

# **Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming**

**Analysis of consultation responses**

**June 2018**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

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## **Executive Summary**

The consultation on the draft guidance, Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming, ran from 2 November 2017 to 9 February 2018. The document contained 9 questions aimed at obtaining views on each part of the draft guidance.

The draft guidance sought to do two things - to ensure that local authorities have the guidance required to help their decision making in applying the presumption of mainstreaming and to improve inclusive practice in schools.

A total of 362 written responses were received, 87 from organisations and 275 from individuals.

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 here.

Responses to the consultation varied, some focussed on providing comment on the draft guidance itself while other respondents used the consultation as an opportunity to comment on current practice and implementation of additional support for learning policy more generally.

The presumption of mainstreaming of children and young people with additional support needs attracts polarised views which are evident within the responses to the consultation. There are passionate views, both for and against, which are often, but not always, informed by personal opinions as well as experience. The consultation has attracted a wide range of views reflecting a range of positions on the presumption of mainstream education.

There was strong support for the vision and principles underpinning the document and practice as envisaged in the draft guidance. It was clear that there was some conflation of the presumption of mainstreaming with inclusion and a misunderstanding that inclusion always meant going to a mainstream school when the message set out in the document was about the importance of children being included no matter what setting they were in. There was support for the expectations set out within the draft guidance, the guidance for applying the presumption of mainstreaming and for the material on how schools could look to develop their inclusive practice. There was a mixed view on the helpfulness/usefulness of the case studies provided, with a similar proportion responding positively or negatively to them.

The concerns raised in the consultation were not, in the main about the vision and principles or the practice as envisaged in the draft guidance, but that current practice did not meet those aspirations and that if the guidance was to be implemented effectively, practice would have to be strengthened and supports put in place to achieve this. The most common concern reported was resources and this included having sufficient numbers of teachers and support staff, access to specialist supports, specialist provision within local areas and the physical environment of

schools. The attitudes and ethos of practitioners was seen as crucial and that there had to be more training put in place to support teachers and support staff.

A summary of the responses to each of the questions is set out below. The methodology section (page 6) sets out an explanation of the terms used to indicate relative prevalence and the number and percentage responses for each question can be found within the body of the report.

**Question 1: Do you agree with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland?**

The majority of those that responded to this question agreed with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland. Of that subset, many of those respondents caveated their responses by raising concerns about implementation and how the system currently operated. Many of the respondents who responded to the question did not agree with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland. These responses were split between those that did not agree with the vision in principle and those that had concerns around implementation.

**Question 2: Do you agree with these principles?**

A large majority of those that responded to this question agreed with the principles. Of that subset, the majority of those respondents caveated their responses by raising concerns about implementation and how the system currently operated. Some of the respondents did not agree with the principles. The majority of this sub set did not comment on the principles themselves but on issues around implementation of them.

**Question 3: Are the expectations set out under each of the ‘present, participating, achieving and supported’ principles the right ones?**

The majority of those that responded thought the expectations set out were the right ones. Of that subset, many of those respondents caveated this by stating that they didn’t think that current practice matched the expectations set out in the document. Many respondents commented that they did not think the expectations were the right ones. Individual respondents were more likely to disagree with the section and the majority of this subset did not focus on the drafting of the section but on how practice currently operated.

**Question 4: Are the entitlements and options for provisions clear?**

The majority of those that responded found the entitlements and options for provisions as set out in the document to be clear. Many respondents commented that they did not find the entitlements and options for provision clear. Individual respondents were more likely to disagree with the section and the majority of this subset did not focus on the drafting of the section but on how practice currently operated.

**Question 5: Is the commentary and the reflective questions on each of the exemptions helpful?**

The majority of respondents found the commentary and reflective questions helpful. Many of those that responded saying they were helpful expressed concern that current practice didn’t match what was set out in the section. Of those that did not find them helpful comments split between comments on the section and comments on implementation more generally.

**Question 6: Are there any areas missing, requiring strengthening, or which are not required and could be removed?**

The majority of the respondents that responded to this question provided comments on the eight key areas identified within the section. A wide range of comments and opinions were provided. Many respondents to this question didn't offer comment on the section itself but raised concerns about the system more generally.

**Question 7: Were the case studies helpful?**

There was a mixed view on the helpfulness/usefulness of the case studies provided, with a similar proportion responding positively or negatively to them. Responses split between comments on case studies themselves and concerns about current practice.

**Question 8: Overall, is the guidance helpful?**

The majority of respondents said that they found the guidance helpful. Of that subset, many of those respondents caveated their response by highlighting issues around current practice and resources. Many of the respondents said that they did not find the guidance helpful, in the main because of concerns around implementation.

**Question 9: Are there any other comments you would wish to make about the draft guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming?**

There were a wide range of responses to this question. The majority of responses concentrated on additional support for learning more generally although many responses did comment on the guidance itself and possible inclusions to it. Organisations were more likely to provide comments on the guidance and individuals were more likely to comment on additional support for learning more generally.

## **Introduction**

The consultation on the draft guidance, Excellence and Equity for All: Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming (<https://consult.gov.scot/supporting-learners/presumption-of-mainstreaming/>) ran from 2 November 2017 to 9 February 2018.

The guidance aims to bridge the gap between legislation, policy and day-to-day experience of decisions around placement, to ensure that local authorities have the guidance required to help their decision making in applying the presumption of mainstreaming. As the implementation of the presumption of mainstreaming requires a commitment to inclusive practice and approaches to be effective, the guidance clearly links inclusive practice with the presumption throughout and includes key features of inclusion and guidance on how to improve inclusive practice in schools.

The document contained 9 questions aimed at getting opinions on each part of the draft guidance.

The aim of the analysis report is 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 here.

## **Responses and respondents**

A total of 362 written responses were received, 87 from organisations and 275 from individuals.

Organisational respondents came from the public, independent and third sectors and included local authorities, schools, national bodies, voluntary organisations, parent councils and unions amongst others. Many of the organisation responses had been informed by discussion and debate within and between organisations and their own stakeholder groups.

Individual respondents included parents, teachers, others working within the education sector and the public. However, identification of respondent type was only possible within a small proportion of responses, so an accurate breakdown of individuals' responses by respondent type is not possible.

Unless specified, when referring to 'responses' and 'respondents' we mean both organisational and individual responses and respondents. In areas where responses highlighted differences between organisational and individual responses this will be made clear.

While the majority of responses followed the format of the consultation questionnaire, a small number of respondents submitted non-standard responses (such as letters, emails or stand-alone documents) which did not directly address the consultation questions. However, where possible, themes were identified for inclusion in the analysis. Amongst those providing written submissions to the consultation, not all provided a response to each question.

The responses to the consultation have been published on the consultation hub [https://consult.gov.scot/supporting-learners/presumption-of-mainstreaming/consultation/published\\_select\\_respondent](https://consult.gov.scot/supporting-learners/presumption-of-mainstreaming/consultation/published_select_respondent). The published responses are those where the respondent has agreed to have their consultation response published.

## **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 themes from the analysis are summarised in this report.

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.

When discussing the prevalence of certain views, either amongst all respondents or within a certain subset, the following terms are used to indicate relative prevalence:

- 'Few' means between 5 and 9%
- 'Some' means between 10 and 19%
- 'Many' means between 20 and 49%
- 'Most' or 'majority' means between 50 and 74%
- 'Large majority' means between 75 and 89%
- 'Consensus' means 90% or over.

The structure of this report follows the 9 questions that were asked as part of the consultation on the draft guidance. The first 8 questions require a yes/no/don't know answer with the opportunity to provide comment and the last question allowed a free text response. The report provides number and percentage responses for respondents as a whole.

## Question 1: Do you agree with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland?

### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	237	65%
No	100	28%
Don't know	15	4%
Not answered	10	3%

The above question was asked in relation to the *Introduction* section in the document. This section sets out the purpose of the document, a vision for inclusive education in Scotland, a series of key principles that underpin the guidance and a summary of the key legislative and policy milestones.

The vision for inclusive education in Scotland is –

'Inclusive education in Scotland starts from the belief that education is a human right and the foundation for a more just society. An inclusive approach, with an appreciation of diversity and an ambition for all to achieve to their full potential, is essential to getting it right for every child and raising attainment for all. Inclusion is the cornerstone to help us achieve equity and excellence in education for all of our children and young people.'

The majority of those that responded to this question agreed with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland (65%).

Of those that provided commentary, the majority highlighted that they agreed with the vision for inclusion in principle, agreed that education was a fundamental human right and that all children deserved to feel included and required that in order to achieve their full potential. Many in this sub set also commented on the importance of children developing an appreciation of diversity and understanding of differences and that this would lead to a more just society. It was felt by some that links should be made between leaving education and transition into adult life. Some felt that clarity could be improved by providing a definition of inclusion. It was felt that the terms inclusion and mainstreaming could sometimes be conflated and that it was not clear that an inclusive approach should be the aspiration for children in all settings, not just mainstream schools. There was a concern that 'inclusion' means 'mainstream' when inclusive education should be achieved in all settings.

Many of the respondents who agreed with the vision raised concerns about current practice and implementation of the guidance. It was felt that for this vision to be achieved that the right conditions, staff and support structures had to be in place and this sub set of respondents commented that this was often not the case. Respondents expressed the view that resources needed to be put in place to allow the vision to be realised.

Many of the respondents who responded to the question did not agree with the vision for inclusive education in Scotland. Of those that provided reasons, the



responses split between those that did not agree with the vision in principle and those that had concerns about current practice and implementation. Of those that did not agree in principle, they had concerns about the presumption of mainstreaming and thought the implementation of the presumption meant that children were not in the correct place to meet their needs which could mean they were excluded from their learning. Concerns were expressed that this could mean that the rest of the children in a classroom might not get the support required to enable them to meet their full potential. Of those that had concerns about implementation, there were concerns that the vision did not meet the reality of what currently happened in practice and was too aspirational. Of those that raised concerns about implementation the main issue raised was lack of resources. This included staff resources, both teachers and pupil support assistants, and resources to ensure that there was enough provision to cover a wide range of needs both within both mainstream and special schools. Training and support for teachers and pupil support assistants was also highlighted as an issue.

## Question 2: Do you agree with these principles?

### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	280	77%
No	59	17%
Don't know	12	3%
Not answered	11	3%

The above question was asked in relation to the *Introduction* section in the document. The key principles that underpin the guidance are:

- Improve outcomes and support the delivery of excellence and equity for all children and young people
- Meet the needs of all children and young people
- Support and empower children and young people, parents and carers, teachers, practitioners and communities
- Outline an inclusive approach which identifies and addresses barriers to learning for all children

The responses to this question split between those providing responses on the drafting of the principles and those that commented on how the system was currently working in practice. Respondents from organisations were more likely to comment on the drafting of the principles and individuals more likely to comment on what is happening in practice and concern about the implementation of the principles.

A large majority of those that responded to this question agreed with the principles (77%). Of those that provided commentary with their response the main reasons given for this were that they thought that they were theoretically sound and that they were the right aspirations that we should be striving for from the education system. Respondents welcomed the fact that they were child centred and focussed on the learner and that there was reference made to ensuring that all those involved (children and young people , parents and carers, practitioners and communities) felt supported and empowered.

Many respondents provided comments to improve the clarity of the principles. There were a wide range of views expressed but there were a number of areas where opinion clustered. Respondents mentioned the importance of including partners such as social work, health and third sector organisations and emphasised the importance of creating collaborative partnerships. It was felt to be important to reflect and build on children and young people's strengths as well as meeting their needs. It was thought that ensuring that children receive appropriate support and planning to ensure a positive transition from school should be included within the principles. It was felt to be important to ensure that the presumption of mainstreaming was reflected in the principles however it was also felt that when describing inclusive approaches that this was not used interchangeably with mainstreaming. A child feeling included was important no matter what setting a child was in, whether a mainstream school or special school. It was also felt to be

important to make links with the National Improvement Framework, Headteachers Charter and Getting it Right for Every Child and thought given how to link with these agendas.

The majority of the respondents, who agreed with the principles and provided commentary with their response, caveated their responses by raising concerns about implementation and how the system currently operated. They agreed with the principles but had concerns they were aspirational and did not reflect current practice within schools. Views were expressed that some children were not getting the support required to meet their needs and that because of the way the presumption of mainstreaming was being applied children were sometimes not in the correct setting to meet their needs. It was felt that this could have an impact on, not only children that required additional support, but for all children in a classroom because teachers did not have time and resource to provide appropriate support to the class as a whole. The main reason given for this was a lack of resource and this included sufficient numbers of teachers and support staff, access to specialist supports, specialist provision within local areas and the physical environment of schools (busy open plan environments, lack of space for breakout/calm down areas). The attitudes and ethos of professionals was seen as crucial and that there had to be more training put in place to support teachers and support staff.

Some respondents did not agree with the principles. The majority of that sub set did not comment on the principles themselves but on the issues around implementation of them and the feeling that they did not reflect the current reality of practice within schools. Broadly the same issues were set out as those covered in the paragraph above.

Of the minority of the respondents who provided further commentary as to why they disagreed with the principles themselves, the most common concern was that the principles were felt to be too complex to be achieved and required further thought and development. It was felt that the application of presumption of mainstreaming could sometimes mean that children were not in environments that were best to support their needs and that the requirement to provide additional support for pupils, whilst also balancing the need to support other children in classes could cause resourcing issues for teaching staff.

Individuals, particularly teachers, reported that they often did not feel supported and empowered but could feel overwhelmed and not listened to by senior managers and local authorities. Parents expressed similar concerns of not feeling they were working in partnership with teachers and that their opinions were often not heard.

### Question 3: Are the expectations set out under each of the ‘present, participating, achieving and supported’ principles the right ones?

#### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	200	55%
No	94	26%
Don't know	51	14%
Not answered	17	5%

The above question was asked in relation to the *Key Features of Inclusion – Present, Participating, Achieving and Supported* section in the document. This section sets out four key features of inclusion which can be used to set expectations and evaluate children and young people's inclusion in their learning environment.

The responses to this question split between providing responses on the drafting of the section itself and issues around practice and how ready the system would be to support these expectations. Respondents from organisations were more likely to comment on the drafting of the section and individuals more likely to comment on what was currently happening in practice.

Just over half (55%) of respondents thought the expectations set out were the right ones. The reasons given for this were that the ideas were sound in principle and the key features of present, participating, achieving and supported did encapsulate what children should experience in their education. They felt that the expectations set out under each of the principles were helpful and could help to set out what we should be looking to achieve for children.

There were a wide range of general comments on the drafting of the section and on each of the expectations but there were areas where comments tended to cluster and these areas are set out below.

General comments highlighted the importance of linking the principles to the wellbeing indicators in Getting it right for every child, the four capacities in Curriculum for Excellence, How Good Is Our School 4 and the National Improvement Framework. The importance of partnership working was raised and ensuring partners worked together at key transition points, particularly leaving school.

In relation to *present*, it was felt that clarification was needed around what was meant in relation to full time education, that further explanation was required around exclusions, that situations where children couldn't be physically present because of medical needs etc. should be included and that responsibility of other partners, including parents, should be emphasised.

In relation to *participating*, it was felt to be important to emphasise that children and young people's views were key to ensuring participation and that communication was key.

In relation to *achieving*, it was emphasised that achievement could look very different depending on a child's needs. It was felt it was important to recognise that the curriculum needed to be tailored to support those with additional support needs and that differentiation was important. There were concerns raised about personalisation of learning and difficulties with this when there was a wide range of abilities within a classroom.

In relation to *support*, it was felt that a holistic approach should be taken that included social work, health and the third sector. It was felt that co-ordination of support was particularly important at transition points. As well as looking at support it was felt there was a role for professionals in moving children and young people towards independence and increasing resilience, especially as young people moved to leaving school. It was felt that support should be provided in a non-stigmatising and inclusive way as possible.

Although as highlighted above, the majority of the respondents thought the expectations were the right ones, many of these respondents caveated this by stating that they didn't think that current practice matched the expectations set out in the document. They raised concerns that some children were not currently receiving support in the way envisaged under the expectations. It was felt that the presumption of mainstreaming could mean that children were not in an environment most appropriate to meet their needs and that this impacted on the whole class receiving the support they required. Lack of resources was again highlighted as the reason for this with funding, lack of specialist supports and flexible provision, lack of training, teachers and support staff cited as reasons for this.

Many respondents commented that they did not think the expectations were the right ones. Individual respondents were more likely to disagree with the section and the majority of comments received did not focus on the drafting of the section but on how practice currently operated. Amongst those respondents, there was a belief that current practice did not match expectations and lack of resources was again highlighted as an issue.

#### Question 4: Are the entitlements and options for provisions clear?

##### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	200	55%
No	116	32%
Don't know	32	9%
Not answered	14	4%

The above question was asked in relation to the *Deciding on the right provision for a child or young person* section in the document. This section sets out the entitlements and options for provision and Annex B sets out a series of reflective questions to ask when deciding on the most appropriate provision for an individual child or young person.

Overall, over half (55%) of respondents thought the entitlements and options for provision were clear. Around a third (32%) did not agree.

The responses to this question split between providing responses on the drafting of the section itself and suggestions on how to improve clarity and responses which focussed on current practice around this issue. Respondents from organisations were more likely to comment on the drafting of the section and individuals more likely to comment on what was currently happening in practice.

Just over half of the respondents (55%) found the entitlements and options for provisions as set out in the document to be clear. Respondents thought that it was helpful to have the range of options set out and found the inclusion of flexible placements to be helpful. The reflective questions were seen to be helpful in setting out what should be considered when deciding on the most appropriate provision for children and young people.

A few respondents provided some suggestions for how clarity could be further improved, these are highlighted below.

On the options for provision, it was felt that more detail should be provided on what was meant by flexible provision and that more emphasis put on this route. It was also felt that it would be helpful to highlight the value of closer links between mainstream and special schools, both for outreach and sharing expertise. It was also felt that it was important to ensure that the section acknowledged that provision would be different in each local authority and will have developed due to local community contexts and geography. Another issue raised was that partners such as health and social care should be included and that views from a range of professionals should be fed into the decision making process.

On entitlements and Annex B it was felt that it might be helpful to try and align these more closely and to make links across to the reflective questions on the exemptions in section 4 of the draft guidance. It was felt that it would be helpful to have more on process and what to do when there was a conflict of opinions on what provision was

the best to support a child's needs. On Annex B, it was felt that the question on ability and aptitude should be reworked to put a greater focus on how the learning environment could be adapted to support the child to be present, participating, achieving and supported. This also highlighted the need to make links into section 2 of the document that sets out the key features of inclusion.

Many respondents commented that they did not find the entitlements and options for provision clear. Individual respondents were more likely to disagree with the section and the majority of comments received did not focus on the drafting of the section but on how practice currently operated. Views were expressed that it was often not clear in practice what the entitlements and options for support were and that parents often felt that they were not involved in the decision making process. It was felt that the section did not reflect the reality of what provision was available in some local authorities and that there was often a lack of alternative if mainstream was found not to be working. It was felt that there was a lack of consistency in the way provision was accessed and that because of variation between local authorities this could be different depending on what area of the country you were in. The main reason given for the system operating in this way was seen to be lack of resource and lack of specialist support.

### Question 5: Is the commentary and the reflective questions on each of the exemptions helpful?

#### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	189	52%
No	97	27%
Don't know	53	15%
Not answered	23	6%

The above question was asked in relation to the *How and why could the exemptions be applied?* section of the draft guidance document. This section provides further detail on the three exceptions and a set of reflective questions for each of the exemptions to assist local authorities in their decision making processes.

Overall, just over half of respondents thought that the commentary and reflective questions were helpful. Still, 27% did not agree and a further 21% did not know or did not provide an answer.

Responses to this question split between providing commentary on the drafting of the section itself and how that might be improved and general comments on the section and issues around implementation. Respondents from organisations were more likely to comment on the drafting of the section and individuals more likely to comment on what was currently happening in practice.

Just over half (52%) of respondents found the commentary and reflective questions helpful. Those that responded that they found them helpful indicated that they thought that the reflective questions would help the decision making process. It was felt that if local authority decision makers did use the questions as intended this would help to make the process more transparent. Respondents also found it helpful to have the exemptions set out and to have commentary on what they meant in practice.

The majority of those that indicated that they found them helpful provided comments on the drafting of the section in the draft guidance document. Comments were evenly split between the three exceptions with a similar proportion offering general comments on the drafting of the section. The comments received on all the exemptions were very wide ranging and did not cluster significantly around a particular theme. However, there were areas of some common interest and they are highlighted here.

On ability and aptitude, some respondents expressed concerns that the section implied that consideration of alternative placements could only be explored when mainstream had been tried first with the implication that children had to experience problems first before alternatives could be explored. Some respondents also commented on assessment – how would ability and aptitude would be assessed, who should be involved in this process and the importance of ensuring that this



assessment was undertaken with consideration of how a child would respond with appropriate supports in place.

On incompatible with the efficient education for other children, some respondents expressed concern about the reference to physical interventions and thought it would be more useful to mention the range of supports and strategies that could be put in place to support the child. A few respondents felt that what was meant by an 'efficient education' needed to be explored. A few respondents expressed concern about the language of the legislation.

On unreasonable public expenditure, some respondents expressed concerns that this exemption could allow local authorities a reason not to make appropriate decisions for children because of wider resource concerns. A few respondents expressed the view that supporting children with additional needs would be more likely to require a higher level of resource to provide a level of equity so it was important there was further guidance on what constituted unreasonable public expenditure.

The general comments on the exemptions were wide ranging and did not cluster around particular issues however some respondents did express concern about the language in this section, although there was acknowledgment that this came from the legislation, it was still felt that it was not as child centred as the rest of the document. There were also concerns expressed that the commentary and questions were too subjective and not prescriptive enough.

Of those that responded saying they would be helpful, many expressed concern that current practice didn't match what was set out in the section. The concerns clustered around whether resources were in place to support this, that they were aspirational and respondents felt that the system was not adequately resourced to ensure that appropriate decisions were made around placement.

Of those that did not find the commentary and reflective questions helpful and commented on implementation more generally, their concerns clustered around a number of different issues. They had concerns that the resources were not in place to allow decision making to happen in this way, there were concerns that if mainstream was not appropriate that there were not alternatives in some local authority areas and there were concerns that it was not realistic to expect them to be used as practice at the moment did not reflect this.

**Question 6: Are there any areas missing, requiring strengthening, or which are not required and could be removed?**

**Yes/no responses – all respondents**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	204	56%
No	101	28%
Don't know	40	11%
Not answered	17	5%

The above question was asked in relation to the *Delivering Inclusion* section in the draft guidance document. This section was developed to provide guidance for schools, teachers and practitioners to help guide their inclusive practice. It examines how to deliver inclusion in and out of school and focusses on eight key areas.

Overall, over half (56%) of respondents stated that there were areas missing, requiring strengthening or which were not required and could be improved.

The majority of the respondents to this question provided comments on the eight key areas identified within the section. A wide range of comments and opinions were provided, the most common views are highlighted below:

- *Inclusive schools values and ethos* - It was felt that this section was light on detail and needed to be expanded and aligned more closely to the vision and principles set out earlier in the draft guidance document. It was felt that a commitment to inclusive education had to be reinforced at a national and strategic level through regional improvement collaboratives, the development of the headteachers charter and development of any further headship/leadership work.
- *Leadership* - Comments received on this area focussed on how crucial effective leadership was in being a driver for change and linked into comments made above about ensuring that this fed through to leadership at local authority, regional collaborative and national levels.
- *Constructive challenge to attitudes* - Respondents highlighted that the attitudes of those involved could be a significant barrier and that some of those working in education required training, coaching and support to enable them to work in an inclusive way.
- *Evaluation of planning processes* - Respondents commented on how important it was that children and young people could participate in the planning of their learning and that pupil voice was valued within a school. It was felt by some that this should be expanded or included as an area on its own. Others emphasised the importance of this area as a whole in meeting children's needs, that measuring of progress was crucial and that it should be remembered that assessment has to form part of this process.

- *Capacity to deliver inclusion* - Respondents commented that building capacity was often affected by resource issues and the ability of staff to be able to respond to build their skills due to lack of time, the physical environment or reduction in opportunities for professional learning. It was felt that the section should be expanded to look to build an approach for all those delivering education – support assistants, teachers and leaders. It was also felt important to bear in mind that capacity within a school was not constant and could be affected by many factors and that what building capacity might look like might be very different depending on the environment – primary/secondary/mainstream/special provision.
- *Parental and carer engagement* - Respondents emphasised the importance of this section, in particular, the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers, ensuring their views were listened to and that they were kept up to date with their children’s progress. An equal number of respondents emphasised the importance of parental responsibility and accountability in ensuring that children got the most from their education.
- *Early intervention, prevention and strong relationships* - Respondents felt that this section was important and required strengthening. It was felt that there should be more emphasis on partnership working with other agencies as partnership working was crucial to working in an inclusive way (as highlighted above). It was felt that there had to be more of an emphasis on early years (including reference to how Good is our Early Education and Childcare) and there should be mention of adverse childhood experience work and nurture groups as part of that.
- *Removal of barriers to learning* - Respondents commented that they felt that this area lacked detail and didn’t set out how the removal of barriers could be achieved.

A few respondents provided a number of other more general comments. The most frequently mentioned are highlighted below:

- The importance of training was emphasised and although it was touched on under constructive challenge and capacity it was felt that those references should be strengthened or thought given to creating a separate area.
- Respondents mentioned the importance of enhanced transitions between nursery and primary school, primary and secondary school and secondary school and moving into adult life.
- There was also mention of the importance of engaging with communities and ensuring that they understood the importance of inclusion.
- There was a feeling that areas should be broken down to look at addressing individual needs of children and young people rather than looking at it as a whole.

Consistent with answers to other questions, many respondents raised concerns about the system generally. There was a concern that current practice could not support the delivery of inclusion set out within the section of the document. The biggest concern was lack of resources to support delivery of the aims of the draft

guidance and that training and support would need to be put in place to make it work in practice. Other issues of concern were that mainstream doesn't work for all and the impact that the policy in practice can have on all children in a classroom environment.

## Question 7: Were the case studies helpful?

### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	130	36%
No	122	34%
Don't know	87	24%
Not answered	23	6%

Case studies were included under the *Delivering Inclusion* section of the guidance and this question sought responses on whether they were helpful.

There was a mixed view on the helpfulness/usefulness of the case studies provided, with a similar proportion responding positively or negatively to them.

Of those that found them helpful (36%), the most common reasons given were that they provided information on what practice existed in other areas of the country and how practice could be implemented in their own area and that it was helpful to have real life examples of how inclusion could work in practice. Those that responded also thought case studies were helpful as a prompt to inform and change practice. Some respondents caveated their responses by highlighting that although they found them useful they had concerns that the current practice within their own area did not match the practice set out within the case studies.

Amongst the third (34%) of respondents who did not find the case studies helpful, comments split between those that commented on current practice and those that commented on the drafting of the case studies themselves.

Those that responded with concerns on practice felt that the case studies did not reflect the reality of practice within their local area or take into account the resource/workload issues that they were experiencing. It was felt that case studies could only provide a snap shot of practice within school and were unconvinced that this could be used to improve practice in other contexts or improve inclusion more generally. There were concerns that the case studies were not detailed enough to be used by others to improve practice.

Some respondents provided more general comments on the case studies. These comments were wide ranging and there were a lot of different views on how the case studies could be improved. Some respondents commented that it would have been helpful to have a wider geographical and school mix. It was felt that a lot of the case studies were from the west coast and it would have been helpful to have examples from other parts of the country and from a larger number of schools with different types of provision (nurseries, primary, and secondary, with bases and without). A few respondents had concerns that the case studies covered only a limited number of needs and at a fairly low level. It was thought that it would have been helpful to cover more complex needs being dealt with in mainstream environments and a wider range of needs.

## Question 8: Overall, is the guidance helpful?

### Yes/no responses – all respondents

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	210	58%
No	91	25%
Don't know	43	12%
Not answered	18	5%

The majority of respondents said that they found the guidance helpful (58%).

Of those that provided written commentary along with this response, the most common reasons given for this were that it provided a clear overview of the vision and principles for inclusive education and what everyone should be striving to achieve. It was thought to be useful for generating debate and professional dialogue on this issue and allowed the opportunity to highlight the complexities surrounding this topic. It was felt that the structure of the document was good and made appropriate connections. It was felt to be succinct and that it was clear and helpful. Others commented that it was a useful reference point and helpful to see how things should be working in practice.

There were a number of suggestions about how the guidance could be improved and these fit within the areas set out under question 9 of this report.

Many of the respondents that provided written commentary with their response highlighting that they found the guidance helpful caveated their response by highlighting two main issues. The first was that there was a feeling that although the guidance was helpful that practice currently didn't match the aspirations of the guidance. It was felt that it didn't reflect where schools were at currently and was unrealistic and too aspirational. The other concern that was highlighted was that there was a need for resources (funding and increased staffing) to support the implementation of the guidance.

A quarter of respondents (25%) said that they did not find the guidance helpful. Of those that provided written commentary along with this response, the most common reasons given were that the guidance did not reflect the current reality in schools, that there was a concern that the guidance wouldn't improve practice unless resources were put in place to support it and there was a concern that the presumption of mainstreaming meant that the aims of the document could not be realised. In relation to the drafting of the document itself, there was a concern that the document was not detailed enough and was open to different interpretations. It was felt that it had to link to related legislation and be more prescriptive in nature.

### **Question 9: Are there any other comments you would wish to make about the draft guidance on the presumption of mainstreaming?**

There were 266 responses to this question and there were a wide range of responses. The majority of responses concentrated on implementation of additional support for learning policy more generally although many responses did comment on the guidance itself and possible inclusions to it. Organisations were more likely to provide comments on the guidance and individuals were more likely to comment on the system generally.

Many respondents suggested inclusions to the guidance. The areas mentioned most frequently (in order of frequency) were:-

- Ensuring links were made to other policy areas. Examples given were the Governance Review, development of Head teachers Charter and Improvement Collaboratives, Getting it Right for every Child, Developing the Young Workforce, 'The Key to Life', 'Principles of Good Transitions'
- More detailed guidance clarifying the decision making process including more guidance on dispute resolution
- More detail on implementation of the guidance and monitoring and evaluation of the guidance
- More detail on responding to different types of additional support, for example autism, visual impairment, hearing impairment
- More work on how achievement is measured

Of those that responded on additional support for learning, many mentioned lack of resources as a barrier to achieving the aims of the guidance. Resources included funding generally, staffing resource (both teachers and support staff), buildings and provision for support bases. Many respondents also raised the issue that mainstream was not for all and thought that specialist provision was required in some circumstances. A few respondents mentioned concerns about lack of specialist provision or lack of specialist/other agency response. This included reference to educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, child and adolescent mental health services and support assistants. The importance of multiagency work was also emphasised. A few respondents also mentioned the importance of ensuring teachers and others working with those with additional support needs receive appropriate training.

There were a number of other comments made by a small numbers of respondents. These included more work being required to ensure that parents were aware of the guidance and that parent's views were sought as part of the decision making process, that teacher's views should be more apparent within the guidance and within the decision making process, concerns that special schools were sometimes seen negatively instead of an appropriate provision to support children, concerns that schools were not given enough power to deal with violent behaviour and that the document did not go far enough in moving forward the inclusive education agenda.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78781-045-7 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, June 2018

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS431447 (06/18)

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