

PE1833/A

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 23 November 2020

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people get the support that they need in school to reach their full potential, this includes children with dyscalculia.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act requires education authorities to identify, provide for and to review the support for pupils who need support to overcome barriers to learning, including dyscalculia. Any person working with a child, or young person, can draw attention to the fact that they may require additional support. For example, this person might be the parent, class teacher, a member of the school health team, educational psychologist, social worker or any person who has been working with a child or young person.

Staged intervention is used as a means of identification, assessment, planning, recording and review to meet the learning needs of children and young people. All local authorities have a staged intervention and assessment process in place which enables practitioners to assess and meet learners' needs. Staged intervention:

- Provides a solution-focused approach to meeting needs at the earliest opportunity and with the least intrusive level of intervention.
- Involves the child, parents/carers, school staff and, at some levels, other professionals, all working in partnership to get it right for every child.
- Staged intervention is designed to be flexible and allows for movement between stages depending on progress.

Assessment plays a key role in a school's and the education authority's arrangements for identifying children and young people who have additional support need, including those who have dyscalculia. It is for education authorities to determine the most appropriate provision for children and young people with additional support needs, taking account of their legislative responsibilities and the individual circumstances and wishes of children, young people and their families.

There are a wide range of provisions and resources which are already available to teachers and other practitioners to help them support children and young people with additional support needs, including those with dyscalculia. These include:

- The Autism Toolkit includes a variety of numeracy resources specifically designed to help children and young people with dyscalculia. This is a popular resource with practitioners and was refreshed and updated in late 2019.
- The National Improvement Hub which contains resources, articles and exemplars on improving outcomes for all learners.
- The Education Scotland Inclusion module which provides educational practitioners and local authorities with high quality free professional learning resources which focus on an introduction to Inclusion and equality. The module also covers identification of additional support for learning, assessment and monitoring of need.
- The presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: guidance. This guidance is for policy and decision makers in education authorities, education

authority officers, senior management teams in schools and early learning and childcare settings and all school and early learning and childcare staff.

- The statutory guidance on the Implementation of Additional Support for Learning published 2017 which explains the duties on education authorities and other agencies to support children's and young people's learning. It also sets out arrangements for avoiding and resolving differences between families and education authorities. As part of the ASL action plan we have committed to refreshing this guidance to ensure that it fully supports authorities to carry out their duties under the ASL Act.

Parents and carers are key partners in their children's learning and they should be fully involved, along with children and young people themselves, in decisions and discussions about their children's learning, including where there are concerns that a child may have an additional support need. Under the Additional Support for Learning Act, parents have a number of rights, including the right to request an assessment of need or to receive advice and information about their child's additional support needs.

In addition the Scottish Government funds a range of services, including Enquire, Let's Talk ASN Scotland and My Rights, My Say, which offer advice, support and representation to ensure parents, carers, young people and children are fully supported to be involved in decisions that are made about additional support.

Following Angela Morgan's independently chaired review of the implementation Additional Support for Learning, the Scottish Government, COSLA and ADES have worked in partnership to develop a joint response to the review and action plan to address all of its recommendations.

It is recognised that effective communication between professionals, parents/carers and children and young people is an essential contributing element required to reduce any barriers to learning. This is reflected in the ASL action plan.

The following actions, in particular, will help raise awareness off conditions like dyscalculia as well improving the support available to all children and young people:

- actively involving children, young people and their parents/carers in decisions regarding support;
- working with partners across the education system to improve the support available to staff who provide additional support for learning; and
- further integration of additional support for learning into existing policies and reviews

The Scottish Government will continue to work to improve the educational outcomes and experiences of all children and young people including those with dyscalculia.

I hope the committee finds the response helpful.

Yours sincerely

JOHN SWINNEY