



#IncludED in the Main?!

22 steps on the journey to inclusion
for every pupil who has a learning disability



ENABLE Scotland is the leading organisation of and for people who have learning disabilities, and their families. We provide a wide range of support services for over 2000 people in Scotland who have learning disabilities. Together with our 5000 members, ENABLE Scotland campaigns for an equal society for every person who has a learning disability.

#IncludED in the Main?!

#IncludED in the Main?! is ENABLE Scotland's national conversation about the reality of educational experiences for young people in Scotland who have learning disabilities.

Informed by over 800 responses, #IncludED in the Main?! shows that inclusive education is still far from a reality for many young people who have learning disabilities.

Too many are still excluded: from classroom and curriculum, by friends and peers, and from opportunities that make up the whole spectrum of school life.

#IncludED in the Main?! did not set out to apportion blame. It set out to listen.

Our challenge now to Government at all levels is to listen. Listen to the pan-perspective views shared by more than 800 young people who have learning disabilities, their parents and carers, and the education workforce who work with them, who took part in #IncludED in the Main?!

Listen and Act. Act to make truly inclusive education a reality.

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"Every child has the right to become a successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor and responsible citizen - wherever their learning is taking place. Some will face barriers to learning and will need additional support to enable them to make the most of their educational opportunities and to realise their potential."

The Doran Review¹

"Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance... shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education...in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development."

Article 23, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

"Where school education is provided to a child or young person by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by an education authority it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential."

Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000)

"Every education authority must — in relation to each child and young person having additional support needs for whose school education the authority are responsible — make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by that child or young person."

Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act (2004)

"It is important that we ensure that the needs of young people are met most effectively. I am focused on the need to ensure that young people who have additional support needs are given adequate and appropriate support that is commensurate with their circumstances and conditions. The Government will continue to take that approach, consistent with the content of the 2004 act."

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education, John Swinney MSP²

We've come a long way...In 1975 every child in Scotland was finally deemed to be educable. The Education (Scotland) Act (1980) stated that every local authority had a duty to provide adequate and efficient education for all children in their locality.

During this period special school provision was developed.

Since 2000, there has been a move towards the inclusion of most pupils within mainstream education settings. This is generally referred to as the presumption to mainstream and is enshrined in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000).

But, 16 years on, where are we now?

¹ Scottish Government, Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs, (The Doran Review), Terms of Reference <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/920/0113850.pdf>

² <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10459&i=96339>

22 Steps on the Journey to Inclusion



Over 80% of education workforce said we are not getting it right for every child with the presumption that all children should be taught in a mainstream setting.

Recommendation 1: The Scottish Government should replace current guidance on the duty to provide mainstream education with holistic guidance for local authorities on delivering truly inclusive education; properly framing the implementation of the legal presumption to mainstream with children's best interests and wellbeing at its core.

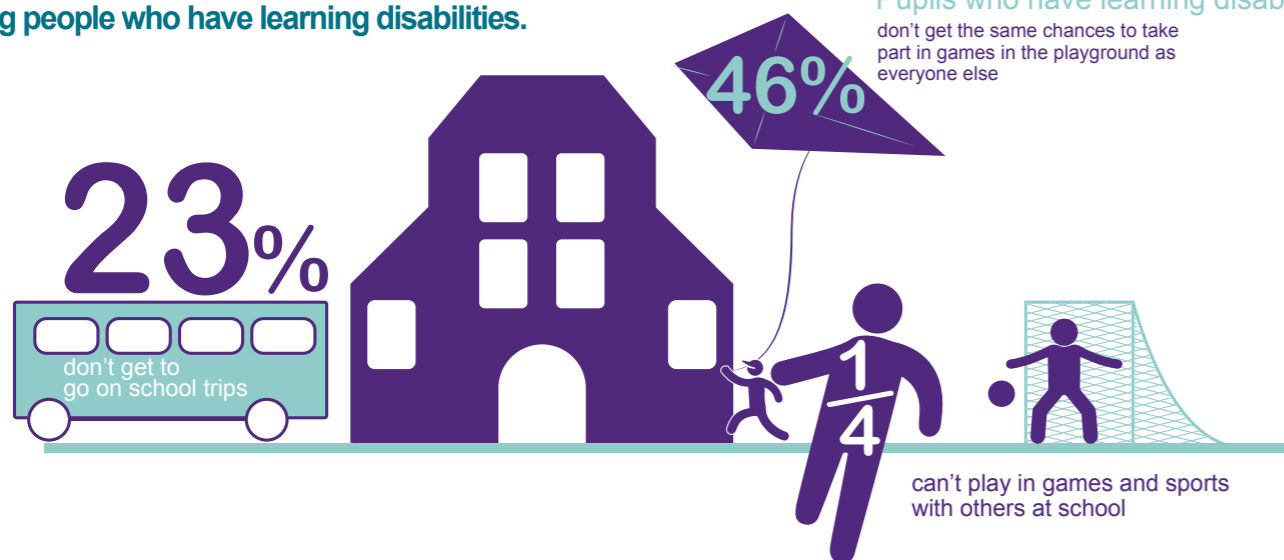
Recommendation 2: Lessons on Learning Disability should be embedded into the curriculum for all students. Pupils who have a learning disability themselves should be empowered to be have a key role in this.

Recommendation 3: Scottish Government and Education Scotland must ensure plans within the National Improvement Framework to measure progress on wellbeing, equality and inclusion, genuinely reflect the voices of young people who have learning disabilities.



60% of pupils who have learning disabilities feel lonely at school, with 62.5% saying people do not understand them.

Pupils who have learning disabilities: don't get the same chances to take part in games in the playground as everyone else



Recommendation 4: Education Scotland should embed greater accountability for inclusion by mandating School Inspectors to ask explicit questions on full participation in school trips and extra-curricular activities, and report on any barriers to that, as part of all school inspections

Recommendation 5: Scottish Government should provide guidance on self-directed support for children and families, and encourage the application of Self-Directed Support to support inclusion in wider school life.

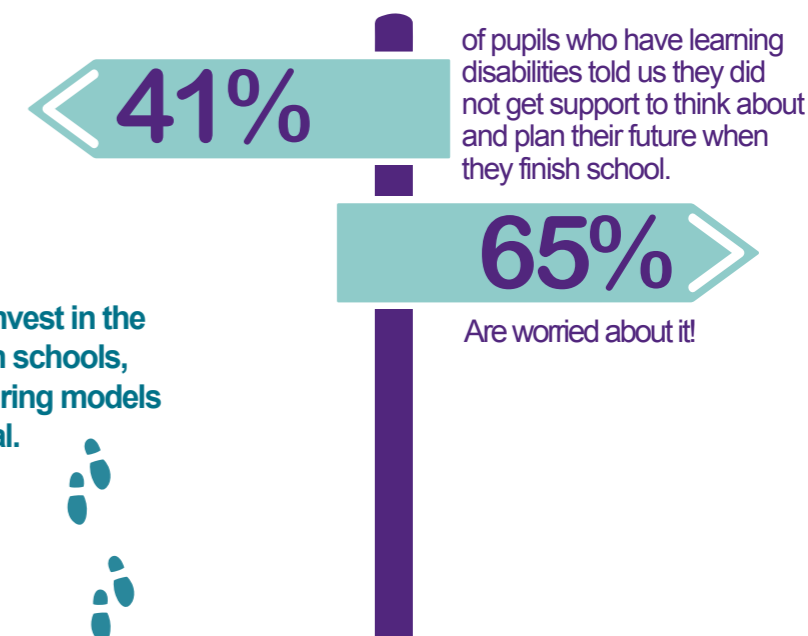
Recommendation 6: Scottish Government should review access to Self-Directed Support for families with disabled children and implement strategies to improve assessment for and uptake of this.



Recommendation 7: Additional Investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge should be targeted at reducing inequality of opportunity for children and young people who have learning disabilities.

Recommendation 8: The Scottish Government should urgently explore ways to deliver National Standardised Assessments that are fully inclusive by establishing a short-life expert working-group.

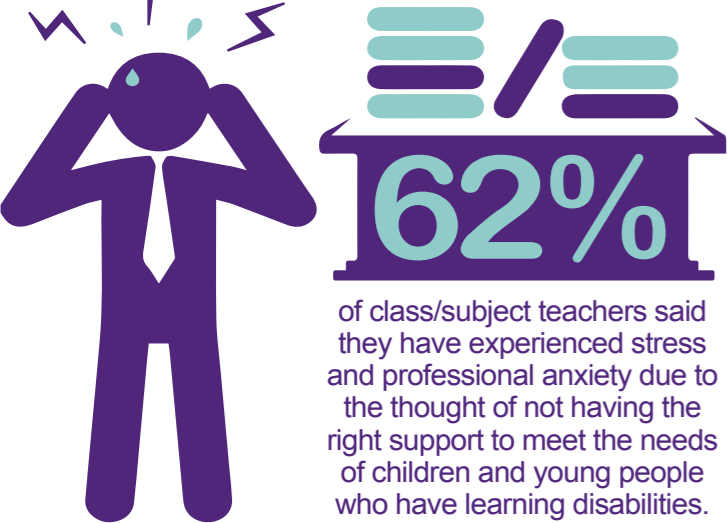
Recommendation 9: The Scottish Government should continue to invest in the specialist employability support in schools, provided by the third sector; ensuring models of good practice become universal.



Most common phrases used by parents and carers to describe their experience of the school system were:



Recommendation 10: Through the development of a strategy for families with disabled children, the Scottish Government should bring together policy, legislation, and funding, to ensure support, information, and advice, is available to every parent of a disabled child; embedding the processes to ensure access to this is routinely facilitated by professional points of contact equipped to do so.



Recommendation 11: Scottish Government should urgently extend plans to gather evidence on 'initial teacher education programmes' coverage of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to include coverage of additional support for learning needs within those measurements.

Recommendation 12: Modules on Disability inclusion, ASN strategies and Positive Behaviour Support should be incorporated into both Initial Teacher Education programmes, and the new Masters Qualification for Headship.

Recommendation 13: Scottish Government should commission new accredited CPD courses on: learning disability, Positive Behaviour Support and supporting families with disabled children. And monitor uptake by all education staff nationally as part of National Improvement Framework.

Recommendation 14: Scottish Government and COSLA should establish a national Commission on the role of classroom support in Scotland pursuant to a standardised role, supported by a national training programme, and guidance on appropriate deployment.

Recommendation 15: Scottish Government and Local Authorities must renew and continue investment in the role the role of Additional Support for Learning Teachers, through the creation of an elevated post, and direct action to recruit and retain skilled staff into these positions.



Recommendation 16: Scottish Government should establish a National Centre for Excellence on Learning Disability Education to: develop and accredit CPD; promote and disseminate best practice; create cutting edge resources; and support teachers to develop teaching strategies.

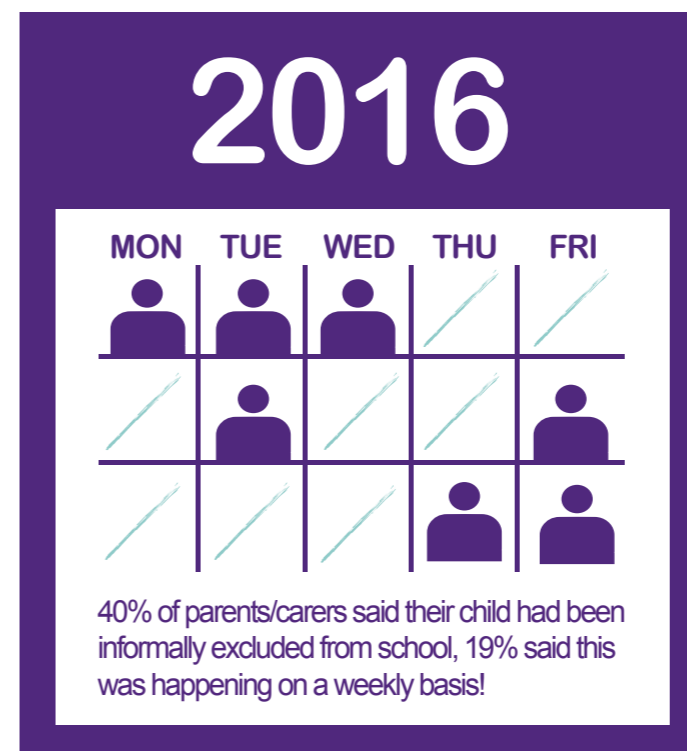


Recommendation 17: Scottish Government, COSLA, and Local Authorities must work together to urgently review and take action to standardise and improve practice around the early identification and recording of additional support for learning needs.

Recommendation 18: The Scottish Government should issue guidance on coordination of plans to remove complexity from the system.

Recommendation 19: Scottish Government should support local authorities and school leadership to implement an annual process of considering all pupil support needs and resourcing requirement to meet the collective learning needs identified by individual learning plans.

Recommendation 20: National and Local monitoring of those whole school learning needs plans should then inform national and local commissioning of specialist input.



Recommendation 21: Scottish Government and Education Scotland must take urgent action to increase visibility, and reduce incidence rates, of unrecorded exclusions through the School Inspection regime. School Inspections should include explicit questioning on instances of unrecorded exclusion, and request evidence of adapted pupil support strategies to reduce incidence rates.

Recommendation 22: Scottish Government must be clear in Guidance that exclusion is not a proper response to wellbeing issues arising at school, and any decision to reduce attendance at school, rather than providing additional support, must be underpinned by a transparent decision making process.

Respondent information

ENABLE Scotland's national conversation — #IncludED in the Main?! — took place between February and September 2016. Over 800 young people who have learning disabilities, their parents and carers, and education staff, took part in the Scotland-wide conversation.

The majority of participants took part in the conversation by completing one of three online surveys.

Alongside this, ENABLE Scotland, commissioned IPSOS Mori to survey 1550 young people in secondary schools across Scotland. This survey took place during October 2016.

Children and Young People

The #IncludED in the Main?! survey for children and young people who have learning disabilities received 116 responses from children and young people, aged 5 to 26, who identify as having a learning disability.

Some respondents took part in the conversation by completing an easy-read questionnaire, with questions identical to the online survey.

87% of respondents attended mainstream school provision; 46% attended an additional support needs base within that mainstream provision. 9% of respondents attended special school provision. 4% selected 'other', with responses including: 'Home schooled with 3 tutors', 'have not attended school for 5 years. I get 2 hours a week with a learning assistant 1:1', and 'I'm waiting for a place at a new school as I can't cope in mainstream'.

Parents and Carers

The #IncludED in the Main?! online survey for parents and carers received 503 responses from parents and carers of children aged between 2 – 28, from across 28 different local authority areas.

The majority of responses were received from parents and carers of children who have learning disabilities. 39% of responses were received from parents and carers of young people who have autism spectrum disorders. Additionally, some responses were also received from parents and carers of young people who have learning difficulties including dyslexia and ADHD.

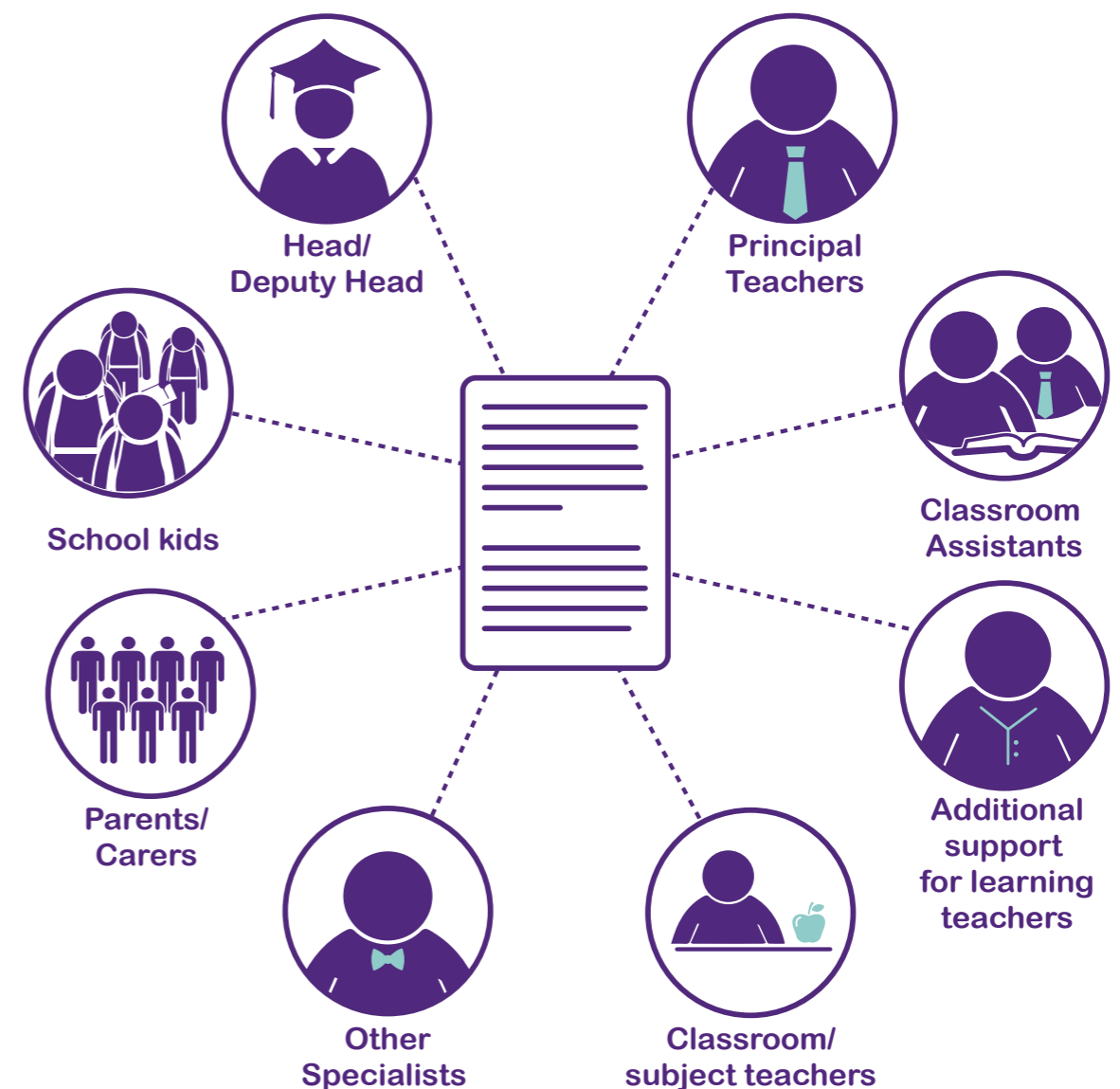
72% of respondents' children attended mainstream school provision; 30% attended an additional support needs base within that mainstream provision. 13% said their child attended special school provision. 12 responses were received from parents whose child was currently being educated at home. 4 responses were received from parents who stated there was currently no education provision for their child.

Education Workforce

The #IncludED in the Main?! online survey for the education workforce received 204 responses.

- 6% from individuals who identified as headteacher/deputy headteacher;
- 17% from principal teachers;
- 40% of respondents identified as a classroom/subject teacher;
- 19% of responses were from Additional Support for Learning Teachers
- 7% from classroom assistants
- 11% identified as other including, 'other support staff', 'Early Year Practitioner', 'Speech and Language Therapist', 'Senior Early Learning and Childcare Practitioner', 'Applied Behaviour Analyst Therapist', 'Retired Headteacher', 'Librarian', 'Social worker' and 'NHS professional supporting schools with Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education.

57% of responses received came from education professionals working in a mainstream school; 27% from those working in a mainstream school with an ASN Base; and 6% from education professionals working in a special school.



Are we getting it right through the presumption to mainstream?

The Standard in Scotland's Schools Act includes a presumption to mainstream. Since the introduction of the legal presumption to mainstream there has been a gradual shift in the type of school that pupils who have learning disabilities attend.

In 2008, the majority of pupils who have learning disabilities (46.2%) attended special school provision. The proportion of young people who have learning disabilities attending special school provision in 2005 was 29.5%.³

#IncludED in the Main?! sought to understand contemporary feelings about the presumption to mainstream.

#IncludED in the Main?! asked the education workforce: are we getting it right, in terms of inclusion, through the presumption that children should be taught in a mainstream setting?

Over 80% of the education workforce said we are not getting it right for every child through the presumption that all children should be taught in a mainstream setting.



Over 80% of education workforce said we are not getting it right for every child with the presumption that all children should be taught in a mainstream setting.

With only 3% responding: Yes we are getting it right, in terms of inclusion, through the presumption that children should be taught in a mainstream setting, and 13% responding: Yes but there is still more work to be done.

The majority (60%) responded Sometimes - but it doesn't work for everyone, while 22% responded: No.

To understand parents and carers feelings, we compared their responses by their child's school placement. When asked about the support provided to their child, fewer than 12% of parents and carers, whose child attends solely mainstream provision, felt the support their child received was enough to support their participation in all parts of school life.

In contrast more than half (57%) of those parents and carers whose child attends special school provision felt the support their child received was enough to support their child to participate in all parts of school life. 23% of those whose child attends mainstream with an Additional Support Needs (ASN) Base felt the same.

On schools meeting their child's educational and emotional needs: Only 7% of parents, whose child attends solely mainstream provision, are confident their child's educational and emotional needs are being met at school. This is in comparison to 22% whose child attends mainstream with an ASN Base, and 40% whose child attends special school provision. This trend was not replicated when we compared responses from young people based on school setting.

Only one-third (33%) of young people in mainstream school felt they were getting the right support in school. This is compared with two-thirds (66.67%) for young people who attend mainstream with an ASN base. Interestingly only just over one-third (37.5%) of young people who attend a special school said they felt they were getting the right support at school.

A similar trend was demonstrated throughout various responses. 42% of children in solely mainstream provision thought they were doing well in school. Two-thirds (66.67%) of children who attend mainstream with an ASN base felt they were doing well. Interestingly only 44% of those in Special School felt the same.

School Placement Decisions

Parents and carers report to ENABLE Scotland that, all too often, they do not feel that local authorities or schools are listening when they ask for additional support to be put in place, or that budgetary pressures are influencing decisions about placement and additional support resource allocations.

43% of parents and carers felt that they struggled to have their concerns heard when decisions were being made about their child school placement. 22% did not feel part of the decision about their child's school placement.

Less than 1 in 10 (9%) felt listened to as an expert about their child when such decisions were being made.

Most parents and carers (31%) identified local authority budget as the primary motivator in decisions about their child's school placement, in their opinion. This was followed by, 'my child's best interests' (20%) and the availability of suitable school placements (19%).

#IncludED in the main?! demonstrates that the policy of presumption to mainstream is not delivering a truly inclusive education for young people who have learning disabilities. And nor can it, on its own. It is only one part of a bigger issue. Systemic change is required to make it real. And that is what the recommendations in this report seek to achieve.

³ Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory, What are Learning Disabilities?, 2016
<https://www.sldo.ac.uk/media/1546/what-are-learning-disabilities-report.pdf>

Inclusive education is not about school setting or placement — all children should receive an inclusive education in a setting that best meets their educational and developmental needs.

The Scottish Government's policy for a presumption of mainstream education (2000) has undoubtedly been a positive step towards equality; with longer term benefits of creating a more inclusive society. However, ENABLE Scotland is concerned that not enough consideration has been given, either at the time of implementation, or since, as to how to ensure that this policy is supporting children who have learning disabilities to be properly supported and fully #IncludED at their school.

There are actions and interventions required to make the vision this policy sought to deliver a positive reality. Now is the time to address this, and take the next steps on the Journey to Inclusion.

Only when mainstream schools can provide a good quality educational experience for all children, will the demand for specialised support in separate settings decrease, and our societal aspiration for full inclusion be realised.

This relies on parents, children and young people feeling confident that they will receive the highest standard of support and be #IncludED fully as equal members in their place of learning, and teachers feeling confident that they have the appropriate skills and resource to deliver this.

The journey to inclusion

Guiding the Way

16 years after the implementation of the presumption to mainstream, ENABLE Scotland welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to review the guidance on the duty to provide mainstream education; and supports government's intention to establish a working group on the review and consult on draft refreshed guidance next year (2017).⁴

This is an opportunity to enhance the implementation of this policy; informed by the learning since its inception; and underpinned by contemporary legal and policy developments, including, the Equality Act 2010, GIRFEC, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended.

In keeping with the GIRFEC approach, putting the best interests of the child at the heart of decision-making, revised guidance must properly frame the implementation of the legal presumption to mainstream with the best interest of the child at its core.



Recommendation 1: The Scottish Government should replace current guidance on the duty to provide mainstream education with holistic guidance for local authorities on delivering truly inclusive education; properly framing the implementation of the legal presumption to mainstream with children's' best interests and well-being at its core.

As a minimum guidance should seek to deliver against the recommendations outlined in this report, including the following as part of delivering an inclusive education:

- Implementing strategies to support school pupils to develop the language, understanding and confidence to discuss learning disability; removing prejudicial attitudinal barriers to an inclusive learning environment
- Creating opportunities for shared-experience peer support for parents with children who have learning disabilities
- Equipping education staff with the training, and access to specialist support, to meet the needs of children who have learning disabilities
- Effective partnership-working between education, health and social care, to plan for inclusion, including in school trips and out of school activities
- Opportunities for specialist input in school as often as is required to support children who have a learning disability to achieve their full potential
- Visibility of unrecorded exclusions from school to reduce exclusions from school
- Whole-school approach to planning the resource, training and specialist input required to meet the individual learning needs within the school population
- Monitoring strategies to reduce exclusions from school

⁴ <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-04041&ResultsPerPage=10>

Case Study: Lucy McKee



Seventeen year old Lucy McKee has had a difficult time at school. Alone and without friends, she was often bullied and called names by her fellow pupils, or worse, she was just ignored.

Supported by her new headteacher, Lucy took a stand and spoke out about her experiences, winning the hearts of her teachers and pupils in the school.

But despite this, the youngster still finds school life “hard”, often wishing she was more #IncludED and says she worries about her future.

It was Lucy’s involvement with ENABLE Scotland that gave her the voice and resources she needed to speak out about the significant problems she faced at school.

“School wasn’t easy for me, I didn’t have any friends and some of the children bullied me and called me names, or just ignored me. I felt invisible.”

“I spoke to my headteacher and said I wanted to talk to the whole school about it. I wanted them to understand what it is like to have a learning disability and how hurtful it is when people call you names. I wanted to make it better for me and younger people who might be bullied too.”

This was a turning point for Lucy and her work to educate peers on what it is like to live with a learning disability has been instrumental in helping try to build a more inclusive school environment.

Lucy has discovered a voice she never knew she had: *“It has made me stand up for who I am. Since I gave the presentation school has got a lot better for me. People know who I am and talk to me now. Mr Brown [her headteacher] says younger children look up to me as a role model.”*

Despite improvements on the social elements of school life, Lucy still finds school difficult.

“I just get on with school but it is hard. I feel like I’m not part of the crowd and sometimes don’t feel #IncludED in conversations with others. Classmates talk about university and their career and often I don’t feel #IncludED in those conversations.”

When asked if the curriculum is accessible to her in terms of the way she learns, she said that it depends: *“Sometimes it is and sometimes it isn’t. It depends on what topics or lessons.”*

In some, if it’s a lesson I understand, then I feel comfortable. But for some others I do need additional support or tuition. Without this additional support, I worry that I’ll fall behind.”

The S6 pupil worries about her future and struggles to find information about what types of opportunities are available to her.

Lucy hopes her work to educate her fellow pupils will help others, but knows some of the problems stem from a wider problem in society: *“It will take time for people to learn that people who have learning difficulties are equal members of society but I hope that can happen so that other people don’t have to feel invisible.”*

Equity and excellence in education

Inclusion

“We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities.”

Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision (2013) Scottish Government

“I am never treated the same I don’t get allowed out for playtime or at lunch.”

Young person, 8, attends mainstream and ASN base

Children and young people who have learning disabilities have the right to grow up in a world that includes them in all areas of society, gives them support and opportunities to engage with their peers, develop friendships, and equips them with the personal skills to progress and be valued members in the community.

An inclusive education system should facilitate the achievement of all of these things. It should deliver young adults who have learning disabilities who have the skills and confidence to achieve their full potential.

But simply being present in a classroom does not mean you are #IncludED.

#IncludED in the Main?! demonstrates that young people who have learning disabilities are not always #IncludED as equal members in their place of learning:

“I feel like I miss out on things at school!” — said more than half (51%) of young people who have learning disabilities.

“I don’t feel part of things at school.” (49.43%)

Bullying and Isolation

60% of young people who have learning disabilities told ENABLE Scotland they feel lonely at school, and 62.5% said: “people don’t understand me at school.”



of pupils who have learning disabilities feel lonely at school, with 62.5% saying people do not understand them.

Two-thirds of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders have been bullied. 16% don’t have any friends and 39% don’t see their friends outside of school.

Interestingly, these experiences were fairly consistent across the various school settings, mainstream, ASN base and special school.

Most education staff (59.13%) told us that children and young people who have learning disabilities have fewer friends than their peers who do not have learning disabilities and are less likely to maintain school friendships outside of school (24.35%).

Almost half (43.48%) of the education workforce said children and young people need help to better understand and engage with their peers who have learning disabilities.

This position is further evidenced by the fact that nearly one-third (29%) of 1550 secondary pupils in Scotland say they find it difficult to make friends with young people at their school who have a learning disability.⁵

The experience of being isolated and bullied at school can have a range of negative impacts on an individual’s health, well-being, attendance and attainment.

Pupils who have been bullied are less likely to feel safe, be healthy, have a sense of achievement, or feel supported, respected, #IncludED or happy in school.⁶

⁵ ENABLE Scotland and Ipsos MORI, Young People in Scotland Survey 2016

⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools: A research report 2015 https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/prejudicebased_bullying_in_scottish_schools_research_report_0.pdf

⁷ The Scottish Government, National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education, 2016

⁸ McLaughlin, C., Byers, R., Oliver, C. (Eds) (2012) Perspectives on Bullying and Difference. London. National Children’s Bureau 2012

The Scottish Government has identified improving attainment, health and well-being as key priorities within the National Improvement Framework.⁷ Specific plans on how health and well-being will be measured nationally are anticipated. Within that, particular attention must be paid to measuring the health and well-being of pupils who have learning disabilities, if we are going to see a significant shift from the current picture painted by #IncludED in the Main?!

Research identifies that a perceived ‘difference’, fuelled by lack of understanding, creates barriers to forming friendships between young disabled people and their non-disabled peers.⁸ Helping young people to understand disability will encourage a better understanding and respect for diversity. Equality doesn’t mean not addressing difference; and failing to do so just creates further barriers. Lucy’s experience shows that.

The Scottish Government’s current National approach to anti-bullying for Scotland’s children and young people, 2010, identifies highlighting bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, and ensuring policies and practices are effective in dealing with these issues as a key principle of the strategy.⁹

However, in 2015, the Equality and Human Rights Commission reported many Scottish Local Authority anti-bullying policies did not suggest specific preventative strategies, and the strategies which were offered rarely referenced prejudice. Fewer than half recommended that either prejudice or diversity be #IncludED in the curriculum.¹⁰

At the time of writing, publication of a new National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Children and Young People is expected from Scottish Government in 2016/17. It is expected that refreshed local strategies will flow from this. ENABLE Scotland has participated in the group refreshing the guidance and is keen to see greater emphasis on tackling prejudice-based bullying.

To address the issues of isolation, exclusion and bullying, evidenced by #IncludED in the Main?!, adequate time and resource must be provided to develop both staff and pupil understanding of learning disability. Talking about difference is part of the journey to inclusion.

Currently, only 37% of secondary school pupils say they have been taught about disability prejudice.¹¹

Discussion of learning disability should be embedded into teaching practices, so that pupils have the language, understanding and confidence to discuss learning disability; removing prejudicial attitudinal barriers to an inclusive learning environment.

This requires the education workforce, both teaching and non-teaching staff, to have an understanding of learning disability and prejudice in order to transfer the learning and understanding to pupils; with the additional benefit of challenging any prejudice present in the workforce too.

⁹ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/330753/0107302.pdf>

¹⁰ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Prejudice-based bullying in Scottish schools: A research report 2015

¹¹ https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/prejudicebased_bullying_in_scottish_schools_research_report_0.pdf

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/prejudice-based_bullying_in_scottish_schools_research_report_0.pdf

¹² Education Scotland, How good is our school? 4th EDITION, 2016

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/HGIOS4August2016_tcm4-870533.pdf

Recommendation 2: Lessons on Learning Disability should be embedded into the curriculum for all students. Pupils who have a learning disability themselves should be empowered to have a key role in this.

School resources developed in partnership between ENABLE Scotland, Strathclyde and Glasgow Universities create a safe place for children and young people to discuss learning disability; developing their understanding and overcoming prejudicial barriers to inclusion.

These will be available to schools in 2017; accompanied by training for education staff.

Recommendation 3: Scottish Government and Education Scotland must ensure plans within the National Improvement Framework to measure progress on wellbeing, equality and inclusion, genuinely reflect the voice of young people who have learning disabilities.

Education Scotland should build on the helpful framework provided by *How Good is Our School? (4th edition)*¹² *Quality Indicators* to ensure school inspections reflect the reality of life at school for young people who have additional support needs. Models such as peer audits could helpfully be utilised to ensure young people who have learning disabilities are heard in mechanisms to inform improvements to their school. There may be opportunities to broaden the scope and purpose of Education Scotland's Young Ambassadors for Inclusion to this end.

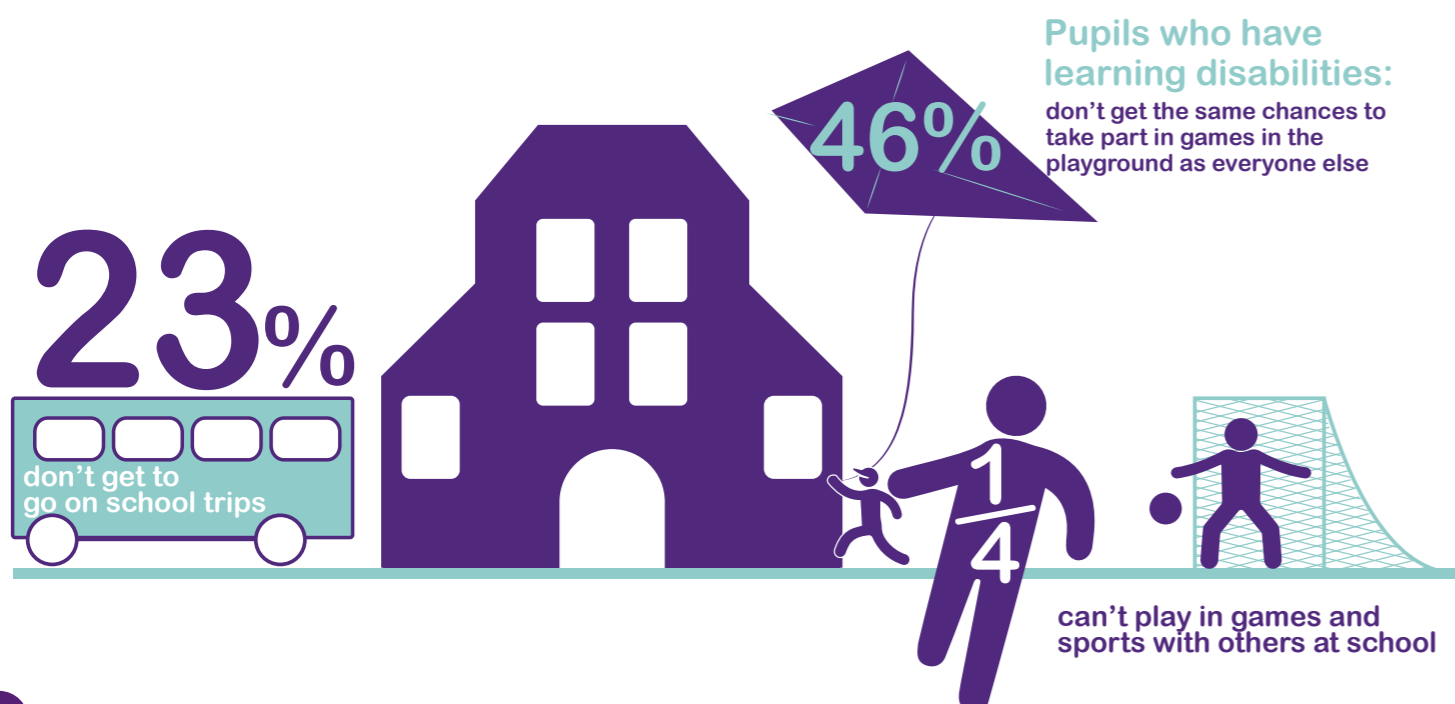
Equal Opportunities for an equal future

Learning doesn't begin and end in the classroom.

"My mum has to fight for me to go on trips and things."

Young person, 15, attending mainstream school with ASN base

More than a quarter of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders told us they can't take part in games and sports with other people in their school. 23% told us they don't get to go on school trips. Nearly half (46%) said they don't get the same chances to take part in games in the playground as everyone else in their school.



Half of the parents and carers who took part in #IncludED in the Main?! told us: *"My child feels excluded from many extra-curricular activities."*

28% of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders said: *"I don't learn about life outside school."*

At times responses varied by school setting:

On participation in games and sport 23% of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders told us they missed out on this, similar to 22% in special school.

On playground games 45% of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders told us they don't get the same opportunity to take part, in comparison to 25% who attend special school.

While 15% of young people in mainstream settings told us they don't get to go on school trips, 44% of those in special school provision said this.

24% of pupils in mainstream setting said they did not learn about life outside school, while 44% of those in special school provision said this.

When Education staff were asked: *"are children and young people who have learning disabilities #IncludED outside of the classroom in terms of trips, committees and extra-curricular activities?"* more than half said they were not involved as much as their peers; with 48% answering 'Involved in some school activities/opportunities but face barriers to others', and a further 7% answering: 'Excluded from many school activities/opportunities'.

This is not good enough.

No child should be excluded from the opportunities available to their classmates and peers. To do so, on the basis of their disability, is in violation of the Equality Act 2010.

Parents know about this, education staff know about this, children feel it. This begs the question why it is still happening?

Despite the legislative framework being strong, the evidence suggests that there is an urgent need for robust guidance, training, and systemic accountability.

Recommendation 4: Education Scotland should embed greater accountability for inclusion by mandating School Inspectors to ask explicit questions on full participation in school trips and extra-curricular activities, and report on any barriers to that, as part of all school inspections.

Joining Up the Journey towards Inclusion

It is clear more attention must be given to co-ordination across services to achieve inclusive opportunities. This can only be achieved by working alongside parents, with other professional input, including social work, to plan for inclusion in school trips and out of school activities.

Consideration could helpfully be given to the opportunities presented by Self-Directed Support, whereby families can seek direct payment options to enhance their child's outcomes, and greater partnership working between education, health and social work.

There is a need to promote the flexibility and creativity facilitated by Self-Directed Support for the benefit of children and young people. Further consideration should be given to how Self-Directed Support could be better utilised to support inclusion in extra-curricular activities and school trips.

Such a shift would be supported by specific guidance on Self-Directed Support for children and young people, with specific guidance on the use of Self-Directed Support to support inclusion in school life.

Recommendation 5: Scottish Government should provide guidance on Self-Directed Support for children and families, and encourage the application of Self-Directed Support to support inclusion in wider school life.

Additionally, to achieve this, issues of access, assessment and uptake of Self-Directed Support for families with children who have learning disabilities, require to be addressed.

Research by ENABLE Scotland in 2015 revealed that 70% of families with children who have learning disabilities do not receive a social care support package; with more than half having not been through a social care assessment of need.¹³

Recommendation 6: Scottish Government should review access to Self-Directed Support for families with disabled children and implement strategies to improve assessment for and uptake of this.

The Additional Attainment Gap

The Scottish Government has made closing the poverty-related attainment gap its *defining mission*.¹⁴ However, #IncludED in the Main?! makes clear that the attainment gap does not start and end with poverty. Young people who have learning disabilities experience many other barriers to achieving and attaining in the education system.

More than half (51%) of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders do not feel they are achieving their full potential at school.



46% of young people who have a learning disability and/or autism spectrum disorder believe they are not doing well in school. One-third (33%) feel they cannot take part in the work in class.

When asked to respond to the statement: I believe in myself, 41% of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders responded: false.

The Scottish Attainment Challenge

Additional investment in schools for the Scottish Attainment Challenge presents an opportunity to look at the wider attainment gap for children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders.

Whilst we know that young people who have learning disabilities are more likely to live in poverty¹⁵, we cannot hope that the wider attainment gap they experience will be reduced as a coincidental by-product of interventions to challenge the poverty-related attainment gap.

In recognition of that wider gap, the scope of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, and associated additional investment, should be broadened beyond poverty and targeted at reducing inequality of opportunity for children and young people who have learning disabilities. Furthermore, schools should be supported to make effective use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funds; thinking creatively to deliver better outcomes for young people who have learning disabilities; including supporting their involvement in the whole spectrum of opportunities of a holistic learning experience at school.

¹³ ENABLE Scotland, Exploring Concerns around a Child's Diagnosis of a Learning Disability (including ASD): Experiences of Parents, Young People and Professionals in Scotland, 2015

¹⁴ A Plan for Scotland The Government's Programme for Scotland 2016 -17
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00505210.pdf>

¹⁵ almost one in five families with disabled children are missing meals and 18% cannot afford to heat their homes - http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/381281/counting_the_costs_scotland_insert.pdf

Recommendation 7: Additional investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge should be further targeted at reducing inequality of opportunity for children and young people who have learning disabilities.

Assessment

The Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework sets out government's intention to assess and monitor children's progress. The planned National Standardised Assessments have been positioned as a diagnostic tool, enabling teachers to tailor learning for each individual child.

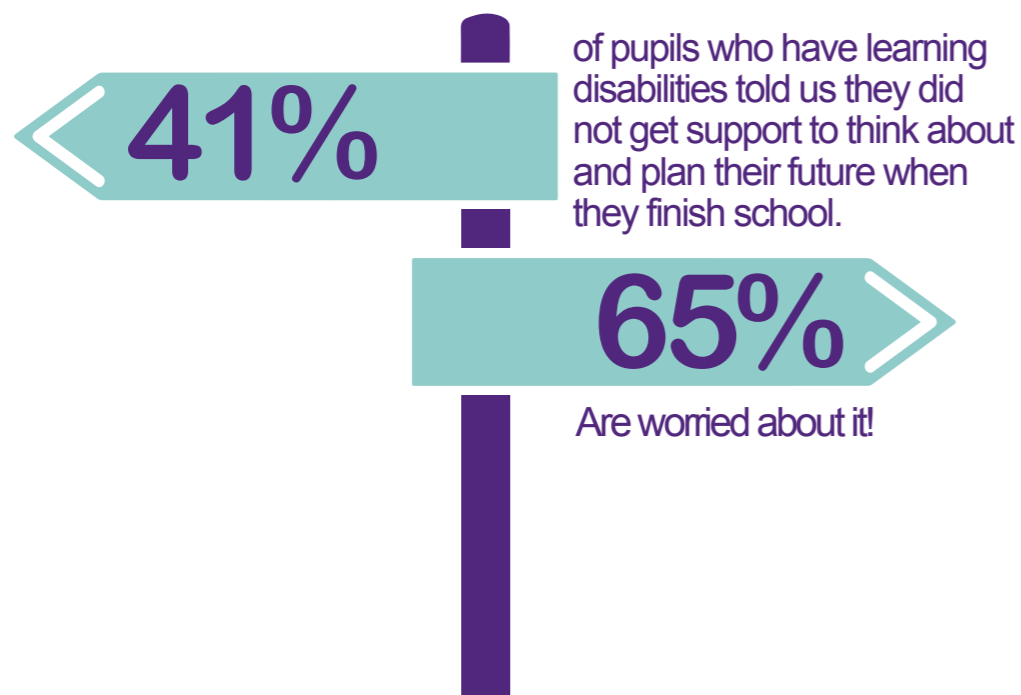
If such a resource is to be used to promote equity and excellence in education, as intended, then it must be inclusive and accessible in order to be utilised for the benefit of all children and young people, including those who have learning disabilities.

Recommendation 8: The Scottish Government should urgently explore ways to deliver National Standardised Assessments that are fully inclusive by establishing a short-life expert working-group.

Positive Destinations

The Scottish Government's latest leaver destinations statistics show 81% of young people who have a learning disability achieve a positive outcome in comparison to the national average of 94% for those young people who do not have an additional support need.¹⁶

Nearly half (41%) of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders told us they did not get support to think about and plan their future when they finish school. 65% are worried about it!



¹⁶ Scottish Government, Attainment and Leaver Destinations Supplementary Data 14/15
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/leavedestla/folleavedestat/attainmentandleavers1415>
¹⁷ Education Working For All! Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, Recommendation 33
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00451746.pdf>

When broken down by school setting: 38% of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders in mainstream settings told us they did not get support to think about and plan their future when they finish school; while more than half (56%) in special school settings said the same.

The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce concluded that Young disabled people are much more likely to experience difficult transitions through education and to be unemployed after they leave education. The Commission recommended that: *'Career advice and work experience for young disabled people who are still at school should be prioritised and tailored to help them realise their potential and focus positively on what they can do to achieve their career aspirations.'*¹⁷

ENABLE Scotland welcomes commitments made in *Developing the Young Workforce Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy* to: introduce a new work experience model for young disabled people; implement an improved approach to careers services for young disabled people; and introduce a supported work experience programme for young disabled people.

In order to achieve that the Scottish Government must promote greater partnership working between public, independent and third sector service providers to deliver the most appropriate support to children and young people who have learning disabilities.

The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce pointed to the specialist support provided by the third sector in schools as an example of good practice; highlighting ENABLE Scotland's *Stepping Up* employment service.

Case Study: Stepping Up

Stepping Up works with schools to support young people aged 14–19 who have learning disabilities. Since August 2009 almost 1000 young people, in more than 70 schools, across 11 local authorities, have been supported. *Stepping Up* is a comprehensive support service which takes participants from an initial investigation of the world of work, through a process of discovery and planning for their future, to engagement with employers in the workplace. It supports young people who have learning disabilities to start employment and through after-care ensures that jobs are sustained and incomes maximised. *Stepping Up* takes an inclusive approach, engaging not only with the young person being supported, but with their families and teachers. To date, *Stepping Up* has supported 228 young people who have learning disabilities into jobs, 157 training opportunities including MA's and 485 into further education.

98% of young people who have learning disabilities, supported through *Stepping Up*, achieved a positive destination. This is a clear indication of the value of specialist interventions in closing the attainment gap.

Recommendation 9: The Scottish Government should continue to invest in the specialist employability support in schools, provided by the third sector; ensuring models of good practice become universal.

Case Study: The Bothwell Family



When Nick and Vickie Bothwell's son Jack, 9, was diagnosed with autism five years ago they worked hard to understand the world from Jack's perspective and learn how to support him.

"What they don't tell you when your child gets the diagnosis is you will have to learn to fight for your children. You will have to learn how to be very determined to make sure you get what is right and appropriate."

They feel fortunate they are able to manage these scenarios but believe greater support is needed to equip and empower parents to stand up for their children's needs.

"I come across lots of other parents and find myself sharing advice with them, even just to know how to go in and handle a meeting, to learn how to communicate in a constructive cooperative way, because it is emotive and it is emotional."

Jack's schooling is a blend of mainstream education and a specialist communication unit, and his parents are committed to working in partnership with them to find tailored solutions that best suit his needs.

"We are not experts in education. But we are experts in our son."

When Jack was anxious about taking part in the school's sports day because he finds competitive sports stressful and was embarrassed about his poor coordination, they successfully persuaded the school to instead involve him by holding the finishing line and assisting the teachers who were running the event. As a result Jack felt relieved, happy and #IncludED.

However, this is not always the case.

"Jack is P5 and still struggles to write. But he is often not allowed to use a computer or a tablet because the school says it is not appropriate as he needs to learn to write. They had a parents' evening last week and they had his classmates' writing up on the walls. And Jack's wasn't there."

They know that better access to supportive technology and communication aids, as well as adequate levels of support teaching staff, would enable Jack to express his knowledge and learning and build his confidence, which would also better equip him to integrate with his classmates and form more meaningful, equal-footed friendships with his peers. However, a lack of funding and understanding still acts as a barrier.

"My son isn't really integrated in school. He copes with school. They help him to an extent but they don't help him to thrive."

"In our opinion they do not meet the GIRFEC principles. From a human rights perspective you are actually violating his dignity and indirectly discriminating him by not adapting his education."

"What you do now at school for these young people will set them up for the rest of their lives. This is something that will help these young people achieve their best and maybe even reduce their support needs in the future."

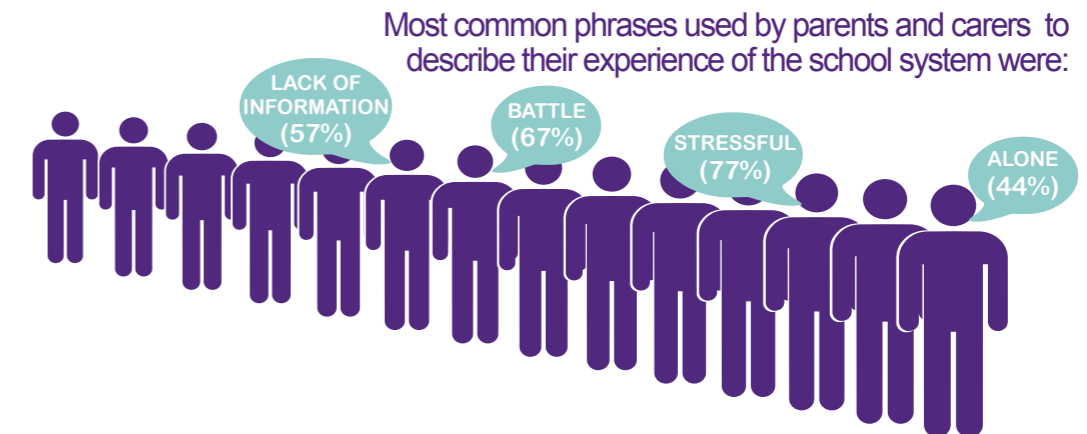
Parents and families

"(I am) ostracised and isolated by the other parents."

Parent of young person age 11, in mainstream school

22% of parents and carers described their experience of the education system as positive; 50% described it as negative.

When asked which words/phrases they would use to describe their experience of the school system so far the most commonly used words/phrases by parents and carers were: Stressful (77%), Battle (67%), lack of information (57%) and alone (44%).



The more positive words/phrases were used less frequently: Supported (19%), informed (18%), choice (5%).

Learning Strategies

A child's first educators are their parents or carers. A large proportion of children's opportunities to learn are outside the classroom in the family setting where learning can, and does, take place. This can have a positive effect, not only on the child or young person, but also on the parents and carers.

¹⁸ The Scottish Government, Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland, 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf>

¹⁹ ENABLE Scotland, Exploring Concerns around a Child's Diagnosis of a Learning Disability (including ASD): Experiences of Parents, Young People and Professionals in Scotland, 2015
<http://www.enable.org.uk/families/Pages/default.aspx>

ENABLE Scotland welcomes Scottish Government's commitment to a National Improvement Plan on Parental and Family Engagement.¹⁸

#IncludED in the Main?! identifies that 46% of parents and carers of young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders do not feel part of regular decisions about their child's education.

Parental Engagement is a key driver of improvement recognised within the National Improvement framework. In measuring performance against this driver, Scottish Government must look beyond 'pre-inspection questionnaires', as currently planned, acknowledging that these are unlikely to reflect the views of parents and families already struggling to engage.

A fundamental part of closing the educational attainment gap for young people who have learning disabilities will be providing support for parents to explore the learning strategies that work for their child at home.

Parents as Equal Partners

For parents to participate as 'equal partners' in their child's education, they are expected to take on an increasingly professional role; disconnecting the emotional parental response; participate in formal discussions; and engage in a manner which professionals consider to be constructive. ENABLE Scotland's research¹⁹ demonstrates that the system can currently entrench a 'them and us' dynamic, where parents can find it difficult to air concerns or frustrations in a non-confrontational way.

Information, Advice and Support

Support for families with disabled children is required. ENABLE Scotland therefore welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to develop a strategy for families with disabled children.²⁰

Families have identified 'having access to relevant information' (**95%**) and '*knowing where to go for support*' (90%) as key coping strategies. However, many parents report that they do not have access to this.²¹

It is recognised that where young people are placed in special school provision the opportunity to develop a local diverse peer community with friends and neighbours may be lost. Conversely, it must be recognised that for parents and carers, the opportunity to develop communities of support and advice around shared experiences may be reduced in a mainstream school placement.

The new strategy should seek to deliver access to information and advice; creating opportunities for shared-experience peer support for parents and families with children who have learning disabilities will be a central part of that.

²⁰ A Plan for Scotland The Government's Programme for Scotland 2016 -17
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00505210.pdf>

²¹ ENABLE Scotland, Exploring Concerns around a Child's Diagnosis of a Learning Disability (including ASD): Experiences of Parents, Young People and Professionals in Scotland, 2015
<http://www.enable.org.uk/families/Pages/default.aspx>



Recommendation 10: Through the development of a strategy for families with disabled children, the Scottish Government should bring together policy, legislation, and funding to ensure support, information and advice, is available to every parent of a disabled child; embedding the processes to ensure access to this is routinely facilitated by professional points of contact equipped to do so.

As a minimum, the Scottish Government's Strategy for families with disabled children should include the following:

- Support for families to explore the learning strategies that work for their child
- Access to advice, information and advocacy
- Create opportunities for shared-experience peer support for parents and families
- Interventions to support families to meaningfully participate as equal partners in their child's education

Case Study: Teacher

"There isn't a teacher I know who doesn't have problems", says Nicola*.

"Behind the classroom door a myriad of challenges await."

"In some of the schools I have worked in there are children displaying social and behavioural difficulties due to a lack of nurture. I just want to take them home and feed and shove their uniform in the wash. There are children who are dealing with change and loss on a frequent basis. Some don't speak English and have just fled war and conflict. Then there are the children with more typical additional support needs, such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, dyslexia, speech and language difficulties. And they are all sat side-by-side. Never mind trying to provide a high quality learning experience for each individual child, there can be days in a row that go by when what you've planned to teach goes out the window."

As a Post Graduate student teacher she recalls little by way of training to prepare her to meet this wide array of needs.

"At my university you would get the odd hour or two on the likes of GIRFEC. A speaker would tell you about the Single Child Action Plan, the 'named person' idea, or maybe looking at how to fill out a Personal Learning Plan for a child with different from the typical, or additional, support needs. Otherwise, though, it really was a case of getting into a classroom and, if you were lucky, the teacher would give you some information about any individuals you had to try to treat or teach in a particular way. There was lots of learning as you go and trying to be brave enough to ask questions. But before you knew it your five weeks at that school were over and you went away feeling rubbish and, that for said children, you probably just disrupted their learning."

After qualification, she says the onus shifted onto teachers to lead their own professional learning. However, the additional training available differs greatly between local authorities and often has to take place out with normal school hours. As a result she says there is little consistency when it comes to training on additional support needs.

“What I have attended for training can be completely different from the teacher teaching in the class next door. One of us may have other, more pressing, issues in our class that we feel the need to attend training on other additional support needs. Another may have a family to get home to after work and not have time to go to CPD. Or they may have been in the job for 40 years and think they know it all already.”

The challenges are exacerbated by lack of adequate classroom support. She says classroom assistants are overworked and at least as stressed as the teachers themselves but paid even less for the pleasure. She says some lack the training or skills for the job and they often just end up doing your photocopying or laminating.

“Ideally, each class would have one classroom assistant there as standard, plus additional for children who need more one-to-one support”, she says.

“But that will never happen because there isn’t the money. Well, there might be, but it’s being spent on something else.”

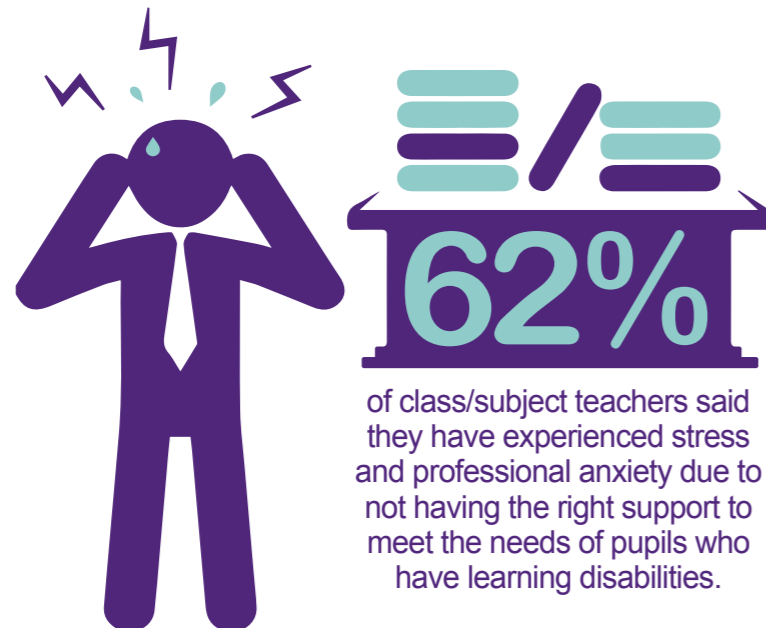
*Names have been changed to protect anonymity.

Education workforce

Fewer than 12% of the education workforce felt satisfied that they can meet the educational and developmental needs of a child or young person who has a learning disability. This dropped to 7% for class/subject teachers, 66% of whom said they need more support in the classroom to do so.

Less than 10% answered that they felt confident that a child or young person who has a learning disability was getting enough of their time and support.

Two-thirds (66%) of class/subject teachers told us: “I don’t get enough support to meet the needs of children and young people in my classes who have learning disabilities.”



When asked: *what is the personal impact on you if you feel that you do not get enough support to meet the needs of children and young people who have learning disabilities*, 62% of class/subject teachers said they have experienced stress and professional anxiety. 71% also said they do not feel job satisfaction.

Additional Support for Teachers

Teacher training

*‘Teachers should be confident in understanding and addressing the consequences of various barriers to children’s learning and their needs for additional support. To address the serious weaknesses in literacy and numeracy, for example, all teachers need an understanding of how children, including those with additional support needs such as dyslexia, acquire and continue to develop vital skills in these fundamentals of learning throughout their schooling. This will also reduce the risk that early difficulties with literacy and numeracy lead to increasing inability to cope with the curriculum as a whole as a young person progresses through school and ultimately suffers serious impairment of life chances in adulthood’.*²²

Teaching Scotland’s Future

However, the same 2010 review of teacher education found that many new teachers also expressed a lack of confidence in dealing with some of the most challenging aspects of the role, including positive behaviour management and ways of supporting learning for pupils with significant additional support needs.

Now, in 2016, the majority of families (88.01%) still feel classroom teachers are not trained to work with children/young people who have a learning disability.

98% of the education workforce feels that initial teacher training education does not adequately prepare teachers for teaching young people who have additional support for learning needs, including learning disability. 55% said it does not prepare teachers, while 43% said it could be better.



²² Graham Donaldson, Teaching Scotland’s future: Report of a review of teacher education in Scotland, 2010 <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/337626/0110852.pdf>

²³ The Scottish Government, National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - achieving excellence and equity, 2016

The National Improvement Framework²³ will gather evidence on 'initial teacher education programmes' coverage of literacy, numeracy and health and well-being. ENABLE Scotland would contend that there is opportunity here to evaluate how well prepared student teachers are to teach children and young people who have learning disabilities by including coverage of additional support for learning needs within those measurements.

Recommendation 11: Scottish Government should urgently extend plans to gather evidence on 'initial teacher education programmes' coverage of literacy, numeracy and health and well-being to include coverage of additional support for learning needs within those measurements.

Recommendation 12: Modules on Disability Inclusion, ASN strategies and Positive Behaviour Support should be incorporated into Initial Teacher Education programmes, and the new Masters Qualification for Headship.

Career-long professional learning

There needs to be more high-quality CPD offered to teachers and teachers need to be enabled to access these.

Class/Subject Teacher, Mainstream Primary School

30% of education professionals felt there was not enough specific CPD for teaching young people who have learning disabilities.

Given the changing needs of the pupil population there is an argument that Initial Teacher Education can never fully and adequately prepare teachers to meet the specific learning needs of every pupil they will meet. Access to continuous, relevant and timely professional development is equally if not more important to support teachers in their role.

On top of that, supporting families of disabled children is increasingly part of a teacher's role.

The Named Person Service should provide a framework to ensure families have access to the advice, information, support and services they need. Earlier research by ENABLE Scotland²⁴ suggests that parents and carers already identify professionals who will take on the role of named person as the first point of contact for information and advice, which is a positive indicator for the practical application of the legislation. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places that relationship on a statutory footing and defines the responsibilities entailed.

However, most education staff responded that they did not have the skills or time to support parents of young people who have learning disabilities throughout their child's journey through education (51.85%).

Opportunities for the education workforce to engage in training focused on supporting families with disabled children should therefore be made available. This will be of additional value to school leadership taking on the role of Named Person; requiring them to be equipped with the

relevant training and knowledge to enable them to support and connect families to information and advice around parenting a child who has a learning disability, navigating the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004, the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, the Equality Act 2010, and the social security system, to maximise access to rights and support.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 presents opportunities to provide support to parents and carers, as well as access to information and advice. Given that parents do not always identify as being 'carers' – recognising the shift from 'mummy' or 'daddy' to 'carer' can be a challenge, and one that many parents will not readily want to explore. It is therefore important that professionals, including education staff, are equipped to make that identification and inform parents of their rights under the Act.

Recommendation 13: Scottish Government should commission new accredited CPD courses on: learning disability, Positive Behaviour Support and supporting families with disabled children. It should monitor uptake by all education staff nationally as part of National Improvement Framework.

Classroom Support

Referred to variously as classroom assistants, pupil support assistants, teaching assistants – additional classroom support was in high demand and perceived as low supply.

82% of the education workforce believes there is a shortage of classroom/pupil support assistants available to meet the needs of children with additional support needs educated in a mainstream setting.

When asked: what would help in a mainstream setting to teach children and young people who have learning disabilities, the most popular response from the education workforce was: More support assistants (70.63%).

There is evidence that working with classroom support can lead to improvements in pupils' attitudes, and also to positive effects in terms of teacher morale and reduced stress. Research also suggests that classroom support can also have a positive impact on academic achievement. However it should be noted that impact varies widely dependent on how that resource is deployed.²⁵

Indeed negative impact has been reported where support from classroom support has substituted rather than supplemented teaching from teachers.²⁶

Where classroom support is shown to have a positive impact, it is likely that adequate support and training will have been provided to both assistant and teacher so that both understand how to work together effectively. Research which focuses on assistants who provide one-to-one or small-group support shows a stronger positive benefit. Often such support is based on a clearly specified approach which teaching assistants have been trained to deliver.²⁷

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491758.pdf>

²⁴ ENABLE Scotland, Exploring Concerns around a Child's Diagnosis of a Learning Disability (including ASD): Experiences of Parents, Young People and Professionals in Scotland, 2015
<http://www.enable.org.uk/families/Pages/default.aspx>

²⁵ Education Endowment Foundation, Teaching assistants Low impact for high cost, based on limited evidence, 2016
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistants/>

²⁶ Education Endowment Foundation, Teaching assistants Low impact for high cost, based on limited evidence, 2016
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistants/>

It should also be noted that while teachers are regulated by the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS), there is currently no independent regulatory oversight of classroom support.

The National Improvement Framework²⁸ is set to measure 'teacher professionalism' as a key improvement driver. Yet many other people contribute to children and young people's learning and development. For young people who have learning disabilities, classroom support has a particularly vital role.

Recommendation 14: Scottish Government and COSLA should establish a national commission on the role of classroom support in Scotland pursuant to a standardised role, supported by a national training programme, and guidance on appropriate deployment.

Embedding specialism in the System

Whilst the presumption to mainstream has created the opportunity for children who have learning disabilities to be educated alongside their wider peer group, this has also meant the number of specialist units, schools, and consequently, access to specialist knowledge of the educational support needs of children who have learning disabilities, has reduced.

Most education staff (78%), in particular class/subject teachers (86%), said: *there are not enough additional support for learning staff in my school to support children and young people who have learning disabilities.*

It is clear that access to specialist input has a positive impact on education experiences. Through #IncludED in the Main?!, this is most clearly demonstrated by the greatest positive responses being received from those children attending mainstream school with an additional support needs base.

Additional support for learning teachers are specialist resources and a central part of their role is to support classroom/subject teachers to develop their approach through creative curriculum architecture, strategies and models that meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs in their classrooms. For example this could include accessible curriculum techniques, task-based learning, and positive behaviour support approaches.



²⁷ Education Endowment Foundation, Teaching assistants Low impact for high cost, based on limited evidence, 2016
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/teaching-assistants/>

²⁸ The Scottish Government, National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education - achieving excellence and equity, 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491758.pdf>

In an era of presumption to mainstream this role is critical.

However, the number of additional support for learning teachers in Scotland fell last year to its lowest level since 2007. In 2015, there were 2,936 teachers with additional support needs (ASN) as their main subject in Scotland. The number is down on the 2014 figure of 2,963. A total of 22 out of 32 local authority areas reduced ASN teachers since 2009.²⁹

Furthermore, Additional Support for Learning Teachers who attended an #IncludED in the Main?! focus group raised the issue of Additional Support for Learning Teachers regularly being deployed as supply teachers.

'ASN teachers are being asked to be supply at other schools.'

Additional Support for Learning teacher, Secondary School

Urgent Action is required to ensure that consultative specialist resource is routinely available to education staff to support an inclusive learning environment.

Recommendation 15: Scottish Government and Local Authorities must renew and continue investment in the role of Additional Support for Learning Teachers, through the creation of an elevated post, and direct action to recruit and retain skilled staff into these positions.

In order to promote good practice and innovative thinking in education for children and young people who have learning disabilities, education professionals must be given the opportunity to explore and develop their classroom approach with input from experts.

ENABLE Scotland welcomes Scottish Government's commitment to accelerate efforts to share best practice through the new National Improvement Hub.³⁰ Additionally, the commitment to develop a research strategy and national forum to ensure innovative, research-based intervention and strategies are implemented in practice, is welcome.³¹

To ensure such commitments deliver for young people who have learning disabilities, #IncludED in the Main?! highlights there is a clear need for renewed focus on developing excellence on learning disability education.

Recommendation 16: Scottish Government should establish a National Centre for Excellence on Learning Disability Education to: develop and accredit CPD; promote and disseminate best practice; create cutting edge resources; and support teachers to develop teaching strategies.

²⁹ Answer to Parliamentary Question from John Swinney MSP
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=5W-00665&ResultsPerPage=10>

³⁰ The Scottish Government, Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland, 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf>

³¹ The Scottish Government, Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland, 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf>

Planning for Positive Experience

More than half (52%) of children and young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders feel that they are not getting the right support at school.

Two-thirds of pupils in mainstream provision say they are not getting the right support at school. This reduces to one-third for pupils who attend mainstream school with a specialist provision. Interestingly, and in contrast to parents views, almost two-thirds (63%) of young people attending a special school setting say they are not getting the right support.



Only 20% of families feel the support provided to their child is enough to facilitate their participation in all parts of school life. 65% believe it is not.

Of those parents whose child attends a mainstream school setting 79% believe support is insufficient; decreasing to 55% where their child attends a mainstream school with an additional support for learning base; and decreasing further to 25% where their child attends special school provision.

Overall 70% of education staff told us: *Children and young people who have learning disabilities at my school are well supported.* 30% told us they are not. Breaking this down by school setting, 90% of education staff in special school provision told us children and young people who have learning disabilities at my school are well supported and 80% working in a mainstream setting with an ASN base said the same; this decreases to 67% from respondents working in mainstream provision.

³² Parliamentary Question, Answered by John Swinney (25/07/2016)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-01096&ResultsPerPage=10>

Overall, 59% of education staff told us there are not enough resources in their school to properly support children and young people who have learning disabilities. As perhaps expected, this drops to 10% in responses from education staff working in special school provision.

Currently it is difficult to gain a clear picture of what support is being offered in different local authority areas across Scotland because the Scottish Government does not hold information on how many hours of support provision are being provided per pupil.³²

Early identification of needs

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended, provides for a statutory requirement on local authorities to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of children and young people for whose education they are responsible.

Yet Local Authority variation in the number of identified children with additional support needs demonstrates clear inconsistencies in the identification of need. In 2015, the percentage of pupils recorded as having an additional support need ranged from as low as 8% in one local authority to as high as 35.7% in another.³³

ENABLE Scotland is concerned that unidentified needs may be unmet needs. Without the correct data to inform planning and budget projections, there is likely to be a deficit.

Earlier research³⁴ by ENABLE Scotland identified challenges to accessing early year's support, particularly while awaiting a child's learning disability diagnosis. The research concluded that diagnosis is perceived, by both families and professionals, as a pre-requisite to obtaining support and facilitating access to services. The research also concluded that the journey from identifying developmental needs to a formal diagnosis is not straightforward, or swift; meaning many families are struggling to access crucial support and services during their child's formative years.

In parallel, during an #Included in the Main?! focus group, an Additional Support for Learning Principal teacher stated: *'I always ask for a doctor's letter to confirm diagnosis before offering ASN support.'*

In 2015 ENABLE Scotland's research concluded that: *'the universal principle of monitoring well-being indicators for all children (GIRFEC) should mean that an absence of a formal diagnosis should not be a barrier to accessing support, both for the child as an individual, and for the family around the child.'*

This should have the potential to promote a significant positive shift in identification of needs in all parts of children and young peoples' lives, including education.

Implementation of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 therefore provides a timely opportunity to make this vital shift. The Named Person Service provides a potentially excellent framework to facilitate an early intervention approach to identifying concerns, and implementing an appropriate and timely response.

³³ Parliamentary Question, Answered by John Swinney (25/07/2016)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-01096&ResultsPerPage=10>

Recommendation 17: Scottish Government, COSLA, and Local Authorities must work together to urgently review and take action to standardise and improve practice around the early identification and recording of additional support for learning needs.

Planning the right support

Various individualised planning mechanisms: Personal Learning Planning (PLP); Individualised Educational Programme (IEP); Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP). Each with their own pros and cons. For example, only 1.8% of pupils with an additional support need actually have a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP)³⁵ perhaps highlighting a need to raise awareness of the right to an assessment of a child's requirement for a Co-ordinated Support Plan, provided by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended.

A child or young person who has a learning disability may also have a care plan under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

Individual children are therefore part of a varied and complex planning system. There is a need for all of these plans to connect for the benefit of the child, and their family.

The implementation of Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 should provide opportunities to do so, provided this is supported by adequate training and guidance; which specifically looks at the provision and purpose of the Act within the context of young people who have learning disabilities, preparing for, and in school.

Recommendation 18: The Scottish Government should issue guidance on co-ordination of plans to remove complexity from the system.

Additional Support for Schools

Despite the many individualised planning mechanisms there is an apparent absence of systemic planning informed by these. A recurring frustration is that individual plans fail because they are not adequately resourced; they are not positioned within the circumstances of the particular school, or area. This research has been unable to find evidence of individual planning mechanisms informing collective systemic planning of resource requirements at school or local authority level.

This appears to be a fundamental disconnect in the system.

To strengthen the impact of individualised planning there is a need for a whole-school approach to planning; looking at the resource, training and support requirements, to meet the collective learning needs within the pupil population, as identified through individual planning mechanisms. Supporting school leadership to do so will become increasingly important with plans to allocate the additional £100 million per annum from Council Tax reforms directly to schools from the financial year 2017-18.³⁶

³⁴ ENABLE Scotland, Exploring Concerns around a Child's Diagnosis of a Learning Disability (including ASD): Experiences of Parents, Young People and Professionals in Scotland, 2015
<http://www.enable.org.uk/families/Pages/default.aspx>

Recommendation 19: Scottish Government should support local authorities and school leadership to implement an annual process of considering the support needs of all pupils and resourcing requirement to meet the collective learning needs identified by individual learning plans.

Recommendation 20: National and Local monitoring of those whole-school learning needs plans should then inform national and local commissioning of specialist input.

The cost of not getting it right

"Too much time spent forcing square peg in round hole causes my son to be so anxious that he lashes out. He's either excluded, informally excluded or so stressed about his actions he refuses to go to school and ends up on part time time-table therefore missing half his education."

Parent of young person age 14, Fife

Exclusion from Education

"My son talked about suicide after last exclusion because he thought he was worthless & everyone would be better off if he was dead".

Parent of young person age 13, Renfrewshire

Exclusion from education represents both cause and consequence of failing to appropriately meet the needs of young people who have learning disabilities.

Exclusion is often symptomatic of the right support or strategies not being in place.

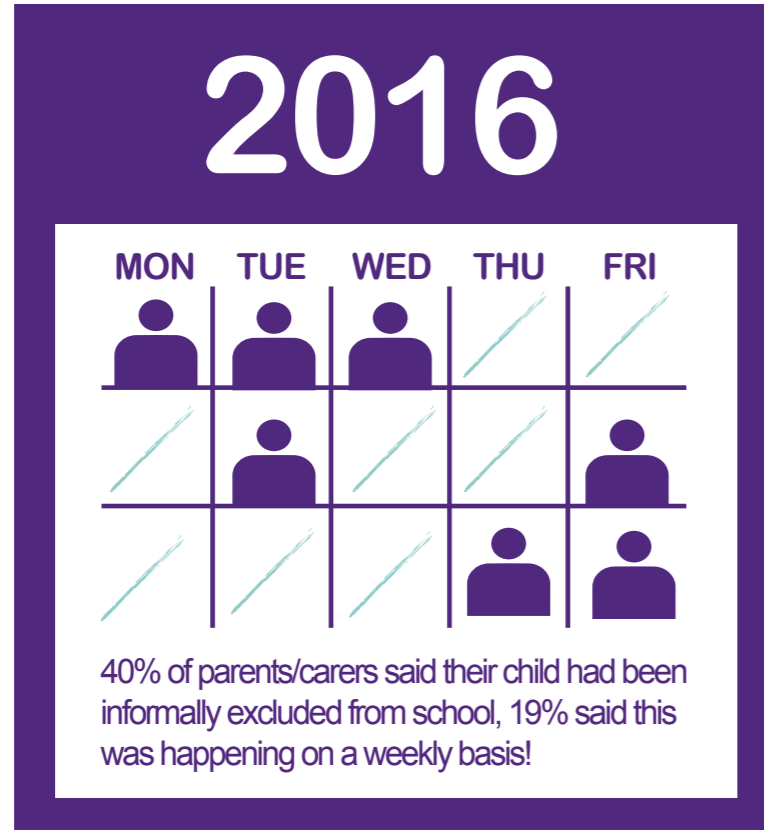
And yet the unhelpful practice of 'unrecorded exclusion' serves only to mask a support need that is not being met. Recorded exclusions require appropriate alternative education provision to be provided for the duration of the exclusion, it is unlikely that an unrecorded exclusion would trigger the same response; and is therefore an infringement on the right to education.

Scottish Government Guidance makes clear that every exclusion from school must be recorded.³⁷ Despite the policy and legislative position, unrecorded exclusion from school, also known as, 'informal exclusion', 'cooling off period' and 'sending a learner home', continues for young people who have learning disabilities.

³⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendSpecialEducation>

³⁶ The Scottish Government, Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland, 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf>

40% of (410) parents/carers said their child had been informally excluded from school, 19% said this was happening on a weekly basis!



"I have been told in the past if I did not keep my child home or collect him it would then result in a formal exclusion."

Parent of young person age 12, Perth & Kinross

Only 32% of education staff could say that they had not felt the need to informally exclude a young person who has a learning disability from school; 27% said they had; 40% were unsure if they had.

"The drive to reduce exclusion is very high... due to the reduced exclusion rate it is not highlighting children that may need support as happened previously."

Additional Support for Learning Teacher, attending #IncludED in the Main?! focus group

"The drive to reduce formal exclusions is causing an increase in other forms of exclusion which can in turn be part of the reason for the feeling of isolation in those with (learning disabilities) — they are seen as trouble-makers by their peers and so are further socially isolated and so the cycle continues."

Classroom Teacher, Mainstream Secondary School

"School management are encouraged to mask problems encountered."

Additional Support for Learning Teacher, Mainstream primary school with an ASN Base

"My only explanation is that it depresses the exclusion stats which is pointless in my view."

Additional Support for Learning Teacher, Mainstream Secondary School

Our evidence reveals apparent infringements of the Equality Act 2010, where young people who have learning disabilities and/or autism spectrum disorders are being excluded from school because of their disability or behaviour arising as a consequence of their disability.

We asked families for the reason given for their child's unrecorded exclusion, they told us:

- School said child not coping (45.69%)
- School said child needs time out (28.43%)
- School said child being too disruptive (38.58%)
- School said not enough staff to support your child (30.46%)
- School said class/activity/trip not suitable for your child (28.43%)
- School said it's for your child's "own good" as they are having a "bad day" (46.19%)

60% families did not agree with the reason given for unrecorded exclusion, believing the following to more accurately describe the situation:

- School not coping (52.48%)
- Child not getting the support they need (74.75%)
- Child not being listened to (43.07%)

Exclusions often impact on the family unit. More than half (53%) of parents said they were unable to work due to exclusions from school, and 75% said it causes heightened stress at home; creating a further negative the impact upon the child.

ENABLE Scotland remains concerned that Education (Scotland) Act 2016³⁸ effectively creates statutory approval of the idea that a proper response to well-being issues arising at school is to reduce attendance at school for that child or young person, rather than providing additional support.

*"Where the authority is satisfied that the pupil's well-being would be adversely affected if the prescribed hours were to be made available to the pupil during the relevant year, an education authority may secure that fewer than the prescribed hours are made available to the pupil during the relevant year."*³⁹

³⁷ #IncludED, Engaged and Involved Part II - National guidance for schools and local authorities in managing school exclusions. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/10/06092326/12>

³⁸ Education (Scotland) Act 2016, s.21 Learning hours inserts s.2ZA Learning hours to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

³⁹ Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) s.2ZA(3)and(4)

Scottish Government must act. Firstly to address the root causes of exclusion, highlighted by #IncludED in the Main?!; and secondly to prevent those root causes being further entrenched by the practice of unrecorded exclusion masking the consequences.

Scottish Government must take urgent action to be clear in guidance that unrecorded exclusions are not permitted. Furthermore strict accountability must be embedded.

Recommendation 21: Scottish Government and Education Scotland must take urgent action to increase visibility, and reduce incidence rates, of unrecorded exclusions through the School Inspection regime. School Inspections should include explicit questioning on instances of unrecorded exclusion, and request evidence of adapted pupil support strategies to reduce incidence rates.

Recommendation 22: Scottish Government must be clear in Guidance that exclusion is not a proper response to well-being issues arising at school, and any decision to reduce attendance at school, rather than providing additional support, must be underpinned by a transparent decision making process.

Through #IncludED in the Main?! ENABLE Scotland set out to listen to, and amplify, the voices of young people who have learning disabilities, their parents and carers, and the education workforce.

Our challenge now to Government at all levels is to listen. Listen to the pan-perspective views shared by more than 800 young people who have learning disabilities, their parents and carers, and the education workforce who work with them, who took part in #IncludED in the Main?!

Listen and Act.

Lets take the next step together on the Journey to Inclusion.

"I worry that when the school can't cope he is sent for a walk, left to wander round the grounds and school until he is ready to come back and learn. I fear this happens too often and he is missing a lot of his lessons. There is not enough support to keep him focused on work so the teachers send him away when they feel he is being disruptive — at least twice per lesson."

Parent of child aged 8, Perth and Kinross

"My son feels very bad about himself because he cannot fit in and learn like all the other children. He feels isolated and hurt and sometimes wishes he were dead."

Parent of child aged 8, Glasgow

"School is difficult for me. It is noisy and busy and there are bright lights. I don't understand the rules. I try to run away and hit out. I am often excluded."

Young Person, 7, attending mainstream school with ASN base

"My school is the best but I need someone to help me most of the time and I don't have anyone. My teacher and head teacher try to help me but they can't do that all the time and so I get mad about stuff and then I am naughty and it gives me a sore head and sore feet and I want to run home. I just want to have someone to help me. Mummy goes to meetings to try to get me more help but they don't do anything. It is making me sad and I feel like I am bad at school. I am good at home though so it makes me sad. I am in p2 now and I don't want to go to school anymore."

Young Person, 6, attending mainstream school

"I didn't like my school as it was too big and noisy and there were a lot of bullies."

Young person, 12, waiting for a place at a new school as 'I can't cope in mainstream'

"The main-streaming of pupils is a failed experiment which is unable to achieve its objective of social equality. It is a well-intentioned but idealistic and overly-simplistic mechanism to a complex set of problems. The solutions to equality must therefore be diverse. Indeed it could be argued that main-streaming creates more problems than it solves. It is doomed to failure without enhanced funding and adequate resourcing. The paradox is that separation of certain types of learner may be in their own interest and may ultimately lead to what we all want; a more equal opportunity to succeed in society."

Class/Subject Teacher



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