



## **CELGIS's response to the Scottish Parliament's Education, Children and Young People Committee's inquiry into Additional Support for Learning (ASL).**

**December 2023**

CELGIS, the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection, is based at the University of Strathclyde and is a leading improvement and innovation centre. We improve children's lives by supporting people and organisations to drive long lasting change in the services they need, and the practices used by people responsible for their care. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Education, Children and Young People Committee's inquiry into Additional Support for Learning (ASL). Our responses, based on research evidence, practice experience, and feedback from longstanding cross organisational networks, maintains a sharp focus on the impact of national and local policy initiatives on children and young people in need of care and protection.

### **Context**

Over 13,000 children are 'looked after' by Scottish local authorities, and over 7,000 young people are eligible for 'aftercare'<sup>1</sup>. This includes young people who are care leavers, and children who are living with foster carers, in residential care, with kinship carers, or living at home with one or both of their birth parents whilst the family is receiving support from social work; all of these children and young people are care experienced. There are a further 2,104 children 'at risk of significant harm' and thus on a Child Protection Register in Scotland. Furthermore, there are children who need care and protection who may not yet be identified or recorded within formal child protection systems<sup>2</sup>.

All of these children and young people are in need of care and protection but their individual circumstances and needs will vary. The vast majority will have encountered difficulties in their lives, including experiencing trauma, abuse, and neglect.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2022) [Children's social work statistics 2020-2021](#). Edinburgh: Scottish Government

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert, R., Spatz-Widom, C., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E. & Janson, S. (2009) 'Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries.' *The Lancet* 373: 68-81.

Education outcome indicators show that the gap between the attainment and achievement of 'looked after' children, and that of their non-care experienced peers, remains unacceptably large<sup>3</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated public health protection response, has disproportionately impacted children, young people and families in 'vulnerable situations'<sup>4</sup>, who are already facing inequalities and disadvantage and, with this in mind, we welcome the opportunity to submit information to inform the Education, Children and Young People Committee's inquiry into ASL.

### **Additional Support for Learning**

The [Education \(Additional Support for Learning\) \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) promotes the interests of 'looked after' children by stating that these learners are presumed to have additional support needs unless assessed as otherwise. We have covered the learning support needs of care experienced learners in evidence we have provided to the Committee and Government recently and this may provide the Committee with helpful information concerning your current inquiry.

These are as follows and highlight the themes and areas that the inquiry is interested in and are of most relevance to children and young people with care experience:

September 2022: [CELCIS's response to the Scottish Government's Statutory School Uniform Guidance consultation](#)

February 2022: [Response to Scottish Parliament Education, Children and Young People Committee's Call for views on the impact of the Scottish Attainment Challenge](#). February 2022

November 2021: [CELCIS response to the Scottish Government's 'Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority: Consultation](#).

May 2020: [Response to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee's Inquiry into Support for vulnerable children during the Coronavirus outbreak](#).

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to respond. We hope the feedback is helpful; we would be happy to discuss any aspect in further detail.

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<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government (2022) [Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020-21](#); Edinburgh: Scottish Government

<sup>4</sup> United Nations (2020) [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020](#); New York: United Nations Publications

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