



# Ask Us, Hear Us, Include Us!

## A Professional Learning Guide

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# The Resource

The professional learning resource is built around the film '[Ask Us, Hear Us, Include Us](#)' which was created by the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion. The resource comprises of the film, an accompanying powerpoint presentation and this professional learning guide.

## Who are the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion?

The Young Ambassadors for Inclusion are young people with additional support needs who have been nominated by their local authority to join a network<sup>1</sup> which provides an opportunity for them to share their views and experiences of Scottish education. Twenty-six local authorities have been represented since the network began.

Through discussion and activities the Young Ambassadors have identified the ways they feel schools are doing well in their provision of inclusive education and also where improvements could be made. They have shared their ideas with the Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Parliament.

## What was the purpose of the film?

The Young Ambassadors were keen to share their views on what works in inclusive education. They decided to create a film which could allow their views to be heard and help staff understand how to support young people with additional support needs.

## Aims for the resource:

The film and accompanying resources can be used to:

1. Understand the views of the Young Ambassadors about what is working and what could be improved in relation to inclusion in education
2. Consider how you currently seek the views of young people with additional support needs in your school
3. Explore ways that you can make your school more inclusive

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<sup>1</sup> The network is funded by Scottish Government and supported by staff from Education Scotland and Enquire

# How Can this Resource be Used?

This resource can contribute to continuing professional development and to school or service improvement. Suggestions for a 55 minute session are detailed below but this resource can be used flexibly.

## 1. Session Plan (55 minutes)

### Aims of the session

To help staff to:

- Understand the views of the Young Ambassadors about what is working and what could be improved in relation to Inclusion
- Consider how we currently seek the views of young people with additional support needs in this school
- Explore ways that we can make our school more inclusive

### Preparation

- Check digital projector, computer and speakers are available and working
- Flipchart , flipchart paper and pens
- Printouts of full Professional learning guide or of Appendix 1 to 8
- If wifi is available check embedded film plays in the slideshow. If not use the downloadable film available on the Improvement Hub page

### Format

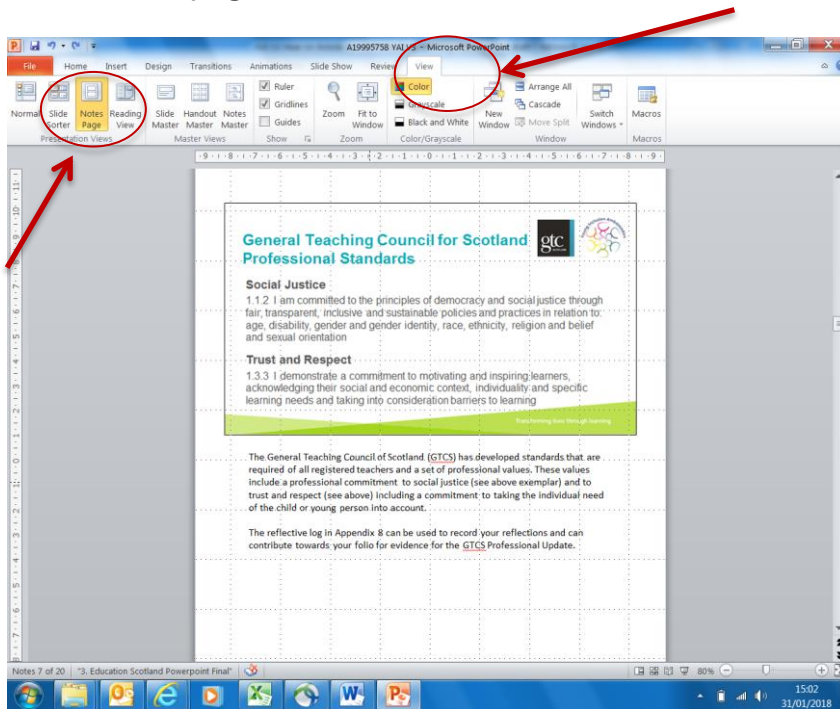
If the session is being held with a staff group of around 12 or under the group tasks can be whole staff tasks. For larger groups it is useful to subdivide into smaller groups for the activities.

### Timing of the Session

Slide 1-7	Introduction and background	5 minutes
Slide 8	Activity 1	10 minutes
Slide 9	Show the film	8 minutes
Slide 10	Activity 2	
	Discuss with partner	5 minutes
	Group discussion	5 minutes
Slide 11	Introduce Activity 3	2 minutes
Slide 12-16	Explore <b>one</b> theme from these slides	
	Read the Young Ambassadors notes	3 minutes
	Answer the solution oriented questions	10 minutes
Slide 17	Key messages	2 minutes
Slide 17	Choose a first step for change	5 minutes
<b>Total</b>		<b>55 minutes</b>

## Powerpoint Notes

Notes for each slide are written on the notes section of the slide. To view these notes choose 'view' then 'notes page'. See screenshot below:



The notes for each slide explain the content of the slides and how to run the activities.

## What is covered in the session?

- Who are the Young Ambassadors?
- The themes identified by the Young Ambassadors
- The Inclusion Pledge
- The link to GTC Professional Standards
- Interactive Activities
- Watching the film 'Ask Us, hear Us, Include Us'
- Key messages from the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion
- An invitation to choose one improvement action to take forward

The themes identified by the Young Ambassadors are detailed below:



## **2. Follow up activities**

During the session only one of the five themes is explored in depth. As a follow up, small groups of staff or departments could consider other themes using the same format as described in Activity 3.

## **3. Seeking the views of young people**

Appendix 2 details examples of how your school/service staff could seek the views of your own young people. Staff may decide to start fresh dialogues with young people about their views of how well included they feel in the school. These conversations are likely to highlight areas of strength as well as areas where improvements can be made.

## Appendix 1 What does Inclusion Mean to Us?

Collation of responses to a brainstorming exercise with the Young Ambassadors for Inclusion.

<b>Included</b>	Everyone being included in education regardless of ..... No segregation Everyone is involved, nobody is left out Adapting teaching methods so everyone can be included no matter what the barriers young people face
<b>Accepted</b>	Everyone accepted - having friends Accepting differences Nobody judges others Not being made to feel different from others Being accepted for who you are - don't change for anyone Not putting people down because of educational barriers Not being defined by any difficulties you have
<b>Belonging</b>	Finding people to relate to Involvement
<b>Equal</b>	Same quality of learning or group for everyone Targeted equally to erase discrimination Being treated equally
<b>Accessible</b>	Steps (physical access)
<b>Understood</b>	Understanding between pupil and teacher Feeling understood (teacher gains a larger understanding of support needs)
<b>Needs met</b>	Need a space to do what we like Being able to meet everyone's needs
<b>Opportunity</b>	Being able to work together with a range of people
<b>Awareness</b>	Pupil awareness of additional support needs
<b>Safety</b>	Feeling safe Comforts No Pressure
<b>Attitude</b>	Positivity
<b>Communication</b>	Communication vital Voicing opinions
<b>Respect Supported</b>	Being respected The right help and support Support those experiencing difficulties Being able to support your peers Support for further education - this may require more support for young people who need it

## Appendix 2

### Listening and gathering children and young people's views

Participation and engagement work is an important mechanism to ensure we are listening and reflecting on the needs, views and preferences of the children and young people we are working with. In all participation and engagement work, children and young people should be actively listened to, treated fairly and have their opinions respected and taken seriously.

Before undertaking activities to gather pupils views it's helpful to:

- plan the session carefully (thinking about the individual pupils that are expected to be involved)
- ensure the activities planned are inclusive for all pupils and that support is available to any child who may need it to take part. Adapt the activities where needed
- consider if there are any child protection issues that might arise
- design participation activities that are suitable to the age and stage of the pupils that are to be involved
- explain to the pupils involved why their views are being sought and what will happen once they have given their views

Children in Scotland have created a useful set of principles and guidelines for practitioners undertaking participation work with children and young people. For more details about planning and participation see <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Principles-and-Guidelines-FINAL.pdf>

### Three examples of ways to collect pupils' views

(These can be modified depending on the topic and age of pupil)

#### 1. "Hot" topics

Resources needed



- Green and red paper cut into the shape of chillies
- A pot or bowl

Ask pupils to think about what's important to them about a given topic. Ask pupils to write/draw on the chili shaped card what are "hot" topics for them. Pupils can write/draw the issues that are important to them on green chillies and choose the one that is the most important to write on a red chili. Ask pupils to place the chillies in the bowl (by putting the chillies in the bowl, pupils issues remain anonymous).

It can be useful to use the information on the chillies to have further discussion about common themes and action that might be required to resolve issues.



Example: This would be a good method for gathering information on pupils' views on school improvements or issues pupils want to cover in a PSE lesson.

## 2. Body Voting



### Resources needed

- A space for pupils to move around in.
- Paper or card

If you are asking pupils to give their views about a series of options, write the options on separate pieces of card and stick them round the room with plenty space between them. Then ask pupils to move to the option they want to choose. Count the number of pupils at each station and record.

Example: This can be a useful methodology if you are asking multiple questions. For example if you want to know whether pupils feel they know where to go for help the cards round the room would have the name of the different type of person a child might go to (e.g. class teacher, guidance, teacher, parent, friend, GP, nobody etc) and you could ask "Who would you talk to if you were worried about your school work?" "Who would you talk to if you were being bullied?"

## 3. Traffic light voting



### Resources needed

- Red, Green or Orange card cut into circles

If you are asking pupils to give their views about a series of options give each pupil a red, green and orange card. Explain to pupils that the red card means they don't like an option, green means they really like an option and orange means they are not sure whether they like an option or don't have strong opinions about an option. Read out the options or issues and ask them to use their cards to vote.

Example: This can be a useful method to gather information about action that children would like to take such as agreeing on a school action plan or to collect views on how children feel in school by voting on whether they agree with certain statements e.g. "I feel really included in school" or "I know where I can ask for help if I am worried".

## Appendix 3 Friendship and Belonging

The comments and ideas below were gathered during various activities and discussions with the Young Ambassadors.

Issues raised	Ideas of what can help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be hard to develop friendships</li> <li>• It's hard. I don't feel there is anyone to go to if there is a problem</li> <li>• I don't have many friends</li> <li>• You don't want to attend school: you feel depressed like you have no one</li> <li>• It can be difficult to keep friends if you have additional support needs and you are in mainstream schools</li> <li>• It was okay in S1 and S2 being in the base and in mainstream but in S3 I didn't feel part of mainstream school</li> <li>• Deaf people don't have the confidence to mix with mainstream so it can be difficult to keep friendships going. I don't always want to mix with deaf people</li> <li>• I had to fight for opportunities to have time in the mainstream</li> <li>• Social areas in public can be inaccessible and that can affect friendships. There isn't access into friends' homes so you stop getting invited</li> <li>• There can be a stigma with other pupils</li> <li>• Secondary school atmosphere is harder than primary</li> <li>• It feels very low to be left out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clubs-some people bring friends</li> <li>• Teachers should be helping peer relationships</li> <li>• Introducing children to other children-finding out why they are alone and trying to sort it</li> <li>• Finding friends through common interests</li> <li>• People's influence</li> <li>• A simplified version of human rights</li> <li>• Make sure no one makes fun of us</li> <li>• Help people find confidence</li> <li>• Look for ways for quieter people to become included in discussions</li> <li>• Singing</li> <li>• Raise awareness of inclusion across society</li> <li>• Peer mentoring-We've got a buddy programme which supports the first years from the seniors and helps them through the years of moving up in high school</li> <li>• Ask us if we would like to take part in something-don't assume we can't</li> <li>• Zero tolerance of bullying and intimidation</li> <li>• Create a culture</li> <li>• Some support groups are really helpful places to go where the staff understand and respect us</li> <li>• Understanding of ASN (see Awareness section)</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 Positive Attitudes

The comments and ideas below were gathered during various activities and discussions with the Young Ambassadors.

Issues raised	Ideas of what can help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes can be good but wish they could be better</li> <li>• Sometimes we don't feel included</li> <li>• There can be a stigma with pupils</li> <li>• Sometimes we aren't offered a choice</li> <li>• Treating young people as if they are misbehaving when sometimes the pupils are struggling</li> <li>• Teacher attitudes can change (for the worse) if you are struggling</li> <li>• The timetable you get shouldn't put all the people with ASN in one class unless the pupil chose this for a particular reason</li> <li>• Community attitudes can be the hardest to change e.g. on the bus, in the shops, at the swimming pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put yourself in young people's shoes</li> <li>• Teachers should try to see the views of pupils too</li> <li>• If teachers have positive attitudes towards people with ASD (or other ASN) and try to understand what their needs are and why they are acting the way they are</li> <li>• Be careful not to segregate by needs</li> <li>• Pupils need to let teachers know why they are struggling</li> <li>• Staff need to keep an eye on people who are struggling</li> <li>• Support staff being friendly</li> <li>• It helps to be patient with pupils with ASN</li> <li>• Need a good attitude – don't rush pupils with ASN. It can be really frustrating for pupils if teachers rush them</li> <li>• Encourage pupils to try to understand other people's support requirements (for example a young person with autism not having to wear school uniform)</li> <li>• We should have the right to be different and not to be judged for it from teachers</li> <li>• We should have access to all areas of the school and the curriculum</li> <li>• Take opportunities to share that people are different and you should not make fun of them</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5 Awareness of Additional Support Needs

The comments and ideas below were gathered during various activities and discussions with the Young Ambassadors.

Issues raised	Ideas of what can help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lack of consistency in teachers' understanding of ASN. Teachers need better training about ASN.</li> <li>• Many class teachers and other staff don't have an awareness of ASN, what that means for us and how to support us in the classroom</li> <li>• People do not understand that I find some subjects difficult e.g. tests in French</li> <li>• There is not enough knowledge of conditions/ASN</li> <li>• Staff don't understand why pupils are struggling-they think they are misbehaving</li> <li>• Supply teachers are not always aware that young people have ASN (e.g. I never got out of class although there is an arrangement that I can)</li> <li>• Teachers need reminders about how to support pupils with ASD</li> <li>• Looked after children-teachers get annoyed at us missing work but it's not our fault</li> <li>• Conflict arises when staff are not aware- not everyone wants to announce that they have ASN</li> <li>• It's not good when schools don't do anything about issues when they are raised</li> <li>• It's hard when you have to keep explaining CAMHS's issues to school staff</li> <li>• We shouldn't have to explain everything to teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure staff have some training on inclusion and the different areas of ASN</li> <li>• Whole school awareness of ASN can support much better understanding and reduce stigma and isolation</li> <li>• Improve communication between teachers/students/other staff</li> <li>• Make sure we can access the curriculum: IT/scribes/readers etc.</li> <li>• Make schools aware of inclusion</li> <li>• Schools can share resources</li> <li>• Share stories about inclusion</li> <li>• Take part in a national week/awareness raising day e.g. blue ribbon for autism awareness</li> <li>• It is good when we are listened to and asked what we need</li> <li>• When staff have an understanding of different ASN and then can understand certain behaviours it helps them to understand why young people with ASN act in a particular way</li> <li>• Adapt meetings to suit needs</li> <li>• Curriculum needs to be more flexible to help us gain the most out of it</li> </ul>

## Appendix 6 Asking for Help

The comments and ideas below were gathered during various activities and discussions with the Young Ambassadors.

Issues raised	Ideas of what can help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When I feel there is no respect for people with ASD that would stop me asking for help</li> <li>• If things have gone badly in the past that would stop me asking for help again</li> <li>• It's hard when people don't help me in the right way</li> <li>• It's a problem when they tell parents without permission</li> <li>• Teachers telling other pupils about personal issues</li> <li>• Not feeling part of mainstream (puts me off asking for help)</li> <li>• Stigma with pupils</li> <li>• Sometimes it's hard to express feelings-staff do not understand what children are going through</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening and asking young people what they need</li> <li>• Good emotional support: supportive teachers in mainstream</li> <li>• For mental health: it's helpful knowing there is someone you can go to</li> <li>• It helps to feel listened to by teachers</li> <li>• To have groups for issues that young people are dealing with e.g. transgender, LGBT</li> <li>• Knowing there is help to support us to work through our emotional issues</li> <li>• We should try and solve problems as one</li> <li>• Good staff and headteachers</li> <li>• We should come together as one team. Don't be afraid to speak your mind.</li> <li>• Teachers should communicate with pupils at all times</li> <li>• In my case it'd be I need to trust the person that I'm asking for help so that they could listen and actually take in what I'm saying</li> <li>• A time-out card</li> </ul>

## Appendix 7 Support

The comments and ideas below were gathered during various activities and discussions with the Young Ambassadors.

Issues raised	Ideas of what can help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not being told about support that is available</li> <li>• When staff are off-this impacts on support being available</li> <li>• Support staff have ideas of what young people are good at or not. Don't make assumptions</li> <li>• Teachers shouldn't make hidden support needs public to others</li> <li>• Staff are not updated enough or change too often</li> <li>• Need to respect pupils more</li> <li>• Limited help</li> <li>• Must be careful not to segregate by needs</li> <li>• Dyslexia: some teachers understand however some think technology is the answer. Not in everyone's case. One less subject plus more study time.</li> <li>• As pupils get older they need to be treated with more respect/maturity</li> <li>• Teachers need qualifications to work with people with ASN/medical needs</li> <li>• Not getting opportunities to try new things. If school don't support you to try things how will we ever get the chance.</li> <li>• When moving from primary to secondary I got help from someone for 1 ½ years but then they left and I wasn't prepared</li> <li>• Shortages-there is a reduction in support</li> <li>• Not getting to make subject choices. Teachers say you are best to do these subjects. You have to fight to do the ones you want.</li> <li>• When you are forced to do subjects you are not interested in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers help and accept</li> <li>• Having a choice and being asked</li> <li>• Developing relationships with staff- they know you better, making learning experiences a bit easier</li> <li>• Support us during tests</li> <li>• Having interpreters all the time</li> <li>• Support staff being friendly</li> <li>• Need someone to scribe</li> <li>• Extra time for exams</li> <li>• Consistent staff</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Pupils should have timeout if they need to calm down</li> <li>• Give pupils the chance to try new things. Provide opportunities the same as for other pupils</li> <li>• Keep an eye on the pupils who are struggling</li> <li>• Do not ignore us</li> <li>• Offer different types of support</li> <li>• Can I just try a subject the same way that someone without ASN would get to do?</li> <li>• We need to be able to ask and get the information we need</li> <li>• I can't be in school a lot so need study support and extra help</li> <li>• Adapting times for pupils with mental health difficulties to do exams at different times</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• School staff to be aware of age and stage</li> </ul>

**Education Scotland**

Denholm House

Almondvale Business Park

Almondvale Way

Livingston EH54 6GA

**T** +44 (0)141 282 5000

**E** [enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk)

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)