

Emergency motions lodged with council on provision of education for children with additional support needs

Two political groups, the Greens and Liberal Democrats have lodged emergency motions on education which the Lord Provost has accepted for debate on Thursday.

These ask for an urgent briefing note to be prepared by officers on the provision of teaching for children with additional support needs (ASN). This has given rise to recent confusion on the part of many parents.

Historically, education has been provided in Enhanced Support Bases (ESBs) which have been rolled out to nine schools in the capital in recent years. These allow children attend the units situated in mainstream school and where appropriate to attend classes in the mainstream school.

Parents were invited to make applications on behalf of their children and all of those we spoke to have had their applications for a place in an ESB rejected, with the offer of a mainstream school place for the child "with enhanced support provision".

This is a term which parents have told us they do not understand and say it has been newly coined by the council but means nothing.

The Liberal Democrats explain that ESBs are “an invaluable part of educational landscape which allow children and young people with additional support needs to receive tailored support in many subjects whilst taking advantage of many of the opportunities that mainstream provisions can offer them”.

[We explained the experience of several parents here.](#)

The council has denied that any cuts in the provision of education for these children is being made.

Emergency Motion by the Green Group

City of Edinburgh Council 8 February 2024 Enhanced Support Bases

Council:

- 1) Expresses concern about recent press reports regarding young people whose applications to Enhanced Support Bases have been refused and the impact this may have on young people with additional support needs and their families;
- 2) Welcomes initial reassurances from Senior Council Officers that ESB provision has not been stopped;
- 3) Requests an urgent briefing note to confirm this and clarify the situation regarding ESB provision going forward, including details of communication with providers and parents, and any relevant financial information about funding of ESB provision, ahead of the 14th February budget motion deadline.

Moved by: Cllr Alys Mumford
Seconded by:

Emergency Motion by the Liberal Democrat Group

City of Edinburgh Council

8 February 2024

Education Support Bases

Council believes:

- 1) That children and young people with additional support needs have a right to the same educational opportunities as all other children and young people
- 2) That in line with Getting it Right for Every Child Principles educational provision for young people with additional support needs should reflect their individual requirements whether that be in mainstream or alternative settings.
- 3) Education Support Bases are an invaluable part of educational landscape which allow children and young people with additional support needs to receive tailored support in many subjects whilst taking advantage of many of the opportunities that mainstream provisions can offer them.
- 4) Families of children with additional support needs often face additional challenges during the transition period between primary school and high school and when there is significant anxiety amongst this community of parents the local authority has a duty to provide reassurance.

Council notes:

- 5) Concerns expressed to elected members from a significant number of parents about the provision of additional support needs education in the city
- 6) A significant number of parents received official rejection letters following the 30th January deadline for full council motions and following the last meeting of Education, Children and Families Committee.

7) Full council is not meeting again until the 21st March and Education, Children and Families Committee is not meeting again until the 16th April. Leaving families is a state of significant anxiety for a long period of time.

Therefore council agrees

8) That an urgent communication plan needs to be executed in order to reassure families of children with ASN that Enhanced Support Bases are being retained

9) An urgent briefing is held within the next week for Education, Children and Families Committee members updating them on the ASN review and the current situation regarding placement applications for children with additional support needs

10) An update report is provided to the next Education, Children and Families Committee on the status of the Additional Support Needs Review. This should include a comparison of the number and outcome of applications to enhanced supports bases and other alternative provisions between this year and last.

11) Officers will make urgent contact with families rejected for ESB's or other alternative provisions to discuss their concerns.

Moved by: Cllr Euan Davidson

Seconded by: Cllr Louise Young