

**Survey Report**

**Additional Support Needs (ASN) / Additional Support for Learning (ASL)**

(Data Gathered Aug – October 2018)

* The NPFS conducted a survey on Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Additional Support for Learning (ASL). We received 594 responses to the survey, across 31 of the 32 local authorities in Scotland. Parents of children with a wide range of additional support needs and in a variety of educational settings were represented; the majority (85%) were in mainstream settings.
* 36% of respondents know what additional support their child is entitled to. Respondents often described difficulties in finding this information:

*“Only because I have professional knowledge of ASN. I don’t feel local authorities share this info freely enough with parents.*

*It's not clear what support is available or how to get it. It requires parent initiative and constant battle with support agencies to get anywhere.*

*‘The school has not informed me of my child's entitlement. I have looked for help externally.”*

Furthermore, several respondents added that despite knowing what their child is entitled to, they are finding it very difficult to access the support.

* 71% of respondents were involved in the discussions surrounding their child’s ASL needs and some of these parents found this useful and beneficial to their child. However, a very common theme was that the parents did not feel their views were taken into account.

*“Although I was asked along to meetings, I felt my views weren't considered / taken into account.*

*“…did not feel fully listened to.’’*

Furthermore, another common theme was that respondents did not feel that the meetings resulted in action, discussions were not followed up or support did not change as the parent desired.

*“Sometimes things were not put in place when discussed.”*

*“…promised support has not been provided.”*

Several respondents explained that they were involved in discussions, but this was at their initiation.

*“I have had to pursue and initiate all discussions myself.”*

* Almost a third (31%) of respondents agreed (strongly or slightly) that the ASL resources and support in their child’s school meet their individual child’s needs - this is down 14% from the 45% in 2015. For the sample of respondents that agreed strongly, this is down 9% (34% compared to 25% in 2015).
* Over half respondents (54% compared to 38% in 2015) say their child has been directly or partly affected by changes to ASL provision in their school, with 29% unsure. Only 9% of the parents who responded were consulted about this change in provision and, of these, only 37% found this discussion useful.
* 85% of parents were not signposted to services, such as Enquire, by their school or local authority.
* 53% do not think their child’s written report clearly explains the progress they have made and the level of learning they have achieved or are working towards.
* 51% do not think their child has the same opportunities as other pupils in the school.
* Suggestions to promote good communication and schools in relation to ASL were plentiful and varied but included:
* more regular face to face meetings
* more information
* realistic expectations being laid out
* greater transparency
* more honesty and openness.

Other themes raised:

* Respondents feel more special schools are required; mainstreaming is not working for their child.
* The staff shortage in Scottish schools is negatively impacting on students with ASN.
* More consistency in support across the country is desired.
* Teachers need more training.
* There were also instances of children who are without a school placement at all or on part time timetables as there is no suitable school placement in the area.