

## News release

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# Fundamental review needed of planning and resourcing of additional support for learning

**The Scottish Government and councils must fundamentally rethink how they plan, fund and staff additional support for learning as part of core school education in Scotland.**

Since legislation in 2004 to make additional support for learning (ASL) more inclusive, there has been an eight-fold increase in pupils recorded as receiving ASL; currently 40 per cent of Scottish pupils – or 285,000 children – receive ASL. Almost all support is now delivered in mainstream classrooms, and it has become an increasingly central part of what teachers do.

The Scottish Government failed to plan for the impacts of this inclusive approach, and poor data means it is not possible to determine the scale, complexity and nature of needs across Scotland. The Scottish Government and councils urgently need better information to understand pupils' needs and appropriate level of resource to support them.

Existing measures show a wide gap in outcomes for pupils receiving additional support compared with other pupils, including being more likely to be absent or excluded from school. More appropriate ways of measuring the achievements of pupils who receive ASL are still to be developed.

**Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said:**

"The Scottish Government has failed to plan effectively for its inclusive approach to additional support for learning. Current gaps in data mean it is unclear whether all children's right to have an education that fully develops their personality, talents and abilities is being met.

"The Scottish Government and councils urgently need better quality data to understand pupils' additional support needs and the resources required to provide support to enable all pupils to reach their full potential."

**Ruth MacLeod, Member of the Accounts Commission, said:**

"Councils and the Scottish Government must fundamentally rethink how additional support for learning is planned and provided as a core part of Scotland's school education. This includes reviewing how mainstream and

special education is provided to meet current and future additional support needs and demands.

“It is critical they work with pupils, parents and carers and staff throughout this process.”

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### **Notes to Editor:**

**1.** This briefing looks at how well the Scottish Government and councils are addressing the demand for ASL in publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools. It does not examine how the demand for ASL is addressed in early learning and post-school settings.

**2.** Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available [www.audit.scot](http://www.audit.scot):

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**ENDS**