

**PE1789/D**  
**The EIS submission of 30 October 2020**

The EIS is Scotland's largest education union with over 60,000 members, including educational psychologists.

Recent EIS AGMs have adopted resolutions outlining concerns around the reduction in ASN support to pupils and staff. In 2019, an EIS survey<sup>1</sup> asked members "How far do you agree with the following statement: 'The provision for children/young people with ASN is adequate in my school.'" Over 20,000 members responded:

Strongly Agree	3%
Agree	12%
Neither agree or disagree	7%
Disagree	37%
Strongly Disagree	42%

Serving teachers have reported that the impacts of under-resourcing of ASL have profound impacts on pupils, and on teachers' workload and job satisfaction; these impacts were summarised in an EIS paper "Briefing: ASL Resourcing"<sup>2</sup>

The 'Exploring the Gap' EIS Paper<sup>3</sup> identified many underlying ASN issues, including:

- Overburdened teaching staff
- Too few Educational Psychologists
- Too few specialist mental health & difficulty accessing services
- Cuts to specific services – eg EAL teachers or Speech & Language Therapists
- Overly large class sizes
- Changing criteria for accessing support

The changing numbers of ASN pupils and teachers are illustrated overleaf:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/Research/Membership%20Survey%20-%20presentation.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/For%20Information%20EIS%20Briefing%20-%20ASL%20resourcing-%20Aug%202018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/education/ASN/ExploringTheGap.pdf>

	<b>2009<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>2019</b>
ASN Pupils	37,504	111,058	163,774	176,837	208,765
% ASN Pupils in primaries	5.4%	16.9%	22.3%	23.5%	27.0%
% ASN Pupils in secondaries	5.8%	16.5%	26.8%	29.3%	35.0%
ASN Primary Teachers	303	236	193	156	154
ASN & Learning Support Secondary Teachers	1,485	1,375	1,177	1,181	1,223
Centrally employed Learning Support & ASN Teachers	N/A	321	406	365	351

Specialist ASN teachers can shape Child Plans and provide specialist tutoring or ASN support to pupils and teachers. However, the capacity of schools to do this has dropped in recent years with the reduction in the number of these teachers.

### **Educational Psychologists**

Access to an educational psychologist is seen as a key step for many ASN pupils and any delay in seeing one will hinder ASN support.

The Scottish Government and COSLA have acknowledged the importance of recruiting Educational Psychologists and are implementing a joint plan, but the EIS has concerns that this plan is not financially attractive for EPs.

Over the last 10 years, the number of educational psychologists has dropped in Scotland around 11%, whilst the number of ASN pupils has risen by 500%.

	<b>2009<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>2019</b>
Educational Psychologists	418	411	370	356	372

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/teacher-census-supplementary-statistics/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-support-staff-statistics/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/teacher-census-supplementary-statistics/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-support-staff-statistics/>

The 'Future of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland' report<sup>8</sup> (2019) stated:

*“The declining numbers of EPs is impacting on services’ ability to deliver core functions across the three levels of engagement. A number of areas of work which were previously supported, such as input to colleges, and work with school leavers to promote positive destinations, have been discontinued, or significantly reduced.”*

In 2018, the EIS published the 'Provision for learning support in Scotland: a survey of local authorities'<sup>9</sup> it commissioned from the University of Aberdeen. The study examined changes in, and variations of, provision of learning support for pupils and the different criteria currently used by Local Authorities to establish students' entitlement to learning support.

The findings of this study included:

- *There are variations between LAs in terms of how readily they use diagnostic criteria to identify ASN...*
- *Resources were often not allocated to children, but they were allocated to schools, with the expectation that schools would meet the needs of the children as they saw appropriate*
- *The main changes over time relate to the roles of ASN staff and classroom teachers.... The role of specialists in providing limited targeted support coupled with capacity building for the teachers was common*
- *In the interviews, respondents largely commented that budgets for ASN had remained fairly static. However, the level of need was recognised as increasing by all respondents who commented on this issue.*

One of the biggest changes in recent years is the perception that educational psychologists are increasingly playing a consultative role with pupils, i.e. by advising teachers and having less direct contact with pupils who have additional needs. This has led to a shift towards mainstream classroom teachers engaging more with pupils' specific additional needs – at the same time as having less ASN support in the classroom. Large classes and multi-level/course teaching in the secondary context further exacerbate these issues.

## **Speech & Language Therapists, Psychiatrists, Physiotherapists, & Occupational Therapists**

A recent NHS workforce report<sup>10</sup> has shown that the numbers of speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists have increased marginally between 2014 and 2019, at a time in which the number of ASN pupils have doubled.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/EPSReportApril2019.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/education/ASN/FinalASNReport.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/Publications/2019-06-04/2019-06-04-Workforce-Report.pdf>

**This is a truncated version of a document the EIS prepared for the Petitions Committee. The full version may be found here:**

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/education/ASLPetition.pdf>

## **Summary**

The EIS supports the Petition's call and calls on the Government and Local Authorities to invest more in ASN and to foster a culture where their specialist contribution is more firmly valued.