

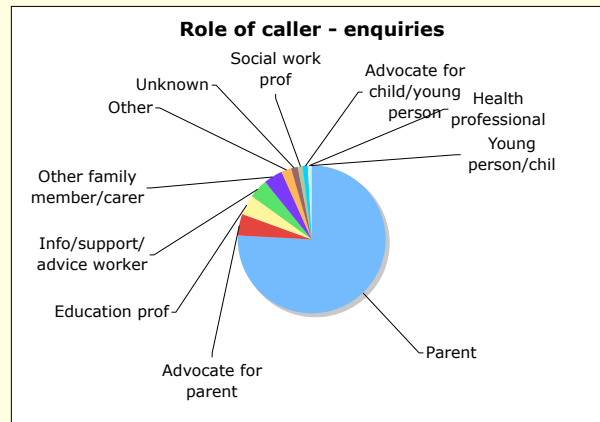
Knowledge is power: Challenges in helping parents to access information on additional support needs

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Additional support for learning enquiries 2010-11

- 1264 ASL enquiries in 2010/11
- Average of 6 per working day
- Average time spent on an enquiry is 1 hour

People contacting Enquire 2010-11



Helpline enquiries - factors giving rise to additional support needs

- Autism spectrum disorder (20%)
- Social/emotional/behavioural factors (15%)
- Dyslexia (9%)
- Physical health condition (8%)
- Learning disability (7%)

Enquiry by local authority

In 2010-11 Enquire received the highest number of enquiries from or relating to:

Glasgow (13% of all)
Edinburgh (10%)
City of Aberdeen (6%)
Aberdeenshire (6%)
South Lanarkshire (5%)

Questions we're asked

- Provision for support for learning
- The Additional Support for Learning Act
- Mediation
- Identification/assessment of additional support needs
- Placing requests

Duty to provide information

The Additional Support for Learning Act requires education authorities to provide information about a range of specified matters relating to additional support for learning.

The requirement to publish information includes:

- the authority's additional support for learning policy
- arrangements for and how to access independent mediation services
- arrangements for and how to access to dispute resolution
- the local authority officer(s) from whom parents can obtain information and advice
- Enquire
- the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance Ltd
- the Scottish Child Law Centre.

Challenges in helping parents to access information on additional support needs

- Complexity of ASL information
- Volume of information going to schools
- Parents often emotionally exhausted
- Personnel changes in schools and local authorities

Supporting children's learning code of practice

- "Professionals must take responsibility for encouraging good relationships with families based on trust, openness and effective communication." Chapter 7, section 26.
- Guidance on good practice for professionals, including: information, communication, effective working relationships, meetings, identifying the way forward and accountability and involvement.

What causes communication problems between parents and professionals?

- Parents being left out, or sensing being left out, of a decision that concerns their child
- Throw away comments
- Parent doesn't feel listened to and a lack of acknowledgement from school/professional that there is a problem

Providing advice and information through Enquire

- Confidence-building
- Providing information
- Clarifying rights
- Impartiality

Conclusions

- Schools, authorities and related services provide clear, plain information about additional support for learning that is easy to access
- Promote an respectful understanding of parents and practitioners responsibilities and obligations
- Getting it right from the start, with everyone involved.