



Education & Cultural Services

Policy: Dispute Resolution (Complaints against Additional Support Needs)

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Last Updated: November 2009

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FRAMEWORK FOR RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Making use of good practice in any communication with children, young persons and parents can help to avoid disagreements or prevent them from escalating into more serious disputes. When disagreements do arise, it is expected that most will be resolved at school and education authority level. Although, in practice, almost all concerns are resolved at these stages, there may be situations that this does not happen successfully and the situation may lead to a third party review. This framework provides guidance and policy on how to help both avoid disagreements arising and help resolve them if they do arise.
- 1.2 In particular, this paper outlines.
- good practice in communication to help avoid disagreements arising;
 - when disagreements are unavoidable, a clear staged disagreement resolution procedure, with named contacts at school and local authority level (including independent mediation); and
 - the four different processes of third party review which may take place depending on the nature of the disagreement.
 - (i) mediation
 - (ii) dispute resolution by an independent adjudicator
 - (iii) the West Lothian Council (Placing in Schools) Appeal Committee
 - (iv) Additional Support Needs Tribunal

2 GOOD PRACTICE IN COMMUNICATION

- 2.1 Children, young persons and their parents can and should be involved successfully in education and learning
- 2.2 All **children and young persons** should have the opportunity to make their views known about decisions that affect them. They should have the opportunity to express their opinions and have these taken seriously. It is the intention that everyone working with children and young persons in whichever capacity should strive to encourage them to contribute to decision-making processes, the setting of educational objectives, the preparation of learning plans, and reviews and transition planning and, in this way, create a climate where seeking children's views and encourage participation in decision-making are part of everyday activities. It is very important that children and young persons know that what they have to do will be respected, listened to and, where appropriate, acted on.

It is understood, however, that specific arrangements may have to be made to seek out and note the view of some children and young persons, for example, those with complex communication support needs. **Appendix One** to this paper outlines a range of approaches that could be used. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list.

When noting views, it is helpful to consider two factors; what the child or young person has actually expressed; and what interpretation was made of

the child's or young person's view and by whom. It is important to note and record both.

It is important, at this point, to understand that taking account of views does not mean that the council has to accept and implement everything expressed. Due weight should be given to the following:

- the child's capacity to understand the information on which their views were based;
- the ability of the child/young person to express his or her own views;
- the child/young person's understanding of the range of options; and
- how well the person reporting the child/young person's views know him or her.

The main issue here is that a balance is struck between what a child/young person may want and what is realistic and appropriate. Just as important though is that where the council does not act on a child/young person's views then reasons for this should be provided to them as appropriate.

- 2.3 **Parents** must also have the opportunity to be involved fully in discussions and decisions about their child's learning. They have a key role to play in their child's education and account should be taken of their wishes and the perspective they bring.

Access to information and advice is central to this. Supporters and advocates can help by making sure that a parent or young person's view is understood, put across and taken account of in discussions where parents or young persons feel unable or less confident to do so themselves. Young persons and parents, therefore, have a right to have a supporter or advocate present at any discussion or meeting with a professional it is related to the additional learning needs of their child. Professionals should make parents and young persons aware of this right and how they can find out how to access such services. If the professional involved considers it unreasonable to include a supporter or advocate in discussions, then the parent/young person should be provided with their reasons for taking this view.

Appendix One to this report outlines good practice in communicating with parents and young persons.

- 2.4 In terms of **legislative duties**, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 builds on the obligations set out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 by placing a duty on education authorities to seek and take account of the views of children and young persons as the authority considers appropriate. In particular, where the authority is seeking to:

- establish whether the child/young person has additional support needs;
- establish what additional support the child or young person may require; and
- establish whether a Co-ordinated Support Plan is required, preparing it and reviewing it.

3. DISAGREEMENT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE AND THIRD PARTY REVIEW PROCEDURES INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

3.1 Disagreement Resolution Procedure at Local Levels

In the event of an unavoidable disagreement arising involving children and/or young persons with additional support needs, the following staged Disagreement Resolution Procedure must be adhered to.

NB The ultimate aim is that those involved reach an agreed outcome at a local level which helps develop positive relationships and partnerships between all parties involved. In other words, the goal is to resolve disagreements not prolong them.

School Level

In the event of a disagreement arising which involves a child or young person with additional support needs, school based staff (ie class teacher, senior school staff and/or Head Teacher) should take a team based approach to meetings and discussions with parents and pupils to resolve matters. This should include representation of other agencies involved with the child or young person if considered relevant to the disagreement. Parents should be informed that they will receive written confirmation of the meeting/discussion. Parents and young persons should be informed that they have the right to have a supporter or advocate present at any school-based discussion or meeting.

The outcome of all such meetings and discussions should be confirmed in writing to parents (and young person if appropriate). This communication should be clear, understandable and must avoid jargon. Consideration should be given to the differing needs parent/young persons may have, such as those arising from a disability or communication and linguistic barriers.

If parents are unhappy with the outcome of the discussion/meeting then they should be encouraged by the professionals involved to contact the following officer for advice:

Principal Support Officer, Additional Learning Needs Team, Ogilvie House, Ogilvie Way, Knightsridge, West Lothian EH54 8HL (Telephone Number 01506 777444, E-mail: alison.raeburn@westlothian.gov.uk)

Local authority level

Concern over a disagreement at school level, involving a child/young person with additional support needs should be raised with the Principal Support Officer, ALN.

Action on receiving a concern

- a written acknowledgement will be sent promptly if the concern has been received in writing
- the concern may be discussed within the ALN team to bring out more fully its nature and detail. The purpose of the discussion will be to give a clear

description of the concern that will help in its consideration and resolution. The originator of the concern may be asked to meet with the Principal Support Officer to discuss the concern in greater detail. At any meeting in connection with the concern, a friend, advocate or interpreter will be welcome to support the parent/young person. Parents and young persons will be informed that they have the right to have a supporter or advocate present at any authority-based discussion or meeting

- following the investigation of the concern, a full response will be sent to the parent/young person (if appropriate) as quickly as possible. It will explain the outcome, the reasons for it, any action to be taken or proposed, and any further action the parents/young person may take.

Action to be taken if the concern is justified

If a concern is found to be justified, Education and Cultural Services will:

- put right what went wrong in this instance, if this is possible
- adjust service delivery to try to prevent a similar problem arising in the future
- offer an apology where appropriate

Monitoring of the Procedure

The Principal Support Officer, ALN, will keep a confidential record of concerns received.

This system will provide information to improve services, identify training needs and increase levels of public satisfaction with services related to children/young persons with additional support needs.

An annual report will be presented to the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Committee on the results of the monitoring process. The report will not identify individuals.

The Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Committee/Children's Service Management Group's attention will be drawn to any trends that suggest adjustments may be necessary to the provision of services for children/young persons with additional support needs.

Confidentiality

A concern will be dealt with in a confidential manner and knowledge of it will be limited to those directly involved.

Concerns received by each educational establishment will be recorded locally but NOT in the personal file of a member of staff, pupil or student.

Details of each concern made to the ALN team will be logged in a confidential database. (The database has been registered under the Data Protection Act 1998).

It may be necessary for third parties to be made aware of the concern and possibly also the identity of the person raising the concern, eg where the investigation of a concern brings to light the need to refer matters to the Senior Officer Review Group or criminal offences to the Police.

Anonymously Raised Concerns

Anonymous concerns, by their nature, cannot be investigated. However, where the concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, the circumstances surrounding the concern will be investigated.

Supporters and Advocates

The council does not have a duty to provide or pay for a supporter or advocate. However, the West Lothian Council 'Parents' Guide to the (Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004' provides details about the right to an advocate or a supporter, and how parents or young persons can find such services in the West Lothian area.

3.2 Independent Mediation

The council has a duty to provide an independent mediation service for the purpose of avoiding or resolving disagreements between the council and parents and young persons concerning additional support needs. This service is available free of charge to parents and young persons. If the young person lacks the capacity to express a view or make a decision, then the parents can pursue mediation on behalf of the young person. Initial use of this service is most likely at authority level, could cause concern before relationships break down but can also be used at later stages (ie during third party review) if appropriate. The aim is for both parties to reach a mutually acceptable solution to a difference of views. Independent mediation is not about apportioning blame.

Mediation can be used at any time in the life of a disagreement between the council and parents or a young person. The process can be used more than once as it can be useful for resolving parts of a disagreement, as well as the whole of a disagreement.

Mediation, however, may not be appropriate in all cases. For example, the parents or young person may not wish to engage in mediation. In addition, the provision of mediation is not the appropriate vehicle for parents who have disagreements about issues other than additional support needs. In such situations, parents should follow West Lothian Council's normal school and authority complaints procedure. The contact person for this is:

Brian Innes, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston EH54 6FF (Telephone Number: 01506 281951) E-mail brian.innes@westlothian.gov.uk.

A mediation service leaflet providing these details has been distributed to all schools and council offices.

It is important that mediation remains as a joint problem-solving process rather than an adversarial forum. Therefore, it is not envisaged that the parties involved would bring legal representation to mediation.

Parents of children for whose school education the council is not responsible but who belong to the council's area do have a right to use the free independent mediation service where a disagreement relates to the council's exercise of its functions under the 2004 Act.

The council has contracted 'Parent-to-Parent' to provide an independent mediation service for the West Lothian area. Parent-to-Parent is an organisation based in Dundee with a Family Worker specifically allocated to West Lothian. The contract with this organisation ensures appropriately trained mediators, engaged in continuing professional development and operating to recognised standards together with policies in place which ensure confidentiality and appropriate safeguards for personal information. Outcomes of meetings are recorded and parents/young persons are provided with a copy of these outcomes.

Parent –to-Parent can be contacted as follows:

Parent-to-Parent Mediation Service, Wallacetown Health Centre, Lyon Street, Dundee DD4 6RB, Telephone Number 01382 455200, E-mail moira.bisset@parent-to-parent.org.uk

3.3 Third Party Review

As explained above, in practice, almost all concerns in relation to additional support needs are resolved at school or local authority level. There may be situations, however, that this does not happen successfully and independent third party review may become involved. The three different processes of third party review which may take place depending on the nature of the disagreement are:

- (i) Dispute resolution by an Independent Adjudicator
- (II) The West Lothian Council (Placing in Schools) Appeals Committee
- (III) Additional Support Needs Tribunal

3.3(i) Dispute Resolution by an Independent Adjudicator

This procedure for resolving disputes allows for a formal review of an individual case by an independent third party, external to the council, who will consider the circumstances leading to the disagreement and will make a report with recommendations to all parties.

In broad terms, this service is for the concerns of children and young persons with additional support needs where the tribunal (see Section 3(iii) below) and the West Lothian (Placing in Schools) Appeal Committee (see Section 3(ii) below) do not have jurisdiction to accept a referral of the case.

The use of this type of dispute resolution does not affect a parent's or young person's entitlement to make a referral to the tribunal, or any other statutory review mechanism, where appropriate.

Matters which may be referred to an Independent Adjudicator for dispute resolution include:

- the decision of the council that a child or young person has, or does not have, additional support needs
- the level of provision required or being provided to meet assessed needs
- failure to implement the requirements of a co-ordinated support plan
- the support from another agency required to enable the council to discharge its functions under the 2004 Act

As with the Independent Mediation Service described above, access to the Independent Adjudicator is for parents of children and young persons belonging to West Lothian, irrespective of whether the council is responsible for a particular child/young person's school education. However, the matter in dispute must be related to the council's exercise of its function under the 2004 Act.

Although not legally obliged to do so, the council will make available the Dispute Resolution procedure in its duties as a host authority to the parents of a child or young person who request it in relation to additional support needs.

It should be noted that this Dispute Resolution procedure is not for issues relating to broader strategy or policy matters or about allegations of misconduct or, for example, school closures. It is also not intended to be for personal disputes between parents and any members of staff at the school or local authority level. All such matters will continue to follow the council's normal school and authority complaints procedure. The contact person for this is:

Brian Innes, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston EH54 6FF (Telephone Number: 01506 281951) E-mail brian.innes@westlothian.gov.uk.

The Procedure

The process of the Independent Adjudicator should not normally take more than 8 weeks from the time the council confirms that it is making arrangements for the parent's or young person's request for their case to be referred to dispute resolution to a report with recommendations being made by the Adjudicator. In exceptional cases, it may take longer, for example, where a request for dispute resolution is made close to or during school holiday periods.

Stage One

Concern over a disagreement at school level, involving a child/young person with additional support needs has been raised, investigated and actioned (as detailed in section 3.1 above) by the Principal Support Officer, Additional Learning Needs Team.

A full response has been sent to the parent or young person explaining the outcome, the reasons for it, any action to be taken or proposed, and any further action the parent/young person may take.

The parent/young person has responded indicating continued disagreement with the situation and requesting the disagreement be considered by an Independent Adjudicator.

This request is acknowledged by the Principal Support Officer together with an explanation of the procedure outlined in this paper. At the same time mediation, if not already made use of, is offered as a means of reaching an outcome satisfactory to both the council and the parent or young person. Although this mediation is not binding, all parties will be encouraged to enter into it with a view to reaching agreement. This mediation service is provided free to the parent or young person by Parent-to-Parent (see Section 3.2 above).

Stage Two

If the mediation service does not result in a decision acceptable to the parent or young person, the original decision together with any outcome of the mediation will be reviewed by an officer not involved in the decision-making process thus far. This officer will be appointed by the Education Development Manager for Additional Learning Needs. If the review produces a conclusion that is acceptable to the parent or young person, it will then be implemented.

Stage Three

If the officer review results in a conclusion that is still unacceptable to the parent or young person, the parent/young person's request for an external Independent Adjudicator will be given further consideration to ensure that the request relates to a specified matter in terms of the 2004 Act. If satisfied that it is an appropriate referral, the Principal Support Officer will refer the case to the Scottish Ministers for independent adjudication and inform the parent or young person accordingly.

The Scottish Ministers will provide the name of an adjudicator from the panel set up by them.

The Principal Support Officer will prepare all appropriate paperwork for forwarding to the Adjudicator and offer to help the parent or young person complete their application, advising them of any sources of support available to them.

Even once the formal process of dispute resolution has commenced, the council will continue to work with the parent or young person to attempt to resolve the dispute.

Stage Four

The Independent Adjudicator will review, objectively and independently, all the information relating to the case, and make recommendations for both parties on the best way forward to ensure that the child's learning is supported with reference to terms of the 2004 Act. Further clarification or information may be asked of either party. Exceptionally, the Adjudicator may arrange to meet the parties, for example, if the adjudicator is concerned that one party, or both parties, may have been disadvantaged by the way the case has been presented.

The Head of Education (Quality Assurance) and Specialist Services of the council will reach and give notice of the decision of the council on the report and recommendations of the Independent Adjudicator, accepting the recommendations of the Independent Adjudicator in all but the most exceptional circumstances. The reasons for the decision to accept or reject the adjudicator's recommendations will be given to all parties. The decision of the Head of Education (Quality Assurance) and Specialist Services will be final.

Monitoring the Procedure

The council will record the number of cases which have been referred to the Dispute Resolution Procedure and their outcomes for monitoring purposes.

3.3(ii) The West Lothian Council (Placing in Schools) Appeal Committee

Remit of Committee is to:

- make decisions on placement of children in schools within and outwith West Lothian following appeals against refusal of placement requests.

and

- make decisions on appeals against pupil exclusions from school

3.3 (iii) Additional Support Needs Tribunal

The Tribunal will hear cases from parents and young persons on matters relating to Co-ordinated Support Plans.

The Tribunal's statutory functions, decisions and dealings with its users and the public are independent of national and local government.

The Tribunal will be made up of a convener who will be a lawyer, and two members who have the skill and experience in additional support needs.

The aims of the Tribunal are:

- to provide independent and expert adjudication, operating impartially, efficiently and effectively, in accordance with the Act
- to be user-friendly through informal and flexible proceedings are being accessible to users
- to discourage formal, litigious encounters between parents and education
- to make decisions which reflect best practice in relation to additional support needs

3.3 (iv) Further Recourse

The Scottish Ministers have power to issue directions to education authorities as to the exercise of their functions under the 2004 Act (Section 27 of the 2004 Act).

Furthermore, alleged failings to carry out a statutory education duty can be referred to Scottish Ministers under section 70 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Scottish Ministers can intervene where they are satisfied that an education authority or others have failed to discharge any duty imposed on them by education legislation.

NB In considering complaints, Scottish Ministers should consider whether other more local forms of resolving the disagreement have been tried.

4. DEFINITIONS

'Parent' includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) in relation to, or has care of a child or young person;

'Child' means a person who is not over school age;

'Young person' means a person over school age who has not attained the age of eighteen years.

APPENDIX 1 - GOOD PRACTICE IN COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS

A Child or Young Person May Benefit from:

- being given enough time to prepare and to go over the items and materials to be discussed
- being given information in a form which is readily understood
- a teacher or other helper to help understand the meaning of key terms and concepts
- a supportive communication facilitator to tease out the full meaning of all of the issues
- specialist or new vocabulary (perhaps in sign or symbol form) in order to discuss a particular topic
- support to go over ideas, perhaps on several occasions
- help to understand outcomes and agreements

Issues Related to Language:

- if English is not the child's or young person's first language, consider using an interpreter
- consider using a facilitator for those with language or speech difficulties
- use appropriate alternative or augmentative communication systems such as visual aids and/or sign language for deaf and/or communication impaired children or young people
- take account of any cultural preferences
- take time to explain what decision has to be made, why it is important and how the child or young person can influence it.

Professionals should:

- acknowledge and draw on parental knowledge and expertise in relation to their child
- consider the child's strengths as well as area of additional need
- recognise the personal and emotional investment of parents and be aware of their feelings
- ensure that parents understand procedures, are aware of how to access support and are given documents to be discussed well in advance of meetings
- respect the validity of differing perspectives and seek constructive ways of reconciling different view points
- cater for the differing needs parents may have, such as those arising from a disability, or communication and linguistic barriers.

Information should be:

- clear and understandable and avoid jargon
- provided easily in accessible formats
- readily available and provided automatically without a charge and without a fuss

Communication works well when:

- people have the interpreters they need
- someone in authority takes responsibility for keeping parents up-to-date
- people are told what has been happening between meetings
- any information provided by parents is acknowledged
- formal references to statutory procedures are avoided wherever possible

Effective working relationships develop when:

- contact with parents is sensitive, positive, helpful and regular
- parents feel included and are encouraged to contribute to discussions
- positive, clear and easily understood language is used
- parents are involved and processes and roles are explained from the beginning
- parents are told what to expect and the next steps
- times of meetings take account of parents' availability

Meetings work best when:

- parents are asked what times and places for meetings suit them best, taking account of any access need or family responsibilities
- notes from meetings, and any papers to be considered, are sent out in good time
- parents are invited to add points to the agenda, at the same time as everyone else
- people attending are aware of their roles and the roles of others and they understand the child or young person's additional support needs
- there are no hidden issues, and no last minute surprises
- decisions are made when parents are at the meeting, or agreed with them before the meeting takes place, not after the meeting is closed, unless further consultation takes place with them
- ample time is given to allow people to raise concerns, so that decisions are not rushed.

Identifying the way forward works well when:

- all views are taken on board – including those of the child or young person
- people are interested in learning from each other
- people show an interest in general family priorities and take them on board
- services work together in a corporate way
- services are responsive to individual needs

Accountability and involvement works well when:

- roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood
- parents' concerns are responded to quickly
- decisions are open to scrutiny
- parents have a clear point of contact who can answer questions, make decisions and ensure that agreed actions are taken
- people do what they agreed within the timescale(s) committed to – if a decision is likely to take time, parents are told and given some idea of when a decision is likely

APPENDIX 2 - RAISING CONCERNS OVER A DISAGREEMENT AT SCHOOL LEVEL WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This appendix sets out the principles surrounding the procedure operated by the Additional Learning Needs Team (ALN Team) when dealing with a disagreement involving a child/young person with additional support needs. The ALN Team based at Ogilvie House, Livingston, provides a focus for the handling of such disagreements and people who contact the ALN Team will have access to an openly responsible and accountable service. Responsibility for dealing with all such contacts lies with the Principal Support Officer, ALN.

The Principal Support Officer will investigate relevant concerns raised, take an objective view and make recommendations for resolving them with regard to the delivery of services of children/young persons living in West Lothian who have additional support needs.

Within this procedure, the council will ensure that:

- individuals wishing to raise concerns know the procedure for doing so
- the ALN Team respond to concerns within a reasonable time, courteously and efficiently
- users of this service are satisfied that their concerns have been taken seriously and have been properly dealt with

Principles of the procedure followed by the ALN Team when dealing with a disagreement involving children and young persons with additional support needs

An effective procedure will promote conciliation rather than confrontation and therefore be of benefit to everyone involved.

The following six principles facilitate an effective Disagreement Resolution Procedure involving Children and Young Persons with Additional Support Needs.

The System will be welcoming:

It will be made clear to the individual who they should contact in the event they wish to raise their concern(s).

People are often reluctant to raise concerns for various reasons. People will be encouraged to seek support/bring along a relative, friend or interpreter to any meetings that may be arranged in connection with their concern(s). Arrangements will be made to provide interpreters for those requiring a sign language facility or, if required, for those whose first language is not English.

The System will be simple to understand and use

Concerns will be dealt with using clearly set out procedures that are easy to understand. Procedures will, where possible, be consistent across different parts of the council.

The Procedure will be prompt

Concerns will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Parents/young persons will be kept informed of progress and given an explanation if deadlines are not met.

The Procedure will ensure a full and fair investigation

All concerns will be thoroughly and objectively investigated. This system will aim to ensure that individuals who raise concerns are not made to feel their concerns are unjustified.

The Procedure will respect people's rights to confidentiality

Raising concerns and any action which follows will be dealt with in a confidential manner limited to those directly involved. Concerns which are received by the ALN team will be kept on a database and access will be limited to those directly involved.

The procedure will address all the points at issue, and provide an effective response and appropriate redress.

Redress, appropriate to the nature of the concern, will be considered on an individual basis.

NOTE: before liability is admitted and compensation offered, there must be full consultation through the Risk and Insurance Officer and appropriate insurers.

Where it appears that the subject matter of the desired payment is outwith the terms of the insurance policy, payment should be made on the understanding that the amount paid will represent 'full and final settlement' of any claim.

APPENDIX 3 - AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY RELATING TO DISAGREEMENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN/YOUNG PERSONS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The Director of Education & Cultural Services is responsible for:

- assuring quality across Education and Cultural Services
- providing a pro-active and responsive service by the progressive development of a quality management culture
- providing advice, support and information to the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Committee and individual Councillors on the development and implementation of policy, for which they are democratically accountable.
- ensuring that a service is provided to pupils and parents on the management of pupil placements, support for pupils with additional support needs, integration of pupils requiring additional support for learning and the provision, as appropriate, of transport, free meals, clothing and bursaries
- providing a single point of responsibility for dealing with concerns about services and responses to all who make use of Education and Cultural Services
- providing a conciliation and mediation service and involvement in Scottish Public Services Ombudsman investigations.

Headteachers and Heads of Establishment are responsible for:

- being available to listen to concerns
- making suitable arrangements to meet users of Education & Cultural Services
- ensuring concerns are acknowledged quickly and courteously, listening to what is being said and responding appropriately
- making every effort to resolve disagreements
- keeping a record of concerns, subsequent enquiries made and conclusions drawn
- monitoring concerns in order to make adjustments in service delivery if considered necessary
- offering advice to members of staff on strategies for dealing with concerns positively
- providing leadership to staff in developing professional relationships with people
- co-operating with the ALN team in the event of a parent/young person raising a concern over additional support needs

The Principal Support Officer, ALN is responsible for:

- adopting an objective position, mediating between parents/young persons and members of staff, making every effort to encourage the resolution of concerns at local level and making recommendations to help resolve all concerns
- resolving concerns raised by members of the public in regard to children/young persons with additional support needs
- providing an open, responsible and responsive avenue of redress for concerns in relation to children/young persons with additional support needs
- ensuring concerns are acknowledged quickly
- meeting parents/young persons and members of staff to investigate complains when appropriate.
- liaising with other agencies as appropriate, eg the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, Social Policy, Health and the Police
- offering advice and support to members of the public in the raising of a concern about a child/young person with additional support needs
- offering advice and support to members of staff in the course of an investigation

- establishing a database of all concerns referred to the ALN team
- keeping records of concerns, of subsequent enquiries made, conclusions drawn and action taken
- publicising the procedure for Resolving Disagreements involving Children and Young Persons with Additional Support Needs
- giving feedback to the Senior Officer Review Group (SORG) to facilitate monitoring and evaluating of procedures and practice
- interpreting and analysing issues affecting children/young persons with additional support needs to prevent similar concerns arising
- reporting annually to the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Committee