

SUBMISSION FROM ANGUS COUNCIL

Introduction

1. Angus Council is of the view that specific legislation in this area is not required as better avenues are already in place for improving services for adults and children with autism. Further, the development of legislation in this area is likely to carry unintended consequences both financially and in terms of the precedent set for other lobby groups.

Meeting additional support needs

2. Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, Angus Council is required to make arrangements to identify additional support needs and to make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support required for each child or young person with additional support needs for whose school education they are responsible.
3. Children and young people may require additional support for a variety of reasons including motor or sensory impairment, are being bullied, have a learning difficulty, have experienced bereavement, in fact **any** and **all** factors which present them with barriers to their learning.
4. From the above it is clear that all education authorities are under a legal duty to identify all pupils with social and communication difficulties (which include those with a medical diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders (ASD)) and to make adequate and efficient provision to meet their needs.
5. This duty demands that the needs of children be identified regardless of the presence or absence of any medical diagnosis and support provided to assist them overcome their barriers to learning. This duty is enshrined in legislation and further specific legislation is neither required nor helpful. Indeed, any attempt to break down the breadth of the term additional support needs (ASN) is contrary to the letter and the spirit of the 2004 Act.
6. Further support needs are identified using duties of assessment in relation to children with disabilities in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Support around the family is assessed using legislation and guidance aimed at assessing and supporting the needs of carers.
7. The vast majority of people with autism become known to adult services through the robust transition arrangements that are in place. Others become known to services through referral from other professionals or self referral. As with other diagnosis, there is little direct reference to autism in

existing legislation however legislative requirements place a duty on local authorities to assess the needs of individuals.

8. Such requirements exist in the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1972 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. Further other duties are placed on local authorities through the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act 2003, the Adults with Incapacity Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Further requirements exist in relation to carers of people with autism through the Carers Recognition and Services Act 1995. Such legislation encourages the development of needs led services without the need for a specific medical diagnosis.
9. Legislation is underpinned by a range of national policy and guidance. Specifically *The same as you? A review of services for people with learning disabilities* report, produced in 2000, has seen significant strides in the development of services for people with autism both with and without associated learning disabilities. This has been achieved without specific legislation on the matter.

Number of Angus children and adults identified

10. Angus Council Education Department, as at June 2010, was providing support based on need for 136 children and young people (3-18) with social communication difficulties, including ASD. This includes children and young people both with and without a diagnosis, as it is recognised that many may not have a medical label but nevertheless present with patterns of behaviour consistent with an ASD and require consideration and review. These young people receive appropriate support from Angus Council Education Department.

Table 1: Number of children and young people identified with social and communication difficulties currently receiving support within Angus Council Education Department.

Pre-school	55
Primary	49
Secondary	20
Total	124

Table 2: Number of children and young people with social and communication difficulties currently receiving support outwith Angus Council Education Department.

Primary	4
Secondary	8
Total	12

11. The above figures are broadly in line with projections contained in *Make Schools make Sense* campaign report, the National Autistic Society and the National Statistics Office.
12. A specialist ASD provision for primary aged pupils is housed within Langlands Primary School and the Angus provision for secondary pupils is housed within Forfar Academy
13. Pupils are placed in the primary or secondary autism bases when, as part of the authority's staged intervention process, it becomes evident that needs cannot be met in full in either mainstream or (in the case of primary pupils) the nearest resourced primary school.
14. The three resourced pre-school provisions provide an appropriate context and level of adult support for pre-schoolers who have significant additional support needs. These may relate to global development delay, significant learning difficulties, complex multiple difficulties including physical disability, or children who may or may not have formal diagnosis of ASD but who display difficulties in the area of social communication or interaction.
15. In all of these resourced locations, educational provision and contexts are available to allow skilled, qualified and experienced staff to take advantage of options which include varying levels of integration with mainstream provision. Individual education programmes are designed taking account of the needs of the individual child, and whether or not a formal diagnosis of autism has yet been made, or indeed will ever be made, does not affect the appropriateness of the provision put in place.
16. The number of adults with autism known to, and in receipt of, adult services in Angus has increased year on year from 30 individuals in 2007, 55 in 2008 and 65 in 2009. This does not include individuals who have been supported to greater independence and no longer have needs which require the provision of adult social work services. There are also a number of other adults with social and communication difficulties in receipt of services whose needs are supported following assessment through a range of services.

17. Services for adults are either directly delivered or commissioned to support individuals with a range of needs. Whilst no specific services for adults with autism exist in Angus, a number of individuals with autism receive personalised services.

Training

18. Training has already been delivered to all support for learning assistants at a full day event. Training is an ongoing process with further training courses already planned in relation to autism.

Table 3: Proposed Courses

Content or title	Audience	Sessions
Autism Toolbox	PT (SFL), SFL Staff, both primary and Secondary	
An Introduction to Autism	PT (SFL), SFL Staff, both primary and Secondary	1
Autism Focus: A Training Workbook	Teachers and Support Staff	6
Teaching Sexuality and Relationships to Young People with an ASD	PT (SFL), SFL Staff, both primary and Secondary	1

19. Autism teachers perform an outreach service as part of their remit and offer training programmes to individual schools tailored to meet the requirements of the staff – this may take the form of learning lunches, in-service, twilights etc. Additionally they are part of the Support Teachers of Angus Network (STAN) and offer training to staff as part of the rolling programme of events.
20. The autism teachers offer training to transport providers and escorts to ensure that pupils who use school transport have routines and structures in place. Transport staff are given strategies to support the needs of the pupils and are more knowledgeable about ASD. They also engage in multi-agency training and work closely with respite care and adult services to increase knowledge and understanding of ASD as well as providing strategies and resource advice.
21. The principal teacher pre-school, principal teacher ASD and Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) work closely together on the SPARKLE project which offers sessions for pre-school children and their carers to provide training and opportunities to further understanding ASD.

22. There have been a total of 137 training sessions for adult services staff in autism or ASD awareness with a variety of training providers from both public and private sector organisations. A number of staff have undertaken multiple courses.

Table 4: Adult staff training in autism

Provider	Course	Length of course	Staff attended
Scottish Autistic Society	Autism awareness	0.5 day	1
	Autism	1 day	31
	Autism	2 days	11
Speech & language Therapy Department	Autism awareness	0.5 day	66
	Autism awareness	1.5 days	
New Struan School	Basic Autism awareness	2 hours	2
Gowrie Care	Autism awareness	1 day	1
SENSE Scotland	ASD & managing challenging behaviour	Ongoing	1
National Autistic Society	Autism awareness	2 days	23

Planning activity

23. Within Angus there is currently a number of multi-agency groups who meet on a regular basis to co-ordinate the identification of children, young people and adults with all and any additional support needs and to plan to meet these needs. These include:

- Additional Support Needs Joint Action Group
- Complex Needs Planning Group
- Additional Support Needs Consultative Team
- Social and Communication Difficulties Review Group
- Angus Multi-agency Social and Communications Difficulties Team
- Social and Communication Difficulties Education Network
- Autism Network
- Respite Panel
- The Community Care and Health Executive Group
- The Tayside Learning Disability Steering Group

Transition

24. Angus Council's transition process aims to identify those young people who are likely to have long term needs and who will require ongoing support and/or assistance in adult life.

25. As a result, a series of transition conferences are held annually. These conferences are multi-agency and partners involved in this process with the school include parents/carers, representatives from the Department of Social Work & Health (in particular the Adult Services Care Managers for Transition), the Educational Psychology Service, Community Child Health, Adult Learning Disability Health, NHS Tayside, the voluntary sector, Careers Scotland, Angus College and local training providers.
26. Management of the whole process is a joint responsibility with the school playing a major co-ordinating role. During the process of transition the balance of responsibility shifts from school to post school service providers as appropriate.
27. The purpose of the meeting is to:
- ensure that appropriate agencies are aware of children who may require their support
 - identify young people who may require that services beyond school
 - identify additional services that may be required by each young person
 - identify additional post school service providers who should be made aware of the needs of individual pupils
 - support schools to make appropriate referrals to adult services and other sources of support
 - advise parents/carers and pupils on the range of post school services available
 - allow partner agencies to gather information to allow future service planning
 - develop a picture of referral patterns likely to emerge over time
 - identify young people in need who may 'fall through the net'.

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