



Community Services: Education

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To: Heads of all Educational Establishments

Dear Colleague

Procedures relating to additional support needs including the opening of co-ordinated support plans

NB Due to legislative changes this circular will be updated in August 2010.

- 1 In November 2004 the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act came into effect [ASL Act]. The Act builds upon the general obligation that is contained in the Education Scotland (1980) Act to provide education appropriate to each child's age ability and aptitude. It replaces the concept of the special educational needs of a comparatively small group with a recognition that a wider range of children and young people may need additional support if they are to benefit from school. Such a need can arise for many reasons including factors in the learning environment, through family circumstances, through disability or ill health and through social and emotional factors. A code of practice to accompany the ASL Act has been published and all staff should be aware of its content and implications. The code should be consulted for further guidance on all matters in this circular. The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000), with subsequent guidance in the Scottish Executive Education Department Circular 3/2002, introduces the presumption that all children will be educated in mainstream school while recognising that there are exceptions.
- 2 Within the wider range of those with additional support needs a small number will have needs that arise from complex or multiple factors, are likely to last for more than a year and require additional support to be provided by education and another agency. Under the Act, planning for this group has to be undertaken by means of a coordinated support plan (CSP). This circular sets out the range of responsibilities related to CSPs for heads of establishments and others. It also provides detailed guidance on related issues.

- 3 With regard to children under 5 years it is important that those children who need additional support are identified as early as possible and that good communication between health service personnel and the psychological service is established through the pre-school assessment and monitoring system (Pre SCAT). Any recommendation to consider opening a CSP for a child under the age of five will normally arise out of this process. A number of children will start school with well identified needs for additional support.
- 4 With regard to children of school age, head teachers/campus principals are responsible for having arrangements in place within their establishment to ensure that the needs of all its learners can be met. These arrangements should be detailed in an explicit policy which includes clear processes for assessing, recording, reporting, and monitoring the educational progress of individual pupils and for consulting with parents. The policy should also include measures for identifying any child whose difficulties might require assistance with assessment and support from resources outwith the establishment. Special schools and learning centres should have a clear indication in their policy as to how they maintain links with mainstream schools.
- 5 If, following assessment by school staff, planned intervention and in-school monitoring, a pupil's needs for additional support are not being met within the resources of the school, members of staff who have designated responsibilities for support for pupils should consult with the head teacher/campus principal. If it is decided that further assistance is required, the head teacher/campus principal should in the first instance seek advice from the co-ordinator of the area network support team. The child and his or her parents should be fully consulted and then kept informed at all subsequent stages.
- 6 An appropriate period of time should be allowed to establish whether the implementation of a revised educational programme is sufficient to alleviate a child's identified difficulties. If it is apparent that a revised programme is insufficient, the next steps may be to review this programme or to request the parent's permission to seek advice from the psychological service. Following a request for advice, the educational psychologist may suggest further strategies to be implemented or may arrange to meet with the parents and others involved with the child to gather more information and agree a course of action. The school and support services involved, in consultation with the parents, will continue the process of monitoring progress and adjusting provision in line with the child's needs. No further steps are required for many pupils.
- 7 In some cases there will already be involvement from another agency. As school plays such a large part in the lives of children and young people these agencies will invariably want to work alongside school staff and parents. In other cases school

staff may want to approach another agency to seek its support for a pupil. In all cases joint work needs to be well planned and clearly focused if it is to be effective. Further guidance on working in partnership is available in *Supporting Children: Supporting Effective Education* section J.

- 8 It is recognised that for a small minority of children and young people full time attendance in mainstream classes is not in their best interests. Often these children are identified before they start school but for others this view will develop following a period of full time attendance in a mainstream school. At the point of making part or full time provision outwith mainstream settings there must be a thorough and formal exploration of whether additional measures could be taken to make mainstream provision effective for the child and, if not, why not. The terms of this discussion and its recommendations must be formally recorded in the minute of the appropriate meeting. Further guidance is available in *Supporting Children: Supporting Effective Education* section C: The framework for placement.

Recommending that a CSP is considered

- 9 There are two routes through which the education authority will come to consider whether a CSP should be opened for a child. The first route will be following a recommendation from a multi-agency group in which parents are full participants. For pre-school children this will be through a Pre SCAT meeting. For school age children it will usually be a review meeting convened by the school. Such a recommendation may however also arise out of a looked after review or other multi-agency meeting. The second route is where a parent exercises their independent right to request that the education authority assess whether their child should have a CSP.
- 10 For both pre-school and school aged children ongoing assessment may indicate that a child's needs are complex or multiple. A complex factor is one that has a significant adverse effect on the school education of the child or young person. The code of practice indicates that such a factor will affect most aspects of learning. Multiple factors are less significant in themselves but taken together they will have the same effect. Discussion with an educational psychologist will help to clarify whether or not factors would be regarded as complex or multiple.
- 11 The significant involvement of at least one agency apart from education is essential to the purpose of a CSP. For the involvement to be significant the following 5 factors have to be taken into account:
 - (a) it must be necessary to establishing educational objectives;
 - (b) these objectives must relate to the child's progress in school;
 - (c) activities related to the objectives must be taking place on a frequent basis;

- (d) the agency must be actively monitoring the child's programme at regular intervals;
 - (e) the agency and school staff must be in regular contact.
- 12 At the multi-agency meeting a minute will be taken in which the recommendation to consider a CSP will be noted. The educational psychologist will collate the available assessment information and will note any further information that the meeting feels would be relevant. Any assessment information that has been supplied by the parent will also be included. The psychologist will forward this information to the Principal Educational Psychologist.

Decision making and opening a CSP

- 13 When a recommendation that a CSP is considered is received, the principal psychologist will write to the parents to say that such consideration will take place and to specify any further information that is being sought as part of the consideration process. Where a parent has made a reasonable request that a CSP is considered they will be similarly be notified.
- 14 The principal psychologist will take the minute of the meeting and all associated papers to a screening group which has representatives of partner agencies. This group will consider all of the available information including anything that has been commissioned by parents against a consistent set of criteria. It will then make a recommendation on whether a CSP should be opened to the Head of Education who will write with a decision to the parents within 4 weeks of the letter notifying them that a CSP will be considered. If information needed to make a decision is not available, timescales will be extended and parents kept informed of the reasons.
- 15 If the decision is not to open a CSP, parents will be informed and given information about their right to appeal the decision to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal.
- 16 If the decision is to open a CSP, parents will be informed and given information about their right to appeal the decision to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal. A meeting may be convened involving parents, a supporter if requested, school staff and representatives of the agencies outwith education who are providing support. The purpose of the meeting will be to define those educational objectives for the pupil which specifically require coordination amongst agencies, the nature of the support to be provided and the agencies providing the support. Parents and the child or young person will be invited to submit their comments at this stage.
- 17 In the interests of ensuring that the required timescales are adhered to it may be that the person responsible for drafting the CSP meets individually with school staff, support agencies and parents to complete this process.
- 18 Although it is not a requirement of the Act or its guidance, a draft version of the CSP will be circulated to all relevant parties and comments sought. This will provide a

further opportunity for parents, children and young people to comment on the plan. At this stage agreement will also be sought from other agencies that they will provide the support specified in the plan. Once comments have been considered and support agreed the final version of the CSP will be issued.

The CSP in practice

- 19 Every child who has a CSP will have an individual support plan (ISP). The ISP is a wider document identifying the key educational objectives for the child or young person irrespective of whether there is co-ordination with other agencies needed. It will also identify short term objectives, some of which will be derived from the long term objectives identified in the CSP. The head teacher/campus principal is responsible for ensuring that the ISP and the CSP are implemented effectively.
- 20 The CSP is a confidential document which must be kept securely. It will be shared with any agency which has agreed to provide support. Parents will be notified of all agencies which have copies of the CSP. The CSP forms part of the pupil progress record. It should be available in its entirety to a pupil's class, subject, pupil support and guidance teachers for consultation. Equally it is a confidential document and it should be kept securely in the PPR under a separate cover, for example in an A4 envelope.
- 21 The educational objectives in the CSP should be made known to all school staff who have a role to play in their delivery. This will include all teaching staff in direct contact with the pupil, designated support assistants and where relevant ancillary staff, for example for a pupil working towards a communication objective.
- 22 Generally speaking the educational objectives in the CSP are a subset of a wider set of educational objectives. The staff indicated above should be familiar with the content of a pupil's ISP. For practical purposes there will only be a need to distinguish between the two sets of educational objectives insofar as one set refers to the role of other agencies.
- 23 All relevant staff should be aware of a pupil's progress towards his or her objectives and they should contribute to the monitoring of that progress in an informed way.
- 24 The short term targets in ISPs should be kept under review and updated as required. There should also be an annual review at which long term targets are reconsidered. The head teacher/campus principal is responsible for the organisation of reviews. Reviews should be concerned with evaluating the pupil's progress against planned learning outcomes and updating the ISP to specify new learning outcomes. An additional element is needed in an annual review when a child or young person has a CSP. There should be a formal consideration of those long term targets which involve other agencies. The need to continue the CSP or otherwise should also be

explicitly discussed. This does not need a separate meeting but it should be incorporated formally as a matter for discussion in the annual review.

- 25 Schools will be notified of CSPs which fall to be reviewed in the forthcoming session and the date by which the review must be completed. Schools should invite parents to reviews in sufficient time and attach the standard information sheet which will invite parents to submit their views, including their views about any additional aspects of assessment which they or, as appropriate, their child considers necessary for the purpose of review.
- 26 In all cases those and only those who need to be present at the review should be invited. This will include parents, the child (if appropriate) and professionals involved in supporting the child. The area network support coordinator should be present at reviews for pupils who have CSPs and he or she will be responsible for ensuring that the long term targets in the document are updated. As a minimum a review assessment will be based on reports prepared by school staff which should include the views of teachers and other professionals who work with the child. Where relevant, the presumption of mainstream attendance should be explicitly referred to. Copies of all relevant reports should be provided to the parents and the child in advance of review meeting.
- 27 The head teacher/campus principal is responsible for updating the child's IEP or support plan and the compilation of the review report. Where full- or part-time provision is made for a child outwith mainstream the continuance or alteration of these arrangements should be explicitly discussed. This discussion must be referred to in the report of the review. Copies of the review report should be distributed to all invited. Section J paper 8 of *Supporting Children: Supporting Effective Learning* gives detailed guidance on review and planning meetings.
- 28 If, following review, the terms of the CSP are to be amended a revised version will be sent to parents. If the CSP is to be discontinued the parents will be informed with clear reasons given for the discontinuation. The CSP will not be discontinued for a period of 2 months after this date to allow parents who may wish to do so to exercise their right of appeal to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal.

Transitions including leaving school

- 29 The Act requires education authorities to seek information and advice from other agencies when children and young people with additional support needs are about to move between stages in education - entering pre-school or school, moving from pre-school to primary, moving from primary to secondary and leaving school education. For pre-school children this should be carried out 6 months in advance of the expected move for school age children the timescale is 12 months in advance of the point of transition.

- 30 Establishments should set out well defined written procedures for transition. These should be used for all children identified as having additional support needs with adjustments as required to reflect the need for more detailed planning for some children and young people.
- 31 For pupils who are expected to leave school there are two key processes. Firstly the school must seek information and advice from relevant agencies about provision at the school stage that would benefit the young person in terms of the knowledge and skills they will require when they leave school. This information should be available no later than 12 months before the pupil is expected to leave school. Consequently it must be gathered in advance of this date and would be likely to inform the targets set out in the ISP.
- 32 The second process is that information should be passed on to other agencies who might make provision for the young person once they have left school. The gathering and setting out of this information has to be completed 6 months before the young person is expected to leave. The young person or his or her parents must consent to any information being passed on.

Yours sincerely

Executive Director of Community Services

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