

New Additional Support Needs Provision in Earlston

Executive Committee – 24 May 2016

Profound and Complex Learning Difficulties

There is no nationally agreed definition but for our purposes we will take the term to mean: “Any person whose intellectual development is under eighteen months when compared to a conventionally developing child (and usually considerably under eighteen months), irrespective of their actual age” Peter Imray, 2005

Defining characteristics of a person with profound and complex learning difficulties include most of the following, and will be lifelong:

- Pre-verbal in terms of intent
- May communicate for needs and wants only
- Highly unlikely to understand abstract concepts
- Limited understanding of cause and effect
- Need a sensory and process based approach to learning
- Little or no working memory
- Physically reliant on others for the majority of their needs
- Support with all personal care needs
- Complex medical needs
- Associated challenging behaviour, may include self-injury

There is a very high chance that there will be attendant physical and/or cortical sensory (hearing and sight) impairment.

The term profound and complex learning difficulties can include a number of students who may not be considered by some to have profound learning difficulties. These are pupils who will probably be ambulant and will have well or partly established self-care skills in being able for example, to feed themselves and at least partly dress themselves. They are likely to have a rudimentary understanding of cause and effect, and may even have attained at least partial contingency awareness. They may have additional learning difficulties such as autism, but will not generally suffer from the attendant physical and multiple disabilities. Nonetheless, the intellectual and cognitive impairments of this group will restrict their development to a very early level which may be considered pre early Curriculum for Excellence.

When planning support arrangements for the child/young person the following points should be considered:

- To spend all, or a significant percentage of their educational experience in a specialist, small group setting
- A specialised learning environment tailored to meet the physical, communication and sensory needs of each child or young person
- Safe and accessible indoor and outdoor space
- A total communication environment
- A highly personalised curriculum
- An ongoing coordinated approach with outside agencies
- Support for physical, medical, communication and cognitive needs from highly skilled, trained and informed staff
- Core equipment and furniture to meet individual need, e.g. specialist seating,

standing frames, adjustable height tables, personal care facilities, and accessible space to store them

- High levels of support throughout the school day (including mealtimes and breaktimes).
- Adult support need to understand approaches to learning and also be trained to meet individual physical and medical needs.
- High levels of support for personal care
- Support, encouragement and opportunities to make realistic and relevant choices

Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties

Defining characteristics of a person with severe and complex needs are likely to include many or most of the following, and will be lifelong:

- Significant cognitive impairment
- Communicate (receptive and expressive) through use of AAC systems – sign, gesture, words, pictures, symbols, environmental cues and clues
- Significant difficulties with reading, writing and comprehension - most will never read or write with any kind of fluency
- Significant difficulties with basic mathematical skills and concepts
- A short attention span
- An atypical, inconsistent and ‘spikey’ learning profile
- Significant challenges with working memory
- Physical impairments and under developed co-ordination skills
- Mobility difficulties
- Some degree of sensory impairment and/or sensory integration difficulties
- Significant support with personal care needs and steps towards independence
- Significant support to develop social skills
- Associated challenging behaviours

These children’s development will generally be at early or first level within Curriculum for Excellence, although they may have experienced some Es and Os at a higher level. However the Es and Os will need significant derivation to plan for, and demonstrate, progress in learning.

Young people at Senior Phase will be working towards National 1 or National 2. Those at FE College will be working towards SCQF 1 and/or 2

When planning support arrangements for the child/young person the following points should be considered:

- A total communication environment
- A specialist, small group educational environment for a significant part of their week
- Significant support throughout the school day (including mealtimes and breaktimes and personal care)
- A highly personalised curriculum
- Planned and organised strategies to support building social relationships with mainstream peers
- An on-going coordinated approach with outside agencies
- Personal care facilities
- Safe and accessible indoor and outdoor space
- Support for physical, medical, communication and cognitive needs from a highly trained and informed staff
- Core equipment and furniture to meet individual need, e.g. specialist seating,

- standing frames, adjustable height tables and accessible space to store them
- Adult support need to understand approaches to learning and also be trained to meet individual physical and medical needs.
 - Support, encouragement and opportunities to make realistic and relevant choices

Children with moderate learning needs will be supported in their mainstream setting and clusters will consider and may allocate resources where appropriate to meet the needs of individual SBC settings.

Moderate Learning Difficulties

Defining characteristics for a person with moderate learning difficulties will include some or many of the following:

Have attainments significantly below expected levels (in terms of age) in most areas of the curriculum despite appropriate interventions

Have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic numeracy and literacy skills and in understanding concepts

Challenges with abstract learning

Needs generally met through extended differentiation

May have associated speech, language and communication difficulties

Low levels of concentration

Under developed social skills and/or social awareness

May have low self esteem