

Roles and responsibilities in additional support for learning

Enquire factsheet 8

Children and young people who need extra support at school, and their families, often have to deal with a lot of people during their pre-school and school years. These people can have a number of roles and responsibilities. The job titles they have can also vary among different local authority areas. This can make it difficult to work out who has responsibility for what, and who to speak to if you want to make an enquiry. This factsheet aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different people at each stage of the process of finding out about and providing the support children and young people need. It takes into account changes in the law brought by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (the ASL Act).

Children under three

Identification

Parents and medical staff such as **doctors**, **midwives** and **health visitors** will probably be the first people to identify that your child may need support when they go to nursery or school.

Assessment

Medical staff may refer some disabled children to an **education officer** at the education authority. The education officer may then arrange to assess whether those children need extra support. The education officer should tell you about any assessments being considered or carried out, and take your views into consideration. They should also explain what the assessment will involve, when it will take place and when the report or outcome will be available.

Generally children under three are assessed on an on-going basis by health professionals. Your child's progress would normally be monitored predominantly by a health visitor but you may also have input from your **GP** or other **health care worker**. Your child's development will be measured in a number of ways to check whether they are meeting the expected developmental targets for their age. In some cases more formal assessment by social work or education may take place, if appropriate.

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. We provide independent and impartial advice to parents and carers, to practitioners in education, social work and health services, and to children and young people themselves.

Factsheets on other topics are available.

Providing extra support

If an education authority identifies that a disabled child referred to them by medical practitioners has additional support needs, it must provide additional support to the child. **Pre-school home visiting teachers** may visit your child at home in order to support their development. Some children may be given a place at a local pre-school centre.

Parents' concerns

If you feel that your child is likely to need extra support you should speak to your GP or health visitor first of all. You can also discuss this with the **education officer** responsible for additional support for learning at your education authority. The education authority may provide additional support, but it does not have to.

Children at pre-school or school

Identification

Once a child starts at nursery or school, more people will become involved with them and will all play a part in looking out for any additional support needs a child or young person may have.

You may notice changes in your child's behaviour and development or you may become aware they are having specific difficulties.

Medical practitioners might come across issues that could affect a child's ability to benefit fully from school education. This may be identification of a potential long-term illness or a developmental delay.

Nursery staff, class or subject teachers, teaching assistants or auxiliaries may notice a child is having some difficulties with school work or with social interaction.

Social workers involved with a child or young person may be aware of a situation outside school that could have an impact on their ability to cope with school, such as a change in family circumstances or a bereavement.

Assessment

The education authority is responsible for making arrangements to find out about the needs of children and young people in their area. It must publish information about these arrangements. You or your child should contact the education officer who is responsible for additional support for learning at the education authority to find out more about the arrangements.

One person should manage the assessment process. This person should keep you and your child informed of progress and provide appropriate contact details. You should contact the education authority if you do not receive these details.

You may think your child should be assessed to find out whether they have additional support needs or may need a coordinated support plan (CSP). You should ask the school or the **education officer** responsible for additional support for learning about this or write to the education authority to request an assessment. Young people also have the right to request an assessment of their needs.

Some of these people may be involved in assessing your child's needs.

Class or subject teachers assess all children and young people's school work and social development on a daily basis.

Parents also monitor their child's progress and they should be asked for their views. They may also be asked to keep an eye on their child's behaviour or development and provide information about their child to others involved with them.

Support for learning teachers may look at the school work of children and young people who could require additional support. They may observe them in class or speak to them to find out how they feel they are getting on in school.

Educational psychologists may assess a child or young person's needs by looking at information provided by school staff and parents, observing them at school or at home, or occasionally speaking to them.

Health professionals may be involved, for example:

- **Doctors or nurses** may look into any medical conditions the child or young person may have
- **Occupational therapists (OTs)** may assess what kind of support a child may need to join in fully at school
- **Physiotherapists** may look into physical support a child may need
- **Speech and language therapists** may try to find out about any communication difficulties a child may be experiencing.

Providing extra support to children aged three or over, at nursery or school who do not have a co-ordinated support plan (CSP)

Several people may be involved in meeting the needs of these children and young people:

Nursery, class and subject teachers will play a major role. They may need to adapt classroom and homework activities and materials to suit the learning needs of each child. They must listen to the views of the child and their parents. They also have a duty to update individualised education programmes (IEPs) and other planning approaches such as personal learning planning.

Parents will be able to support their children by keeping in touch with their teachers and helping them to complete homework. Education authorities and people who work for them must seek and take account of parents' views.

Behaviour support staff may be available to help children and young people manage their behaviour. They may use a variety of behaviour management techniques that can be adapted for use in class and at home.

Support for learning teachers and educational psychologists may supply specialist advice or training to teachers on providing additional support to their pupils. Support for learning teachers may also back up teachers in the classroom or provide individual or small-group support to some pupils.

Teaching assistants help the teacher to deliver the work to children in each class. This may involve a number of tasks from paperwork to working with children individually or in a group.

Speech and language therapists can advise teachers on their approach to meeting the needs of children and young people who find it difficult to communicate. They may also work directly with the children and young people themselves providing a course of therapy, or this may be undertaken by a **speech and language therapy assistant**, under the direction of the therapist.

Other **medical or health practitioners** can help teachers make the changes needed to enable children and young people who have medical conditions to participate fully in school life.

Specialist teachers may provide support to pupils with particular needs. These may include teachers of children with sensory impairments or teachers of English as an additional language.

Visiting (peripatetic) teachers may provide home education to children and young people who are not well enough to attend school, or to children of Gypsy and Traveller families.

Other pupils may also be able to provide support to children and young people who need it. This could happen informally but schools can also set up **peer support** arrangements, such as buddying, reading together and circle time.

Social workers and **voluntary sector workers** may also be able to tell school staff about children and young people's circumstances outside of school that may help teachers to understand and meet their needs.

Providing extra support to children aged three or over, at nursery or school with a CSP

In addition to any of the people mentioned above, a **CSP coordinator** will be appointed to be in charge of the CSP and will make sure people carry out the actions set out in the plan. They are also responsible for telling you, your child and everyone involved in providing additional support what is expected of them.

Parents' concerns

You should discuss any concerns you have with the **nursery or class teacher**. If your concerns are not addressed, you can also speak to the **support for learning teacher** or the **headteacher**. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the education authority. Some education authorities have an **education liaison officer** (who may be called a **parent liaison officer**, a **customer liaison officer** or other title depending on the authority). These officers are responsible for dealing with parental concerns. If this role does not exist in an education authority, you should speak to the **education officer** responsible for additional support for learning.

Leaving school

Identification

Many of the people involved in providing support for a young person at school will also be involved in helping them plan for their future. The education authority must begin to gather information from **all agencies** involved with your child at least 12 months before they are due to leave school.

Assessment

Young people who may require a high level of support when leaving school and moving into adult services will be assessed by social work to establish what support is required. Depending on the outcome of the assessment they may be assigned a **key worker**.

The **careers adviser** or **guidance teacher** at school or a **Careers Scotland adviser** will provide careers advice.

If a young person is planning to go on to further education, the college or university they are going to will be involved with planning to ensure that their needs are met when they move on.

Providing extra support

As mentioned above, extra support after school will flow from the assessment carried out by your child's social worker. There may also be some voluntary organisations which can offer additional support – the social worker should be able to advise on these. For example, LEAD Scotland can provide advice or support about learning opportunities after school. See contact details below.

Parents' concerns

Young people may be entitled to benefits after leaving school and should contact their local benefits office for advice.

Parents may want to ensure that they have sufficient support and respite care for themselves if the young person will be more home-based than before.

Local Citizens Advice Bureaux can offer advice on these matters.

Further useful resources:

The parents' guide to additional support for learning, Enquire (2007)

People who can help you in and out of school, an Enquire guide for children and young people (2005)

Leaflets with more information about allied health professionals are available from www.ltscotland.org.uk

Parentzone:

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

For your local benefits office
www.dwp.gov.uk/localoffice

LEAD Scotland
Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
EDINBURGH EH2 4RG

Email: enquiries@lead.org.uk
www.lead.org.uk

Tel: 0131 228 9441 Fax: 0131 229 8082
Textphone: (18001) 0131 228 9441

To find your local Citizens Advice Bureau:

Citizens Advice Scotland
1st floor
Spectrum House
2 Powderhall Road
EDINBURGH EH7 4GB

Tel: 0131 550 1000
Fax: 0131 550 1001
www.cas.org.uk

For further information contact:

Enquire, Children in Scotland, Princes House,
5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, EH2 4RG

Helpline: 0845 123 2303 Office: 0131 222 2425 Fax: 0131 228 9852
email: info@enquire.org.uk web: www.enquire.org.uk

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