

Pathways to Policy Book 6

Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework for Supporting Children's and Young People's Learning

Aberdeenshire Council Education and Recreation Service Vision:

“Working together for the best quality of life for everybody in Aberdeenshire; from mountain to sea, and helping through Education and Recreation to make it the best possible place in which to live and learn, work and play.

Our aims are the building of capacity, the realisation of potential and the achievement of excellence in Aberdeenshire – the very best of Scotland”

**Supporting Learning in Aberdeenshire :
Pathways to Policy**

January 2007

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING

I. Statement of Principles

I.1 The "Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy Pack for Supporting Children's and Young People's learning in Aberdeenshire" (hereafter called the "Pathways to Policy Pack") ensure that all children and young people in Aberdeenshire are provided with the necessary support to help them work towards achieving their full potential with respect to their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. It promotes collaborative working among all those supporting children and young people. Central to this process is the principle that children and young people will be fully consulted and their views taken into account.

I.2 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy Pack sits within the underpinning principles of the Education & Recreation Service commitment to its stakeholders by:

- supporting and empowering individuals, families and groups
- enabling lifelong learning and employability
- advancing community development and well-being

through partnership working and excellence in the delivery of inclusive and accessible Education and Recreation services throughout the area.

I.3 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy Pack sits within the Aberdeenshire Education and Recreation Service strategic intention which is:

'To implement a vision of Aberdeenshire as a place where citizens participate in lifelong learning and where everyone is included'

I.4 The main aims of the Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy Pack are as follows:

- to set the policies and guidelines for supporting children's and young people's learning in Aberdeenshire within a manageable context
- to bring together the wide range of policies in order to better inform all practitioners as to how to apply them
- to draw together and align the key elements of support for children's and young people's learning within the context of the fuller integration of children's services including:

- ✦ the roll-out of Integrated Community Schools, the development of multi-agency Community School Networks and delivery of Integrated Children's Services
- ✦ the development of the Integrated Assessment, Planning and Recording Framework Strategy which will be central to the Staged Assessment and Co-ordinated Support Plan process
- ✦ the on-going audit of Additional Support Needs provision in Community Schools Networks across Aberdeenshire
- ✦ the developing multi-agency approach to quality assuring the broad scope of Additional Support Needs practice using multi-agency, generic quality indicators being developed nationally by HMIE and partners in Health and Social Services

2. Policy Focus and Target Audience

2.1 Focus

Every school in Aberdeenshire should aspire to the delivery of the highest quality of education to all its learners. The service will provide this by supporting children's and young people's learning to ensure that every child in Aberdeenshire has the opportunity to reach their full potential in education.

2.2 Target Audience

All stakeholders – children and young people, parents, school staff, Education & Recreation Officers, Elected Members, partners in the Health Service, Social Work and Housing, and Voluntary Organisations should be engaged in ensuring that all children, young people and families are supported in their learning.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy Pack encompass the broad range of legislation underpinning inclusion and social justice. This includes "The Standards in Schools (Scotland) etc, Act 2000, the implications of which were set out in the landscape document "The Inclusive School in the Community". Similarly, the Policy Framework is embedded in the Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004 and the accompanying national code of practice "Supporting Children's Learning : Code of Practice (2005)" which places legislative imperatives upon the Education and Recreation Service and its partners in Social Work and Health.

3.2 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework is further set in the context of the following national legislation and guidelines:

- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Records) (Scotland) Act 2002
- The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003

3.3 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework is also informed by a wide range of national policies and guidelines including:

- Guidance on Presumption of Mainstream Education – Standards in Scotland's Schools, etc Act (2000)
- National Priorities in Education (2000)
- The Same as You? (2000)
- Better Behaviour, Better Learning (2001)
- For Scotland's Children (2001)
- A Curriculum for Excellence/Ambitious Excellent Schools (2004)
- Being Well – Doing Well (2004)
- Children's Charter (2004)
- Framework for Standards (2004)
- The Health Promoting School (2004)
- "Safe and Well" (2005)
- Extraordinary Lives (2006)

The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework is further informed by "Getting it Right for Every Child" - Proposals for Action (2004) which contains the Scottish Executive's proposals for the Children's Hearings System and the Integrated Assessment Planning and Recording Framework. In addition, developments in the Child Protection Reform Programme in response to "It's everyone's job to make sure I am alright" (2002) and the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2002 inform the Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework sits within local strategic and operational plans. It takes account of the following:

- Aberdeenshire's Integrated Children's Services Plan
- The Inspection of Aberdeenshire's Education & Recreation Service Action Plan
- Aberdeenshire's Education & Recreation Service Plan
- Aberdeenshire Council Strategic Plan
- Joint Health Improvement Plan

As such it is informed by National Priority Three for Inclusion and Equality and the related Local Improvement Objectives.

4.2 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the pathways to policy pack articulates with, and acts as, a co-ordinating mechanism for a range of related Aberdeenshire policies and frameworks supporting children and young people. These include:

- Accessibility
- Race Equality
- Looked After Children
- Education at Home
- Early Intervention

- Pre-School
- ASSIST/CALM
- Health Promoting Schools
- Aberdeenshire Life Education Centre
- School Admissions Policies
- Related Partner Policies (Social Work/Health)
- Protecting Children
- Gypsies / Travellers

5. Policy Development

5.1 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy Pack have been developed using the Corporate Project Management tool. This has resulted in the formation of a multi-agency management group which steers the process at a strategic level and three multi-agency project task groups with representation from Health, Social Work and Education. Each of the three project task groups have very specific remits which include:

- the development of appropriate awareness raising, training and quality assurance procedures
- the development of processes – in particular, those associated with the operation of the Integrated Assessment Framework and Co-ordinated Support Plans
- the development of policies and guidelines for practitioners

5.2 Each of these task groups works to Project Initiation Documentation (PID). The PID for the Policies Group includes information on:

- identifying and prioritising policy requirements
- taking forward policy development
- engaging with and consulting stakeholders in developing and agreeing policy
- carrying out an audit of current policies
- interpreting ASfL requirements, developing underpinning principles and establishing criteria for policy development

5.3 Key Elements

The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework builds on existing policies and good practice.

The Aberdeenshire Education & Recreation Guidelines and Information to Support Inclusion (2004) describe a range of good practice relating to supporting children's and young people's learning. These have been well received by education establishments and partners and have become embedded in practice. A key element of support for children and young people is Aberdeenshire Education and Recreation's Staged Assessment model which ensures a systematic approach to supporting children's and young people's learning.

- 5.4 The Staged Assessment model supports the planning, assessment and intervention processes for children and young people. It underpins the decision-making process enabling the appropriate document(s) to be put in place to support the child's or young person's learning. Documentation may include an Individualised Educational Plan, a Managing Accessibility Plan, or a Co-ordinated Support Plan.
- The Individualised Educational Plan is central to planning, monitoring and managing the additional support for learning required by some children and young people. For the vast majority of children and young people with support needs, the Individualised Education Plan will be appropriate.
 - Where a child's or young person's needs have implications relating to accessibility, as defined in the Aberdeenshire Education and Recreation Accessibility Strategy, a Managing Accessibility Plan may be required.
 - Where children's and young people's needs are more complex, enduring and require a high degree of co-ordination of support from more than one agency, a Co-ordinated Support Plan may be agreed as necessary by all stakeholders involved, including the child or young person.

The Individualised Educational Plan and the Managing Accessibility Plan, completed by the educational establishment staff, will form the main part of the Co-ordinated Support Plan. This will be complemented by additional information from partner plans. In nearly every case, much of the assessment and written planning will already be in place in line with Education and Recreation's Staged Assessment model. Building upon this, school staff along with lead professionals from partner services or agencies, as appropriate, will write and manage the day-to-day delivery of the Co-ordinated Support Plan.

- 5.5 The co-ordinating responsibility will lie with the Head of Establishment/lead professional but some or all functions may be delegated to a member or members of staff as appropriate. The Education Network Manager will be responsible for the formal decision to initiate a Co-ordinated Support Plan and the administration of related statutory requirements. Parental and partner agency requests for a Co-ordinated Support Plan should be referred to the Education Network Manager in the first instance. The above process will be supported by the implementation of the Integrated Assessment Framework which enables all partners to contribute.

6. How the Policy will change Practice

6.1 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack has the key aim of describing the range of Aberdeenshire policies which support children's learning. It seeks to bring these together, set them in context and establish links, common themes and pathways between them. It shows that educational establishments are central to the delivery of appropriate and suitable education for all Aberdeenshire's children and young people. Support, advice and consultation take place through partnership working leading to capacity building within Community School Networks. It further demonstrates that Aberdeenshire Education and Recreation Service has a range of instruments of assessment which link to the Staged Assessment Model and Integrated Assessment Framework which inform the level of support and intervention a young person requires.

6.2 Impact of Policy

For the first time the Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack 'join up' the range of policies, procedures and guidelines that exist to support children and young people's learning. As such, it will inform the working practice of all practitioners giving them efficient and effective access to appropriate information thereby improving service delivery and the impact on children, young people and families. For example, one aspect of the Pathways to Policy pack is the highlighting of an audit of all additional support needs resources across Aberdeenshire on a network basis. This audit information is held by Education Network Managers. Community School Networks will find this mapping exercise useful in identifying areas of strength and gaps in provision both locally and in other networks, allowing the sharing of good practice and the possible alignment of resources, practices or training.

7. Consultation

7.1 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework has been circulated to the Additional Support for Learning Management and Project Groups, the ICS Strategy Group and the Integrated Assessment Framework Strategy Group, which contain senior officer representation from Education, Law & Admin, Social Work and from Health and other agencies; there is also school and union representation. The Policy Framework has also been submitted to the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers. Stakeholders and practitioners will be briefed on the Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack early in 2007. Local Network "champions" will be identified and will receive appropriate briefing and training to help them support their Network in the use of the Pathways to Policy pack, particularly as regards implementing the Integrated Assessment Framework.

8. Implementation

- 8.1 In order to implement and develop the Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack, it is essential that all those involved in the education of children and young people, including parents, children and young people, are involved in a process of continuing development of knowledge, skills and expertise. Wherever possible, this should be carried out in a multi-agency setting and increase, in measurable terms, the effectiveness and capacity of joint working.
- 8.2 Following approval by the Education & Recreation Committee, Social Work and Housing Committee and Health, Voluntary Organisations and stakeholder groups, the Additional Support for Learning Management Group will implement the Additional Support Needs Policy Framework.

9. Quality Assurance

9.1 HMIe and Partners Quality Assurance Documentation

Multi-agency approaches in Quality Assurance will be based on "A Quality Improvement Framework for Integrated Services for Children, Young People and their Families" (SEED, August 2005) and "A Guide to Evaluating Services for Children and Young People Using Quality Indicators" (HMIe, October 2006) which relate to the following areas:

- Looked After Children
- Race Equality
- Inclusion
- Young people not in education, employment or training
- Partnerships with Further Education
- Community Learning and Development
- Educational Psychology Service
- Protecting Children
- Health Promoting Schools
- Children requiring Sensory Support
- English as an Additional Language
- Success for All
- Gypsies and Travellers

9.2 Local Quality Assurance Delivery

The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways Policy pack are key aspects of the quality assurance processes that are already in existence and used by Education and Recreation and partner services. Community School Network partners from Social Work, Health, Community Learning and Development, Educational Psychology Service and others will contribute to the quality assurance process that ensures children and young people reach their full potential. This Community School Network quality assurance process will employ some or all of the above quality assurance frameworks. The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy pack will be a central feature of educational establishment and Community School Network development plans. A central feature of this quality assurance process is the measurement of added value, based on evidence, as regards supporting the learning of children and young people.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

- 10.1 Existing staff across Education, Health, Social Work and other agencies operating within Community School Networks will ensure that the Networks and teams and establishments operating within them are inclusive organisations implementing the Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the related Pathways to Policy pack. Senior staff, from across all agencies, have a key leadership responsibility empowering front line staff to respond effectively to the broader concept of additional support needs which the Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and the Pathways to Policy pack encompass.

11. Resource Implications

11.1 Staffing

There are no new staffing implications arising directly from this policy. The Authority's CPD programme will provide professional development to support the key elements of the Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack as these elements unfold into practice.

11.2 Financial

To allow local authorities to plan and prepare for their new duties under the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004), the Scottish Executive allocated an amount to each in 04/05, 05/06 and 06/07. For Aberdeenshire, the amounts were £382,955, £454,759 and £598,367, respectively.

A separate allocation of £272,000 for each year 04/05 and 05/06 was made to NHS Grampian to help meet specific health requirements.

11.3 Sustainability

All the Education and Recreation developments surrounding the Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack are sustainable within the financial implications outlined above.

12. Accessibility

- 12.1 Underpinning this policy is an inclusive approach to all services. A key principle in supporting children's and young people's learning is the realisation of potential for all learners regardless of gender, race or disability.

13. Communication

- 13.1 The Aberdeenshire Additional Support Needs Policy Framework and Pathways to Policy pack will be issued to schools and partners and will also be placed on the Authority's website database of policies and guidelines with an invitation to comment pending a review in six months' time.

An initial briefing session will take place for Community School Network representatives from across services early in 2007

14. Timeframes

- 14.1 A formal review of the policy will take place initially at intervals of six months.

Reviews will be led strategically by the Additional Support for Learning Management Group and implemented at operational level by schools, Education Network Managers, and partner services and agencies. All stakeholders, pupils, parents, staff, partners and Elected Members will be invited to participate in the review of the Policy Framework.

Any recommended substantive change to the policy will be submitted to the Education & Recreation Committee, Social Work and Housing Committee and partner agencies for comment and approval.

