

The right help at the right time in the right place

Scotland's Ten Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026

Scottish Government, 2017

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Foreword – A message from Margaret Orr, Chairperson of the Doran National Commissioning Group



On behalf of the National Commissioning Group I am delighted to invite your response to the consultation on Scotland's Ten Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017 – 2016.

I am very appreciative of the time given by a range of stakeholders and interested parties to meet with me over the past months to reflect on the themes which underpin the strategy. Within the Commissioning Group itself the strategy has benefited from the cumulative knowledge and experience of the group membership. Discussions within the group have been robust and always reflective of a strong commitment to the children and young people who are the focus of the strategy.

We have sought to ensure that the strategy chimes with the imperatives underpinning the current agenda for educational achievement for all children and young people. With this in mind the terms of reference for the priority areas are aligned to the National Improvement Framework, customised to reflect the context of complex additional support needs. Although the remit of the Commissioning Group is governed by The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, we are also cognisant of the imperatives in GIRFEC, the Children & Young People Act and UNCRC.

Your views on the proposals are critically important to help fashion the way forward over the next ten years. We look forward to receiving your responses and sharing the finalised strategy with you.

Our vision

The vision for education in Scotland is described in the National Improvement Framework:

(<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/01/8314>)

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

We need Scottish education to deliver both excellence in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering equity so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.

The Framework envisions “a Scotland in which **all** children and young people can realise their potential, regardless of their social background or learning needs, thereby developing the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need to flourish in life, learning and work.”



Aim

To improve outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs through strategic commissioning of services; with a particular focus on the provision of education. While this strategy also recognises the critical role played by social services and health in supporting educational outcomes the strategy is set within the context of [The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004](#).

Objectives

1. To ensure the four key priorities set out within Scotland's National Improvement Framework – raising attainment, achieving equity, improving health and wellbeing, and developing skills for learning, life and work; for children and young people with complex additional support needs – are central to the outcomes anticipated in the 10 Year Strategy.
2. To frame the Strategy in the six key drivers for improvement within the National Improvement Framework: school leadership; teacher professionalism; parental engagement; assessment of children's progress; school improvement; performance information all reflecting a particular relevance to provision for complex additional support needs. With appropriate customisation to reflect the context which the Strategy is addressing. These drivers are customised in the strategy to reflect the multi-dimensional factors which impact on improvement of services for children and young people with complex additional support needs.
3. To ensure that the impact of any service commissioned results in capacity building across local authorities as well as at a national level.
4. To provide an evidence base for decisions around national commissioning that drive improvements which benefit children and young people with complex additional support needs.

Why we need Strategic Commissioning for Learners with Complex Additional Support Needs?

The National Improvement Framework and Curriculum for Excellence apply to all children and young people including those with complex additional support needs. Given that these needs are of relatively low incidence¹ and attract a high level of resourcing and require specialist input, Scottish education requires a particular strategy to ensure that the needs of this group are met. This Strategy sets out how this will be addressed over the next decade.

This Strategy addresses the current **key priorities** for the National Improvement Framework, which are:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

¹

Report to Parliament: **Supporting Children's Learning Implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act** <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497314.pdf>

What are “complex additional support needs”?

Complex additional support needs may arise as result of:

- the severity of one or more factors resulting in need, and/or
- the combined impact of a number of separate factors, one or more of which may be severe.

A rigorous, clearly bounded and universally accepted definition is extremely difficult to formulate because of the multiplicity of factors and the impact of specific contexts in different local authorities. For that reason the National Strategic Commissioning Group (NSCG) is using a working **description** rather than a definition of children and young people with complex additional support needs:

1. Those in receipt of a Co-ordinated Support Plan as defined in the [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#), i.e. where: -
 - a. an education authority are responsible for the school education of the child or young person,
 - b. the child or young person has additional support needs arising from-
 - i. one or more complex factors, or
 - ii. multiple factors,
 - c. those needs are likely to continue for more than a year, and
 - d. those needs require significant additional support to be provided-
 - i. by the education authority in the exercise of any of their other functions as well as in the exercise of their functions relating to education, or
 - ii. by one or more appropriate agencies (within the meaning of section 23(2)) as well as by the education authority themselves.
2. Children and young people aged 3-18 who do not have a co-ordinated support plan but who have been assessed as stage 3 or 4 by a local authority under a staged intervention model as recommended by the [Supporting Children’s Learning Code of Practice](#).
3. Children and young people aged 3-18 who attend a grant aided or independent special school.

The Doran Review

The [Doran Review](#) of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs², published in November 2012, was conducted to identify ways of improving educational outcomes for children with complex additional support needs. The review found variations in all aspects of services that children and families receive across the country and noted a need for better joined-up working across agencies. The review noted the team around a child or young person needs to be highly trained and experienced, and raised concerns regarding the availability of professional training in both breadth and depth. Parents and professionals reported difficulties in obtaining information about resources available.

The Doran Review made 21 recommendations aimed at providing better outcomes and experiences for children and young people with complex additional support needs. The Review aspires:

- That children and young people, supported by their parents and/or carers, have an easily accessible route to early integrated assessment of, and provision for their complex additional support needs from the earliest stage of development.
- That services offered are responsive to changing needs, lead to the best possible outcomes and are delivered where possible within the home community.
- That there is a presumption of entitlement to the highest quality of services which should be inclusive, efficient, equitable and effective in meeting the assessed needs and promote optimum inclusion in society.
- That local and national provision are complementary and operate with coherence.(2 p. 48)

The recommendations were to Scottish Government, Education Scotland, local authorities, health boards, GTCS, training providers, independent and [Grant-Aided Special Schools \(GASS\)](#), and the three National Centres ([CALL Scotland](#), [Enquire](#) and the [Scottish Sensory Centre](#) (supporting children and young people that are currently funded by Scottish Government. The [Scottish Government response](#)³ set out the Scottish Government's action to take the recommendations forward.

² [The Doran Review](#): The Right Help at the right time in the right place: Strategic Review of Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs. November 2012.

³ [Meeting the needs of Scotland's children and young people with complex additional support needs](#). The Scottish Government's response to the Doran Review. November 2012.

National Strategic Commissioning

Six of the 21 Doran recommendations concern funding for, and commissioning services, including national services. A [Strategic Commissioning Project](#), supported by a [Project Board](#) and five [workstreams](#), was established to address these specific recommendations.

For there to be an appropriate strategic approach it is important that all those involved in the process: children, parents, providers, purchasers and representative organisations, should agree on what we are trying to achieve in the long term for children and young people with complex additional support needs. A [National Strategic Commissioning Group](#) (NSCG) with membership drawn from all the groups above was established and subsequently developed this Strategy.

The national profile of complex additional support needs requires the maintenance and on-going development of a range of provision, underpinned by appropriate research and professional learning.

The provision includes education within local authority managed provision (mainstream and special); direct access to peripatetic specialist services managed or contracted by local authorities and other providers; and placement at independent day and residential special schools.

The decision as to the most appropriate interventions and placement lies with the home education authority⁴ acting within the national legislative and policy context.

In taking the decision to place⁵ a child or young person in the independent sector or to require input from independent specialist services to assist with assessment and on-going support, the residential authority is recognising that there are some complex additional support needs which require highly customised responses in terms of assessment, direct intervention and physical learning and care environments.

The National Commissioning Process will provide funding, on a cyclical basis, to address the scope of services as outlined on Page 9. It is anticipated that there will continue to be a range of education provision, (schools and services) under independent and local authority management, which will be focused on meeting the range of complex additional support needs as defined on Page 4 of this paper. It is essential therefore that funding provided at a national level is seen to focus on building the capacity of providers across the spectrum: specifically in areas where there are shared benefit which can then be

⁴ Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice, Chapter 3, paragraph 1, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/04/04090720/6>

⁵ Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice, Chapter 4, paragraph 5, <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/348208/0116022.pdf>

adopted and developed at direct provider level to meet the personalised needs of learners.

In recognition of this the current grant aid of approximately £11m/annum that is currently allocated to seven Grant-Aided Special Schools (GASS) and three National Centres is being reviewed to ensure that it is targeted on supporting the key areas identified by the Doran Project Board – described in more detail below.

Scope of Services to be commissioned

The Strategic Commissioning Project Board (SCPB), informed by the work of the Doran Workstreams and [Needs Analysis](#)⁶, have identified that the following services are all within scope to be commissioned.

Direct education, care and health services for children and young people with complex additional support needs;

Research related to children and young people with complex additional support needs that provides a sound evidence base, alongside other sources of evidence to support national policy development and service provision to improve educational outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs;

Sustainable, child and young person focused learning and development for those supporting children and young people with complex additional support needs aligned to a mechanism for sharing practice; and,

Broader services which support the education of children and young people with complex additional support needs including services provided across a number of authority areas, provided by local authorities or voluntary organisations which taken across Scotland may constitute a national need.

The Commissioning Process

The commissioning process for national services will be:

- Inclusive – involving service users, purchasers and providers.
- Transparent – decisions and processes will be open to scrutiny and made in ways that are easily understood, whilst respecting the need for commercial confidentiality.
- Innovative – creating an environment that supports good ideas and values evidence based innovation where it leads to service improvement.
- Focused on Excellence - aspiring to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism in the provision of educational and related services to children with complex additional support needs.

⁶ [The Needs Analysis for Strategic Commissioning of Services for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs](#),

The package of nationally commissioned services will be:

- based on assessed need;
- based on the principle of provision being locally provided wherever possible and inclusive in nature;
- able to support parents and carers;
- able to capitalise on the expertise and experience developed by partners, building services and capacity locally and centrally which best meet children and young people's needs;
- able to provide a mix of long-term services of learning and support and short-term focused support to meet particular needs;
- located equitably across Scotland;
- able to ensure regional support to ensure equality of access to centralised services;
- co-ordinated to prevent duplication, and thereby improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Legislative and policy framework

The Commissioning Process will work within relevant legislation and policy, namely:

- [The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004](#)
- [The National Improvement Framework](#)
- [Curriculum for Excellence](#)
- [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)
- [The Children and Young People Act 2014](#)
- [The Education \(Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records\) \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Children's Rights and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [Digital Learning Strategy](#)

National Strategic Commissioning Group

The National Strategic Commissioning group will continue to work collaboratively with local authorities and health boards to establish a common view regarding strategic needs, informed by the Commissioning group's direct engagement with stakeholders and professional analysis, as well as by the local authorities' position as the chief determinants of education provision for their learners. The Strategic Commissioning group will work collaboratively with the providers of the services it commissions to agree forward plans and strategies. In particular it will work positively with providers and the users of their services at times of anticipated change or transition in the service or the strategy under which the service has been commissioned. The Scottish Government directly and through partner agencies will provide proactive support and scrutiny of the programmes as appropriate.

Resource of c. £11m per annum is being maintained by the Scottish Government to ensure that the key areas identified by the SCPB for delivery are supported.

Changes in current grant awards and services will engage with stakeholders and will not prejudice the placements of children or young people who are supported by currently funded services.

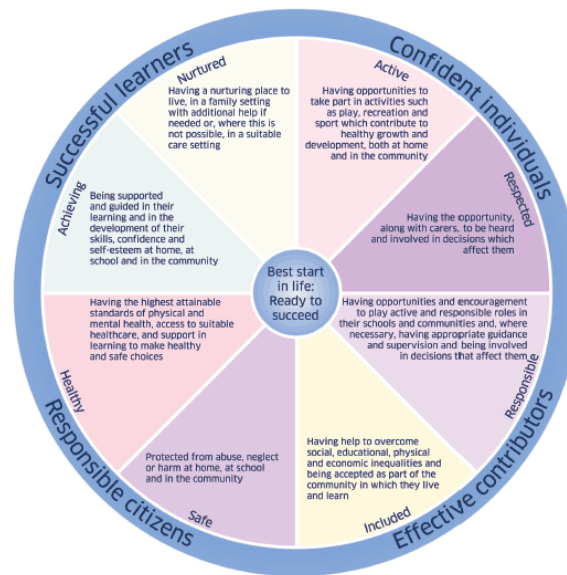
The National Strategic Commissioning group, following ministerial approval, will oversee the implementation of a 3 year cyclical commissioning plan that supports this Strategy. It will follow a cycle of planning, commissioning and review and will support the on-going anticipation of future need in addition to ensuring that services are addressing identified current national need.

It is anticipated that the third sector will take a lead in applying for funding and delivering services through the new commissioning process in recognition that they currently act as agents of local authorities to address the most complex additional support needs as defined by child or young person's residential authority. Other organisations or partnerships may also apply for funding.

In applying for funding, service providers will be required to provide information on:

- Rationale for proposed area of focus (Direct education, care and health services; Research; professional learning and development; and/or broader services which support the education of children and young people with complex additional support needs).
- Evidence of agreed collaboration with partners and added value to existing local or regional provision.

- Anticipated outcomes on each of the key priorities of the National Improvement Framework: raising attainment, achieving equity, improving health and well-being, developing skills for learning, life and work.
- Anticipated impact on professional learning and capacity building across local authorities as well as at a national level.
- Internal governance and self-evaluation processes that focus on SHANARRI outcomes.



10 Year Strategy

Our aim is that by 2026 Scotland will be a world leader in relation to providing the highest quality education to children and young people with complex additional support needs. An outcome review in 2026 should be expected to evidence a well-developed history of proactive collaborative working between national government, local authorities, independent providers (3rd Sector), national and international training providers (Universities, Education Scotland, SCEL etc). The central objective will be to secure enhanced and sustained attainment and achievement outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs.

As indicated the strategy will be framed within the key drivers identified in the NIF but customised to reflect the multi-dimensional themes identified in the Doran Review, particularly in reference to social services and health. Given the scope of the strategy it is proposed that it will be addressed in phases over the 10 year period. The first phase would focus on pathfinder activity related to training, development and research.

Service Leadership

Leaders at all levels and in all relevant services should evidence on-going professional learning commensurate with their areas of practice and responsibility.

Education Services

This objective will be supported by the development of appropriate leadership development programmes within the already established Education Scotland and SCEL Frameworks and reflect collaborative working with Universities and GTCS.

The writing and pilot delivery of these programmes will be commissioned over 2017-2020. Participation in the writing, delivery and involvement in the initial programme will reflect input by senior managers across all sectors, working collaboratively. Initial and on-going funding to support participation in the programmes will be supported by the Scottish Government through the commissioning process.

As with the expectation on local authorities, providers will be expected to have a rigorous self-evaluation process which monitors the impact of school and service leadership on achieving the optimum outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs. Evidence should reflect collaboration at a senior level with colleagues in the other key services

Internal self-evaluation will be complemented by independent research.

By 2026 there should be a well-established national leadership programme at post-graduate level, which addresses the requirements of effective leadership in the context of schools and services for children and young people with complex additional support needs.

Practitioner Professionalism

To support the objectives in the National Improvement Framework the strategy proposes:

- The development of relevant professional learning opportunities at post graduate level for teachers addressing complex additional support needs including, as appropriate, study at Master Level. As with the school leadership programmes they will be developed and trialled on a collaborative basis between school and service staff and providers. Such an approach would meet the expectation within an evolutionary Masters Programme. As with the Leadership programme it would have essential elements of multi-professional collaboration.
- Profiling on a 5 year basis the range of professional learning being undertaken by teachers in both independent and local authority managed provision to address complex additional support needs. In keeping with Teaching Scotland's Future and GTCS Professional Update this would include a range of CPD activity,

including opportunities at establishment or service level as well as post graduate study. This information would be gathered through the Professional Update process but would not compromise the confidentiality of individual practitioners.

Parental Engagement

Given that many of the children and young people who attend specialist schools in the independent sector are looked after and accommodated by the home education authority, the strategy underlines the comprehensive definition of parent to include carer and corporate parent.

By 2026 there should be clear evidence of strong partnership working between providers and parents which underpins the achievement of educational outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs.

The strategy proposes initial action research over 2016-2018 into the key themes of transition to determine the current strengths and challenges which characterise current practice and how each key partner can maximize their contribution.

Assessment of Children's Progress

To support the statement in the National Improvement Framework, "Progress in learning for children with significant additional support needs will be evaluated at an individual level, through agreed plans and next steps, which will be personalised" the strategy proposes:

- Supporting the trialling of a range of assessment models developed specifically to provide frameworks for schools and services to support the assessment process for children and young people with complex additional support needs;
- The trial to be funded over two school sessions 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 and to include the full range of complex additional support needs in both the independent sector and local authority managed provision; and
- This action research will complement activity linked to research into transition and positive destinations and will reflect collaborative contributions from all the key agencies.

Service Improvement

In relation to the key theme of direct education care and health, the strategy proposes an initial focus on the quality of the partnerships that are in place to support children and young people with complex additional support needs to allow them to engage as fully as possible in education.

- Action research be commissioned to identify the factors which empower productive inter-agency collaboration and positive outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs; and
- The research to look at both at internal collaboration between education, care and health staff within a localised setting and also the wider local authority scene (Education and Social Work Services).

Performance Information

This would also underline the expectation that proposed areas for funding will be expected to inform practice and improved intelligence information across the profile of complex additional support needs.

All of the above are set against the current international and national legislative frameworks, and national and local authority policies which seek to protect and promote the rights of every child. Education Scotland and the Care Commission have key responsibilities in these areas.

By 2026 the National Strategic Commissioning Group will by then have become trusted as well informed and authoritative voice leading stakeholders toward a consensus around these aspirations.

Transition Period

At the present time there are seven grant-aided special schools and three education support services that receive recurrent funding from the Scottish Government, from an annual budget that will in 2017 become the resource from which national commissioning will be carried out by the National Strategic Commissioning Group. Scottish Ministers are committed to a carefully managed transition from the existing grant system to the new programme of commissioning that ensures that recommendations do not disadvantage children and young people currently in receipt of services and the organisations currently receiving this grant funding will be supported through the change process.

It is proposed that there be a phased release of funding from the current commitments. This would facilitate a managed transition from the present model without prejudice to children and young people currently attending grant-aided schools or accessing broader services. This reflects a commitment made by the Scottish Government when the National Strategic Commissioning Group was established.

It is proposed that within the 10 year strategy, there will be multiple cycles of commissioning. The cycle will seek to align with the relevant spending review period wherever possible to enable the maximum planning and delivery opportunity for commissioned services. This may mean that in the initial commissioning cycle may be

for a shorter period to enable alignment with spending review timeframes. This would also enable the lessons learned to be considered from the initial commissioning cycle.

The National Strategic Commissioning Group will work with its stakeholders to produce a supplement to this plan to set out how it will operate to achieve its vision. This will involve developing a forward funding plan in collaboration with the current school/service grant recipients, which will support the move from the traditional recurrent grant funding model to the strategic commissioning model.

Evaluation and planning for improvement

An evaluation framework will be developed following the agreement of this strategy.

Governance

The Doran Strategic Commissioning Project Board (SCPB) will continue to oversee the implementation of recommendations 7 and 17-21 of the Doran Review, including the work of the National Strategic Commissioning Group.

The National Strategic Commissioning Group will submit the 10 year strategy and proposals for commissioned services to ministers for approval before implementation. Ministers have appointed a chair to lead the NSCG group and the remit of the National Strategic Commissioning Group (Annex A) will be reviewed as and when the group and/or ministers agree this is needed. Any changes to the remit will require ministerial approval. The Group can determine its own working arrangements including the frequency of meetings and decision making processes. The Scottish Government provides secretariat support to the group. Where expert support, in relation to policy, procurement or legal issues is required these will be sourced through the secretariat.

Whilst it is expected that the group will strive to achieve consensus in recommendations it is recognised that this may not always be possible. Where recommendations do not represent a unanimous view, Ministers will be made aware that this is the case.

Thank you for reading Scotland's Strategy for the Education Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2016-2026.

Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by Monday 28 August 2017

Please respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/support-and-wellbeing/complex-additional-support-needs-2017-2026>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the close date.

If you are unable to respond online, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form (see “Handling your Response” below) to:

Scotland’s Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026 Consultation

Support and Wellbeing Unit
Area 2C South
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

or

Email: Doranreview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Handling your response

If you respond using Citizen Space, you will be automatically directed to the Respondent Information Form at the start of the questionnaire. This will let us know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the **Respondent Information Form** attached to the end of this document as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. If you use Citizen Space to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us.

Comments, complaints and queries

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, or any queries about the consultation, please send them to:

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