

Every Child is Included: Policy into Practice Additional Support for Learning Network News



Education Services

February 2015 - Issue 9

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the ninth issue of Glasgow ASL Parents' Network News.

We know that additional support needs is a very wide area – and there is a lot going on in Glasgow - so if there is something you would particularly like more information about in a future edition of Network News, please let us know. All the contact details are on the next page.

This aims of Network News remain the same; we want to provide you with the opportunity to:

- get regular and reliable information about what Education Services are doing about additional support for learning
- link up and communicate with other parents whose children have additional support needs
- ask questions and receive answers about additional support in Glasgow
- get news about national and local developments relating to additional support.

Network News is going out directly to over 100 parents and carers. We know that is a very small number of those who have children with additional support needs attending Glasgow schools, but we hope it will continue to grow. Please pass it on to anyone you think may be interested. We are also sending it out through schools and early years centres and we're going to put it online. If you don't see copies of Network News in the school your child attends, please ask the Headteacher to make it available to everyone.

You can access this and previous editions of Network News by downloading them from the Glasgow City Council website www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=8627

Our core parents group – The ASL Parents' Forum - is still meeting regularly. At these meetings we discuss - in a very informal way - any particular concerns or interests the parents/carers raise.

Contact details for core group parents/carers are also on the next page.

This ninth issue of Network News is being sent to:

- all those parents already signed up to the Network
- all Glasgow schools, establishments and services
- Psychological Services
- our partner agencies; health and Social Work Services
- voluntary organisations

Network News will only support parents/carers and families if it does the job you want it to do. Please let us know what you think about it. All our contact details are listed on the next page.

Yours,

Margaret McKinlay
Area Education Officer
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The most recent meeting of the ASL Parents' Core Group, reviewed with me the changes to the pathways process.

It is important for parents to understand this process and we intend to put information about it on line.

We all agreed, however, that a good start would be to explain this to you in this edition of Network News – so here goes!

Over the last few months we have been reviewing the way in which we make decisions about the pathways that are being recommended for some children who need a high level of support. Our policy continues to reflect the statutory position in Scotland that all children and young people have the right to access mainstream education with appropriate supports in place.

In Glasgow, we are fortunate to have a range of provision specifically designed to meet support needs and we have been working over the last two years to extend and develop this provision in order to provide a continuum of support for children and young people.

Most children with identified additional support needs are in their local schools, close to their family and community. Local schools identify, assess and plan to meet a wide range of additional support needs for many children and young people. The schools access support from a range of specialist services, including, English as an Additional language, Dyslexia Support, Early Years Inclusion Support, Additional Support for Learning Technology and Hearing and Visual Impairment Support Services. Children are also supported in local schools through collaborative working with colleagues in Health and in Social Work Services and through the work we do with a huge variety of partners and voluntary organisations.

All children who have additional support needs in local schools should have a Wellbeing Assessment which is ongoing. If this assessment indicates that in one or more area of wellbeing, the child needs a very high level of support, this becomes a Wellbeing Assessment and Plan. Schools and officers sometimes call this a WAP.

Parents and carers must be fully involved in the wellbeing assessment and in setting up the plan if one is needed. They should also be involved in regular reviews of how the plan is supporting progress.

In many cases, the school's link psychologist will also be supporting the school to meet the child's needs.

We also support children in mainstream schools through the training that we provide for staff and through the networks of local support we are increasingly putting in place.

If a child or young person is not making good progress in their local school and if there are concerns about wellbeing, the school can take the decision to refer a child to the Joint Support Team or JST. Every Learning Community - which just means a group of local primary and early years establishments with their associated secondary school - has a JST. At the JST senior members of school staff work with colleagues in health and social work, as appropriate, to try to ensure that all the right supports are in place for a child. The JST will often make a series of suggestions for the school to take forward.

You should always be part of the decision to refer your child to the JST and you should always be clear about the outcomes from the referral.

In a few cases a school, parents and educational psychologist and JST will come to the view that the current pathway of full time attendance at the local school, is not effectively supporting progress for the child.

In Glasgow, we aim always to meet a child's needs without restricting the opportunities and the curriculum on offer. If a child needs to attend specialist provision, we will always carry on planning opportunities for links with mainstream because we know that this is very important for each child's development and wellbeing.

The JST, based on the assessment information the school has provided, may suggest that the child is referred to the City Inclusion Group (CIG) to consider an alternative pathway. The school is responsible for this referral.

The school has to submit the following pieces of evidence:

- a PL1 form with factual information about the child and with a clear recommendation about how the current pathway should be altered;
- the child's Wellbeing Assessment and Plan (WAP);
- minutes of the most recent review meeting held;
- any additional assessment information or reports they hold from other agencies;
- clear evidence that the parents and, where appropriate, the child have been consulted and have expressed their views;
- clear evidence that this is the view of those principally involved in assessment - that is, the school staff and the link EP.

The CIG meets whenever it is necessary to consider submissions of this kind from schools. It is made up of two Area Education Officers, a Principal and a Depute Psychologist, our Inclusion Manager and representative heads from schools and nurseries. This group considers carefully the submissions made by schools and recommends an appropriate way forward to the Head of Service for the relevant area. The Head of Service will confirm the decision of the CIG and ensure that parents/carers are involved in the outcome.

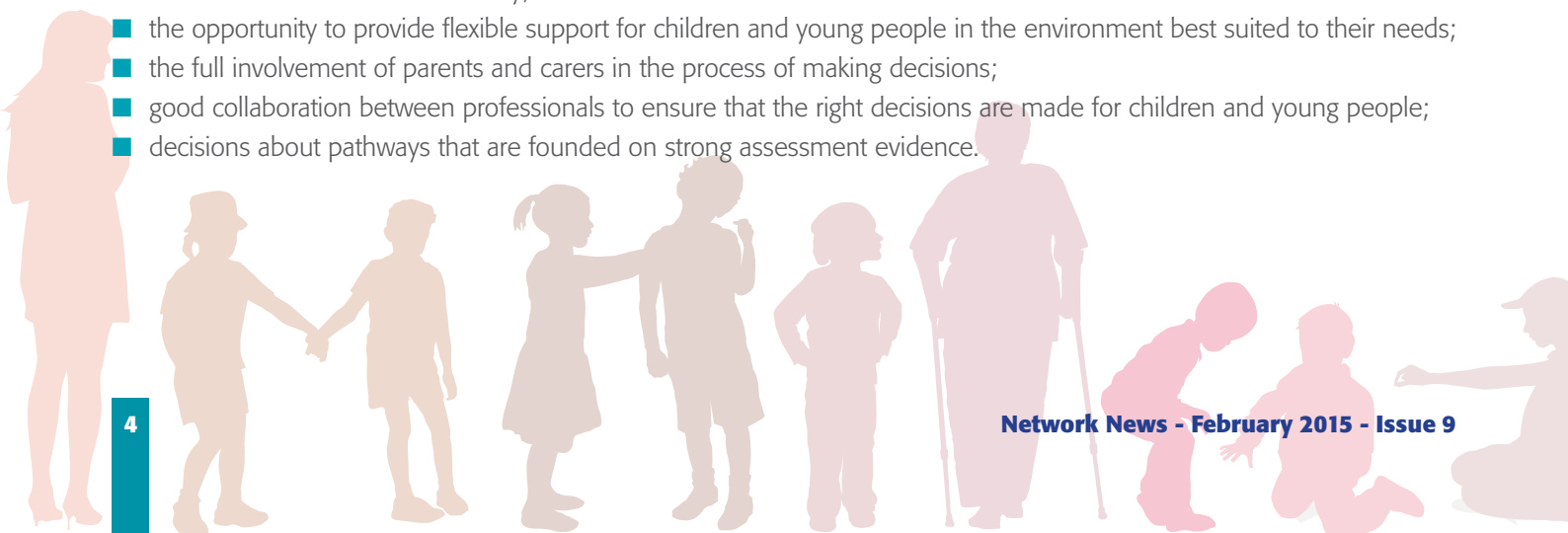
We realise that this process sounds long and complicated. In fact, The CIG met in late January this year to consider one group of applications and parents and carers and schools will know the outcome by the end of February.

When children who are in specialist provision come to a point of transition the CIG will also consider all the assessment information the school provides before making a decision about what will be the best next step. From this year, the CIG will consider pathways for children in P6.

We have been thinking very carefully about the pathways process.

What we are trying to achieve is:

- the opportunity for as many children and young people as possible to benefit, with appropriate support, from being educated in their local community;
- the opportunity to provide flexible support for children and young people in the environment best suited to their needs;
- the full involvement of parents and carers in the process of making decisions;
- good collaboration between professionals to ensure that the right decisions are made for children and young people;
- decisions about pathways that are founded on strong assessment evidence.



Current Developments

PARENTS' CONFERENCE

We are planning another conference for parents of children with additional support needs this autumn. Responding to what you have told us, we are going to invite all parents along.

We thought that you might like the Conference to concentrate on the ways children are being supported in mainstream schools and on the Wellbeing Assessment and Plan.

We'd be glad to get your feedback on this proposal.

POLICY UPDATE

We are currently working on the update to our policy on inclusion – *Every Child Is Included – Getting It Right In The Nurturing City*

We need to update the policy to reflect changes in the law as a result of the Children and Young People's Act, and some of the developments in Glasgow.

The Core Group of Additional Support for Learning parents have been informally discussing some of the thinking underpinning the policy update.

The updated policy and its associated guidance booklets should be ready to go on line this summer.

REMINDER - ASL Parents' Guide

In the last edition of Network News we told you that we had recently completed a guide for parents of children and young people with additional support needs. You can access this guide online at www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10279



Questions and Answers

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS, INFORMATION?

While specific questions about your child need to go directly to the Headteacher he or she attends, we are very happy to publish general questions that may be of interest to other parents here in Network News – and we can do so anonymously. It's also good if we can include comments or suggestions that other parents may find helpful. Quite often, when we meet parents at conferences and other events, they tell us about the successes their children have had and about support that has worked out well. It would be encouraging for other parents if you were prepared to share stories like this, as well as concerns, through Network News.

You can email questions, suggestions, comments to Yvette Duffy (see contacts) and we will include them in the next issue of Network News.

Similarly, if you have any news or information that you think would be helpful to other parents/carers and families, please let us know and we will include these too.

If you want to be added to the direct mailing list for Network News, please email Yvette Duffy – see Contacts list on Page 2.

Next Edition - Planned for April 2015

