

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 19 April 2018**  
**Learning and Development for Support Staff**

**BACKGROUND**

In August 2016, the amalgamation of the Support for Learning Assistant (SFLA) and Secondary Support Assistant (SSA)/Primary School Assistant (PSA) roles resulted in the School and Pupil Support Assistant (SPSA) post. This has enabled greater flexibility in our response to meeting the needs of children and young people. As part of the Learning and Development strategy, it was recognised that as the new SPSA role evolved, staff would require core training to help support them to meet emerging needs.

As a result, around 100 staff attended 'A Day in the life of....' training led by our Allied Health Professional colleagues from Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy at the in-service day in May 2016 in Arbroath Academy and in May 2017 in Brechin Community Campus. The session was delivered through practical workshops giving staff an awareness of how it might feel to live with additional support needs and highlighted areas to consider when working with children and young people in our schools. These included;

- Posture, positioning and transfers – how this can affect day to day tasks and why it is important
- Hoisting, wheelchairs and equipment – what it feels like to a wheelchair user/ require hoisting
- Sensory – how it might feel to be over-stimulated by various senses and the impact on the child's ability to attend and focus
- Fine motor and visual perceptual ability – what challenges may be experienced by a child who has difficulties in this area
- Inclusion in Physical Education – practical tips and advice on inclusion of children with physical difficulties
- Communication- communication difficulties and the impact on a child's day

Following the positive feedback from these events, further training from Speech and Language Therapy colleagues was arranged for all support staff this session. 'An Introduction to Speech, Language and Communication Needs' was attended by over 350 SPSAs working in a support role across Angus schools. The sessions were delivered in Carnoustie High School during the in-service day in February 2018, led by six therapists from Speech and Language Therapy services.

The purpose of these sessions was to be able to identify types of speech, language and communication needs and to understand how to best support children with these barriers to their learning. The training also provided a networking opportunity for colleagues to learn from each other.

An initial input for all staff on 'Creating Communication Friendly Settings and Language Learning Opportunities' was presented as a keynote introduction followed by a choice of two workshops including:

- Everyday Makaton Sign Sharing
- Language Development Levels (for supporting children with more complex needs)
- Promoting the Vocabulary Development of Children with ASNs (Primary/Secondary)

From the evaluations received, this was a very successful learning event, and following consultation with staff regarding future training, there are plans to deliver similar events on two in-service days within each school session.

Contact for further information: Pauline Stephen, Head of Schools and Learning.  
Email: PEOPLE@angus.gov.uk