

# Additional support for learning: Written submission from UNISON Scotland, 17 October 2025



We are grateful that the committee has given us this opportunity to take part in their work in looking at the Additional Support for Learning briefing prepared by Account's Commission for the Auditor General for Scotland. .

The committee asks our view of the issues raised by the AGS, the Scottish Government and CoSLA. We will comment on the contributions made by the Scottish Government and CoSLA. Which we found very disappointing.

As we told the Education Children and Young People committee in in 2024.

“The presumption of mainstreaming in the 2004 act is that all children born in Scotland should go to their local establishment, whichever way they get there, whether it is an early years establishment or a primary or secondary school. It is a matter of inclusiveness; mainstreaming creates a view that there is diversity in society and an acceptance of that diversity.

However, the problem has been that, since 2004, there have been cuts in the provision of psychologists and speech and language therapists to support that inclusiveness. That support has been withdrawn over decades...

What is education? The education system for children is not just held up by teachers or support staff; it is held up by those in the peripheral services—the speech and language therapists, the physiotherapists, the occupational therapists and, crucially, the educational psychologists. The other day, an educational psychologist told us that, in Glasgow, there used to be one educational psychologist for every 80 pupils but there is now one for every 698 pupils. That situation is just imploding; it cannot be sustained.

That is what is happening with the budget. The Government wants to send the message that teacher numbers are being maintained, so that is what is happening, but everything else that holds up the system is being cut. That money needs to be put back in, and pupils with diverse needs need to be supported.”

Rather than addressing this situation, the CoSLA and the Scottish Government responses to the Committee are discussions about who should provide which aspect of spending. They all but completely ignore that fundamental issue that funding for the system as a whole is woefully inadequate. A more precise division of who provides an inadequate budget will do little to improve the situation of pupils with ASN across Scotland, nor the staff.

It is not a formal UNISON position but on looking at the ScotGov/CoSLA submission the remark has been made more than once that rather than spending time devising a complex formula to disburse inadequate sums – they should consider funding every pupil as having ASN and working out how to redistribute the surplus!

We are by no means against improving data collection – we would however point out that this too involves additional resources – something that ought to be factored into any roll out of new procedures.

We are still waiting for the publication of the Report on accreditation for pupil support assistants.

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