern of special provision. As Sheila Riddell, the keynote speaker, noted in her conference report, "the number of special schools in Scotland is falling and the number of special units attached to mainstream schools is

increasing. More and more pupils with additional support needs are being educated partly in a special unit and partly in the mainstream school to which it is attached." Inclusive education goes far beyond the placing of children and young people in mainstream schools.

Referring to the Audit Scotland and HMIE report *Moving to mainstream* (May 2003) Margery Browning from HMIE highlighted several features of good practice that must be present in order to make mainstreaming work: strong leadership; staff commitment; staff development and training; the school's ability to support inclusion; a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum that meets the needs of individual children; and good communication with parents.

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## Tell us what you think

We would like to know your views on the Enquire service. If you have suggestions for the helpline, website, or publications, please get in touch.

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In addition to the SSSA the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act (2002) places a duty on all education authorities to prepare an accessibility strategy, with a view to increasing accessibility to the curriculum and the physical environment of schools and improving communication with pupils with disabilities. Richard Rieser, from Disability Equality in Education, noted that the focus for mainstreaming has been pushed beyond mere physical adjustments in school environments. Today, successful mainstreaming is about creating a school environment where every pupil is valued, understood, fully participating and having their educational and personal needs met.

Successful mainstreaming is a challenging task, but one that has been energetically addressed by many practitioners across the country. Jim Dalziel demonstrated how the features of good practice had been practically applied to good effect at Eastbank New Learning Community, whilst Idem Lewis and Grant Douglas provided insiders' perspectives on the impact of inclusive education on young people themselves. The facilitators of all the workgroups each brought to the conference examples of successful practice in their area of expertise to share with other delegates.

If you would like to read the full report, please contact the Enquire office for a free copy. ■

## Legal subscription service

One of Enquire's activities is the provision of a legal subscription service. This provides a tool for advisers in the field of educational needs, in an easy-to-use information folder, and includes:

- An advisers' guide answering common questions arising in additional support needs advice work including detailed references to legislation and guidance
- Regular updates on legislative changes
- Enquire factsheets including topics such as Choosing a school, Placing Requests, Individualised Education Programmes, Educational Appeals Mediation etc
- Legal briefings covering topics such as Transport, Mainstreaming, Exclusion, Placing Requests and Access to Educational Records
- A listing of education departments and psychological services for all local authority areas, with key contact details
- A directory of solicitors in Scotland with an interest or expertise in additional support needs

The advisers' guide has been updated to include information on the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. All information will continue to be reviewed and updated throughout the implementation of the Act and the Code of Practice.

We would recommend this extremely useful and informative service to anyone in a role where queries regarding additional support needs may arise. Such roles may include solicitors, local authority professionals, voluntary organisations, MSPs, independent consultants, advocacy workers, lecturers or Health Care Advisors

To subscribe to the service at a cost of £45.00 annually, please complete and return the enclosed form. ■

## Disability Debate: Have your say on how to make an equal society for disabled people

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has recently launched a major national debate on the future of disabled people's equality in Britain with its discussion paper *Shaping the Future of Equality*. The debate will give people the opportunity to play an active part in shaping a society in which disabled people can genuinely expect to participate and contribute as equal citizens.

Over the summer the DRC will host a series of "debating points" covering issues such as risk, welfare and work, and the role of professionals. The DRC will also provide opportunities for people to discuss the issues directly with those who have the



power to bring about change. If you have ideas or views visit the website now at [www.disabilitydebate.org](http://www.disabilitydebate.org). Help shape the future of equality.

## Online information supports callers to Helpline

In line with the advanced use of technology in communications, the Internet is increasingly being used to access our services. The user evaluations from April 2004 - March 2005 indicated that the number of users who heard about the service via the Internet showed an increase of 69% over the previous year. We continue to receive regular email enquiries on a variety of subjects from our online service.

Enquire's information website is going from strength to strength. Table 1 shows page views of the website from January - March 2005 and Table 2 shows the downloads of Parents' Guides and Factsheets for the same period. Many service users comment that they really appreciate the fact they have instant access to the information, especially if they have an imminent meeting.

### 18% of calls concerned with provision of support for learning

The Helpline recorded 340 calls on the confidential database during the period January - March 2005. As in the past, the specific area that generated most enquiries was SEN Provision – Support for Learning which accounted for 18% of the total calls. This was followed by concerns about:

- Placing request/Choosing a school – 15%
- Identification/Assessment of Special Educational Needs – 12%
- Additional Support for Learning Act – 7%
- Record of Needs – 7%

Queries arose in all stages of education with the majority, 51%, concerning the primary sector and 25% with secondary education. Pre-school issues accounted for 10% of calls and concerns over further/higher education 1%. (13% of the calls were not sector specific).

### 24% of calls regarding children and young people with needs related to the Autistic spectrum

With regard to the type of additional support need referred to in this quarter, the highest figures recorded were:

- Needs relating to the Autistic spectrum – 24%
- Specific Learning Difficulties – 11%
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties – 10%
- Multiple – 6%

As a result of "awareness raising" talks, seminars and training sessions carried out by Enquire, Children in Scotland and other agencies, an ever-increasing number of people are anticipating the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act in November. Our advisers have noticed an increase in questions on how the new legislation will impact on present and future issues affecting their child's education. Our professional development programme will incorporate these issues to ensure our continued commitment to the delivery of a high quality service. ■

Month	Page views
January 2005	4879
February 2005	4601
March 2005	4526
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,006</b>

Table 1: Page views of www.enquire.org.uk between January and March 2005, figures from awstats

Publication	Downloads
Parents' guide	242
IEPs	170
Record of Needs	166
Roles of Professionals	163
Choosing a school	114
Placing Requests	84
Parental participation	77
School Attendance	76
Educational Appeals	67
Transport to school	57
Mediation	54

Table 2: Number of Parents' guides and factsheets downloaded from the website between January and March 2005, figures from awstats

### Helpline Hours

Mon	9am - 5pm
Tues	9am - 5pm 7pm - 9pm
Wed	8am - 5pm
Thurs	9am - 5pm 7am - 9pm
Fri	9am - 5pm

Please note the extended opening hours of the service on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and on Wednesday mornings. This enables callers to contact the Helpline at times which may be more suited to work or family circumstances.

## NOTICEBOARD

### Learning For Life

#### Children In Scotland's Annual Conference

Children in Scotland in partnership with Dundee City Council is holding a two-day conference with study visits to explore the importance of creating an enthusiasm for learning that lasts a lifetime.

The conference will:

- Look at the importance of developing an enthusiasm for learning in the early years
- Explore how children and young people continue to be motivated to learn throughout their lives
- Provide practical examples of how children and adults are being encouraged to make learning an essential part of their life

3-4 November, Dundee

Contact: Lynn Gilmour, 0131 222 2443, [lgilmour@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:lgilmour@childreninscotland.org.uk)

### Understanding the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004)

Children In Scotland is offering tailor-made training and awareness raising for organisations that need to know more about the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act and its implications.

Training sessions can be developed according to the needs of the group involved and could include:

- Examining the legislative and policy context of the Act
- Getting to grips with the new additional support for learning framework
- Identifying the key changes – ie new rights and duties
- Exploring the impact of these changes
- Expanding on specific aspects of the Act – eg dispute resolutions, parental involvement

Contact: Alison Rowan, 0131 222 2405, [arowan@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:arowan@childreninscotland.org.uk)

### Children in Scotland Study visit to Sweden

November 2005 (to be confirmed)

The study visit for Children in Scotland's Growing up in Rural Scotland programme 2005/06 will be to Sweden. This year's programme will explore the types and levels of support provision for young children with additional support needs. A particular emphasis will be placed on the teacher reform programme. A strategic overview of services plus visits to preschools and a family centre in Sweden are planned.

Deadline for registration Friday 23 September.

For further information, contact Sarah Gillen, Policy and Research Events Co-ordinator, on 0131 222 2404 or email [sgillen@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:sgillen@childreninscotland.org.uk)

### Are policies and services working for young children who require additional support?

The Opening Doors to Learning Project is holding 2 events to explore whether current early years policies and services are meeting the needs of young children who require additional support for learning. The first event will focus on children with additional support needs and their access to and experience of pre-school education. The second event will address the move into primary school.

This will enable parents, carers and professionals from all sectors to explore this issue, exchange views, share good practice and make recommendations for improving practice and policy.

14 September, Stirling;  
7 December, Ayr

These events are FREE to parents and carers.

Contact:  
Catriona Thomson, 0131 222 2445,  
[cthompson@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:cthompson@childreninscotland.org.uk)

### One-day Workshops

Children in Scotland is also offering one-day workshops on the new Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act suitable for interested individuals and those considering commissioning training for their organisation.

22 September, Edinburgh;  
4 October, Glasgow

Contact:  
Alison Rowan, 0131 222 2405,  
[arowan@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:arowan@childreninscotland.org.uk)