

Summary Report of the Analysis of the Consultation on ‘Scotland’s Ten Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026’

April 2019

Introduction

The consultation on the draft ten-year strategy – ‘Scotland’s Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026’, ran from 5 June 2017 to 28 August 2017. The consultation contained 10 questions aimed at obtaining views on each part of the ten-year strategy.

Scotland’s Ten Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026 aims to support improved outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs through strategic commissioning of national services, with particular focus on the provision of education. The strategy is based on recommendations made in the Doran Review published in November 2012. While the strategy also recognises the critical role played by social care and health services in supporting educational outcomes, the strategy is set with the context of The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, (as amended).

The consultation document asked 10 questions aimed at getting opinions on each part of the draft strategy, as well as, allowing general feedback on how the strategy could be improved.

Overview of consultation responses

There were 61 responses to the consultation – 14 from individuals and 47 from organisations.

The consultation document asked 10 questions in total – 2 questions on the structure of the document, 6 questions on the content and 2 questions to allow general feedback on how the strategy could be improved.

All respondents were given the choice to submit their responses anonymously and for them to be anonymous in reporting. 56 respondents gave permission for their responses to be made public and these are available on the Citizen Space website at <https://consult.gov.scot/support-and-wellbeing/complex-additional-support-needs-2017-2026/>. All responses were moderated before being approved for publication.

Methodology

The aim of the analysis was to present the wide range of views offered. The responses were examined using a qualitative thematic approach and the key points from the analysis are summarised in this report.

Responses to the consultation varied, some focussed on providing comment on the draft strategy itself and answering the specific question asked. Other respondents used the consultation to comment on current practice around supporting children with complex additional support needs more generally, particularly in relation to the implementation of additional support for learning policy.

The analysis is focused on the volume and depth of the responses provided rather than the number of respondents. In other words, conclusions can only be drawn about the comments/information that respondents volunteered. If a respondent did not answer the

question, or reference a particular topic, no conclusions can be drawn in regards to their opinions or stances on the issue discussed.

Analysis of responses

The purpose of this report is to summarise against general themes that were raised in the consultation responses. The structure of this report follows the 10 questions that were asked as part of the consultation on the draft strategy.

Overall the large majority of respondents were supportive of the ten-year strategy while some felt that it lacked important detail. A strong message in the responses was that the ten-year strategy would benefit from including the following:

- a high level timeline and action plan for implementation;
- detail on how progress in implementing the strategy would be measured; and
- how this would be reported.

The focus of the ten-year strategy on training and development for staff working with children and young people with complex additional support needs, had widespread support. While the majority of respondents welcomed specific Leadership training in the sector of complex additional support needs, many expressed the view that this needs to be done within the context of providing high quality training and development for all staff working in the sector.

The concerns raised in the consultation were not, in the main about a move to strategic commissioning. The majority of respondents were supportive of strategic commissioning with a few respondents highlighting the impact on grant-aided special schools. The only other common concern reported by a few respondents was resources, including sufficient numbers of teachers and support staff, as well as access to specialist provision within the local area.

A summary of the responses to each of the questions is set out below.

Question 1: Is the structure correct? Does the content of the document flow in a logical order?

Most respondents thought the structure was correct. A few respondents suggested that an introductory summary to the strategy earlier in the document would be helpful in providing further context.

Question 2: Does the structure help the reader to follow the strategy effectively?

Most respondents agreed that the structure helped the reader follow the ten-year strategy effectively. A few respondents suggested that a visual aid in the shape of a high-level timeline would be helpful.

Question 3: Do you think the aim of the Strategy and the four objectives are the right ones to achieve the Scottish Government's purpose of improving outcomes for children and young people with complex additional support needs through strategic commissioning of services?

The majority of respondents agreed that the aim of the strategy and the four objectives were the right ones to improve the outcomes for children and young people with complex

additional support needs. A few respondents wanted the improvement in outcomes to be within the context of the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators, however some respondents agreed that it was reasonable to link improved outcomes to the National Improvement Framework.

Question 4: Within the context of The Doran Review recommendations – do you agree with the explanation of why we need strategic commissioning for national provision/services for learners with complex additional support needs?

The majority of respondents were supportive of strategic commissioning with many expressing the view that strategic commissioning will bring transparency and parity to national funding. Only a few respondents expressed concern about the impact on grant-aided special schools.

Question 5: The ‘Scope of Services to be commissioned’ on page 8 relate to education, care and health, research and training and is informed by the Doran review recommendations and the National Needs Analysis, which was completed in 2015. Can you please comment on any services within those headings, which would particularly wish to see featured here? Please tell us if you think it should exclude any aspects or include any others?

The majority of those who responded to this question were supportive of the five areas identified as being within the scope of services to be commissioned. The main theme under Education was teacher and support staff training and development. The responses to Care were wide ranging, however the main theme was ‘types of provision’ and where national funding could support gaps in provision around transitions, SEBN and mental health. The responses to Health were similar to those in Care. Again, there was a range of views expressed with the main theme being ‘types of provision’ and where national funding could support gaps in provision around mental health, SEBN and transitions. Two main themes highlighted by those who responded under Research was for there to be a focus on looking into the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with complex additional support needs. The majority of responses to Training were supportive of this being an area that national funding could help build capacity by ensuring teachers and support staff working in local provision for children and young people with complex additional support needs have access to high quality training.

Question 6: What are your views on the National Commissioning Groups proposal that the first phase of strategic commissioning will focus on pathfinder (testing) activity on training, development and research? Are there any particular areas of training which should be focussed on?

The majority of respondents agreed that pathfinder activity around research, training and development was the correct starting point and many suggesting that Inclusion Pedagogy and Leadership training were most needed.

Question 7: For the purposes of this document, the National Improvement Framework drivers have been adopted and therefore reflect particular concerns related to children with complex additional support needs? Do you have any suggestions for additions or alternative wording, which should be included? Please set it out against the relevant heading below.

A few respondents felt that this section of the ten-year strategy would benefit from further development, some respondents citing the latest education reform agenda and for this to be reflected in the strategy. A recurring theme in this section was for a high level timeframe and action plan to be included.

There was a range of suggestions put forward in the responses for additional or alternative wording. The National Commissioning Group, when updating the final version of the ten-year strategy, will consider all of these.

Question 8: Do you agree that the Governance arrangements detailed in page 17 are appropriate? If not, what else should be included?

The majority of respondents were in agreement with the Governance arrangements. A few respondents had some concern about the impartiality of the National Commissioning Group and impartiality of the decision making process. The principle of strategic commissioning as a model requires that service users and providers are part of the process. Without this collaborative partnership approach, the principle of strategic commissioning would be lost and this would become a procurement process. Some respondents supportive of strategic commissioning asked that there is a commitment in the ten-year strategy to provide regular progress reporting against the aims and objectives.

A perception amongst a few respondents was that the National Commissioning Group and National Strategic Project Board, lacked representation from parent/carers and children/young people.

Question 9: In relation to the overall 10 Year Strategy – are there any areas missing, requiring strengthening, or which are not required and could be removed?

The common themes identified by most respondents suggested the ten-year strategy could be strengthened by:

- Inclusion of a high level timeline and action plan;
- Information on how progress will be monitored and reported on;
- Including more detail on the transition period and how this will be managed;
- Updating the strategy to include changes from the education reform agenda.

Question 10: Are there any general comments you would wish to make about ‘Scotland’s Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026’?

There was a broad mix of comments to this question mostly repeating themes already reported. The majority of respondents welcomed the ten-year strategy.

Next steps

The Scottish Government and the National Commissioning Group will now consider the content of all the responses received and work will be taken forward in the coming months to take account of these with a view to amending and improving the draft strategy. We are concerned with the area of complex additional support needs within the context of the government's commitment to address the needs of all learners. It is crucial that the final document supports our vision for education in Scotland of delivering 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 additional needs or social circumstances.



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