



CONSULTATION REPORT

Consultation Report on the Proposal to Change Falkirk Council's Enhanced Provision Model

9 February 2026

This document has been issued by Falkirk Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010



Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings of the statutory consultation on the proposal to change Falkirk Council's model of Primary Enhanced Provision. The proposal was developed in response to increasing levels of Additional Support Needs (ASN) across the authority, alongside growing pressure on access to Enhanced Provision places. The overall aim was to improve equity of access to enhanced support - ensuring that children receive the right support, at the right time and within their local school communities wherever possible.

The consultation generated a significant level of engagement, with 1,194 responses received through the Participate+ platform, supplemented by extensive feedback from public meetings, focus groups, written submissions and pupil-voice responses.

Alongside this engagement, the Council's statutory impact assessment processes were followed, including the completion of an initial Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) at the proposal stage and, subsequently, the development of a full EPIA and Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) - informed by the consultation feedback and children's views.

Analysis of the consultation evidence indicates that, while there was broad understanding of and support for the ambition of strengthening enhanced support across all schools, a key factor influencing confidence in the proposal was the extent to which parents, carers and staff felt assured that mainstream schools currently have the capacity to deliver enhanced provision-level support consistently and safely across all settings.

In particular, parents, carers and staff expressed concern about maintaining children's wellbeing, continuity of support and the potential dilution of the skilled teaching currently available within Enhanced Provisions. Consultees also questioned whether staffing capacity, training and physical environments within mainstream schools were sufficiently developed to support the safe, consistent and sustainable delivery of this level of support.

On the basis of this feedback, Education Services recognises that while the majority of parents of children within mainstream settings expressed confidence in their child's needs being met within their local catchment school, the consultation also highlighted lower levels of confidence among parents of children with more significant needs. Staff and partners also reported that full confidence in system-wide capacity is not yet sufficiently established. In response to this evidence, **Education Services will recommend to Elected Members that the proposal should not be progressed and there will, therefore, be no change to Enhanced Provisions as a result of this consultation.** All existing Enhanced Provisions will remain in place, and **current arrangements governing access to these provisions will continue.**

In order to further build confidence within school communities, **Education Services will continue to strengthen the capacity of all schools to meet children's additional support needs**, supported by additional ASN funding from the Scottish Government. This work will focus on developing staff confidence, consistency of practice and access to skilled support over time - building on existing strengths within Falkirk schools.

The outcomes of the consultation and the associated next steps will be brought forward to Elected Members through a report to Executive (including Education), aligned with the conclusions and recommendations set out in this report.

To support clarity and accessibility, particularly for parents, carers and members of the wider community, a glossary of key terms used throughout this report is provided in Appendix 6. This explains commonly used education and statutory terminology in plain English and is intended to support understanding of the proposal and consultation findings.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Table of Contents	4
1. The Proposal and Statement of Clarification	5
2. Reasons for this proposal.....	6
3. Introduction.....	9
4. Background	10
5. Consultation Process.....	13
6. Responses to the Consultation Exercise	14
7. Education Services Response to the Main Issues Raised	31
8. Education Scotland Report.....	45
9. Consultation conclusions.....	47

1. The Proposal and Statement of Clarification

Falkirk Council proposed, subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process, that:

- The current Primary Enhanced Provision model will be restructured so that every primary school in Falkirk Council will be supported to develop the capacity to provide an appropriate level of enhanced support
- Current pupils who attend an Enhanced Provision, which is not within their catchment school, will return to their catchment school and be educated in their local community, with an appropriate level of enhanced support
- There would be no requirement for future referrals to the Education Resource Group (ERG), for Enhanced Provision placement schools, as this support would be embedded in the mainstream structure with schools being provided with the resources to provide the right support at the right time within their own community
- Totality of additional resources will be redistributed across all 47 Primary schools. This devolved model would then align with the current Secondary model of devolved support to schools.

During the statutory consultation period, concerns were raised about the interpretation of wording contained within the original proposal paper, in particular the statement that:

'Current pupils who attend an Enhanced Provision, which is not within their catchment school, will return to their catchment school and be educated in their local community, with an appropriate level of enhanced support.'

Consultees expressed concern that this wording could be interpreted as indicating that all children currently attending an Enhanced Provision would be required to return to their catchment school as a direct result of the proposal. These concerns were raised during public meetings, through written representations and within focus group discussions. This interpretation was not the intention of the proposal.

To ensure clarity, transparency and fairness for all consultees, and to prevent any potential misinterpretation of the scope or intent of the proposal, Falkirk Council issued a formal Statement of Clarification on 22 September 2025. The clarification was published on the Participate+ platform, where it could be clearly seen prior to any consultees completing the survey and subsequent presentations were updated accordingly. Education Scotland and consultees were then notified of this update.

The statement of clarification confirmed that:

- No decision had been made regarding the final model of enhanced support
- No child currently attending an Enhanced Provision would be required or compelled to move school as a result of the proposal
- Any future movement of pupils would continue to be governed by existing GIRFEC and multi-agency planning processes, based on individual need, professional judgement and agreement with families
- The proposal described an ambition to strengthen enhanced support within local schools over time, rather than a requirement for immediate or mandatory transitions.

The statement in full was as follows:

Statement on the Proposal for Enhanced Support in Every Falkirk Primary School

'Following the ongoing consultation activity, discussion and feedback, we want to clarify that no decision has been made regarding the model of enhanced support and we would continue to encourage engagement from all relevant stakeholders. We want the final approach to reflect the needs and aspirations of all. At the very core of the proposal, we seek a way to ensure that every Falkirk child receives the right support, in the right place, at the right time, within their own school and community.'

We want to provide clarity around some wording in the consultation paper, particularly relating to the suggestion that all children who currently attend an Enhanced Provision would be required to return to their catchment school. We would like to be very clear that no child will be forced to move school. The proposal sets out the ambition that, if every school is equipped with the staff and resource to provide enhanced support, children could be educated in their local school and community. This remains a goal in the proposal that could be achieved through careful transition, planning and collaboration.'

The clarification did not alter the intention of the proposal or its underlying goal, which remained focused on improving access to the right support, in the right place, at the right time, within local school communities. The clarification was issued to ensure that the written proposal could not be interpreted as requiring mandatory movement of children and to support a clear and shared understanding of the consultation.

Having considered the nature of the issue raised and the action taken, the Council concluded that issuing a public statement of clarification was an appropriate and proportionate response.

The full proposal paper and slides used at public meetings can be found in Appendix 2 and Appendix 10 respectively.

2. Reasons for this proposal

Falkirk Council uses a staged intervention framework to ensure that children receive the right level of support. Each stage of intervention is designed to be informed by ongoing assessment, professional judgement and partnership with parents and carers. The Staged Intervention Framework is to support individual child planning in a consistent and phased/staged way.

At Stage 1, children's needs are met through high-quality universal practice within the classroom and wider school environment. At Stage 2, additional or targeted supports are introduced where required, with progress monitored and reviewed through planned interventions. Where assessment indicates that a child has significant additional support needs that cannot be met through Stages 1 or 2 alone, Stage 3 interventions may be appropriate.

Stage 3 of the intervention framework is utilised when a child requires co-ordinated, enhanced support that exceeds universal and targeted approaches.

Rather than relating to a single diagnosis or provision, it encompasses a broad spectrum of learning, communication, and wellbeing profiles. This stage is inherently fluid, allowing learners to move between stages as their needs evolve.

Operationally, Stage 3 is underpinned by a Child's Plan and regular 'Team Around the Child' processes. It is delivered through a strategic combination of school-based resources, devolved funding and, in some cases, support from central Education Services. Only when robust assessment demonstrates that these enhanced interventions are insufficient to meet the young person's needs is Stage 4 of the framework then considered.

Enhanced Provisions (EPs) are a Stage 3 support. They were established over 20 years ago within 15 mainstream primary schools to support a small number of children whose needs could not, at that time, be fully met through mainstream support alone. Over time, patterns of demand have changed significantly. While applications to Enhanced Provision continue to exceed available places (Appendix 1, Table 1), the overall number of children supported through Enhanced Provisions has increased over the last decade (Appendix 1, Table 2).

EPs operate as part of mainstream schools and represent one established model of delivering Stage 3 enhanced support, providing access to higher levels of staffing, smaller and more structured environments, and skilled approaches while maintaining children's connection to peers and the curriculum. Access to EP support is flexible and responsive to need: some children attend full-time for a period, others access support alongside their mainstream class, and some move in and out of EP provision over time through ongoing assessment, multi-agency planning and regular review.

Falkirk Council has increased ASN teaching capacity within mainstream primary schools, including the allocation of an additional 22 Inclusion teachers from session 2023/24 onwards to support children at Stage 3 (and 4) within their local schools (Appendix 1, Table 4). This shift was communicated transparently to parents through the ASN Parent Forum in October 2023 (Appendix 1, Figure 1).

Many of Falkirk's primary schools - particularly those without an Enhanced Provision - have built strong internal capacity to support children with Stage 3 needs within their local catchment schools. As the range and scale of need has increased, schools have responded by developing staff skills and putting in place more tailored resources and interventions. There has also been a stronger focus on planning, monitoring and review through Child's Plan processes - alongside effective use of devolved funding, central services, partner agencies and wider support.

As a result, a high number of children who require enhanced support at Stage 3 are being supported successfully within their local mainstream schools rather than through placement in an EP (see Appendix 1, Table 6). The operation of the staged intervention framework, including arrangements for Stage 3 enhanced support in both mainstream schools and Enhanced Provisions, is set out in detail within the Staged Intervention Process Maps included in Appendix 15 and Appendix 16.

This has resulted, however, in a mixed system across the authority. Some schools have well-developed enhanced support embedded within their own mainstream offer, while others continue to rely more heavily on access to EP placements.

This creates variability in experience, confidence and capacity across Falkirk - even where children's levels of need are similar and comparable.

As of session 2025-26, Falkirk Council educates 21,103 children and young people, with 43.43% having an identified additional support need. This figure reflects a wide range of needs, many of which are short-term or successfully met through universal and targeted supports. Of these pupils, 1,082 are recorded at Stage 3 of the staged intervention framework, including approximately 722 primary-aged children.

Within this context, 278 primary pupils (38.2% of Stage 3 primary school learners) currently access an Enhanced Provision place, meaning that the majority of children (446 in total, 61.8% of Stage 3 primary school learners) at this level of need are already being supported within their mainstream schools, through devolved resources and central services. This distribution of provision, and the concentration of places within a limited number of schools, is set out in Appendix 1, Tables 5 and 6.

The proposal was therefore developed in response to three connected pressures:

- rising levels and broader range of need;
- inequity of access created by a limited number of Enhanced Provision sites, meaning some children allocated an EP placement can remain in their catchment school, whereas others can't; and
- growing evidence that enhanced support can be delivered effectively across a wider range of mainstream settings when appropriately resourced.

The proposal set out Falkirk Council's ambition to enable all primary schools to deliver equitable enhanced support at Stage 3 for the diverse range of learners who require this level of provision, rather than concentrating EPs within a small number of locations only. This was intended to support:

- more equitable access to enhanced support;
- greater consistency and confidence in support across schools;
- support following the child to their catchment school, rather than the child needing to move/attend a provision elsewhere; and
- a more sustainable and adaptable system as needs continue to grow and change.

The proposal represented a strategic direction for consultation with stakeholders rather than a final delivery model. The implementation framework, including resourcing and specific timescales, would be finalised following the outcome of the consultation to ensure the most effective and sustainable delivery model - developed in tandem with stakeholder feedback.

Crucially, the proposal - alongside the formal clarification issued during the consultation - made clear that no child currently attending an Enhanced Provision would be required to move and that any future transitions would continue to be based on multi-agency planning and agreement with families.

The final recommendations arising from this consultation, including any changes to the proposal in light of representations received, are set out in Section 9 of this report.

3. Introduction

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. It sets out the process undertaken by Falkirk Council to consult on proposed changes to the current model of Enhanced Provision (EP) in primary schools and presents all evidence gathered during the statutory consultation period.

This statutory consultation has been carried out in accordance with Falkirk Council's Community Engagement Strategy, Charter and Framework. The engagement approach was planned to be proportionate to the nature and scope of the proposal and to provide appropriate opportunities for those affected to be informed and to share their views. A range of engagement methods were used to support accessibility and participation, reflecting the principles set out in the Council's Community Engagement Strategy, Charter and the National Standards for Community Engagement. The feedback gathered through these processes has informed this consultation report and will be considered as part of the Council's decision-making process.

The consultation sought views on Falkirk Council's proposal to strengthen access to enhanced support for children with additional support needs by moving from a model based on a limited number of Enhanced Provision sites to an approach where every primary school is equipped to deliver enhanced support in a consistent, sustainable and equitable way.

The consultation process began when the proposal paper was presented to the Executive (including Education) on 21 August 2025, where Elected Members approved the recommendation to undertake a statutory consultation in line with the 2010 Act. The statutory consultation ran from 29 August 2025 to 27 October 2025. Taking account of school holidays and the period during which consultees were able to engage and submit views, the consultation was open for 31 school days to exceed the requirements set out in the Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010. During which, representations could be made through the following:

- Public meetings (6)
- School and central Education staff only meetings (2)
- Partnership only meeting (1)
- Online Participate+ survey
- Focus groups (6)
- Written representations (53)
- Pupil-voice gathering within Enhanced Provisions (6)

This report also incorporates the independent report from Education Scotland, as required under the 2010 Act. Their report was received following their review period in November 2025, during which inspectors considered all consultation materials, public submissions, stakeholder views, and the Council's proposal.

In line with Falkirk Council's established process, an initial Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) was completed prior to the statutory consultation. The purpose of the initial EPIA is to act solely as a screening tool, identifying whether a proposal may impact people and therefore whether a full assessment will be required. It does not involve detailed analysis of impact.

Where the initial EPIA identifies that a proposal may have an impact, a full Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) is then undertaken, alongside a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA), as assessment tools. These assessments are completed following consultation and engagement with stakeholders and are used to inform the decision-making process, and the recommendations brought forward once the consultation has concluded. Both completed assessments can be found in Appendix 20 and Appendix 21.

The purpose of this final consultation report is to:

- Provide a record of the total number of written representations made during the statutory consultation period;
- Provide a summary of the written representations;
- Provide summary notes of oral representations made at the Public Meetings;
- Provide a statement of Education Services response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of Education Scotland's report and a statement of Education Services response to this report;
- State how Education Services reviewed the above proposal with regard to the representations received during the statutory consultation period and the report from Education Scotland; and
- Provide details of any omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Proposal Paper and state how Education Services acted upon it.

4. Background

EP placements are reviewed regularly through the Team Around the Child (TAC) process and ongoing assessment of need. Children may move flexibly between EP and mainstream classes as appropriate. Where children spend more time in mainstream, this does not mean that they lose their EP placement. Their enrolled school remains the school with an EP unless parents or carers specifically request a return to their local catchment school, or a different school by means of a Placing Request. Any such transition is planned through multi-agency discussion and agreed in partnership with families.

Enhanced Provision forms part of Falkirk's broader continuum of support, providing a higher level of provision for a smaller number of children whose needs cannot be fully met through the universal and targeted approaches, which are currently in all schools, alone. This level of support is delivered within a wider framework of provision, which includes:

- Universal, early, additional, enhanced and intensive support within schools
- Specialist outreach and central ASN services
- Educational Psychology Service
- Additional Support Centres (ASCs) at primary and secondary stages
- ASL Wing provision (Thistle Wing/Annexe and Timezone provisions)
- Carrongrange High School
- Windsor Park School and Sensory Service
- Inclusion and Wellbeing Service

While EPs have supported many children effectively, the model was developed at a time when levels and patterns of additional support need were considerably lower across the system. Over recent years, local experience in Falkirk has reflected national trends, with local authorities across Scotland reporting sustained growth in the number, range and diversity of reasons for children having additional support needs (see Appendix 1, Figure 2).

As set out in the original Proposal Paper, only 15 of Falkirk's 47 primary schools have a formal Enhanced Provision class. In addition, mapping undertaken as part of this work indicates that a much wider group of schools have developed, or are currently developing, in-house small-group teaching environments to support learners who require Stage 3 style supports. Based on this mapping, over 70% of all primary schools report having a small-group teaching space, including some schools which also host a formal Enhanced Provision.

The absence of a formally designated Enhanced Provision does not, therefore, equate to the absence of enhanced support in practice. Mapping detailed in Appendix 19 demonstrates that many schools without a formal Enhanced Provision have, through professional judgement and in response to local patterns of need, developed dedicated small-group teaching spaces and enhanced support arrangements. These arrangements are being used to deliver planned, structured and flexible support for children with significant additional support needs - similar in function to that historically associated with Enhanced Provisions.

Schools themselves commonly described these arrangements as 'nurture bases' or 'shadow' Enhanced Provisions. Their emergence reflects the changing profile and distribution of need across all Falkirk primary schools and illustrates how schools are already adapting practice to meet that need - albeit in ways that currently vary in consistency, sustainability and access.

Parallel to this, in 2024, Falkirk Council launched a comprehensive ASL Review involving every school, central ASN teams, partners, parents/carers, children and young people, wider ASN networks and other Local Authorities. Stakeholder engagement findings, gathered between October 2024 and June 2025, highlighted:

- The need for more consistent, equitable support across all schools
- The importance of early and timely intervention
- The crucial nature of a positive and successful transition from ELC (Early Learning and Childcare Centre) to Primary School and also from Primary School to Secondary School
- Staff requests for further training and shared approaches to supporting learners with a wider range of needs
- Variation in how enhanced support is currently delivered between establishments
- A strong desire from schools and families to reduce reliance on placing requests or movement between schools
- The need for a more sustainable model as levels and patterns of need continue to change.

These findings, as published through the ASL Review engagement feedback and summary of responses ([Project: Additional Support for Learning \(ASL\) within Fairer Schools and Communities \(ASL\) | Participate+](#)), supported the concept to expand enhanced support to all 47 primary schools - so that the desired equity of support could be achieved. This proposal sought to move from a model where Enhanced Provision is concentrated within a minority of schools to one where every school has the capacity, staffing and training to deliver enhanced support when required.

This approach is consistent with:

- GIRFEC principles¹
- The Presumption of Mainstreaming (2019)²
- National Inclusion and ASN policy direction³
- The findings of the national Additional Support for Learning Review (Morgan Review)⁴
- Themes emerging across Scotland regarding sustainable, community-based support models⁵
- The ASL Enquiry by the ECCYP (Education, Children and Young People Committee)⁶

The background therefore reflects a system where demand has increased significantly, prompting consideration of whether a concentrated model remains the most effective way to meet need and ensure children receive the right support in the right place. It also raises questions about the long-term sustainability and adaptability of the current model, and the extent to which it is sufficiently flexible to respond to future changes in levels and patterns of need.

¹ *Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)* — Scottish Government national policy framework on wellbeing, multi-agency support and early intervention for children and families. Official summary and context. [Scottish Government](#)

Link: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>

² *Guidance on the Presumption of Mainstreaming (2019)* — Scottish Government statutory guidance establishing the presumption that children with additional support needs should be educated in mainstream settings unless exceptions apply. [Scottish Government](#)

Link: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-presumption-provide-education-mainstream-setting/>

³ *National inclusion and ASN policy direction* — Scottish Government policy and statutory guidance on Additional Support for Learning in Scotland, including the *Supporting Children's Learning* statutory guidance for the ASL Act. [Scottish Government+1](#)

Link (policy overview): <https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/additional-support-for-learning/>

Link (statutory guidance): <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/>

⁴ *National Additional Support for Learning Review (Morgan Review)* — Independent national review of ASL implementation, summarising evidence and recommendations for improvement (Review of Additional Support for Learning Implementation). [Scottish Government](#)

Link: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-additional-support-learning-implementation/>

⁵ *Themes across Scotland regarding sustainable, community-based support models* — Audit Scotland national briefing on Additional Support for Learning, highlighting trends in ASL demand, inclusive practice and system sustainability. [Audit Scotland](#)

Link: <https://audit.scot/publications/additional-support-for-learning>

⁶ *ASL enquiry by the Education, Children and Young People Committee* — Official Scottish Parliament Education, Children and Young People Committee report following inquiry into Additional Support for Learning across Scotland. [Scottish Parliament Reports](#)

Link: <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/ECYP/2024/5/15/496ab9b0-bd4a-40ed-8f16-64d07018b3d6>

However, consultation feedback has highlighted a range of concerns and aspirations that require careful consideration before any changes are taken forward. These are set out in Sections 7–8 of this report.

5. Consultation Process

The statutory consultation on the proposal to evolve the Enhanced Provision model in Falkirk’s primary schools was carried out in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

As referenced in Section 3, the consultation period ran from 29 August 2025 to 27 October 2025, and included at least 30 school days, as required by legislation.

During the consultation period, a range of established communication routes were used, including publication on the Council website and Participate+, school Groupcall messages, a published local newspaper notice and direct communication with establishments.

An issue relating to the delivery of a Groupcall message in some establishments was identified on 1 September 2025 following contact from a Head Teacher. On becoming aware of the issue, Education Services took corrective action by issuing follow-up communications to all schools and Early Learning and Childcare Centres on 5 September 2025, with clear and consistent messaging for onward circulation to parents and carers.

The range of communication methods included:

- Publication of the full consultation proposal paper and FAQs (Appendix 2 and Appendix 4) on the Falkirk Council website and Participate+ platform
- Direct Groupcall communication from schools and the central Education mailbox to all parents/carers of pupils
- Information issued through Falkirk Council’s social media channel
- Public meetings held across the authority area and were publicised through Groupcall communications and the Participate+ platform
- Online meetings via Microsoft Teams
- Parent/carer focus groups
- A formal notice placed in the Falkirk Herald regarding the statutory consultation
- A dedicated mailbox for written representations
- Pupil-voice gathering exercises across Enhanced Provisions.

Stakeholders were invited to participate through:

- Public Meetings (6 in total) held at:
 - Braes High School (16 September 2025)
 - Denny High School (17 September 2025)
 - Falkirk High School (30 September 2025)
 - Grangemouth High School (1 October 2025)
 - Online via Teams (23 & 25 September 2025)
- Two staff only (online) meetings (2 and 10 October 2025)

- One partnership (online) meeting (2 October 2025)
- Parent and Carer Focus Groups (6 groups) held during October 2025
- Written representations submitted through email and post
- Participate+ responses, including narrative and multiple-choice responses.

In total:

- 1,194 responses were received through Participate+ during the consultation period.
- Detailed feedback was gathered through 6 parent and carer focus groups. 6 parents were invited to participate in each group, giving a total of 36 invitations. Of those invited, 10 parents took part in total: 7 parents of children attending Enhanced Provision and 3 parents of children in mainstream classes.
- Public meetings were held during the consultation period, with over 214 individuals registering to attend across all sessions.
- Pupil voice was gathered from 44 pupils.
- There were 53 written submissions in the form of staff feedback, partner submissions, and formal written representations from parents, staff, Elected Members and organisations.

All of this material has been considered and is included within this report.

As required under the 2010 Act, all consultation information and documents were made available to Education Scotland. Inspectors conducted their independent review, including consideration of all evidence and attendance at selected events.

The findings of Education Scotland, and the Council's response, are set out in Section 9 of this report.

Engagement with the Scottish Government

During the consultation process, Scottish Government officials asked for clarification on whether the proposal would result in the closure of the Enhanced Provisions (EPs). Education Services explained that the EPs would not be discontinued because all current pupils would be able to remain, and the EPs would continue to consider placing requests. The proposal would instead change how the EPs operate, with the ERG no longer allocating pupils to them. The intention was to vary the constitution of the EPs, not to close them.

However, the Scottish Government advised that whilst they remained open in the immediate term, there was a risk the EPs could later have no pupils and close, which could mean the proposal might be considered a discontinuation.

This issue remains unresolved and would ultimately be a matter for the Scottish Ministers if the proposal progressed to a decision to implement. If the proposal were treated as a discontinuation, it would require referral to Ministers for possible call-in. However, in light of the consultation responses, Education Services is recommending to Elected Members that the proposal is not implemented.

6. Responses to the Consultation Exercise

During the statutory consultation period, Falkirk Council sought views from all stakeholders who may be affected by the proposal. Responses were gathered through public meetings, online engagement, focus groups, staff and partner sessions, written submissions, and the Participate+ platform.

A total of 1,194 responses were received through Participate+, alongside extensive qualitative feedback from meetings, focus groups, and written representations from parents, staff, and organisations. The following table shows the range of this data collection:

Table 1: Summary of Consultation Engagement and Participation

Data Collection Method	Details	Numbers/attendees
Public meetings (in person and online)	Feedback gathered during scheduled sessions	6 meetings held. In total, 214 individuals signed up to attend across all public meetings - with some attending more than one session.
Stakeholder meetings	Feedback gathered during scheduled sessions	3 meetings held. 2 of these were staff only meetings and 1 was a meeting with partners only. Attendance at staff-only meetings was 99 in total, across both meetings. Attendance at the partner-only meeting was 8 in total.
Focus groups	In-depth discussions with selected participants	6 groups held with 36 parents invited in total. Attendance across each meeting was as follows: Group 1 - 2/6 Group 2 - 2/6 Group 3 - 3/6 Group 4 - 1/6 Group 5 - 1/6 Group 6 - 1/6
Written Submissions	Letters and emails from stakeholders	In total, 53 written submissions were received during the consultation period. These were submitted by a range of individuals and organisations, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 32 parents

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Elected Members • 3 Members of Parliament (MPs) • 3 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) • 4 journalists • 2 trade union representatives • 1 parent council • 1 member of school staff • 1 third sector organisation (STAND)
Participate+ Platform	Responses collected online via a comprehensive survey	1,194 responses submitted from a range of stakeholders.
Pupil Voice sessions	Responses collected via schools and staff whom the children know well	Feedback and views were gathered from 44 children who attend the Enhanced Provision in their school.
Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs)	A number of FOIs requested were received and responded to during the consultation process.	6 of these requests were received and responses were issued. These can be found in Appendix 5.

6.1 Pupil Engagement

Gathering pupil voice is a normal and embedded part of everyday school life across Falkirk Council, and pupils' views were gathered as part of this consultation in a way that was appropriate, proportionate and sensitive to individual needs. Engagement with children was undertaken by staff who know the pupils well, within familiar environments, and using approaches already used routinely within schools to support communication, wellbeing and participation.

Schools were asked to gather children's views using flexible and child-centred methods, recognising the diverse profiles and communication needs of pupils attending Enhanced Provisions. Children were asked to share their views about what helps them feel safe, supported and ready to learn within their current school experience. This engagement focused on children's day-to-day experiences of school and was not framed around the specific proposal or potential changes to provision.

The feedback submitted by schools was anonymised and collated to ensure that children's perspectives informed the overall analysis alongside those of parents, carers and staff, while safeguarding children's wellbeing and ensuring that no individual child could be identified.

Enhanced Provision Primary School pupils

Across all settings, children were invited to talk about:

- The support they receive right now
- If they feel the people around them know what best helps them to learn
- What supports them to feel safe and included
- What they most like about school
- What they find most helpful when they are learning
- What they find most difficult when they are learning
- How they travel to school and how they feel about the way they travel.

A wide range of views were gathered, reflecting the diversity of needs within Enhanced Provision settings. Common themes included:

- Feeling safe when there is a predictable routine, calm environments, and trusted adults
- Enjoyment of small-group or direct learning and teaching, supported play, and access to sensory spaces
- Joining mainstream classes and/or activities where they could manage
- The importance of quiet spaces, break-out areas and movement breaks
- Positive relationships with staff and peers
- Clear preferences for tools that support learning (e.g. iPads, visual prompts, sensory resources)
- Mixed views about busy or noisy environments, with some children comfortable in larger classes and others finding these settings more difficult
- Travel patterns varied, although most pupils travel by taxi and generally feel positive about this - with a minority raising concerns about long journeys, loud music, or the behaviour of other children
- Around 20% of pupils found it difficult to respond to some of the questions, even with support and differentiation.

Full pupil-voice feedback notes were shared with Education Scotland as part of the statutory process, in line with the requirements of the 2010 Act. It is important to note that this pupil engagement is separate from the pupil voice gathered by Education Scotland during their school visits. Education Scotland's engagement reflects the routine in-school views of learners, whereas the consultation-specific pupil voice reflects children's perspectives on what helps them learn, regulate, and feel safe within their current EP.

The combined pupil views have informed the findings of this report and have helped shape the Council's responses to the issues raised.

See Appendix 11 for the full detail of pupil responses.

6.2 Public Meetings

A total of six public meetings were held during the consultation period to provide opportunities for parents, carers and members of the wider community to hear about the proposal and share their views.

These meetings were held at Braes High School, Denny High School, Falkirk High School, Grangemouth High School, and through two online sessions. Meetings were attended by parents, carers, staff, children, Elected Members and members of the public.

Summary notes of oral representations were produced for each meeting, informed by transcripts used solely to support the accuracy of the written record. This approach aligns with the format requested by Education Scotland.

Across these meetings, participants raised a range of questions and concerns.

Common themes included:

- The level of detail provided in the proposal and the need for clearer information
- Staffing levels, including recruitment, training and the ongoing availability of Support for Learning Assistants (SfLAs)
- Physical environments and the availability of calm, regulated or sensory spaces
- Safety, transitions and continuity of support for children attending Enhanced Provisions
- The impact on mainstream classes and the role of the class teacher
- Clarity around how support would ‘follow the child’ and how needs would be assessed
- The potential impact on current Enhanced Provisions and whether any children would be required to move
- Transport arrangements and the role of multi-agency planning
- Equity of access to support across the authority
- How the model would support children who experience high levels of dysregulation or who benefit from small-group learning
- Implementation timelines and phasing
- Whether the proposal was linked to wider budget pressures
- Processes for shared decision-making and next steps following the consultation.

Across multiple meetings, parents and carers expressed a range of concerns about the proposal and its potential implications for their children. Many indicated that they would have welcomed more detailed information to support meaningful engagement, particularly around how any future changes might be implemented in practice.

Analysis of feedback from public meetings indicates that most parents and staff expressed concerns about the potential dilution of specialist support should the current Enhanced Provision model be restructured.

Across almost all public engagement sessions, participants sought explicit clarity and reassurance about how individual children’s needs would be met, supported and safeguarded within a more universal, school-based model. Some consultees raised questions about the alignment between verbal explanations provided during meetings and the content of the written proposal.

Families engaged thoughtfully and in depth with the consultation, articulating specific concerns, expectations and views on the supports required to support their children's learning and wellbeing.

While the majority of feedback focused on concerns about the proposal and its potential impact, a smaller number of participants expressed support for the overall direction of travel. In particular, some parents and carers reflected that strengthening enhanced support within local mainstream schools was the right ambition and questioned why this approach had not been developed earlier.

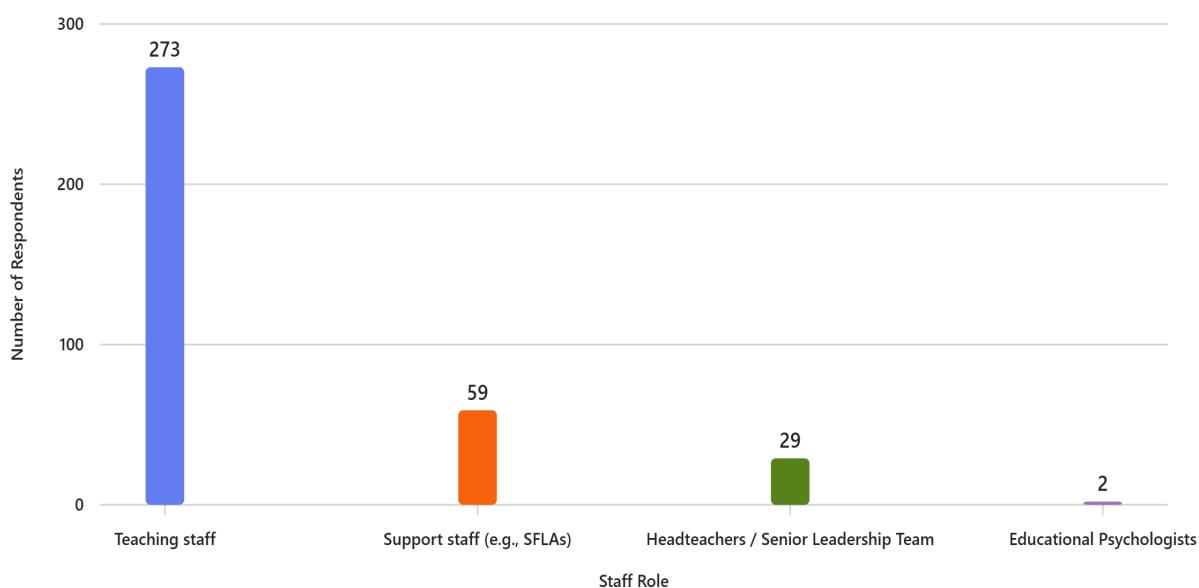
A number of parents of children currently attending Enhanced Provisions also reflected that, had enhanced support of this nature been available within their local school at an earlier stage, they may not have sought an Enhanced Provision placement through the Enhanced Resource Group (ERG) process. These views highlighted the importance of early, accessible and well-resourced support within local schools and were considered alongside concerns raised by other families.

See Appendix 12 for the summary notes of oral representations gathered from public meetings.

6.3 Staff Engagement

Dedicated staff engagement activity took place during the consultation period to provide opportunities for school-based and central Education Service staff to hear about the proposal and share professional perspectives. This included two online staff-only sessions, Participate+ survey responses, written submissions and comments raised through wider engagement activity. The online sessions were attended mainly by staff working within Enhanced Provisions and mainstream school settings. Staff discussions focused on the practical realities of delivering enhanced support within schools and reflected a strong professional commitment to inclusive practice. Figure 1 shows that Participate+ survey responses were received from a range of staff roles across the Education Service.

Figure 1: Staff roles represented in Participate+ survey response



Across staff engagement routes, consistent themes included:

- Staffing capacity, recruitment challenges and the availability of Support for Learning Assistants (SfLAs)
- The importance of access to high-quality professional learning, coaching and specialist advice
- Workload pressures and the sustainability of delivering enhanced support without sufficient staffing, time and planning space
- The need for clarity around roles, responsibilities, expectations and the support available to staff in both EP and mainstream settings
- The suitability of school environments and the availability of calm, regulated and sensory spaces
- Safeguarding, supervision and safety considerations, particularly during unstructured times
- The importance of protecting and valuing the expertise within existing Enhanced Provisions, with a strong emphasis on retaining and sharing this expertise rather than diluting it
- Requests for clear, transparent criteria and continued moderation for access to enhanced support, including continued use of an ERG-style approach
- Questions about evidence from other local authorities and the data used to support the proposal's stated benefits
- Concerns about how children with more complex profiles would be supported within any future planned changes, noting that Stage 4 provision was confirmed during the consultation as being outwith the scope of the proposal

Staff consistently emphasised that, while there is strong practice across Falkirk schools, they believe that any future approach would require careful phasing, clear guidance and workforce development to maintain quality and safeguard children's wellbeing. Many staff expressed pride in the current Enhanced Provision model and highlighted the importance of ensuring that skilled expertise is retained and shared across the wider system. The views shared through staff engagement have informed the analysis and Education Services' responses set out later in this report. See Appendix 18 for staff engagement notes and Appendix 8 for staff-related Participate+ survey data.

6.4 Partner Agency Engagement

A dedicated online partner agency session was held during the consultation period to gather views on the proposal from a multi-agency and service-delivery perspective. Partners included colleagues from health and social work services and other professionals who work closely with schools to support children and young people with additional support needs. Written representations from partner organisations were also considered as part of the overall analysis.

Partner feedback focused on implementation considerations, system coherence and the conditions required for effective delivery, rather than challenging the underlying principles of the proposal. Across engagement routes, key themes raised by partners included:

- Early and timely intervention, supported through stronger joint planning between early years, schools and partner services
- Continuity for children and families, with potential benefits in reducing disruption where support can be delivered within a child's local school
- Improved multi-agency working, including clearer communication, shared understanding of roles and more consistent collaboration when children are supported locally
- Recognition of existing strong practice within Falkirk, including examples where Enhanced Provision-like approaches are already being delivered within mainstream schools through effective partnership working
- The importance of clear assessment, planning and information-sharing processes to support co-ordinated support across services
- The need to protect and share specialist expertise, ensuring that skills developed within Enhanced Provisions are retained and extended across the wider system
- Phased implementation and system readiness, with partners emphasising that schools are at different stages of capacity and that any future approach must reflect local context
- Environmental and infrastructure considerations, including the suitability of physical spaces to support regulation, safety and wellbeing
- Clear governance and ongoing collaboration to ensure shared ownership and confidence as practice develops

Partners identified potential benefits associated with strengthening enhanced support within local schools, provided this was implemented carefully and with appropriate resourcing. Partners were clear that realising these benefits would be dependent on sustained training, appropriate environments and the protection of specialist expertise.

Feedback from partner agencies has been considered alongside views from parents, carers, children and staff, and has informed the overall analysis and Education Services' responses set out later in this report. Notes from partner engagement activity are provided in Appendix 17.

6.5 Parent and Carer Focus Groups

Six dedicated parent and carer focus groups were held during October 2025. Each session was designed to support small-group, in-depth discussion, with up to six places offered per focus group to enable meaningful participation.

Attendance across the focus groups was lower than anticipated. None of the six sessions reached full capacity; the highest attendance at any one session was three parents. All sessions proceeded as planned, and participants engaged in detailed discussion.

Parents and carers were invited using contact details they had chosen to provide during the earlier Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Review, where they indicated that they were happy to be contacted about future engagement or focus group activity. Invitations were sent to a random selection of parents from this group.

Across the focus groups, several consistent themes emerged:

- A strong desire for stability and continuity for children currently attending Enhanced Provisions
- Concerns about whether equivalent levels of support could be replicated consistently across all schools
- The importance of trusted staff relationships, predictable routines and familiarity for children
- The need for clear, timely and consistent communication, and a desire to work collaboratively with the authority to co-design support going forward
- Concerns relating to staffing levels, access to specialist training and staff turnover
- Mixed views on the extent to which mainstream environments could meet significant needs
- Regular questions about timescales, resourcing and implementation
- Recognition that the current Enhanced Provision application process is pressured and often distressing for families, including those attending the focus groups.

Parents also highlighted the value of the social aspects and supportive community associated with Enhanced Provisions. Several participants described EPs as providing a sense of shared understanding for both children and families, where peers and adults had experience of similar needs. Parents expressed concern that while physical inclusion within a local school is important, this should not result in children feeling socially isolated or disconnected from peers who understand their experiences.

A number of parents raised issues around transitions from nursery to school. These parents described anxiety where specialist knowledge, strategies and understanding of their child's needs were not consistently transferred between settings, resulting in families feeling they had to re-establish or re-explain support arrangements. This feedback reinforced the importance of continuity of information and relationships as part of early identification and planning.

Some parents did also raise that success for their children was not defined solely by academic progress in their eyes. Many highlighted regulation, emotional safety, communication, independence and confidence as the outcomes they valued most - particularly for children currently accessing Enhanced Provision. Parents expressed that any future approach must prioritise wellbeing alongside learning. Comments were made that it should not be assumed that academic attainment is the main concern of a family with a child who has additional needs.

At the same time, participants across these groups acknowledged that the existing Enhanced Resource Group (ERG) process is viewed as fair, transparent and robust. Concerns were raised about decision-making being devolved solely to individual schools, and a preference was expressed for retaining an ERG-style model to support consistency and objectivity. However, some participants who had experienced the placement process for their child described the anxiety and distress involved, indicating that there are aspects of the current system for placements and equity where a review would be welcomed.

Participants also expressed a shared aspiration for inclusive education, alongside concern about the pace and scale of change, with requests for alternative approaches to achieving the same overall aims. There was emphasis on the importance of equity across schools, and reassurance regarding safety, transitions and wellbeing.

Parents welcomed the opportunity to discuss their experiences in a safe and supported environment and valued the opportunity for dialogue as part of the consultation process. See Appendix 13 for the notes gathered from focus groups.

6.6 Written Representations

Separate from the Participate+ survey, the Council received 53 formal written representations from organisations and individuals, including 2 parent councils. These submissions provided detailed qualitative feedback and, in one case, were informed by a local survey and evidence gathered directly by a school community. Collectively, the representations reflected the lived experience of families and staff supporting children with additional support needs and drew on their own knowledge of staffing, environments and current practice within schools.

Key themes:

- Parent councils and other organisations raised questions about the clarity of the proposal documentation and FAQs, and about the effectiveness and consistency of communication during the consultation period. Several submissions described differing interpretations of the proposal within their school communities, particularly in relation to whether children currently attending Enhanced Provisions would be required to return to their catchment schools.
- Many organisational submissions sought clarification on how resources, staffing and physical environments would be adapted to deliver enhanced support consistently across all schools. These queries were often grounded in respondents' direct experience of existing school buildings, staffing models and the availability of appropriate spaces. A number of submissions questioned how the principle that 'resources would follow the child' would operate in practice.
- Perceived impact on children and school communities. One organisational submission, informed by local engagement activity, reported that the majority of respondents within that school community did not support the proposal as drafted. This submission highlighted concerns about the potential educational and emotional impact on both children with additional support needs and their mainstream peers. Particular emphasis was placed on staffing capacity, access to specialist training, staff morale, and the sustainability of delivering enhanced support within existing school environments without significant additional investment.
- Across multiple submissions, respondents highlighted the importance of predictable routines, trusted relationships with staff, and the enhanced expertise currently available within Enhanced Provisions. These views were closely linked to children's wellbeing and regulation, with organisations expressing concern about the potential impact on children who rely on consistency and familiarity to feel safe, settled and ready to learn.
- A number of comments questioned whether Enhanced Provision level support could be replicated consistently across all schools, particularly for children who benefit from enhanced levels of support and structured environments all of the time.

At the same time, organisational representations did not reject the underlying principles of inclusion or equity of access to support. Where potential benefits were identified, these were framed as aspirational rather than as outcomes respondents felt confident could be achieved under the proposal as presented, particularly in relation to fostering inclusive school cultures and supporting children within their local community.

Organisational submissions also demonstrated a high level of constructive and considered engagement. In the case of parent council responses, this included undertaking local consultation within school communities, analysing perceived staffing and resource implications, and articulating views in a structured and evidence-informed manner. This reflected a strong commitment to children's wellbeing and to inclusive education, alongside uncertainty about whether the proposal, as drafted, could deliver its stated aims without unintended negative consequences.

Overall, organisational representations reflected opposition to the proposal as drafted, alongside alignment with the principles of inclusion and equity that underpin it. Feedback consistently indicated that any future consideration of change would require clearer detail, meaningful engagement with school communities, and demonstrable assurance around staffing, resourcing, training and environments in order to build confidence and secure positive outcomes for children and young people. See Appendix 7 and 9 for all written representations.

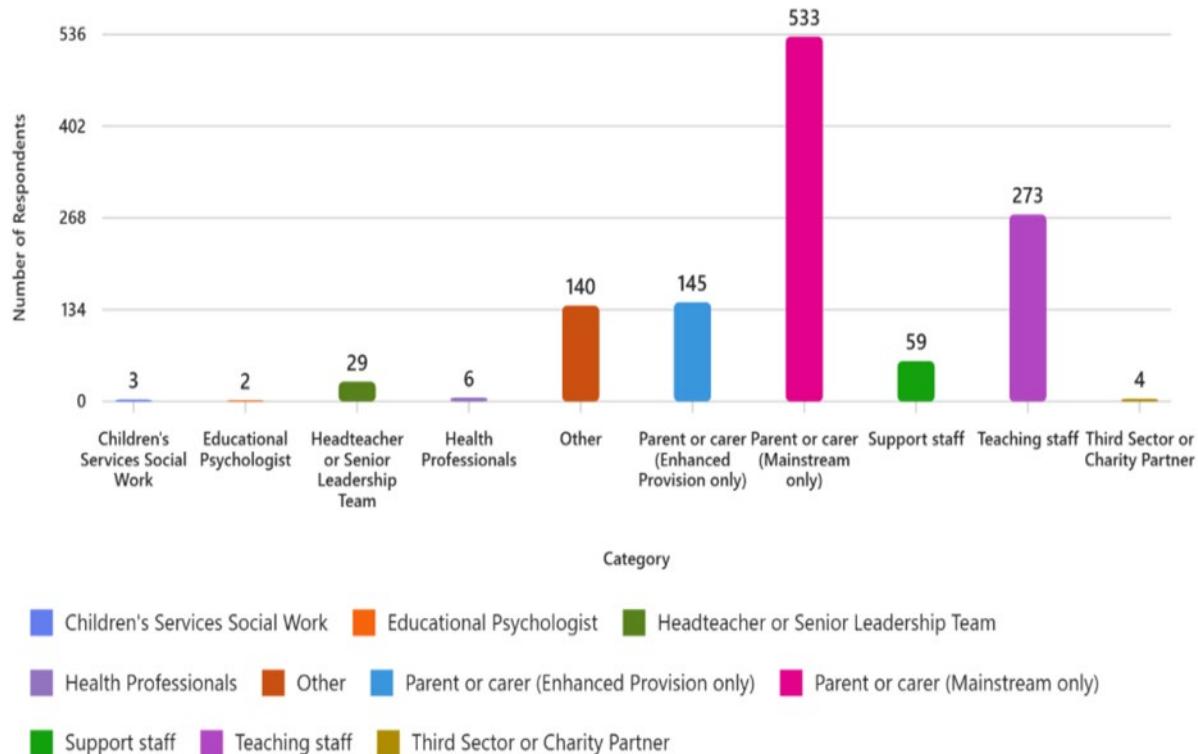
6.7 Participate+ survey responses, closed-question findings and thematic analysis

A total of 1,194 respondents submitted views through the Participate+ survey. Responses were received from parents and carers, staff, partner organisations, Elected Members, local community members and others with an interest in education provision in Falkirk. This represents a substantial level of engagement and reflects both the significance of the proposal and the strength of feeling associated with it.

As shown in Figure 2, responses were received from a wide range of stakeholder groups. The majority of respondents were parents and carers (56.8%), with a substantial proportion of responses also received from teaching and support staff (30.2%).

A smaller proportion of responses were submitted by partners, professionals and other stakeholders (13%). This distribution reflects those groups most directly affected by the proposal and most likely to engage with the consultation

Figure 2: Breakdown of respondents to the Participate+ survey by category



6.8.1 Survey design and approach to analysis

The Participate+ survey included closed questions designed to gather quantitative feedback on respondents' awareness of the current Enhanced Provision model, their understanding of the proposed change, and their views on key aspects of the proposal. These questions explored perceptions of equity and inclusion, confidence in local catchment schools to meet pupils' needs, staff capacity and support, alignment with national policy on the presumption of mainstreaming, and confidence in effective implementation.

Additional questions focused on parental confidence, involvement in decision-making, and the likelihood of pupils returning to their catchment school should the proposal progress. Results are presented in the tables and figures below to show the distribution of responses across the available options.

Alongside this, the survey collected extensive free-text submissions. These were subject to thematic analysis, which identified recurring themes across stakeholder groups. Across the survey, where respondents expressed support for the proposal, this was most often framed as conditional, linked to assumptions about increased staffing, access to specialist expertise, suitable environments and sustained funding being in place prior to any change.

6.8.2 Closed-question findings: awareness, understanding and confidence

Table 2 summarises how aware respondents were of the current Enhanced Provision model.

Awareness of the current Enhanced Provision model was consistently high across respondent groups, although levels of understanding of the proposed change varied.

Table 2: How aware are you of the current Enhanced Provision support model?

	Not aware at all	Not very aware	Somewhat aware	Very aware
Parent or Carers	1%	5%	39%	55%
Staff (incl. Teaching, Support & Senior Leadership Team)	0%	1%	20%	79%
Professionals, Third Sector, Charity Partner & Other	1%	4%	33%	62%
Totals	1%	4%	33%	62%

Table 3 summarises how well different groups of respondents felt they understood the proposed change to a local school-based support model. Overall, 58% of respondents across all groups reported 'very well' followed by 36% reported 'somewhat' understanding, with 6% indicating 'a little' or 'not at all'.

Table 3: How well do you understand the proposed change to a local school-based support model?

	A little	Not at all	Somewhat	Very well
Parents or Carers	5%	2%	38%	55%
Staff	2%	1%	30%	67%
Professionals, Third Sector, Charity Partner & Other	3%	4%	36%	57%
Totals	4%	2%	36%	58%

Table 4 provides a summary of how respondents rated their level of agreement with key statements about the proposal. Across these statements, levels of agreement were low, with a higher proportion of respondents selecting neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. This was particularly evident in relation to confidence that pupils' needs would be well supported in local catchment schools, that staff would be trained and supported to deliver enhanced support, and that the proposal could be implemented effectively.

A higher proportion of respondents reported neutrality or agreement in relation to alignment with the presumption of mainstreaming. In free-text responses, this was often reflected as support for the principle of inclusion, alongside questions around readiness, capacity and implementation in practice.

Table 4: Respondents' levels of agreement across key statements about the proposal

	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
The proposed change will promote equity and	3%	8%	9%	22%	58%
Pupils' needs will be well supported in their local	3%	4%	6%	18%	69%
Staff are trained and supported to confidently	2%	4%	8%	20%	66%
The proposal aligns with national policy on	3%	9%	24%	17%	47%
I feel confident this change will be	1%	2%	4%	12%	81%

6.8.3 Stakeholder snapshots from the closed questions

Parents and carers of children attending Enhanced Provision

54% of parents with children within an Enhanced Provision responded to the survey. Parents and carers were asked whether their child's Enhanced Provision school was their local catchment primary school. 60% responded 'no' and 40% responded 'yes'. Parents and carers were also asked how confident they felt that their child's needs could currently be met within their local catchment school. Responses indicated lower confidence overall, with around three quarters of respondents (75%) reporting that they were either 'not confident' or 'not very confident'.

Table 5: Enhanced Provision parents' confidence in needs being met in local catchment schools

	Number	%
Not confident at all	88	61%
Not very confident	20	14%
Somewhat confident	16	11%
Very confident	21	14%

This pattern suggests that, for parents and carers of children currently accessing Enhanced Provision, confidence in local mainstream settings is closely linked to perceptions of current system readiness, rather than opposition to inclusive education as a principle.

Parents and carers were asked how involved they currently felt in decisions about their child's support needs. Responses indicated that around three quarters of parents (76%) felt 'very involved' or 'somewhat involved', although a minority reported lower levels of involvement.

Table 6: How involved parents and carers of children attending an Enhanced Provision feel in decisions about their child's support needs

	Nr.	%
Very involved	61	42%
Somewhat involved	49	34%
Not very involved	18	12%
Not involved at all	17	12%
Total	145	

Where parents and carers were asked about the likelihood of returning a child to their catchment school (where the child is currently placed out with catchment), responses indicated that most would be unlikely to do so at this time, should the proposal progress.

Table 7: Likelihood of returning to catchment school (where child is currently outwith catchment)

	Nr	%
Very likely	3	3%
Likely	1	1%
Unlikely	7	8%
Very unlikely	73	82%
Did not answer	5	6%
Total	89	

Parents and carers of children attending mainstream schools

Parents and carers of children attending mainstream schools were asked whether their child has a recorded additional support need. 74% responded 'no', 25% responded 'yes' and 8% indicated they did not know.

Parents and carers were asked how confident they are that their child's needs can be met in their local catchment school. Responses indicated higher confidence overall, with 73% reporting they were 'somewhat' or 'very confident', and 27% reporting they were 'not confident' or 'not very confident'.

Table 8: Mainstream parents' confidence in needs being met in local catchment schools

	Nr.	%
Very confident	184	35%
Somewhat confident	207	39%
Not very confident	85	16%
Not confident at all	57	11%
Total	533	

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Parents and carers were also asked how involved they feel in decisions about their child's support needs. Most parents reported feeling involved, though around a third reported that they did not feel very involved or involved.

Table 10: How involved mainstream parents and carers feel in decisions about their child's support needs

	Nr.	%
Very involved	132	25%
Somewhat involved	234	44%
Not very involved	108	20%
Not involved at all	59	11%
Total	533	

Teaching and support staff

Teaching and support staff were asked how confident they are in supporting children with a range of additional support needs.

Responses indicated that most staff felt either 'very' or 'somewhat' confident, with around a third reporting that they were 'not very' or 'not at all' confident at present.

Table 11: Teaching and support staff confidence in supporting children with a range of additional support needs

	Nr.	%
Very confident	86	26%
Somewhat confident	141	42%
Not confident at all	27	8%
Not very confident	78	23%
	332	

Note: percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

6.8.4 Summary of Participate+ survey themes

Across all questions, responses which were in support of the proposal were almost always conditional - most often linked to assumptions about increased staffing, access to specialist expertise, suitable environments and sustained funding being in place prior to any change.

Throughout the survey, respondents consistently focused on the practical readiness of the system to deliver the proposed model, rather than opposition to inclusion as a principle.

Theme 1: Inclusion, equity and access to support

A minority of respondents supported the ambition of making enhanced support more widely available across schools through this proposal and improving equity of access for children and families. These views were framed around fairness, consistency and the potential to reduce barriers to support within local communities.

However, many respondents queried whether the proposed model would achieve equity in practice. Respondents highlighted the risk that a more universal approach could lead to inconsistent quality of provision, dilution of the expertise currently concentrated within Enhanced Provisions and increased pressure on mainstream schools. Variability in staffing, physical space, funding and local capacity between schools was identified as a particular concern - with some respondents suggesting this could result in unequal access to support depending on location.

Theme 2: Early intervention and timely support

Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of early identification and timely intervention, particularly for children whose needs may not yet be formally identified.

Some respondents recognised the potential benefit of earlier support being in place, by the nature of enhanced support in all schools, in reducing escalation of need and improving engagement with learning.

At the same time, concerns were raised that ‘without additional staffing’ and specialist input, an increased focus on early intervention could add further pressure to already stretched school teams. Respondents indicated that, if overall system capacity was not increased, greater demand for support in all settings for children at higher stages of the intervention framework could reduce the support available to other learners.

Theme 3: Staffing, training and capacity

Questions around staffing, training and capacity were the most prominent and consistent theme across all survey responses. Respondents highlighted workload pressures, recruitment challenges and limited access to expertise, advice and support as areas of focus.

Responses indicated limited confidence that it would be realistic for all schools to support a broader range of needs without substantial and sustained investment in staffing, professional learning and specialist services. Many respondents indicated that, without this level of resourcing, the proposal could reduce the quality of support for children with additional support needs and place further strain on staff and peers.

Theme 4: Suitability of school environments

Respondents raised questions around the suitability of existing school environments to deliver enhanced support. These included the availability of appropriate base spaces, sensory-friendly environments, secure areas and specialist resources.

Physical variation between school buildings was frequently noted, with respondents emphasising that differences in design, space and infrastructure would need to be addressed before equitable provision could be achieved across all settings.

Theme 5: Stability, safety and impact on children

A substantial number of responses emphasised the importance of stability and safety for children currently accessing Enhanced Provision – particularly due to the importance of predictable routines for many learners with additional support needs. Parents and staff expressed concerns about potential disruption to established routines, emotional wellbeing and safeguarding if changes were introduced without further time to plan.

These concerns were consistently framed around protecting children’s wellbeing and ensuring continuity of support, rather than resistance to inclusion or the aim of better supporting learners across all schools.

Theme 6: Confidence in implementation and outcomes

Views on the proposal were closely linked to confidence in implementation. A small number of respondents expressed cautious optimism that, with adequate support and phased implementation, the proposal could deliver positive outcomes over time.

Areas of potential positive impact highlighted included improved integration and increased staff expertise.

However, the majority of respondents expressed low confidence that the level of resourcing required would be possible to deliver in practice. These views were often linked to wider pressures facing local authorities and public services at both local and national levels.

Overall summary of survey responses

Overall, analysis of the Participate+ survey responses indicates that most respondents expressed concern about the proposal, particularly in relation to implementation, resourcing, staffing capacity and the potential impact on children.

While some respondents did express support for the ambition of improving equity of access to enhanced support, this support was almost always conditional. Respondents indicated that if these conditions could not be met, they would have concerns about how the proposal would operate in practice.

Survey responses demonstrate that most respondents were not opposed to inclusion as a principle but expressed limited confidence in the readiness of the current system to deliver this scale of change at this stage.

Concerns relating to staffing capacity, physical environments, safeguarding and the potential destabilisation of existing provision indicate that respondents perceived a high level of risk associated with this level of structural change.

This analysis highlights the importance of prioritising capacity-building and workforce development, over time, as part of any future work.

See Appendix 8 for detailed Participate+ survey data.

7. Education Services Response to the Main Issues Raised

Throughout the consultation period, a wide range of views, questions, concerns and suggestions were shared by parents, carers, children, staff, partners and organisations. Education Services has carefully considered all feedback gathered from the 1,194 Participate+ responses, nine meetings, six parent/carer focus groups, written representations and pupil-voice activities.

This section summarises the key issues raised and provides Falkirk Council's response to each. Education Services has approached this consultation as a genuine and open process, in which stakeholder views were actively sought and carefully considered. These have been weighed alongside professional judgement, existing evidence and the strengths of current practice.

Clarity of the Proposal and Information Provided

Issue Raised

A number of stakeholders highlighted that some parts of the proposal required greater clarity, particularly around the meaning of 'enhanced support in every school'.

This focused on how resources would 'follow the child' and the intentions regarding children currently placed within Enhanced Provisions. Some attendees also noted variation in how the information was interpreted during public meetings.

Education Services' Response

Education Services confirms that the proposal was deliberately framed as a strategic consultation on the future direction of enhanced support in Falkirk primary schools, rather than as a finalised delivery model. This approach was intentional and was communicated consistently throughout the consultation process. Detailed operational planning - including workforce and implementation modelling - was always intended to take place only after consultation feedback had been received and considered.

In session 2023/24, additional teachers were allocated to support the inclusion of children with additional support needs who require Stage 3 supports, within mainstream school settings (see Appendix 1, Table 4). This allocation was intended to strengthen in-school capacity and help schools meet children's needs locally.

An ASN Parent Forum was held in October 2023 (see Appendix 1, Figure 1), providing parents and carers with an opportunity to ask questions about the wider ASN service, including Enhanced Provision. It was through this forum that early exploratory discussions began about how enhanced support could be strengthened within mainstream schools over time and potential options to make changes to the Enhanced Provision model began.

The need to consider change was subsequently reinforced through wider stakeholder engagement as part of this portion of the ASL Review, which commenced in October 2024. Feedback gathered through this work highlighted calls for resources to be devolved more directly to schools, so that headteachers could have full autonomy and flexibility over their own resources, and for enhanced support to be delivered more equitably across establishments. Within this context, the proposal focused on one specific element of the wider ASN system and how enhanced support within mainstream schools is structured.

Education Services is clear that no child currently attending an Enhanced Provision would be required to move school as a result of the proposal. The principle that support follows the child would continue to operate through existing planning and decision-making frameworks, ensuring that any consideration of change would remain led by assessed need, be professionally informed and agreed in partnership with families.

The consultation has identified areas where further explanation and assurance would be required. These include how existing strengths within schools and Enhanced Provisions could be built upon; how consistency and equity of access could be supported across the authority and how stability for children currently accessing Enhanced Provisions would be protected.

Education Services confirms that these considerations sit within the scope of the Council's existing strategic work.

The consultation has therefore fulfilled its intended purpose in questioning the strategic direction and confirming areas of shared understanding. It has also identified where further clarity would be essential during future development.

Overall, Education Services emphasises that the proposal was developed and presented transparently, that the consultation was undertaken as a genuine exercise in engagement and that the Council's position has been informed by consultation responses alongside professional judgement, statutory responsibilities and the strengths of current practice.

Children Currently Attending Enhanced Provisions

Issue Raised

Families sought reassurance that children currently placed in EPs would not be expected to return to mainstream or to their catchment school as a result of the proposal.

Education Services' Response

Education Services confirms that the proposal did not intend that any child currently attending an Enhanced Provision would be required to return to mainstream or to their catchment school as a result of this consultation. This position was clear from the outset through specific survey questions and was reinforced throughout the consultation period via the regularly updated FAQs, which consistently reflected that the focus was on future approaches to enhanced support rather than changes to existing individual placements.

A further question raised during the consultation related to how many pupils currently attending an Enhanced Provision are outwith their catchment school. This information is provided in Appendix 1, Table 3, which shows that around 70% of children attending Enhanced Provisions are not currently placed in their catchment school.

Decisions about placement for children attending Enhanced Provisions continue to be governed by ERG, staged intervention and multi-agency planning processes. These decisions are made collaboratively with parents and carers, based on individual need and professional judgement. This system will continue to operate in the same way, and no child will move placement unless this is agreed to be in their best interests.

Education Services recognises that stability and trusted relationships are critical for children currently accessing Enhanced Provisions. These principles are already embedded within existing provision and remain central to how support is planned and delivered for individual children.

In considering the consultation feedback, Education Services notes that confidence in the proposal was closely linked to parents' and carers' understanding of the capacity of mainstream schools to deliver enhanced levels of support consistently.

While enhanced support is already being delivered effectively for many children within mainstream settings across the authority, the consultation indicated that a significant number of parents of children currently attending Enhanced Provisions do not yet feel sufficiently confident that this level of capacity is in place across all schools to support the proposal at this stage.

At the same time, feedback confirmed that many children with additional support needs are successfully supported within their local mainstream schools through enhanced support arrangements aligned with the staged intervention framework and GIRFEC. Education Services recognises this as an important strength within the current system and will continue to build on this practice, while also acknowledging the need to further strengthen confidence and consistency across all schools.

Education Services will therefore continue its established programme of improvement work to build and strengthen enhanced support capacity across all primary schools. This work aligns with the wider ASL Review and existing strategic priorities. The Council is focused on ensuring greater consistency, confidence and equity of access to enhanced support within all local school communities.

Staffing, Skills and Training

Issue Raised

Some stakeholders raised questions about workforce capacity, recruitment and retention of Support for Learning Assistants (SfLAs) and how staff skills and training would continue to be developed to support enhanced support more consistently across all schools.

Education Services' Response

Education Services is confident in the skills, commitment and professionalism of its workforce across Falkirk schools. A significant number of children who receive support at Stage 3 of the intervention framework are currently supported effectively within their local catchment primary schools and this is a practice which is well established.

The majority of learners receiving support at this stage are currently educated in schools which do not have an Enhanced Provision unit, or environments other than within Enhanced Provision classrooms, reflecting the strength of inclusive practice across the authority.

Consultation feedback nevertheless highlighted the importance of maintaining and extending confidence in staffing arrangements by ensuring that staff continue to have access to high-quality professional learning, guidance and support. Stakeholders emphasised the value of consistent approaches and opportunities for staff to further develop their practice over time.

Education Services recognises that the expertise developed within Enhanced Provisions has been built progressively over time through experienced teams, strong leadership and shared practice.

Feedback reinforced that this expertise should continue to be valued and sustained, while also being used to support wider system improvement. This aligns with national policy expectations around inclusive education and the presumption of mainstreaming.

The proposal was grounded in the knowledge that there is a high quality of practice already taking place in Falkirk's mainstream schools. It did not seek to replace or correct existing approaches, but instead to build greater consistency in the level of enhanced support available across all schools. The long-term aim is to ensure that children who require the level of support currently associated with an Enhanced Provision can, where appropriate, receive this within their own catchment school, without the need to move away from their local community. Throughout the consultation, Education Services was clear that no child currently attending an Enhanced Provision would be required to move as a result of the proposal and that existing arrangements would remain in place while any future work was considered.

In light of the consultation findings, Education Services has determined that any future refinement of approach should be taken forward in a phased and collaborative way. This work will focus on strengthening system coherence and confidence in mainstream catchment schools, rather than introducing this type of structural change.

Existing Enhanced Provisions will be retained and their role within the wider system will continue. Access to Enhanced Provision will remain subject to the existing Enhanced Resource Group (ERG) process, which operates on an annual basis and is therefore time and capacity limited. This means that Enhanced Provision placements cannot, in themselves, provide a fully timeous response to emerging need.

Education Services recognises that improving access to the right support, at the right time, cannot be achieved through changes to Enhanced Provision alone. In practice, this means ensuring that children can access appropriate support earlier within mainstream schools, without delay, through strengthened universal and targeted provision and increased confidence in mainstream catchment schools

Physical Environments, Spaces and Sensory Needs

Issue Raised

Parents, carers, and staff highlighted that Enhanced Provisions often benefit from calm rooms, base spaces, sensory areas, and predictable routines. Questions were raised about whether every school will have appropriate spaces to meet children's needs.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of the physical environment in supporting children's wellbeing, regulation and readiness to learn. Calm spaces, nurture approaches, sensory resources and predictable routines are already a well-established feature of practice across Falkirk schools, including within Enhanced Provisions and equally in our mainstream settings.

Information gathered from our schools confirms that a range of calm spaces, nurture areas and sensory supports are already in place across the authority.

This reflects established professional practice and the ongoing commitment of schools to shaping environments that support the needs of pupils educated within their local catchment school.

The environments developed within Enhanced Provisions have evolved over time through experienced teams and sustained practice. This experience continues to inform wider improvement activity and supports consistent understanding of the environmental features that help children feel settled, safe and ready to engage in learning.

Education Services is confident that consideration of learning environments is already embedded within school improvement activity. Schools continue to exercise professional judgement in shaping environments that are appropriate to their context and pupil needs, supported through existing guidance, advice and improvement processes.

Education Services will now continue to support all schools to develop and refine learning environments over time, building on established practice and using existing examples of improvement which have been achieved. Any further development would be planned and aligned with the needs of pupils educated within their local communities.

Safety and Supervision

Issue Raised

Parents raised concerns about supervision during unstructured times and safety for children who struggle with busy environments. In some cases, parents described very specific environmental or safety risks that they felt would require detailed individual risk assessment and adaptation.

Education Services' Response

Education Services is confident that supervision, safety and support during all parts of the school day are already well established across Falkirk schools. This includes less structured times such as breaktimes and lunchtimes - which are already routinely managed as part of daily operational practice in schools.

Across the authority, schools have embedded clear routines and nurturing, relationships-based approaches that support children to feel settled, secure and ready to learn. These approaches are embedded within both Enhanced Provisions and mainstream settings.

The majority of children receiving support at Stage 3 are supported successfully within their local catchment schools, reflecting the strength of inclusive practice across Falkirk. This demonstrates that schools are already meeting a wide range of needs safely and effectively within mainstream environments, using professional judgement and proportionate planning.

Education Services notes that schools regularly review and adapt supervision and routines to reflect their individual context, pupil needs and physical layout. This is part of normal school improvement and risk management processes and does not represent a change in approach or expectation.

Ongoing work to strengthen inclusive practice is well established across the authority. This includes increased ASN teaching and SfLA capacity, nurture and relationship-based approaches and whole-school professional learning – all of which provides a strong foundation for consistent practice.

Education Services will now continue its established approach of working with schools, parents and partners to share effective practice and support consistency where required. This will build on existing strengths, maintain effective practice within current Enhanced Provisions and will ensure that children continue to experience predictable and well supervised school environments within their local catchment schools.

Impact on Mainstream Classes

Issue Raised

Some stakeholders sought reassurance about how a wide range of needs is supported within mainstream classrooms and how inclusive practice is sustained in a way that supports all learners.

Education Services' Response

Education Services is confident that Falkirk schools already support a wide range of additional support needs within mainstream classrooms through inclusive teaching, effective use of staged intervention and well-established whole-school approaches. As previously mentioned, the majority of learners who are supported at Stage 3 are educated successfully within their local catchment schools - demonstrating that teachers are equipped to meet diverse needs as part of everyday practice.

Consultation feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining consistency in how support is planned and delivered. It also reinforced the need for teachers to continue to have access to clear guidance, collaborative support and advice when required. These are already embedded features of inclusive practice across Falkirk schools, supported through existing staffing arrangements, professional learning and current authority-wide guidance.

Education Services is clear that any development of enhanced support should strengthen and sustain the support already available to teachers, rather than add pressure to classroom practice. Ongoing improvement work provides a strong foundation for this, including recent increases in ASN teaching and SfLA capacity, the continued development of nurture and relationship-based approaches.

This work will be supported by additional ASN funding provided by the Scottish Government - with plans to use this to strengthen staffing capacity, professional learning and targeted support for schools.

These investments are focused on reinforcing inclusive practice and ensuring that teachers continue to be well supported in meeting a wide range of needs.

Education Services plan now to continue to work with schools to refine and strengthen these arrangements over time, building on what is already in place and responding to emerging needs through established planning and improvement processes. This approach will aim to ensure that high-quality learning and teaching is maintained for all pupils.

Education Services is clear that strengthening support for children with additional needs is intended to enhance inclusive practice and benefit the learning environment for all pupils and does not reduce the quality of education or support for children who do not require additional support.

Transitions and Continuity of Support

Issue Raised

Parents emphasised the importance of planned, gradual transitions at key points in a child's educational journey, particularly for children who benefit from additional preparation.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of well-planned, gradual transitions at key points in a child's educational journey. This includes transitions within primary school, between stages of support and, in some cases, between settings where appropriate. This is particularly key for children who benefit from routines, consistency and trusted relationships.

This is currently seen within established good practice across Falkirk. Schools and central teams already undertake detailed transition planning through GIRFEC and staged intervention processes - with a strong focus on early planning and close collaboration with families and partner agencies. There is clear evidence of effective transitions when this work is carried out in a planned and co-ordinated way.

Consultation feedback has reinforced the importance of maintaining these approaches and ensuring that communication with families is clear and timely, particularly where children may experience change or increased support. Stakeholders emphasised the value of predictability, stability and reassurance for children and families during transition points. Education Services is committed to ensuring that families continue to feel confident and well supported during times of change and transition.

Education Services is clear that transitions should continue to be paced and led by the needs of each individual child and young person. Existing arrangements already support this through multi-agency planning; the involvement of key adults and proportionate preparation tailored to each child. This approach will continue to underpin transition planning across Falkirk schools, building on established strengths and maintaining the relationship-based practice which families value.

Equity, Fairness and Access to Support

Issue Raised

Some families and staff sought reassurance about how access to Enhanced Provision support operates at present and how consistency and equity of access to enhanced support will be achieved across the authority.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of ensuring that access to enhanced support is based on assessed need and is clearly understood by families and professionals. Enhanced Provisions were established to support children receiving support at Stage 3 of the staged intervention framework and over time the number of children requiring this level of support has increased across the authority (see Appendix 1, Table 2). This context has informed reflections on how enhanced support is planned for, accessed and reviewed.

Consultation feedback reinforced the value of approaches that feel predictable and transparent, with support following the child rather than being shaped by the availability of specific places. This aligns with what schools and central teams have previously identified through data and ongoing improvement activities.

Education Services is confident in current practice and is committed to strengthening consistency in how enhanced support is delivered across Falkirk schools. The aim will then be ensuring this takes place in ways which reflect local context and ensure equitable access for children and families across the authority.

Education Services recognises the importance of maintaining clear and well-understood processes, criteria and support pathways for families and professionals. Work is already underway to further streamline the ERG process to a 'tell us once' approach to provide a strong foundation for planning for consistent and equitable access to support.

Education Services will continue to work with schools, parents and partners to build on these arrangements, supporting consistency and clarity in access to enhanced support and ensuring that children receive the right support at the right time, within their local context.

Financial Pressures and Motivations

Issue Raised

Some stakeholders expressed a belief that the proposal was only financially motivated or linked to wider budget planning.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of clarity about the factors that informed the proposal.

The work was shaped by patterns of need identified over time through staged intervention data, Enhanced Provision applications, professional feedback from schools and wider Additional Support for Learning improvement activity. Combined, this information reflects changes in the range and distribution of need across Falkirk schools compared to when the current Enhanced Provision model was originally established.

The proposal therefore sought to consider how a model developed over 20 years ago, for a different cohort of learners, might be adapted to better reflect current patterns of need across all schools - while also remaining aligned with inclusive education policy and supporting children within their local communities wherever possible.

Education Services has been clear throughout the consultation that the proposal was not financially driven in any way. There were no elements of the proposal designed or intended to deliver savings, and no direct savings were identified through this work. The budget allocated to Enhanced Provision remains ring-fenced and protected for the provisions alone.

As a public service, the Council has a duty to plan and use resources responsibly in line with changing patterns of need. Consultation feedback reinforced the importance of clearly distinguishing between educational drivers for change and the Council's wider responsibility for responsible resource planning. Education Services therefore reiterates that the purpose of this work was to explore how existing resources could best support equitable access to appropriate support for children and young people with additional support needs - rather than to reduce provision or achieve any financial savings.

Participate+ Platform and Data Confidence

Issue Raised

Some respondents raised questions about how data protection and anonymity were being managed within the consultation process.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of confidentiality and anonymity when individuals share views through consultation activity, particularly where personal experiences or sensitive information about children are discussed.

All consultation activity was conducted in accordance with Falkirk Council's data protection policies and the requirements of UK GDPR. The Participate+ survey was designed to allow anonymous responses and did not request or require specific personal data within survey questions. Any personal information which was included in responses was provided voluntarily by respondents themselves. Written representations were handled securely by designated officers and material was anonymised where necessary prior to being shared with Education Scotland. No individual child, family or respondent is identifiable within this report.

Consultation feedback highlighted the value of making information about these arrangements clear and accessible to participants. Education Services will continue to ensure that consultation materials clearly explain how information is handled, the safeguards in place and how anonymity is protected. This supports confidence and understanding for families and staff taking part in engagement activity.

Communication During the Consultation

Issue Raised

Some respondents sought reassurance about the timing and consistency of communications during the consultation period.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of clear and timely communication during statutory consultation, particularly where there is a high level of interest and engagement.

Throughout the consultation period, a range of engagement activity took place. This included: public meetings, the option to submit written responses, focus groups and ongoing correspondence with parents, staff and stakeholders. Officers aimed to respond directly to enquiries as they arose and, where questions were not already addressed in published materials, responses were provided. Where common themes emerged, these were reflected in updates to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) published on the Participate+ platform - ensuring that information was available to all stakeholders.

Information about the consultation was also shared through a range of established channels, including the Participate+ platform, school Groupcalls, the Council website, social media and a statutory notice published in the Falkirk Herald. Updates to the FAQ document were highlighted on the document with date stamps as revisions were made, supporting the signposting to the most up-to-date information throughout the consultation period.

This approach ensured that stakeholders were able to access information through multiple routes and that responses to questions were made available publicly where appropriate. The consultation process operated as intended, with information provided, updated and accessible throughout the consultation process.

Timescales and Implementation

Issue Raised

Parents and staff sought clarity about timescales and how any change would be phased and implemented.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance families and staff place on understanding timescales and on reassurance that any consideration of change would be carefully planned and proportionate.

Throughout the consultation process, Education Services was clear that the proposal did not involve immediate change, as referenced in the FAQs published alongside the consultation proposal. This was intended to provide reassurance that children's arrangements would not be altered suddenly or without appropriate planning and that stability for children and families would not only be maintained but would be a priority if any changes were to progress.

Consultation feedback reinforced the importance of clarity about how change would be approached, should any transformation work be approved. Stakeholders emphasised the value of clear communication and ensuring that planning remains focused on children's needs and wellbeing.

Education Services will take this feedback into account through ongoing work to strengthen enhanced support - continuing to ensure that practice is informed by evidence; aligned with available resources and priorities and focused on children's needs.

Equality, Poverty and Children's Rights Impact Assessments

Issue Raised

Consultees raised questions around the statutory compliance and processes of completing an EPIA for a consultation such as this and that they wished to have the full EPIA prior to submitting any views on the proposal.

Education Services' Response

In line with Falkirk Council's Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment guidance, an Initial Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) was completed at proposal stage. The purpose of the Initial EPIA is to act as a screening tool to identify whether a proposal may impact people and therefore requires a full assessment.

Where an Initial EPIA identifies that a proposal may have an impact, a Full Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment is undertaken as a finalised proposal is developed following consultation and engagement with stakeholders. Producing a full assessment prior to consultation would risk pre-determining impact without the necessary evidence.

In addition, and in line with statutory duties relating to children's rights, a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) has been completed.

This assessment was informed by consultation feedback and by children's views gathered through pupil-voice activity undertaken within Enhanced Provisions.

The completed EPIA and CRWIA are presented alongside this Consultation Report and the report from Education Scotland.

Recording of Public Meetings, Use of Transcripts and Availability of Records

Issue Raised

Some consultees requested access to full transcripts or minutes of the public meetings held as part of the consultation and sought clarification on whether these records had been provided to Education Scotland.

Education Services' Response

Education Services welcomes the opportunity to clarify what is required, and what is produced, as part of a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

The 2010 Act requires an education authority to hold a public meeting and to provide a summary of any oral representations made at that meeting. This requirement is set out in section 7(1)(c), in relation to information provided to Education Scotland, and section 9(2)(b)(ii), in relation to the content of the final Consultation Report. The Act does not require the creation, retention or publication of audio recordings or verbatim transcripts. Scottish Government statutory guidance confirms that the relevant material for statutory purposes is a written summary of oral representations, rather than a transcript or recording.

In line with these statutory requirements, Falkirk Council produces written summary notes for each public meeting, capturing the key issues raised and the responses provided. These summary notes are shared with Education Scotland as part of their independent consideration and are published as part of the final Consultation Report. This approach also aligns with the Council's Community Engagement Charter, Framework and Strategy (2025–2028), which requires the reporting of engagement outcomes and feedback, rather than the publication or retention of recordings or transcripts.

Where meetings are recorded, this is done solely to support accurate note-taking. As part of this process, a temporary transcript may be generated from the audio to assist officers in preparing the written summary notes. These transcripts are not formal records of proceedings and are not intended to be retained or published. Audio recordings and any associated temporary transcripts are used only for as long as necessary to finalise the written summaries and are then securely deleted in line with data protection and records management requirements.

Participants are informed in advance when recording takes place. As the consultation progressed, officers recognised the importance of being explicit about the purpose of any recording and the role of transcripts within the process.

It was therefore clearly explained that recordings were used only to support the creation of an accurate written record and that both audio recordings and any temporary transcription aids would be deleted once summary notes were finalised. This approach was taken to ensure clarity, transparency and shared understanding.

In summary, Falkirk Council meets its statutory and policy obligations by producing and publishing written summaries of oral representations made at public meetings. Audio recordings and any associated transcripts are temporary internal tools used solely to support accuracy and are not retained or released publicly.

Communication of the Consultation and Use of Groupcall

Issue Raised

Some consultees raised concerns about how information about the consultation was communicated, including whether all parents and carers received timely notification of the consultation and public meetings. In particular, concerns were raised about the use of the Groupcall system and whether a technical issue may have affected the delivery of an initial message in some establishments.

Education Services' Response

Education Services recognises the importance of clear, timely and consistent communication during a statutory consultation, particularly where proposals relate to children's education, support and wellbeing.

The consultation was publicised through a range of established communication routes, including publication on the Falkirk Council website and the Participate+ platform, Groupcall messages issued centrally and via schools, a statutory notice in the local press, and direct communication with establishments. Written representations could be submitted throughout the consultation period up to the published closing date.

An issue relating to the delivery of an initial Groupcall message in some establishments was identified on 1 September 2025, following contact from a Head Teacher. Once this was brought to the attention of Education Services, corrective action was taken. On 5 September 2025, all schools and Early Learning and Childcare Centres were emailed with pre-prepared communications for circulation to parents and carers, ensuring consistent information was shared across establishments.

The statutory consultation notice remained available on the Council website throughout the consultation period, and information about public meetings and opportunities to respond continued to be accessible via Participate+. Education Services acknowledges that the communication issue caused understandable frustration for some families and will reflect on this as part of ongoing improvement in consultation practice. However, the steps taken ensured that consultees had access to information and opportunities to engage within the statutory consultation period.

Summary

Overall, Education Services recognises the high level of engagement and the thoughtful contributions made by families, staff and partners throughout the consultation. The themes identified and points raised will further inform ongoing improvement work across Additional Support for Learning.

8. Education Scotland Report

In line with the requirements of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was provided by Education Scotland on the educational aspects of the Proposal to change Falkirk's Primary Enhanced Provision model. This report is attached as Appendix 14

In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at online and public meetings held in connection with the Council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the Council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to Airth Primary School, Beancross Primary School, Deanburn Primary School, Denny Primary School, Langlees Primary School, St Andrew's Primary School, St Margaret's Primary School and Wallacestone Primary School, two of which have Enhanced Provisions.

The report findings can be summarised as follows:

Education Scotland recognised that the proposal was developed in response to increasing demand and changing patterns of need within additional support for learning and that its stated intention was to improve equity of access to enhanced support and strengthen inclusive practice across Falkirk's primary schools.

HM Inspectors noted that some consultees identified potential benefits in children being supported closer to home and within their local communities, provided that appropriate staffing, resources and environments were in place to meet children's needs effectively.

The report highlighted that a significant proportion of stakeholders, particularly parents and carers of children currently attending Enhanced Provisions, expressed concerns about the proposal. These concerns related to the potential impact on children's support, transition arrangements, staffing capacity, resourcing, the availability of suitable space within schools, and safety considerations.

Education Scotland reported that stakeholders sought greater clarity and reassurance about how the proposal would operate in practice, including how children requiring an enhanced level of additional support would continue to have their needs met without that support being diminished or compromised.

The report identified that additional detail would have been required in relation to implementation timescales, professional learning and training for staff, transition planning, risk assessment and costings, to support confidence in how the proposal could be delivered.

Education Scotland also emphasised the importance of continued engagement and clear communication with stakeholders in supporting positive outcomes for children and young people.

8.1 Falkirk Council's Response to Education Scotland's Report

Falkirk Council welcomes the report from Education Scotland and accepts its findings. The authority values the independent and professional consideration given by HM Inspectors to the educational aspects of the proposal and the way in which the report reflects the views and experiences shared by children, young people, parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders during the consultation process.

The Council notes Education Scotland's recognition that the proposal was developed in response to growing demand and increasing range of additional support for learning, and that its stated intention was to improve equity of access to enhanced support and strengthen inclusive practice across Falkirk's primary schools. The authority acknowledges that these aims were understood by stakeholders, particularly in relation to children being supported closer to home and within their local communities.

Education Scotland's report highlights that many stakeholders sought additional clarity and assurance about how the proposal would operate in practice, including around transitions, staffing, resourcing, professional learning and the use of physical space within schools. Falkirk Council recognises that, given the scale and strategic nature of the proposal, consultees wished to see further detail about how the model might be implemented and how individual children's needs would continue to be met.

During the consultation period, the Council took steps to respond to emerging concerns, including issuing a statement of clarification and expanding supporting materials where appropriate. The report confirms, however, that future work of this nature would benefit from further opportunities to explore implementation considerations in more depth and to provide further reassurance to families and staff about how change would be phased and supported over time.

Education Scotland also emphasised the importance of ongoing engagement with stakeholders and clear communication about timescales, professional learning and safeguarding arrangements. Falkirk Council agrees that sustained dialogue is beneficial when considering any changes which impact children with additional support needs. These principles will continue to underpin the Council's ongoing approach.

Falkirk Council recognises the value of Education Scotland's report in informing ongoing reflection and improvement across Additional Support for Learning. The findings will support ongoing work to strengthen inclusive practice and promote consistency and equity in enhanced support across Falkirk schools. Education Services remains committed to pursuing the same intended outcomes through ongoing improvement activity.

The Council remains committed to working collaboratively with Education Scotland and with stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional support needs, drawing on the learning from this consultation process to inform future planning and engagement.

9. Consultation conclusions

The consultation process involved extensive engagement with children and young people, parents and carers, staff, partners and the wider community. The feedback received provided valuable insight into current strengths within the system, areas where greater consistency is sought, and has highlighted the shared aspirations for how enhanced support should continue to develop across Falkirk schools.

Feedback, alongside wider local and national evidence, continues to highlight increasing levels of need across the authority. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that enhanced support is delivered in a way that is equitable, sustainable and able to respond to changing patterns of demand over time. Therefore, it is the intention of Education Services to maintain the strong practice already in place, while continuing to strengthen the capacity and consistency of support across all schools to achieve greater equity for children and young people.

Education Services has listened carefully to the views expressed through the consultation. While there was support for the underlying aim of achieving greater equity in enhanced support across all mainstream schools, a key factor influencing confidence in the proposal was the extent to which parents, carers and staff felt assured that mainstream schools currently have the capacity to deliver enhanced provision-level support consistently and safely across all settings. Feedback highlighted concerns about children's wellbeing, continuity of support and the potential dilution of the skilled teaching currently available within Enhanced Provisions.

In response to this feedback and recognising that confidence in system-wide capacity is not yet sufficiently established, Education Services will recommend that this proposal, as consulted upon, is not progressed by Elected Members. As the proposal to redistribute existing Enhanced Provision resources is not being progressed, current staffing models and resource allocations associated with Enhanced Provisions will remain unchanged. Current arrangements governing access to these provisions will also remain the same.

Education Services also wishes to be clear that the findings of this consultation do not indicate that current support for children in mainstream schools - including those with additional support needs and those without - is being reduced or compromised. Schools continue to support a wide range of learners effectively through inclusive practice, staged intervention and existing staffing and resources. This consultation does not change current arrangements for mainstream pupils and does not diminish the support available to any child.

Alongside the consultation evidence, Education Services has considered the completed Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA). These assessments highlighted the importance of stability where support is delivered and safeguarding children's wellbeing - alongside the need to continue strengthening equity of access to appropriate support across schools. They also reflected the diversity of experiences and needs within Falkirk's school communities.

The CRWIA and EPIA were used as tools to support professional judgement and informed decision-making, alongside consultation feedback, statutory duties and

existing evidence. They were not determinative in isolation but formed part of a wider body of information considered in reaching the conclusions set out in this report.

Next Steps

Work already underway to strengthen the capacity and consistency of enhanced support across Falkirk schools will continue, supported by Scottish Government Additional Support Needs funding and aligned with evidence from the wider Additional Support for Learning Review.

This next phase of work is intended to build confidence over time in the ability of all schools to deliver enhanced levels of support consistently and sustainably, responding directly to what was heard through the consultation and building on existing strengths within the system.

This will include the development of an Enhanced Support Team, made up of skilled and experienced practitioners with experience in supporting children and young people with additional support needs. The funding for this team will be provided through Scottish Government Additional Support for Learning funding, awarded specifically to support improvements in ASN services within each local authority. The team will work on the ground and in real time alongside schools, providing practical support, coaching and professional collaboration to strengthen practice and support greater consistency of capacity across the school estate, in line with the aim of achieving greater equity.

The Enhanced Support Team will focus on:

- supporting greater consistency in approaches to meeting enhanced support needs across schools;
- observing, sharing and extending the expertise currently held within Enhanced Provisions;
- further increasing confidence and capability within school staff through joint working, coaching and problem-solving; and
- further supporting early identification and timely intervention.

This approach is intended to complement, not replace, existing provision. It does not change current access arrangements to Enhanced Provisions and does not introduce new requirements for schools as a result of this consultation. Rather, it reflects a continuation of improvement activity already in progress, using available resources in a targeted and proportionate way to support equity and sustainability across the authority.

Reporting

The outcomes of the consultation, alongside the accompanying recommendations, will be brought forward through a formal committee report. The recommendations presented to Elected Members will reflect the conclusions and next steps set out in Section 9 of this report, ensuring that the matters for consideration are consistent with the consultation findings and do not introduce proposals beyond those outlined here.

Appendix List:

All appendices have been published separately for ease of access and can be viewed on the consultation page:

<https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/consultations-and-surveys/consultation-on-proposed-changes-to-enhanced-provision-model-of-support->

- Appendix 1: Further Information
- Appendix 2: Proposal Document
- Appendix 3: Clarification Notice
- Appendix 4: Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix 5: FOI Responses
- Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms
- Appendix 7: Letters Received
- Appendix 8: Online Survey Responses
- Appendix 9: Organisation Letters Received
- Appendix 10: Presentation Slides
- Appendix 11: Pupils Responses
- Appendix 12: Public Meeting Notes
- Appendix 13: Focus Groups
- Appendix 14: Education Scotland Report
- Appendix 15: Process Map (Primary)
- Appendix 16: Process Map (ELC to Primary 1)
- Appendix 17: Partner Agency Agreement Notes
- Appendix 18: Staff Meeting Notes
- Appendix 19 Map of current and shadow EP's
- Appendix 20: EPIA
- Appendix 21: CRWIA