

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 17 November 2020

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: New Policy and Accompanying Accessibility Strategy (2020-2023): Included, Engaged & Involved: Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for all

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's approval of the new policy and updated accessibility strategy: 'Included, Engaged & Involved: Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for All' (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 1.2 To highlight for the Committee that the Council's updated accessibility strategy (2020-2023) now sits within a new inclusion policy rather than as a separate document.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - i. Approve the draft policy: 'Included, Engaged & Involved: Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for All' (Appendix 1).
 - ii. Approve the accompanying draft accessibility strategy (2020-2023) (Appendix 2).
 - iii. Note the amalgamation of the accessibility strategy with the new inclusion policy.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council believes that inclusion, equality and accessibility are essential components for schools to achieve equity and excellence in education for all our children and young people.
- 3.2 East Lothian Council has developed a suite of policies to promote our commitment to inclusion, equality and accessibility under the heading 'included, engaged and involved'. The proposed draft inclusion policy is a

key addition to this collection and outlines the key principles and values we will drive forward in our endeavour to get it right for all our children and young people.

- 3.3 The Education (Disabilities Strategies and Pupil's Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to prepare and implement an accessibility strategy to cover a 3 -year period.
- 3.4 The purpose of the Accessibility Strategy is to ensure improvements in the following areas:
- **Curriculum** - increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum;
 - **Physical Environment** - improve the physical environment of schools to enable better access to education and associated services provided; and
 - **Communication** - improve communication with disabled pupils. In particular, relating to the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats and taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents that would be provided in writing to pupils who do not have a disability.

These are referred to as *planning duties* in associated legislation.

- 3.8 During consultation on the development of the inclusion policy and accessibility strategy, we found consensus for the amalgamation of the two documents due to the crossover in legislation, key principles and focus on universal inclusive practice.
- 3.9 Consultation thus far has included the accessibility strategy steering group and internal education colleagues. Wider public consultation via the authority's consultation hub will be complete by the 17 November 2020. Officers will take account of this feedback in finalising the policy.
- 3.10 This policy is designed to ensure a consistent approach across East Lothian in line with the suite of existing Included, Engaged & Involved policies, previously approved by Education Committee.
- 3.11 The policy will be introduced within all East Lothian education settings by the end of the academic term 2020/21. All partner agencies and colleagues will be informed of the policy and invited to attend awareness raising and engagement sessions.

Monitoring and Review

- 3.12 East Lothian Council's Inclusion & Wellbeing Service will monitor and review the development of inclusive practice in schools and the implementation of the policy and strategy.
- 3.13 There is a statutory duty to have an accessibility strategy which is monitored annually and reviewed formally every three years.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This policy and strategy takes account of the duties set down by the Equality Act 2010, the Education Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009; 2017) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 4.2 This policy is designed to ensure a consistent approach across East Lothian which is in line with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (and subsequent amendment in 2009).
- 4.3 The implementation of this policy and strategy will ensure the local authority complies with the legislation noted above.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - Current legislation and policy on Equalities and Accessibility requires the Authority to make reasonable adjustments where required to provide access for pupils to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, built environment and communication.
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 'Included, Engaged & Involved: Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for All' (Appendix 1) and Accessibility Strategy (Appendix 2)

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Included, Engaged & Involved

Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for All

POLICY: NOVEMBER 2020

**getting
it right**
for every child

Preface

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Contents

1	Introduction and Rationale	4
2	Legislative Context	6
3	Key Principles for Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility.....	8
4	An Inclusive Education in East Lothian	9
4.1	CIRCLE	11
4.2	Nurture.....	13
4.3	Accessibility.....	15
4.4	Accessibility Strategy	16
5	Partnerships	17
5.1	Recognising and Realising Children’s Rights	19
5.2	Solution Oriented Approaches.....	20
5.3	Our Roles and Responsibilities.....	21
	Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation and National Guidance	24
	Appendix 2: Relevant East Lothian Council Policy and Guidance	25
	Appendix 3: Accessibility Strategy Priorities.....	26
	Appendix 4: References and Useful Links	26

1 Introduction and Rationale

East Lothian Council believes that inclusion, equality and accessibility are essential components for schools to achieve equity and excellence in education for all our children and young people. An inclusive approach, with a celebration of diversity and an ambition for all to achieve is essential to getting it right for every child and raising attainment for all.

Inclusion

An inclusive education aims to ensure the full participation of learners in the curriculum and the wider community, to enable the highest achievements and attainments of all and promote a sense of belonging. This ethos will impact on the cultures, policies and practice of every establishment and service, and in particular, promote the learning and participation of vulnerable children and young people. It is vital that barriers to learning are challenged and East Lothian Council is committed to continuing improvement.

Equality

Equality is the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct. It is also the advancement of equality of opportunity and fostering of good relations to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The Equality Act (2010) provides legislative protection to the seven protected characteristics namely: race, disability, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and places duties on local authorities related to these protected characteristics.

Accessibility

In East Lothian, the Education & Children's Service's approach to celebrating and supporting diversity is demonstrated in our day to day work and our commitment to providing high quality education that is accessible to all. The Service aims to actively promote equality of opportunity for all learners. In order to ensure accessibility for all, reasonable adjustments may be required to support individual learners.

Challenge Question –

'To what extent are our approaches improving learning for all?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 1.2 Leadership of Learning)

This policy details the actions required by all learning establishments, and aspires to ensure the ongoing development of inclusive practices within East Lothian Council. It complements and is integrated within a suite of policies and guidance (see Appendix 2) which align with the local authority's vision for all its children and young people – *Living and Learning in East Lothian*.

These policies provide a framework for education services to address the additional support and wellbeing needs of children and young people in partnership with other agencies and the wider community. They are more than a statement of good intentions; guidance must be acted upon, embedded in practice, and regularly monitored to ensure that barriers to learning are reduced. We want, and expect the best for and from our children and young people.

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Challenge Question –

‘Do all staff have sufficiently high aspirations and expectations for all children and young people?’

(How Good Is Our School 4, 1.1 Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement)

2 Legislative Context

The current legislative and policy landscape includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- The *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000* requires education authorities to provide education for all children in mainstream schools, except under certain circumstances. In addition, it places a new duty: to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person, and to involve them in decisions which will affect them significantly.
- The *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records)(Scotland) Act 2002*. Schools must make reasonable adjustments for the needs of disabled children and schools must not discriminate against disabled children. The Education Authority must prepare and implement an accessibility strategy covering consecutive three year periods to increase the access of its disabled pupils to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, to school buildings and to information.
- The *Children and Young People Act (2014)* has wide reaching powers to promote the Scottish Government aims to encourage effective and targeted services for children and families as well as the promotion of children's rights. Through the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) National Practice Model, the Act promotes cross-boundary models of service delivery to make best use of expertise and resources in an integrated way with the wellbeing of children and young people at its centre.
- The *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004* (and subsequent amendments in 2009 and 2018) outlines the concept of Additional Support Needs and the functions and duties that are placed on education authorities to identify and support those needs.
- *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (third edition) 2017* which explains the duties on Education Authorities and other agencies to support children and young people's learning. It provides guidance on the ASL Act's provisions as well as on the supporting framework of secondary legislation.
- The *Equality Act (2010)* simplified and strengthened previous protections for children and young people with 'protected characteristics' (e.g. age, race, disability and sexual orientation) from discrimination. This strengthened inclusion in education, including school trips and activities, for all children and young people regardless of their additional support needs or disability. The Equality Act 2020 states that a person has a disability if they have a "physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial or long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities".
- The *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to provide a coherent, more flexible curriculum for all children and young people aged 3-18 years. The curriculum comprises the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people wherever they are being educated. Entitlement includes: a coherent curriculum from 3-18 years; a broad general education until S3; a senior phase after S3 and personal support to enable them to gain as

much as possible from the curriculum and support in moving into a positive and sustained destination beyond school.

- The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education sets out the Scottish Government's vision and priorities for our children's progress in learning. The Framework, part of *the Education (Scotland) Act 2016*, is key in driving work to continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap, delivering both excellence and equity.
- *How good is our school? (4th Edition)*. HGIOS4 is the national guidance for school self-evaluation. The quality indicators and supporting toolkit assist schools in the process of self-improvement. Quality Indicators 3.1 (Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion) and 3.2 (Raising attainment and achievement) provide schools with the means to engage in evidence-based analysis of what is working well and what needs to improve, including support for pupils with a disability.
- *Getting it Right for Every Child*. GIRFEC is designed to support families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help them to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected. It informs our planning practices in East Lothian through a staged intervention framework focusing on Universal, Additional or Targeted support.

Taken together, these require local authorities to consider a wide range of issues facing children and young people, and put in place processes and supports to:

- Identify and provide support to allow children and young people to overcome any barriers to learning;
- Prevent discrimination of pupils with disabilities/protected characteristics and provide reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity in learning;
- Plan for accessibility of the curriculum, school information and physical environment;
- Consider the wellbeing of children and young people.

3 Key Principles for Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility

East Lothian Council promotes the following key principles:

- All children and young people have a right to education; and East Lothian Council has a duty to provide this education.
- Everyone in a school or learning establishment should feel they are in a safe and nurturing environment.
- A consistent and well maintained commitment to a whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support as the context for the promotion of positive relationships, learning and behaviour.
- All children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning.
- All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education.
- All children and young people should have access to an environment that promotes respect, celebrates difference, and promotes positive relationships and behaviours.
- A commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child should be demonstrated and developed at all times.
- Children and young people have a universal and inalienable right to an education. It is the duty of East Lothian Council, all schools, learning establishments and every member of staff to create the relationship and environments within which every child and young person can realise this right.

“The central message is simple: every learner matters and matters equally.” (UNESCO, 2017)

4 An Inclusive Education in East Lothian

UNESCO's 2017 'A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education' guidance informs us of four principles of Inclusion:

- **Inclusion is an ongoing process.** It is a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to learner diversity. It is about respecting diversity and the different needs, abilities and characteristics of learners. It is both about learning how to support difference, and, learning how to learn from difference. In this way, differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning among children and adults.
- **Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers.** Inclusion means taking positive action in order to enable achievement for all by building and fulfilling the potential of every child, young person and adult. Barriers may take different forms, some of which are to do with the way schools are organised, the pedagogy of the teaching provided, and the ways in which children's progress is evaluated.
- **Inclusion is about the presence, participation, achievement and support of all learners.** 'Presence' is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; 'participation' relates to the quality of their experiences whilst they are there and, therefore, must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; 'achievement' is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum and 'support' is about ensuring appropriate and adequate support when required.
- **Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or at risk of underachievement.** This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure particular groups of learners, who may be most at risk, are carefully monitored, and where necessary steps are taken to ensure they are present, participating, achieving and supported within schools. Every learner matters and matters equally.



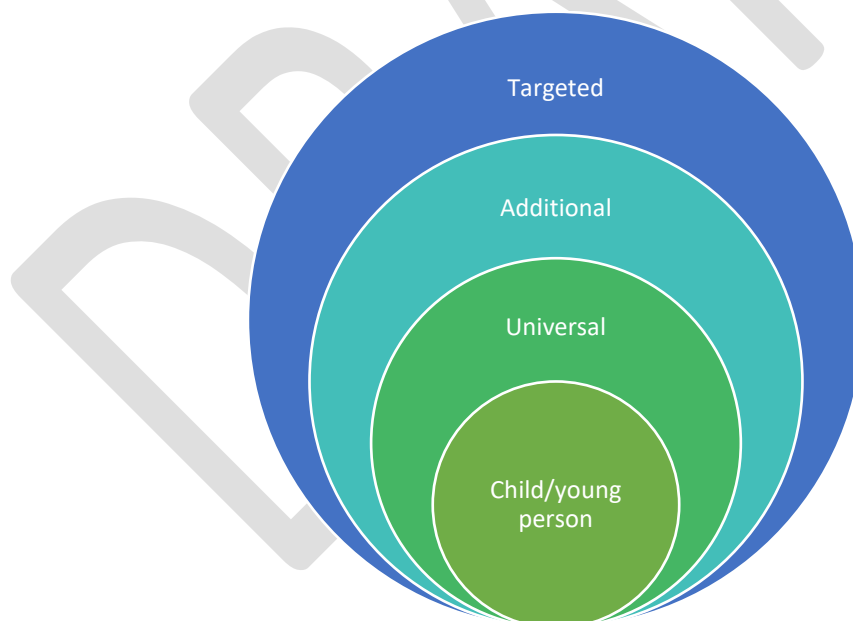
Education in East Lothian Council is based on this inclusive ethos which supports all learners being treated fairly, having equality of opportunity and having a sense of belonging in their learning environment.

Education & Children's Services aims to ensure that:

- Barriers to learning will be identified and reduced;
- Children and young people will be educated within their own community, except in exceptional circumstances;
- Children and young people will be involved in planning to meet their needs;
- Children and young people will be educated in mainstream schools wherever possible.

"Inclusion is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners. Equity is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance." (UNESCO 2017)

Driven by 'Getting It Right for Every Child', East Lothian uses a three-staged intervention framework to meet all learners' needs at either Universal, Additional or Targeted Level as appropriate:



East Lothian is committed to strengthening our offer of universal support and building capacity within our schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings in order to facilitate a truly inclusive education. We expect every child or young person to experience universal inclusive practice whether they have an identified need or not as is indicated by its very name, universal practice benefits everyone.

4.1 CIRCLE

Curriculum for Excellence provides the national curricular framework, and this is supplemented within East Lothian by the use of the CIRCLE primary and secondary inclusive practice resource. This resource focuses on four key areas: *Skills, Motivation, Structures and Routines*, and *Environment* to meet the needs of all learners and complements our authority-wide commitment to a nurturing approach. These inclusive practices support all staff within education to develop positive, respectful relationships with children and young people and take account of the needs of individuals whilst planning for all.



CIRCLE's Inclusive Classroom Scale, can be used to review, reflect on and develop a positive learning environment for all and is the starting point for all practitioners as part of our universal practice.

The following strategies should always be considered:

Physical Environment

- Ensure the classroom is well organised with everything consistently and well labelled.
- Arrange the class to promote good interaction. Consider learners who have additional support needs - do they need to sit close to the door to enable them to leave quickly; do they need to sit away from the window to reduce distractions; do they need to sit near the teacher to maximise attention and concentration or to ensure they can hear or access resources?
- Some learners find elements of the physical environment overwhelmingly distracting e.g. lighting, noise levels, visual stimulation, and proximity to peers. Sometimes further adaptations over and above seating arrangements may be required e.g. individual work station, "safe space", and alternative learning environment.
- Where visual supports are in place, ensure that these support, are consistent and don't add to the distraction.
- Some learners may require the use of agreed sensory supports e.g. fidget supports or move and sit cushions. Others may require specialist equipment. Further guidance and support can be provided by East Lothian Council's Access Officer.

Social Environment

- Aim to develop a classroom culture where everyone feels valued and secure and individual differences are respected.
- Be aware that some learners can feel anxious about performing in front of the class. Take this into consideration.
- Be aware of peer relationships and take these into consideration when planning seating and groupings.
- Be aware of how language is being used and consider differentiating language and instructions as a routine part of your practice.
- All behaviour is communication so reflect on what message might lie behind the behaviour.

- Teach learners how to recognise, understand their emotions.
- Model appropriate social and emotional skills during interactions.
- Teach social skills through providing specific interaction activities.

Structures and Routines

- Consider structures and routines in terms of how the lesson/day/week is structured.
- Approaches such as consistent seating plans can help reduce anxiety or distraction for learner.
- Where possible, advise of any changes to the routine or environment in advance.
- The regular use of active learning and multi-sensory learning should help ensure that learners know that their particular learning style is likely to be met during the lesson.
- Use a consistent approach to behaviour and set clear and specific class rules and routines in collaboration with class members.
- Assign positive roles to class members to promote positive views of themselves.
- Preparing individual children and whole classes for changes – big or small - can be crucial in supporting them to feel safe and lower anxiety levels.

Motivation

- A learner-centred approach is crucial to engaging learners.
- Values, abilities and interests are useful themes for encouraging motivation.

Values

- Listen to and value learners' views, thoughts and ideas.
- Involve learners in target setting and self-assessment.
- Model respectful relationships and restorative approaches.

Abilities

- Differentiate work so that goals are realistic and achievable whilst still providing enjoyment and challenge.

Interests

- Utilise learners' interests or experiences when designing lessons.
- Allow learners an element of personalisation and choice.
- Use experiential learning, multisensory approaches and/or technology to motivate.

Challenge Question –

'Have we successfully established an inclusive learning environment? How do we know?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion)

Further detail of how the needs of learners are identified and assessed, and the specific systems East Lothian has in place for *Additional* and *Targeted* support, can be found in the Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People policy.

4.2 Nurture

In alignment with these inclusive practices, East Lothian recognises that good teaching and learning begin with positive relationships. Relationships fulfil our most fundamental needs as humans – social connectedness. A nurturing approach recognises that positive relationships are central to both learning and wellbeing.

“Nurturing approaches are underpinned by an understanding of attachment theory, which recognises the importance of early relational experiences in shaping children’s social, emotional and cognitive development.” (Golding et al, 2016)

Nurture is underpinned by *six guiding principles* and there is an expectation that these will be understood and fully embedded in practice across all of our schools and Early Learning & Childcare settings.



1. Learning is understood developmentally

The impact of settings closures on children will be extremely individual and will have had a variety of positive and negative effects. Knowing the child and offering them experiences which are appropriate for their developmental level will be essential. Catching up should not be the priority, we need to give children time to make the transition, share their experience and reconnect.

2. The setting offers a secure base

The change, uncertainty and impact of setting closures will have affected children differently depending on the balance of other protective and risk factors in their lives. Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that our settings offer a secure emotional base for children. We need to prioritise and support children's social and emotional development to enable them to feel safe enough to recover and reconnect.

3. Nurture is important for wellbeing

On welcoming our children back to school it will help to demonstrate that we kept them in mind while we were not together. We need to help them see that connections and relationships are still in place and can be renewed and strengthened. We have an opportunity to build resilience by modelling mentally healthy responses to the disruption and change whilst not minimising the adversities faced during this time by some children.

4. Language is a vital means of communication

Children will look to those around them for language to describe our shared experiences and also to understand and put into words their individual experiences. We need to think carefully about the words we choose to describe the changes we have all experienced. We need to encourage children to use different ways to explore what has happened to them and how they feel about it.

5. All behaviour is communication

We acknowledge that how children behave is communication and we are used to asking ourselves "*What is this telling me?*" We may observe some confusing or concerning behaviours from children when settings return. It is important to remember that any behaviour makes sense to the person displaying it given their unique experiences. It is through our relationships with them that we will be able to interpret their behaviour and work out how best to support them with what has happened allowing them to recover and reconnect.

6. The importance of transitions

Everyone is making a transition to new circumstances and we need to take time to adjust to our new situation. Some children will cope with these transitions with minimal support and others will find this more challenging and we will need to be flexible and responsive to individual needs. Staff, children and families will need time to meet, share and reconnect. Establishing a key adult, maintaining routines and the use of familiar environments, experiences and transitional experiences will help to support this.

East Lothian Council is fully committed to a positive relational and nurturing approach in all of our educational settings. Further detail can be found in both the Respect for All: Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in All our Schools, and Included, Engaged & Involved: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions policies.

4.3 Accessibility

East Lothian is committed to working collegiately with all relevant stakeholders to identify and remove barriers to learning. There is an ongoing duty incumbent on all to promote equality of opportunity, and celebrate diversity including disabilities and additional support needs. Everyone should strive to create inclusive environments in which the needs of all pupils can be met and in which children and young people can flourish in a safe and nurturing environment.

Current legislation protects people with different types of disabilities including, but not limited to, the following broad groups:

- Communication Difficulties
- Hearing Impairments
- Specific Learning Difficulties, such as dyslexia
- Visual Impairments
- Developmental Language Disorders
- Physical Difficulties/Motor Impairments
- Neurodevelopmental disorders, such as Autism

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. These activities may include:

- Mobility
- Manual Dexterity
- Physical Co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, Hearing or Eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of Risk of physical danger
- Social interactions
- Participation in social activities

“Long term” is defined as lasting or likely to last for at least 12 months, or for the rest of the person’s life.

Challenge Question –

‘How well are we removing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all?’

(How Good Is Our School 4, 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement)

4.4 Accessibility Strategy

The Accessibility Strategy is a statutory duty for local authorities, and schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings must take the Strategy into account in any management decisions and improvement planning. This policy includes the authority's Accessibility Strategy which covers consecutive three year periods.

The purpose of the Accessibility Strategy is to:

- increase disabled pupils' participation in the **curriculum**;
- improve the **physical environment** of schools to enable better access to education and associated services provided;
- improve **communication** with disabled pupils. In particular, relating to the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats, taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents/carers.

These are referred to as *planning duties* in associated legislation.

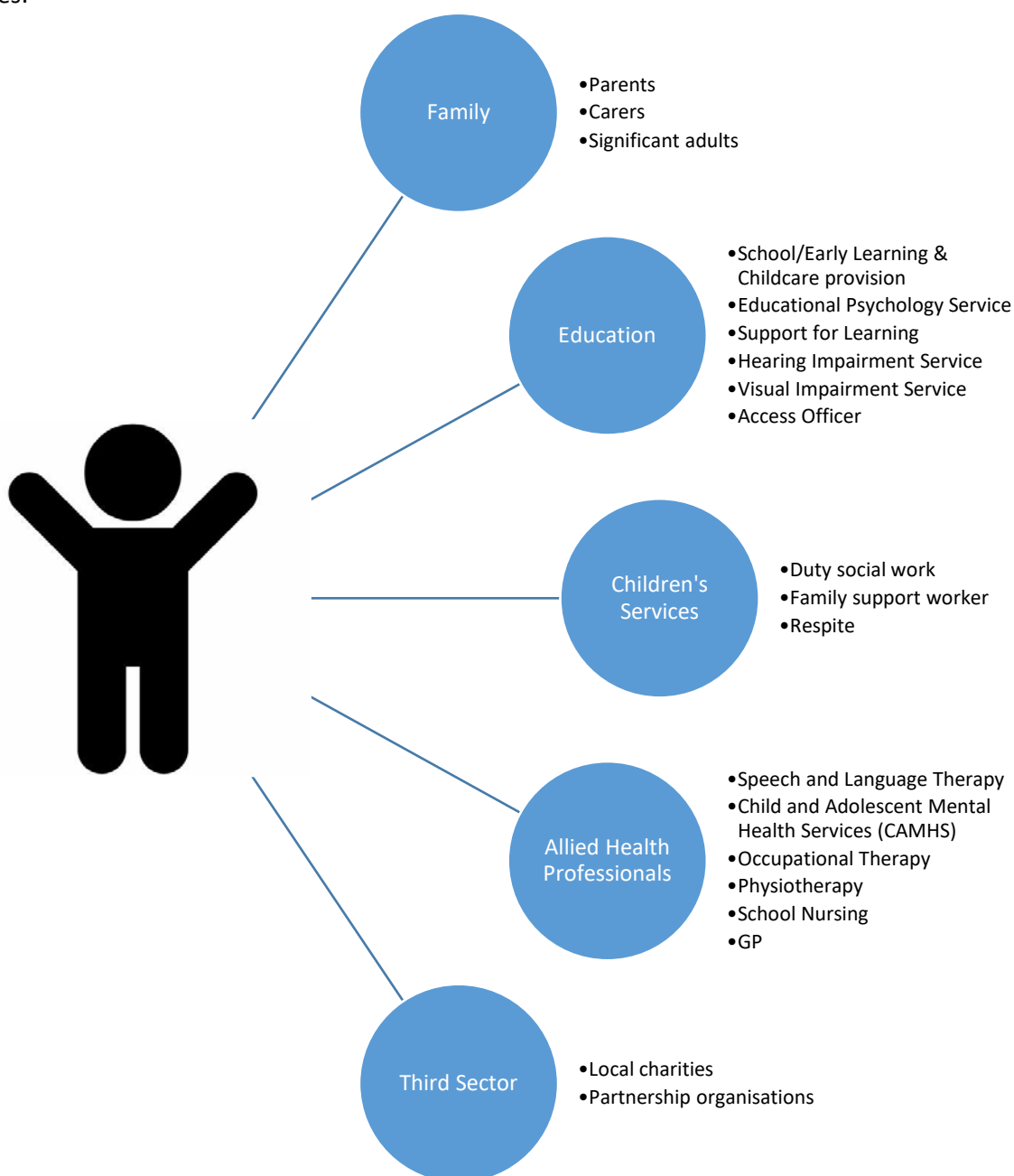
The Accessibility Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan (see Appendix 3) which is monitored and reviewed annually over a 3 year period by a multi-agency Steering Group. As part of our commitment to partnership working, the steering group will include children/young people and their families as valued participants in the monitoring process. An interim report is completed following each review.

“School is a part, and preparation for, life. Being with people with disabilities/differences is a better way of building understanding and respect than learning about them from a book. Everyone benefits from the inclusion of people with differences.” (East Lothian parent, 2020)

5 Partnerships

“The development of an empowered system is dependent on generating and sustaining high levels of relational trust and authentic collaboration. Relational trust supports the development of challenging conversations which are key to developing authentic collaboration.”
(Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, 2019)

East Lothian recognises the importance of *authentic collaboration* with all stakeholders in order to facilitate truly inclusive learning experiences for all our children and young people. An individual may have a complex network of support which can include but is by no means limited to, the following examples:



Authentic collaboration across a range of services such as those noted above whilst maintaining the inclusion of the child/young person in decision making, requires commitment to a common goal and the means to communicate effectively. The independent review of the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 carried out in 2019, substantiated our conviction to collaboration with a particular focus on parents and families.

The following recommendations were made:

Recommendation 6.1 Relationships between schools and parents

- Schools and local authorities must work in partnership with parents and carers to develop, and deliver, ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and co-operation.
- This must include clear pathways on transitions for children and young people with additional support needs, in the context of learning for life, allowing parents, carers, children, young people and professionals to be informed and supported at key transition points.
- Parents and carers must be involved as equal partners in the development of key guidance, to contribute their knowledge and lived experience.
- Further investment is needed to strengthen support services for families; allowing these services, and the support that they provide, to be embedded.
- The benefits of the use of mediation must be widely promoted at a national, regional and local level and consideration should be given to how mediation can be developed through professional learning, to support the workforce.

We recognise that there is certainly more to be done in this area and welcome the recommendations from the 2019 ASL Review. Progress has been made within East Lothian with regards to ensuring children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect their education such as the promotion of the UNCRC's Rights Respecting Schools programme, Education Scotland's establishment of 'Inclusion Ambassadors', and our GIRFEC aligned Child's Planning process which seeks the child/young person's views as well as the family's and relevant service(s)' input at every stage of the process.

East Lothian is committed to continually improving our service with regards to working with parents/families as valued partners. Further detail regarding current East Lothian practices for working with children, young people and parents can be found in the Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People policy.

5.1 Recognising and Realising Children's Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a comprehensive and internationally binding agreement on the rights of children. It is based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

A rights respecting school is an environment where children's rights are taught, observed, respected, protected and promoted. Our ambition is to ensure that every child and young person in our learning communities experiences this.

All of East Lothian's schools are being encouraged to register with UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) programme. The benefits of this programme should go beyond the school and into the community as a whole:

- All children and adults learn about the UNCRC and the overarching set of values which should bring change to the whole school character and atmosphere improving the climate for learning;
- Positive relationships between learners and staff reducing the hierarchical divide due to the rights respecting language;
- Learners' self-esteem and feelings of being valued improve;
- Increased levels of respect for each other with a better understanding of religions, cultures and abilities which are different to their own;
- Improved attainment, attendance and a reduction on exclusions;
- The school develops a rights respecting ethos and children are empowered to become active citizens and learners;
- It strengthens a consultative approach and a platform for better parental engagement and discussion as well as collaborative working;
- A feeling of empowerment for both adults and learners.

It should also be noted that children over 12 years of age now, broadly speaking, have similar rights to parents and young people with respect to their additional support needs. The extension to children's rights is accompanied by safeguards in the form of assessments of capacity and consideration of impact on a child's wellbeing. Further detail of this legislation can be found in the Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People policy.

"The true measure of inclusion is not through external and objective criteria, it is in the child or young person's own experience and how they feel." (Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential, 2020)

5.2 Solution Oriented Approaches

Solution oriented approaches provide staff with opportunities to explore aspects of their working environment and relationships within it, by visualising the desired outcome rather than focusing on the problem. When difficulties arise, solution oriented approaches enable an individual or group of people to identify the skills, strengths and resources that they already have which can help them to reach a solution.

The approach helps individuals/groups identify what is working well, and how positive experiences can be built upon in the future. At the same time, by visualising in great detail what the desired outcome is, individuals/groups are more able to identify the next small steps needed in order to make progress. As progress is the key factor, sometimes the steps are very small. Those setting goals are encouraged to think about how others will know they are making progress. In this way, it facilitates reflective thinking and the capacity to see situations from different perspectives. Moreover, the persistent evaluation of goals, often on a 0 – 10 scale, encourages the same evidence based approach to monitoring progress that schools are asked to implement in an academic context. Initially, an individual or group is supported to use a solution oriented approach, but they then internalise the way of thinking which in turn supports the development of resilience.

Key principles include:

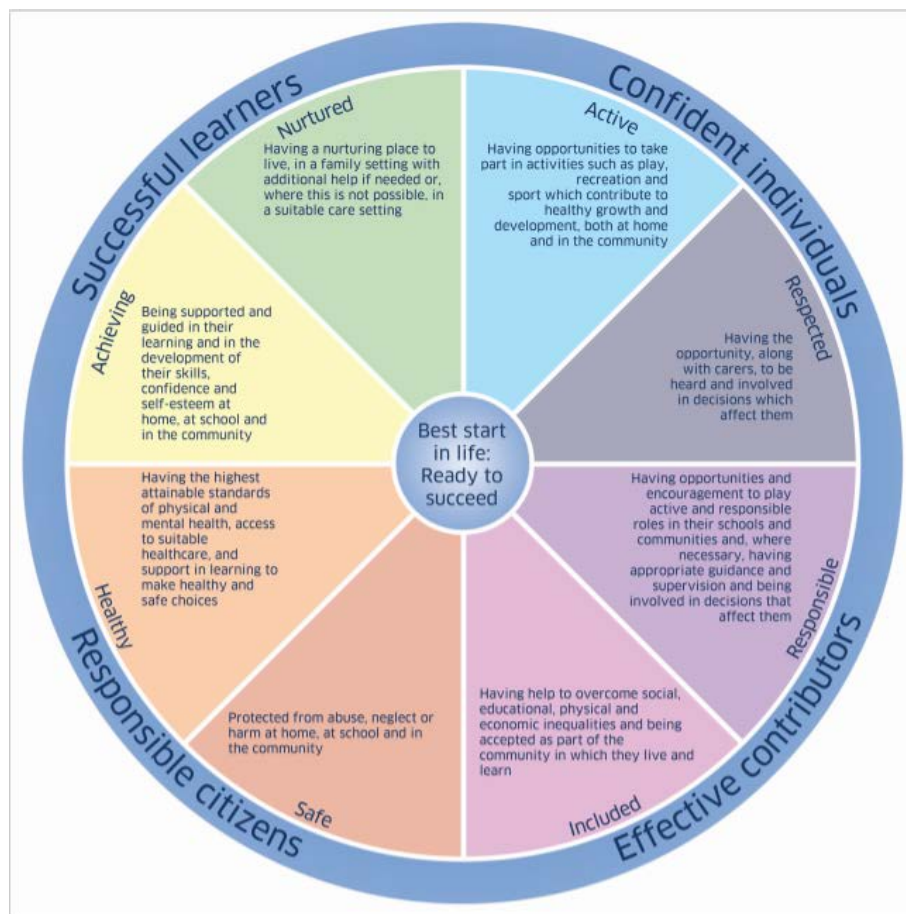
- If it's not broken, don't fix it
- If it works, do more of it
- If it's not working, do something different
- Small steps can lead to big changes
- The solution is not necessarily directly related to the problem
- The language for solution development is different from that needed to describe a problem
- No problems happen all the time, there are always exceptions that can be utilised
- The future is both created and negotiable

There is an underlying belief that people have the necessary resources to make changes; everyone has their own ways of solving problems; collaboration enhances change; and people need to be engaged in the process of change to want it to happen. It is the role and responsibility of the adult/facilitator to find a way to engage the young person.

The solution oriented approach can often be seen in other methodology widely used in schools, such as visual planning. It can be used as a framework for meetings including Child's Planning Meetings, pre-and post-exclusion meetings and professional development reviews.

In East Lothian's Children's Services, the Signs of Safety framework to assess safeguarding and child protection issues is based on a solution oriented approach.

5.3 Our Roles and Responsibilities



It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that our children/young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included in line with Getting It Right for Every Child. In addition to this, all education staff have a vital role to play to realise East Lothian’s aspiration for all our learners to be present, supported, participating and achieving without exception.

School and Early Learning & Childcare Settings

There are a range of key adults across our education settings and the term ‘school staff’ here refers to any significant adult that a child/young person will come across during their school day, however infrequently. For example, classroom assistants, early years practitioners, visiting specialists, administrative staff, volunteers etc. It is the duty of *all* to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all our children and young people in order for them to feel safe and nurtured. Furthermore, there is a responsibility for school staff to learn about the specific practices in place within one’s own setting to enable a respectful, inclusive school culture.

Challenge Question –

‘How do we ensure there is an ethos and culture of inclusion, participation and positive relationships across the whole learning community?’

(How Good Is Our School 4, 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion)

In addition to this, all teaching staff should meet the Standard for Full Registration regulated by the General Teaching Council (Scotland). This includes but is not limited to, the following:

- have a secure working knowledge and detailed understanding to justify what is taught within the curricular areas, in relation to the curriculum and the relevance to the needs of all learners;
- know how to promote and support the cognitive, emotional, social and physical wellbeing of all learners, and demonstrate a commitment to raising all learners' expectations of themselves;
- have secure knowledge and understanding of the methods and underlying theories for effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing; and effectively select the most appropriate methods to meet all learners' needs;
- have knowledge and understanding of the GIRFEC National Practice Model and how to apply this to support teaching and learning;
- have an understanding of current, relevant legislation and guidance such the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000), Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, the Equality Act 2010 and GIRFEC;
- have secure knowledge and detailed understanding of the stages of learners' cognitive, social and emotional development which they are able to use to take an holistic account of all learners' needs;
- plan appropriately, in different contexts and over differing timescales, for effective teaching and learning in order to meet the needs of all learners, including learning in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and skills for learning, life and work.
- use a range of communication methods, including a variety of media, to promote and develop positive relationships to motivate and sustain the interest and participation of all learners;
- justify consistently and evaluate competently professional practice, and take action to improve the impact on all learners;
- ensure learning tasks are varied, differentiated and devised to build confidence and promote progress of all learners, providing effective support and challenge;
- identify effectively barriers to learning and respond appropriately, seeking advice in relation to all learners' needs as required;
- demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the wellbeing indicators;
- recognise when a learner's behaviour may signify distress requiring the need for further support, and take appropriate action.
- systematically develop and use an extensive range of strategies, approaches and associated materials for formative and summative assessment purposes, appropriate to the needs of all learners and the requirements of the curriculum and awarding and accrediting bodies;

Challenge Question –

To what extent does our curriculum promote equity and raise attainment for all children and young people?

(How Good Is Our School 4, 2.2 Curriculum)

The Standard for Full Registration stipulates that teachers wishing to maintain their professional status must “demonstrate care and commitment to working with all learners” indicating that inclusive practice is now an intrinsic part of education in Scotland.

Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams

It is the duty of senior staff in schools to lead their school in developing an ethos in which all children and young people are nurtured and included. There is also an expectation that they will contribute to the development of inclusion in both principle and practice across the local authority.

Senior Leadership Teams must lead and model the best possible practice in relation to inclusion, and challenge and support any who do not meet those standards and expectations. It is their responsibility to ensure that East Lothian's policies relating to children's safety and wellbeing are fully and effectively implemented, and that planning to meet individual needs through the Child's Planning Framework is embedded in practice.

They must evaluate their own professional development and keep up to date with thinking and research on inclusion, communicating any changes in policy and legislation to their staff ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. A culture of authentic collaboration should be modelled and promoted to enable effective partnership working.

Educational Psychology Service

East Lothian's Educational Psychology Service provides additional support and challenge to develop an ethos of inclusion throughout schools and across the local authority.

It is an Educational Psychologist's role to work within the agreed structures for staged intervention and support schools in relation to the Child's Planning Framework. They must advise and guide Senior Leadership Teams regarding any considerations of alternative pathways, and use their professional skill and expertise to guide and support assessment, developing the capacity of schools and staff to meet the needs of children and young people.

It is their responsibility to support staff in understanding both policy and practice in relation to key aspects of inclusion and work effectively with colleagues, enabling collaborative working across the school and East Lothian.

Education & Children's Services

It is the duty of the local authority to ensure that across East Lothian, policies and processes are relevant, in line with current legislation, and are communicated effectively.

At strategic and operational level, authority staff must take forward the commitment of East Lothian to develop as a nurturing and inclusive authority. It is their role to monitor and evaluate the ways in which schools are using agreed East Lothian policy and practice to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met. Authority staff must respond appropriately to concerns schools raise and to referrals for possible alternative pathways.

Authority staff also have a responsibility to evaluate their own professional development, work collaboratively with all stakeholders, and model best possible practice in relation to inclusion.

All professionals working within East Lothian Council must keep children and their wellbeing at the heart of all decisions that are made, working collaboratively to find solutions to any challenges that arise.

Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation and National Guidance

- *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 amendment*
- *The Children (Scotland) Act 1995*
- *The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000*
- *The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records) (Scotland) Act 2002*
- *The Equality Act (2010)*
- *The Children and Young People Act (2014)*
- *The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016*
- *The Education (Scotland) Act 1980*
- *The Education (Scotland) Act 2016*
- *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (third edition) 2017*
- The *National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education*
- GTCS Standards for Registration <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standards-for-registration-1212.pdf>
- How Good Is Our School? 4
https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf

Appendix 2: Relevant East Lothian Council Policy and Guidance

- Child's Planning Framework guidance (2020)
- Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People (2018)
- The Handbook of Procedures for the Management of Pupils with Healthcare Needs in Educational Establishments (2019)
- Admission to Specialist Educational Provision guidance (2017)
- Allocation of Resources to Support Children and Young People with Additional support needs (2017)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2018)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: Managing Distressed and Challenging Behaviour (2018)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: Safeguarding Policy (2018)
- Respect for All: Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in All our Schools (2020)
- Attendance policy (2020)
- Nurture, Recovery and Reconnection (2020)

Appendix 3: Accessibility Strategy Priorities

From the information gathered through multi-agency stakeholder consultation, the following overarching priorities have been identified for the Accessibility Strategy (2020 – 2023):

- Use a Range of Relevant Data to Identify Priorities and Inform Next Steps
- Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools
- Improve Participation by Empowering Children and Young People to Communicate

Below are areas which were highlighted through the consultation process but are either outside the scope of the Accessibility Strategy or being addressed through other strategies, reviews etc:

- Promoting the UNCRC Rights Respecting Schools programme
- Offering British Sign Language as part of the curriculum
- Roll out and monitoring of the Progress & Achievement tracking tool to raise attainment for all and encourage positive destinations
- Transitions to positive destinations for children and young people with additional support needs
- Monitoring of school estate

A more detailed Accessibility Strategy Action Plan is available from the local authority upon request.

Appendix 4: References and Useful Links

- [CIRCLE](#)
- [Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: guidance \(2019\)](#)
- [Review of additional support for learning implementation: report \(2020\) - Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential](#)
- [Rights Respecting Schools - UNICEF](#)
- [A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education \(2017\)](#)
- Chapman, C (2019) Making sense of education reform: Where next for Scottish education? Manchester, UK: Association of Directors of Education in Scotland/The Staff College

Appendix 5: 5th Accessibility Strategy Action Plan (2020-2023)

1. Use a Range of Relevant Data to Identify Priorities and Inform Next Steps				
<i>Action</i>	<i>Evidence of Improvement</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Sub-groups (to be established)</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
1.1 Re-establish steering group membership including children/young people and family representation. 1.2 Establish annual monitoring and progress reporting timeline. 1.3 Identify required data for monitoring of all current action plan points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness within steering group of members' individual roles and deadlines Timeline aims agreed and met Specific measures will be detailed throughout action plan Range of qualitative and quantitative data across action plan Established leads and sub-groups Increased awareness of ongoing monitoring process across the whole steering group 	Education - steering group chair	n/a	By April 2021
1.4 Produce Accessibility Standards to inform future mainstream and specialist provision school estate development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed Accessibility Standards document Accessibility Standards document shared and reviewed by partners e.g. Wallyford secondary campus stakeholders Access evident in plans resulting in fewer individual adaptations Specialist equipment e.g. Soundfield systems, guiding handrails etc evident in planning stage Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 	Education - school representative	Access Officer Children/young people Parents/carers Health & Safety Officer Hearing Impairment Service Visual Impairment Service School representatives including specialist provisions	By April 2022

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2. Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools

Action	Evidence of Improvement	Lead	Sub-groups (to be established)	Timescale
<p>2.1 Audit sample of schools' professional learning and current implementation of the CIRCLE document.</p> <p>2.2 Develop implementation plan to target identified schools.</p> <p>2.3 Support identified settings so that all primary and secondary schools embed the CIRCLE document at whole school and individual level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit completed through use of Implementation Framework • Analysis of audit informs next steps • Timeline aims agreed and met • Requests for Assistance to Educational Psychology Service will include CIRCLE assessments • Requests for assistance to other agencies e.g. S&LT/OT can be directed to children and young people who require support at additional/targeted levels • Reduction in pupil exclusion from learning environments, evidenced through SEEMiS • Reduction in distressed behaviour, evidenced through Sphera recordings • Improvement reflected in internal school reviews and Education Scotland inspections with regards to HGIOS4 QIs • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 	Education - Educational Psychology	School representatives Children/young people Parents/carers Speech & Language Therapy Occupational Therapy	By April 2023
2.4 Develop implementation plan to introduce the SCERTS framework to specialist provisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed Implementation Plan • Timeline aims agreed and met 	Education – specialist provision representative	Educational Psychology School representatives including specialist provisions	By April 2023

<p>2.5 Enable stakeholders to participate in multi-agency small tests of change to inform cycle of improvement.</p> <p>2.6 Support specialist provisions to embed SCERTS in Action in practice for identified individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for Assistance to Educational Psychology Service will include initial SCERTS in Action assessment • More targeted interventions and actions in IEPs • Tracking and monitoring informed through IEPs • Reduction in distressed behaviour, evidenced through Sphera recordings • Improvement reflected in internal school reviews and Education Scotland inspections with regards to HGIOS4 QIs • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 		<p>Children/young people Parents/carers Speech & Language Therapy Occupational Therapy CAMHS</p>	
<p>2.7 Develop introductory Deaf Awareness course for all school staff to be facilitated through LearnPro platform.</p> <p>2.8 Monitor engagement and completion of course data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf Awareness course uploaded to LearnPro and accessible by all those with a log in • Course promoted through CLPL team • Collated data regarding how many staff have completed the course, their role and where they are based available to inform next steps • Increased attendance numbers at more specialist training facilitated by HIS • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 	<p>Hearing Impairment Service</p>	<p>School representatives Children/young people Parents/carers CLPL team</p>	<p>By April 2022</p>
<p>2.9 Develop a tiered framework outlining the offer of mental health training across East Lothian to improve the consistency of workforce development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed framework shared with relevant stakeholders • Increased engagement with targeted CLPL • Collated data from CLPL feedback process • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 	<p>Education - steering group chair</p>	<p>School representatives Educational Psychology CLPL team</p>	<p>By April 2022</p>

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3. Improve Participation by Empowering Children and Young People to Communicate

<i>Action</i>	<i>Evidence of Improvement</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Sub-groups (to be established)</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
<p>3.1 Audit Early Learning & Childcare settings to establish current implementation of Signalong.</p> <p>3.2 Develop implementation plan to target identified settings.</p> <p>3.3 Support identified settings so that all Early Learning and Childcare settings embed Signalong as part of their universal inclusive practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in ELCCs will have access to an introductory Signalong session with scope for a full course where required • Courses promoted through CLPL team • Staff have the appropriate level of confidence and skills to use a relevant number of signs in an ELCC in order to support children to understand and express themselves • Reduction in distressed behaviour, evidenced through Sphera recordings • Reduction in referrals to Education Resource Group for specialist ELCC provision • Improvement reflected in internal school reviews and Education Scotland inspections with regards to HGIOELCC QIs • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 	Education - steering group chair	<p>Early Years representatives</p> <p>Parents/carers</p> <p>Speech & Language Therapy</p> <p>Communication Support</p> <p>CLPL team</p>	By April 2023
3.4 Establish a multi-agency partnership group to monitor and improve access to Assistive Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with CALL Scotland's ATLAS forum • Piloting of specific equipment offered to specialist provisions 	Education - specialist provision representative	<p>Learning Technology</p> <p>KeyComm</p> <p>Speech & Language Therapy</p> <p>Children/young people</p>	By April 2022

<p>including but not limited to, Augmentative and Alternative Communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership opportunities for specialist provision staff evident in PRDs • Appropriate professional learning identified and facilitated • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 		<p>Parents/carers School representatives including specialist provisions CALL Scotland & ATLAS Network (consultative basis)</p>	
<p>3.5 Audit current methods for gathering views with particular reference to the voice of children, young people, parents and carers. 3.6 Develop partnership working through parent mentoring programme and children/young people forum in line with the ASL review recommendations (2020).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views have been sought from children and young people using a range of tools ensuring accessibility • Children and young people with communication/physical/sensory needs have had equal opportunity to express their views using evidence based tools • School-based staff have participated in professional learning to enable a range of methods to gather views for example, Talking Mats • Children, young people, parents and carers' voice is evidenced in Child's Planning • Reduction in distressed behaviour, evidenced through Sphera recordings • Improvement reflected in internal school reviews and Education Scotland inspections with regards to HGIOS4 QIs • Reduction in pupil exclusion from learning environments, evidenced through SEEMiS • Children, young people, parents and carers' voice is evidenced in policy making • Further data methods to be identified by sub-group as per Action 1.3 	<p>Education - Educational Psychology</p>	<p>Speech & Language Therapy Children/young people Parents/carers School representatives including specialist provisions KeyComm Hearing Impairment Service Visual Impairment Service</p>	<p>By April 2022</p>