

## **Additional Support Needs (ASN) Consultation Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1. There are 3 consultations, but are you only looking to open and go ahead with 1 or 2 of these options?**

The Council would like to open all 3 specialist provisions, subject to the outcome of the consultation and approval being granted.

- 2. Would the creation of the specialist provision include the building of additional rooms to the existing school building?**

No. The proposal for a specialist provision is to use existing rooms, space and facilities within the current building. There will be no additional buildings built.

- 3. Have the ASN categories and definitions changed in recent years?**

No, we use the same categories and definitions of ASN used by the Scottish Government and Schools across the period of time that has seen the rise in the level of ASN recorded in schools

- 4. If the specialist provision was to go ahead, would there be opportunities for inclusion between the provision and the mainstream school?**

Yes. There would be opportunities for Inclusion between the provision and the mainstream school. Once any new specialist provision is created within a school in East Lothian Council, the provision operates as part of the school led and managed by the Head Teacher (HT) of the school. As is the case with our current specialist provisions, there will be many opportunities for inclusion, sharing of resources and facilities between the provision and the mainstream school. There will also be the opportunity for staff to work together and benefit from the skills and experience found in both a specialist provision and mainstream school.

- 5. What management support would the specialist provision and the HT receive?**

All East Lothian Council specialist provisions have a Depute Head Teacher (DHT) and Principal Teacher (PT) in post. This structure ensures that both the provision and the mainstream continue to have sufficient leadership capacity in place to support the whole school.

- 6. Why have recently built new schools not been considered for Specialist Provision?**

Space for specialist provisions was not included in the design and planning of these schools. All three of these new schools are projected to reach capacity in the coming years which means there is no long-term capacity for a specialist provision.

- 7. Has consideration been given to capture the views of those children and young people with communication needs?**

Children were asked to volunteer to attend pupil-specific consultation sessions with East Lothian Council staff to gather their views. The public survey is also available and allows parents to submit views on behalf of their child(ren).

**8. Does the increased number of provision referrals also include parental placing requests?**

Yes, the number of referrals to the Education Resource Group noted in the proposal document, include both submissions by schools and parental placing requests.

**9. What happens if following the consultation, East Lothian Council do not decide to open a new specialist provision at our school?**

If decision made is not to proceed with specialist provision at any of the schools under consultation, East Lothian Council staff will continue to consider schools in other areas of East Lothian, as appropriate, to potentially open a specialist provision. However, this will mean the area will continue to not have a specialist provision to support those children and young people with severe, complex and enduring ASN.

**10. If provision is created, will parents from the catchment with children placed in other specialist provisions in East Lothian be expected to move?**

No families will be expected or made to move from their existing provision / school. However, there would be scope to consider requests from families who do wish to move their child to a specialist provision that is newly created closer to their community and home.

**11. Would pupils within the school catchment area be given priority for places within the specialist provision?**

No, all places across all specialist provisions in East Lothian are allocated via the Education Resource Group (ERG) panel. This panel considers and assesses the merits of each referral and the decisions to offer places based on the needs of each child and young person. Whilst the panel look to place children and young person as close to their local community as possible, there is not catchment process for specialist provision places.

**12. Would the school lose out financially if more support needs to be given to the specialist provision?**

No, there is very clear guidance and processes in place to ensure that the appropriate funding and resources are available separately to the mainstream school and to the specialist provision.

**13. Would the level of supports e.g. support for learning, be reduced in the mainstream school to meet the needs of the specialist provision?**

No, the funding process to support the mainstream school is different to the process for the specialist provisions. There is clear governance and clarity for headteachers around both processes.

**14. Will other adaptations be required within the existing school to support pupils when they are part of activities e.g. in classrooms, lunch hall etc?**

There would be no need for any structural changes in the mainstream school. There may be some aesthetic changes, but these would be minor and would not negatively impact the learning experience of all other pupils.

**15. How permanent would the specialist provision be?**

Should the proposal be accepted and a specialist provision be created within the school, this would be a permanent resource within the school and there would be no intention to remove this in future years.

**16. Will this new provision be for pupils with complex health needs? What will the profile be?**

All our provisions are designed in principle to meet the needs of all children and young people with severe, complex and enduring needs. However, our data tells us that the increased need and demand for specialist provision places is for those children and young people who have a neurodiverse profile, and it is this profile primarily that our new specialist provisions are being designed to cater for.

**17. What happens if there is an increased demand for mainstream places in future years and there is no space left in school?**

East Lothian Council continually update and review roll projections for all communities across East Lothian for 10+ years ahead. We do not foresee an issue in meeting the long-term demand for mainstream places in the schools if the provision is opened.

**18. How will the current facilities and storage areas be affected by a new provision?**

All the school's requirements for classrooms, additional spaces and storage will be relocated and other areas of the school re-purposed to ensure the school does not lose out.

**19. Has consideration been given to the increased requirements for storage (e.g. pupil's specialist health equipment) and facilities (e.g. adapted toilets) needed for a specialist provision?**

Yes, these requirements have been made very clear in initial discussions with the design and planning team

**20. Will there be enough toilets across the whole school for children and adults?**

Yes, there is clear statutory legislation regarding the toilet provision in all school buildings for children and adults, this includes accessible toilets. Any design and subsequent change to the school building would need to adhere to this.

**21. Can additional car parking be created?**

We acknowledge that parking, like in many schools and workplaces, can be a challenge. All possible solutions will be listened to and considered throughout the process should it be agreed to go ahead with the specialist provision.

**22. What are the risks to the school associated with this project?**

There are no identified risks to the school should there be a specialist provisions created. The model for our specialist provisions ensures that the provisions have sufficient autonomy and independence to function without impacting negatively on the mainstream school e.g. any inclusive activities where children from the specialist provision attend mainstream activities are carefully planned and staffed appropriately to ensure success. This is evidenced in how our current specialist provisions operate.

The risk to not creating specialist provisions is that there is not enough capacity across East Lothian Council learning estate to meet the demand for specialist provisions places. In this situation, children and young people who would typically be offered a place and attend specialist provision would instead be placed in their mainstream catchment school.

**23. How would the entrances / exits to the school be affected by a new provision?**

The specialist provision would have its own designated entrance/exit.

**24. Will existing breakfast club and after school club be affected?**

No. It is not foreseen that the creation of a specialist provision within a school will have any impact on these clubs.

**25. Would the times in the specialist provision be the same as the mainstream school?**

Not necessarily. Due to the local context the HT and the DHT of the specialist provision would be able to set different start / finish times if this was felt to be in the best interest of all.

**26. What is the timescale for the project?**

If the proposal goes ahead, the specialist provision would open in August 2027.

**27. How can I share my views on the proposals?**

Attend the public meeting in person or a virtual drop-in session online, details of these are available on the website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/asn-consultation](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/asn-consultation). Complete the online survey, you will find a link on the website above, or send in written comments by post to [Your School Name] ASN Consultation, East Lothian Council, Resources and People Services, John Muir House, Brewery Park, Haddington EH41 3HA

**28. Will there be an opportunity for families and learners to shape the design?**

The consultation is all about gathering views of learners, parents, carers and the wider community. There will be public meetings, pupil voice sessions in school, parent council engagement and drop-in sessions that will run throughout the consultation period to give stakeholders as much opportunity as possible to express their views and ideas and for the Council to gather as much rich information as possible. However please note, we are not planning to build a brand-new building for the provision, therefore there will be limits to the flexibility of the design.

**29. How will the Council monitor the impact of the new ASN provision on the wider school community?**

We already continually monitor the data within each of our schools on a monthly basis, such as attendance figures, exclusions and attainment of all learners in the school community. We do not foresee a major impact on the figures given the relatively small proportion of ASN pupils compared to the mainstream.

**30. How do projected costs of the proposals compare to the cost of out of authority placements?**

Out of authority placements are varied, the level of support that an individual child or young person needs will impact the cost of that placement. In addition, transport costs, residential and respite needs also vary and contribute to the overall cost of that placement. Generally, the cost of a placement in East Lothian is around half to a third of the cost of an out of authority placement. However, this is not the only consideration for this proposal which aligns with our aspiration to utilise and grow our own expertise within the Education service and for our children and young people to feel as though they belong to their community and do not need to leave the county to be educated.

**31. Why is the number of children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) in East Lothian increasing?**

The trends we are seeing in East Lothian are being seen at a national level and beyond. Our definition of ASN is inclusive and covers a wide range of additional support needs. That definition ranges from a need that may be temporary, such as a bereavement, to a severe, complex and enduring need. There are several factors contributing to this and its hugely complex, however contributing factors to the increase have been identified nationally, such as:

- Increased assessment and identification of need by professional educators, social workers and medical professions.
- Medical advances leading to increased neo-natal survival rates.
- Sociatal factors, such as the cost-of-living crisis, mental health issues, and experiences during and post covid.
- East Lothian Council is the 2nd fastest growing local authority in Scotland, many families moving into the area and the new houses across the authority.

**32. How would the proposed ASN provision be staffed?**

We have a well-established staffing model in our existing ASN provisions which we would implement in any future ASN provisions we establish. The head teacher of the school leads overall, but is supported by a dedicated depute head teacher who has day to day responsibility for leading the provision. The existing ASN provisions have a higher staffing ratio.

**33. Would there be any benefits to the wider school?**

We do not aspire to have stand alone special schools due to inclusion, and what we have found works best in practice is a provision within a mainstream school. This enables learners within the ASN provision have access to mainstream learning and peers and mainstream learners have access to expertise of specialist staff and facilities within the provision when they need it. This benefits the wider school community, promotes inclusion and best meets the needs of all learners.

**34. Why have you chosen our school?**

The need to create specialist provision within the catchment as part of East Lothian Council's long-term vision and school roll projections have identified that there is physical space (classrooms and additional facilities) within the school to make this proposal feasible. In our experience, an ASN provision works best when there is a minimum of 4 classes. Analysis was undertaken to identify schools within our learning estate that had multiple classrooms available, were suitable for a provision, located on the ground floor, with access to outside space, and in a locality that had no ASN provision already.

**35. How will places be allocated in any future ASN provision?**

Unlike mainstream primary and secondary schools that have a defined catchment area, which allocates places to a school based on your address, ASN provision places are not allocated based on catchment. Places are allocated by the Education Resource Group who meet every 6-8 weeks to consider referrals for specialist ASN provision and make decisions about where individual pupils will be placed. They take into consideration several factors, including geographical location, when deciding how best to meet the individual needs of that child or young person. Pupils living in a locality without ASN provision will therefore not be at a disadvantage.