



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Oideachas Speisialta
National Council for Special Education

International Administrative Review of the Use of Non-Teaching Adult Support Staff in Schools for Students with Additional Care Needs

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**Research conducted as part of the
Comprehensive Review of the Special Needs Assistant Scheme**

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1. Introduction

This report details the main findings of an international administrative review undertaken by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) of the use of non-teaching adult support staff to support students with disabilities in schools who have additional care needs. Following this introduction, section two outlines the methodology for the review while section 3 reports on the findings of the survey. The report concludes with some general observations on the findings.

2. Methodology

In October 2016, the NCSE designed a survey to examine how non-teaching adult support staff are used in schools elsewhere in the world to support students with disabilities that have additional care needs. The aim of the survey was to identify key aspects of mechanisms or schemes in operation in other administrations, including eligibility criteria, personnel titles, allocation processes, needs which are met by the scheme and so on (see appendix 1). Once finalised, a copy of the survey was completed from the Irish perspective. This served as a form of piloting, with the completed survey being reviewed by NCSE staff and subsequent adjustments made to the questions.

2.1 Selecting administrations for the review

Target administrations for inclusion in the review were identified in a number of ways. Firstly, the 34 member administrations of the European Agency for Inclusive and Special Needs Education¹ were included. Secondly, previous NCSE-commissioned research *Continuum of Education Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs* (Rix et al 2013) developed “a broad spread of countries, geographically, economically, politically and culturally,” numbering 55 in total (Rix et al 2013, p.7). After discussion within NCSE, it was decided that this sample of administrations was broadly representative to be used as the sample for this survey. Of the 55 administrations in the Rix study, 24 were members of the European Agency, resulting in an additional 31 which were included in the sample. When combined with the European Agency sample, this gave us an initial list of 65 administrations that we wanted to include in our review. When Ireland was removed, 64 remained. These are listed in appendix 2.

2.2 Administering the survey

The survey was administered via email in late October and early November 2016, with reminder emails sent as required over December 2016 and January 2017 (two in total to those who had not responded). In relation to the European Agency members of sample, some of these (n=14) had participated in a previous, shorter survey on the provision of non-teaching adult support conducted by the Irish National Coordinator for the Agency in 2015. Their answers were used to complete copies of the survey and then forwarded to the National Coordinator for that jurisdiction with a request to review the data entered and complete the survey. The National Coordinators of the remaining European Agency members of the sample (n=19) were written to with a request to complete the survey. The contact emails for the National Coordinators were retrieved from website of the European Agency.

In relation to non-European Agency administrations in the sample (n=31), contact details were retrieved by trawling the websites of education ministries/departments/agencies. The

specificity of contact details retrieved varied from specific individuals and job roles in inclusive or special education sections, to general emails in the same sections, to general emails in entire departments/ministries/agencies. In eleven cases, no email details whatsoever could be found, and thus no email was sent. These countries were Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Iran, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia and Venezuela.

The sample, therefore, was reduced to 53. However, an additional three administrations (all Australian states) were brought into the sample by way of an NCSE contact, thus bringing the sample total to 56. The full list of states contacted across both the proposed and actual sampling frames to which the survey was forwarded is outlined in appendix 2.

2.3 Targeting particular administrations

After the requested date for submission had passed and responses were being received, the NCSE identified that the information being returned related predominantly to European education systems. Notwithstanding the challenges in identifying contact details for officials in particular administrations, it was decided to try to contact:

- academics who had published on special education topics in particular countries;
- academics who had supported the Rix team in their comparative work; and
- individuals which NCSE staff had developed contact with in particular jurisdictions/states through its own work.

The administrations in this element of the work included some of those originally listed in the initial proposed sample: Japan, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Victoria Australia, Jordan, South Korea, Tanzania and Uganda.ⁱⁱ

This strategy resulted in contact details for officials in three administrations, to which the survey was forwarded (Victoria, Australia, Jordan, and Uganda). Information in one case was secured (Victoria, Australia). Officials in Victoria, Australia who completed the survey forwarded it to officials in three other Australian states, who also provided information (New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia).

The addition of these three Australian states brought the final sample to 56 (including the three additional Australian states, but excluding Victoria, Australia, Jordan and Uganda as they were all in the original sample/had been contacted previously). Information was received from 32 administrations, representing a response rate of 57%. The administrations from which responses were received were: Austria, Connecticut United States, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, England, Finland, Belgium (Flemish), Belgium (French), France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, New South Wales Australia, Ohio United States, Ontario Canada, Portugal, Scotland, Slovakia, South Australia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tasmania Australia, Victoria Australia and the United States (federal level).

2.4 Sourcing additional information

After a first review of data was undertaken, it was decided to contact a select number (n=12) of states which responded to the first survey with a request for additional information. The 12 states were as follows: Scotland, Sweden, Malta, Austria, Belgium (Flemish), England, Finland, Lithuania, New South Wales, Ohio, Ontario and South Australia.

Information relating to four areas was sought asked:

1. A list of all the different types of paraprofessionals or other forms of support professionals (additional, non-teaching adult support) available in/to educational settings to students with additional care needs in each state (for example, speech and language therapists, psychologists)?
2. The roles and tasks of each of these types of paraprofessional and/or professionals?
3. Any information on class size in the state's mainstream education system, in which these individuals operate and provide support?
4. The existence of specialist teacher roles in the education system in each state and if so, could the roles and tasks associated with them.

Some form of response was received from seven of the 12 states: Scotland, Sweden, Belgium (Flemish), England, Finland, Ohio and Ontario. Where relevant, this data is integrated into that presented as part of the first survey. It is identified as additional information. It should be noted, however, that detailed information was only received in relation to question one. Responses in relation to question two (n=6) generally noted that roles and tasks were determined by the local setting, or were not provided. Class size information was highly varied from administration to administration, and within administrations (e.g. depending on education level and/or subject taught in class and/or class level). Responses to question four (n=6) noted that specialist teachers did exist, with the role generally of supporting students with special educational needs in mainstream and/or special school settings. In England, the response noted that all teachers should have the ability to teach students with SEN.

2.5 Reporting the data

Data received from each respondent was initially grouped under headings drawn from the survey questions. The collated responses under each heading were analysed to identify trends and patterns amongst them. These patterns formed the basis of the findings reported below.

2.6 Limitations

It is not possible to directly compare schemes or mechanisms that operate in surveyed countries/jurisdictions which are aimed at supporting students with disabilities who have additional needs. There are a number of reasons for this, including the different types of states surveyed (unitary and federal) and the different levels at which responsibility of education policy is held (central and/or regional and/or local) and of course the different education contexts and systems. The poor quality of much of the data provided by many respondents, despite follow up requests, also precludes such comparisons, as well as anything other than a rudimentary reporting of the information provided. Unfortunately, this greatly limits what we can definitively learn from other countries about how they are meeting the needs of these students. However, analysis of the data summarised below reveal some patterns in country/jurisdiction responses which are noteworthy

The response rate, while reasonable, does mask the review's primary limitation: the predominance of data from English-speaking and/or European countries and the absence of data from Africa, South America and Asia.

3. Overview of responses

3.1 The existence of a scheme, policy or programme and departments/ministries/agencies responsible for it

All administrations responded to this question. Of the 32 responses, ten noted that there was no specific scheme which actively resulted in the employment/deployment of such staff (Scotland, Finland, Connecticut, Switzerland, both Belgian regions, United States, Victoria Australia, Tasmania Australia, and Estonia). However, in many of these cases special education policy did not appear to specifically prevent the hiring of such staff. For example, resources could be provided to schools, who may decide if they want to hire additional staff as part of a suite of options to promote inclusion (e.g. the Australian states of Victoria and Tasmania); or, as in the case of Belgium (French), additional non-teaching staff “can be arranged”. The replies for Switzerland and Finland state that there is no scheme, policy or programme in these countries, but there is evidence of the use of paraprofessionals. This is similar for Connecticut in the United States, where despite the absence of a formal scheme, paraprofessionals are used.

Of the 22 administrations which stated that there was a scheme of some sort, two specified the existence of health schemes to support students with care needs in the classroom. In Ontario, Canada this health scheme was the only one mentioned in its response, while in South Australia, its health scheme is in addition to the use of non-teaching adult support in the classroom. It should be noted that respondents in each of the administrations surveyed were not asked to specify the existence of health schemes. Therefore, it cannot be taken as read that health schemes to support students with additional care needs do not exist in other countries which responded.

3.2 Titles used for non-teaching adult support staff

Respondents review were asked whether additional non-teaching adult support staff were given a particular title, and if so, to state what they were (e.g. paraprofessional, care assistant, behaviour therapist, teaching assistant, other).

Over 70 titlesⁱⁱⁱ were provided for these types of paraprofessionals in responses received. The majority of responses indicate a type of paraprofessional which was education-orientated in its title, for example: pedagogical assistants, school assistants, education support staff, pupil assistant, learning support assistant, class assistant, teacher assistant, teaching assistant, school learning support officers.

Some responses indicated titles which were not education-oriented, but the context of their answers is important to consider. For example, responses from both regions in Belgium indicate a range of (para) professionals working specifically in special schools (such as paramedical, medical, social, psychological, speech therapists) which in the case of the Flemish region, are reported to be available to support students in mainstream schools. This support is accessed from special schools as part of a framework integrated education, although no further information was provided on how the framework operates. In Portugal, therapists and psychologists are mentioned as types of paraprofessionals. However, these staff are mentioned in the context of inclusion resource centres, which appear to be former special schools.

The two states which specifically mentioned health-related programmes listed health-related personnel. In Ontario, personnel in its Health Support Services in School Settings programme include aides, health professionals (un-denominated), clinical therapists, speech therapists/pathologists and speech and language teachers.

In South Australia, health support officers form part of the Access Assistant Programme. These officers are unlicensed health care workers, specifically trained to meet the particular invasive health care needs of students, according to the student's defined health plan. Where necessary, a registered nurse can also form part of the programme. Separate to this programme, there is a Student Support Services Team, which contains a number of different professionals such as behaviour support coaches, social workers, psychologists, special educators and speech pathologists. This team advises schools on how to meet the needs of students referred to it, and where required will provide specialist support to the school and student.

The additional request for information from a sub-sample of administrations (see section 2.4) resulted in seven responses. Two of these (Ontario, Belgium (Flemish)) provided little or no additional information to that outlined in their original response and detailed above. In Ontario, reference is made to professionals from outside the school who can be brought in to address particular needs (e.g. speech and language, OT, psychology and medical professionals).

In Scotland, a number of professionals can be involved in both assessing and meeting needs. In relation to assessment, educational psychologists and health professionals, such as doctors, nurses, OTs, physiotherapists, SLTs can all be involved in assessing needs, dependent on the student. These staff are also listed as meeting the needs of students, in addition to behaviour support staff, and SLT assistants. It should be noted that the provision of support in Scotland for students with additional care needs can differ from local authority to local authority.

Similarly, in England, a range of different professionals is listed as being the most common types of person support for students with special educational needs, but it is ultimately for the educational setting to determine what type of support is provided and how. The professionals listed include SLTs, OTs, physiotherapists, behaviour specialists, mental health nurses and psychiatrists.

In Sweden, schools must have a nurse, doctor, social worker and psychologist. In addition, they may also provide speech therapists or other forms of professional support, but this is determined at a local level. In Finland, school nurses, doctors, and psychologists are listed, along with other professionals such as SLTs and OTs. But again, the potential combination of professionals available to schools is determined at a local level.

Ohio provided the greatest amount of detail on the types of paraprofessionals in its education system to support students with disabilities. These included: audiologists, interpreters, nurses and other medical personnel, OTs, orientation mobility specialists, adapted physical educators, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, speech and language pathologists, school counsellors, and general monitors and attendants.

3.3 Types of needs met by schemes and roles of paraprofessionals

Thirty-one responses were received to this question.

In the case of Cyprus, Austria and Norway, responses explicitly indicated that the intention of paraprofessional support was to aid the teacher, through meeting the needs of the student.^{iv}

The remaining responses noted the needs of students (without mention of the teacher) were foremost regarding the operation of the schemes and/or the provision of support by these adults. These needs vary from educational (e.g. learning needs, ICT support needs, pedagogical needs) to care (e.g. toileting, hygiene, feeding) to behaviour and medical.

Responses to this question should also be considered in the context to those detailed under 3.8.1 below (defined role/job description of the paraprofessional).

3.4 Eligibility criteria

Two administrations did not respond to this question, while in a third case the answer was unclear. In two administrations it was noted that the eligibility criteria for access to paraprofessional support was determined at a local level: in Scotland by principals and/or the local authority who decide on access; and in Ontario by each education district, which determines the specific eligibility criteria within a legal framework. The response from Malta noted that new criteria were being developed, but had yet to be signed off so they were not circulated as part of the survey.

Of the remaining 26 administrations, the most common form of determining eligibility for paraprofessional support was by way of a diagnostic or needs assessment. This was the case in 15 administrations (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Iceland, Norway, Slovakia, Victoria Australia, Switzerland,^v New South Wales Australia, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia, England, Denmark and South Australia). In three of these states, school principals were noted as having a final role in determining access to support (Austria, Iceland, Norway).

In five administrations, access to such support was determined by whether it was specified in an IEP or similar document, such as a monitoring policy (France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Ohio).

In the six remaining administrations, different situations exist. In Germany, eligibility is determined by the presence of a disability for six months or more, resulting in needs which are greater than those which could be reasonably met by a teacher. In Spain, the education authority decides on a ratio of assistants to students with special educational needs in a school, based on information provided by the school and the school inspection service. In Flanders, eligibility appears to be determined by the type of setting the student is in. In Latvia, applications are made directly to the Ministry of Education and the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Conditions. In Sweden, eligibility is determined by the School Principal. In the United States, every child is entitled to access paraprofessional support if it is required so they can access education.

3.5 Allocation of paraprofessional support

No data was provided by three respondents. Across the answers provided by the remaining 29 respondents, the degree of information provided varied greatly. While respondents were

given examples of how allocation may occur in the question (e.g. forms of support allocated to settings, to individual students), not all provided this level of detail in response.

The majority of respondents indicated that paraprofessional support is allocated based on student need (Croatia, Cyprus, France, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Victoria, United States, Portugal, New South Wales, Tasmania, Germany, Denmark and Connecticut). In the responses of some these 19 administrations, the way in which the paraprofessionals were allocated was further elaborated. For example, in Spain, while paraprofessional support was allocated based on student need, the allocation can be made to the school or the student. In Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales, the support is allocated to the school: in Tasmania, against named individuals; and in New South Wales using a formula which reflects the learning needs of students (no further detail in relation to Victoria was received). In Portugal, resources are provided to the school based on the number of qualifying students and their needs. In Malta, while support is provided for the individual student in the classroom, the learning support assistant is expected to help all students in the class under the guidance of the teacher.

In the remaining 10 responses, answers varied. In three administrations (Scotland, Finland, Ontario), local level decision makers determine how such support is allocated (e.g. in Scotland, allocation could be based on individual need, and/or determined by head teacher). In the remaining seven cases, allocations are determined at the school level (Austria, Switzerland, Lithuania, South Australia, Estonia, England, Flanders). In some cases, further information was provided. In England, Flanders, and South Australia for example, it appears support is provided to the school as part of an overall general allocation and/or budgetary process.

3.6 Changes to the amount of support allocated

Five administrations did not provide a response to this question, while the response one other was unclear.

Across the remaining 26 administrations, the amount of support provided by a paraprofessional to a student could change over time. The determining factor across almost all responses causing change was the level of student need (Switzerland). Beyond this, some respondents provided additional details. For example, in Cyprus, the amount of support provided can change due to student need, changes in the school (unspecified) or a change of teacher. In Malta, changes are determined through a review process. In Spain, school staff meet periodically to review the progress of the student, but the Inspectorate and Counselling Department is required to write a report to change the amount of support allocated. In Victoria, schools can request a reappraisal and submit a new application demonstrating changes in need. In South Australia, an extensive review process underpins changes in support allocation. This is similar to New South Wales. In Connecticut and Ohio, changes are based on reviews of the student's IEP, which must occur at least annually.

3.7 Review process for allocation of paraprofessional support

Nine administrations provided no response to this question. In four cases it was noted that no formal review process was in place or obliged to occur (Flanders, Lithuania, Switzerland and Ohio), although in the case of Ohio, we know from the previous section, 3.6., that IEPs, which are the basis of allocation of paraprofessional support where required, are reviewed annually). Reviews were noted to take place in the remaining nineteen states, although the

timing of these varied widely. For example, in Croatia, New South Wales, Connecticut and Denmark, reviews were required to occur annually. In the responses of other states, reviews occurred as required, on an ongoing basis or at particular points in the educational life of the student (e.g. in Portugal at the end of the school cycle, in Finland at the end of seventh class). In some cases, the extent to which a review occurred at all was the responsibility of local decision makers/schools (England, Sweden).

3.8 Role profiles, job descriptions and pay rates

3.8.1 Role profiles/job descriptions

No data was provided by three administrations, while a further thirteen indicated that role profiles did not exist, were for schools/districts to determine, or otherwise provided information which was unclear and/or incomplete (Flanders, Connecticut, Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Ohio, Ontario, Victoria Australia, Switzerland and Iceland). The response from Portugal indicated that the job description was outlined in Ministry publications, but no further information was provided other than to say that the role was a student-centred one, working in collaboration with other professionals.

Of the remaining fifteen respondents, the level of detailed provided varied greatly, as outlined below.

In South Australia^{vi}, the role of School Support Officers (SSOs) varies dependent on the setting the student. In mainstream settings, SSOs do not have a pedagogical role^{vii} in mainstream but work under direction of teachers to support students with SEN in areas such as phonics, handwriting, language, and modifying specific activities. In special schools and special classes, SSOs provide classroom support for students, including curriculum, behaviour and social skills. They also provide personal care support, and work with students with communication difficulties.

SSOs also support students with multiple and severe disabilities in both mainstream and specialist settings. Tasks for SSOs in these specific cases include: the provision of curriculum support for students monitoring the physical condition of each student and reporting injuries, illness or problems with support equipment; repositioning the student according to particular activities; feeding, dressing and attending to personal hygiene of students; applying minor therapy to improve or maintain the physical condition of students.

In New South Wales,^{viii} the role of the School Learning and Support Officers involves implementation of IEPs, the provision of opportunities for students to develop personal, social, independent living and pre-vocational skills; attending to the personal care needs of students (e.g. toileting, washing, changing), washing of items such as soiled clothes, disposal of sanitary items, food preparation and support of students eating and drinking, supervision of students on excursion, work experience or travel training programs, among other tasks. There are also specific administration tasks associated with the role, and a tasks associated with the support of students with severe and/or multiple, physical and/or intellectual disabilities, including the undertaking of therapy or nursing type duties under the supervision of professional staff.

In Tasmania, the list of duties of a teacher assistant is to support both students and teachers inside and outside the classroom, supervise students on and off campus, prepare material to support teaching and learning, including individual education and behaviour programmes,

assist students with mobility as set out in their IEP (e.g. such as lifting, positioning, transferring to and from transportation), assist with personal hygiene, toileting, feeding, undertake specific therapy tasks under the guidance of teachers or nominated professionals, support students with the use of learning aides, provide administrative assistance to students, teachers and other school staff, and maintain stores and equipment.

In Sweden, the role of the pupil assistant is determined by the needs of the student. It could include supporting students in their curriculum work, support with individual aids. The role description also envisages engagement with parents and teachers.

In Spain, paraprofessionals work under the supervision of the teacher to support students with personal care, social inclusion, support to parents, and participate in the reviews of IEPs and school programmes.

In Slovakia, teacher assistants support teaching in the classroom, pedagogical assistants support in-school and after-school activities. Vocational trainer assistants provide support in vocational schools during practical education.

In Scotland, Pupil Support Assistants help with school work under the supervision of the teacher, help during therapy sessions, look after children's physical needs and care plans and keep records.

In Austria, the role of pedagogical assistants is to support teachers in pedagogical areas, provide learning support to the student, to support the inclusion of students into a peer group, and assist with care needs.

In Cyprus, the role of the school assistants is to support the teacher, take care of the child in class and at break, and help with care needs. Other duties in relation to the child can be as directed by the head teacher.

In France, the Auxiliary of School Life (AVS) role is a general one, but which specifically does not supplement or substitute for specialised personnel. The Accompaniment for Students with Disabilities can undertake the following: activities in the classroom in cooperation with the teacher. Participation in occasional or regular school trips; technical activity not requiring special medical or paramedical training, help in hygiene; and participation in implementing and monitoring the Personalized Education Plan.

In Italy, assistants collaborate with curricular and support teachers, participate in meetings to plan and monitor educational interventions, and meet with parents. The scheme also denotes that the assistants can be involved in meeting learning needs, care needs and behavioural needs.

In Latvia, the role depends on student needs and abilities. They support care needs, behaviour needs and help the student navigate the educational system, and with after-school activities.

In Malta^{ix}, learning support assistants have a wide range of duties across school-related activities promoting the education of the student, personal care and hygiene support and transport-related activities.

In the Netherlands, class assistants support the child in performing tasks in the classroom and also provide care support to them. Teaching Assistants take instruction from the class teacher and assists and motivates the child in class. The Support Teacher Intern supports the teacher in the classroom in counselling and teaching, prepares lessons and helps with the development of student social skills. A teacher with extra counselling tasks supports learners with special educational needs, guides and motivates them. A Teamleader counselling supports the teacher in the classroom in counselling and teaching learners with special needs, provides support to learners with extra learning needs.

In Norway, the role of the paraprofessional is to provide support to the class teacher, e.g. adaptations, providing care supports, behavioural needs. In exceptional circumstances they will provide some educational support to the child under the guidance of the class teacher.

3.8.2 Pay rates

In relation to pay rates, nine administrations did not answer the question. A further nine provided very general information (e.g. in Flanders, salaries vary according to qualifications, in Ohio each district sets its own salaries, in Lithuania there is no set salary) or indicated that such data was not collected nationally (e.g. Estonia).

In the remaining fourteen cases, data provided is complicated by a number of factors. Examples cited varied greatly, mainly due to the range of paraprofessionals both within and across administrations, as well as the length of service in some cases. It should also be noted that, while respondents were asked to indicate the salary for each of these posts, meaning in the Irish context the gross annual income attached to the position, many respondents reported income based on a different unit (e.g. per month, per hour, per year, with leave factored in and without leave factored in). As a result, what is presented below are select examples for information purposes only.

- In Germany, monthly income can depend on amount of work undertaken and the level of qualifications the individual may possess. Monthly salaries here range from €800-€2,400.
- In New South Wales, hourly pay rates range from AUS\$26- AUS\$30 (approx. €19-€22) per hour.
- In Sweden, the average pupil assistant salary is €28,800.
- In Norway, salaries can range from NOK274,700 to NOK381,900 (approx. €30,000-€42,000) dependent on length of service and recognised qualifications.
- Across the types of paraprofessionals included in the Netherlands response, monthly salaries can range from €1,130-€2,017 for a teaching assistant to €2,290-€4,819 for a team leader of a counselling team.
- In Scotland, the salary of a pupil support assistant ranges from £14,944-£16,850.
- In Austria, a fulltime monthly salary €1,000.
- In France, the monthly salary ranges from €1,200-€1,400.

3.9 Management and supervision of paraprofessional work

Of the thirty responses received to this question, the overwhelming majority indicated that the work of paraprofessionals was managed and supervised at the school level, either by the class teacher, special needs coordinator, school principal/manager, or a combination of these. In four cases, municipal or state roles were identified (Latvia, Denmark, Connecticut and Austria). In Austria, some states delegate the responsibility of management of

paraprofessional staff and services to non-statutory social service organisations (e.g. Diakonie).

3.10 Paraprofessional qualifications and training

3.10.1 Qualifications

Three administrations did not answer the question (, while a further five provided answers which pointed to local level discretion/role in imposing minimum qualification requirements (Flanders, Denmark, England, Ohio and Scotland).

In three further cases (France, Tasmania and Victoria), the extent to which qualifications were a requirement varied by type of paraprofessional. Documentation indicated that lower grade education support staff in Victoria do not require qualification requirement of a minimum of four years required of higher grades. However, such higher grades do not appear to have a role in supporting students and/or teachers directly, as is the case with lower grade education support staff. In France, only AESHs (Accompaniments for Students with Disabilities) was specified as requiring a qualification (a university diploma), although a person with 2 years' experience can be exempted from this requirement.

Of the nine responses that indicated a requirement for a particular level of qualifications, two specifically addressed the qualifications requirements of health (Ontario) and/or social care (Portugal) professionals such as doctors, nurses, psychologists and speech and language therapists. The response from Finland noted the existence of a vocational degree for its paraprofessionals. Four responses noted second level education as the minimum level of qualification required for paraprofessional staff (Slovakia, Cyprus, Croatia, Lithuania), with Slovakia specifically noting upper second level. Malta and the Netherlands's minimum qualifications ranged from second level to third level dependent on the grade of personnel it viewed as paraprofessional.

Twelve administrations indicated that there was no level of qualification required. This should not be taken, however, that individuals filling such roles do not have qualifications. As the responses outlined in section 3.8.2 indicate , paraprofessionals in some administrations receive differential pay according to the level of qualifications they have.

3.10.2 Training

Information provided in relation to training was far less detailed. 20 administrations did not answer this part of the question. In a further six cases answers were unclear or pointed to local level discretion/role in imposing training requirements (Germany, Flanders, Denmark, England, Ohio and Scotland). Six responses noted that training was available (Austria, Spain, Switzerland, South Australia, Portugal and New South Wales), some of which was dependent on the particular roles being fulfilled (e.g. health training for those in South Australia meeting the health care needs of students under its access assistant programme).

3.11 Data on number of paraprofessionals in each education system and number of students supported

Seven administrations did not answer this question, while a further nine indicated that such data is not collected (Spain, Victoria, Switzerland, South Australia, Ontario, New South Wales, Germany, Denmark, Connecticut). One additional administration (Austria) indicated that data may be available per federal state but none was provided.

Of the remaining fifteen administrations, the extent of the data provided varied greatly in relation to both questions under this heading.

For example, at the federal level of the United States, there are 469,668 paraprofessionals employed. In Tasmania, there are 950 FTE paraprofessionals employed, with a gender breakdown of 9:1 female to male. In Lithuania, there are 1,070 teacher assistants with an additional 480 health care workers in schools. In Scotland, there was 12,883 staff in 2016. This figure involved a reduction in additional supports needs assistants and an increase in classroom assistants. In England, there was 409,300 FTE support staff, including 263,000 teaching assistants. In Malta, there are approximately 2,400 support assistants in state schools. In Portugal, 2,819 therapists and psychologists support approx. 18,000 students in resource centres. The response from Iceland estimated there are about 1,000 support staff, while the Finland response estimates approximately 9,000 staff supporting approximately 40,300 students.

The response from Finland estimated that 9,000 assistants were meeting the needs of 40,000 students. In Cyprus, 566 assistants in primary schools provide support to 1,301 students across mainstream, special class and special school settings. Sweden did not provide information the numbers of pupil assistants or personal assistants in the system, but stated that the total amount of people with a personal assistant was 16,000. In Croatia, 2,056 pedagogical assistants supported 2,499 students, at a cost of approximately €10 million. Belgium (French) provided some data, but titles and accompanying notes were unclear.

Ohio provided the most detailed response in relation to numbers of paraprofessionals employed. Paraprofessionals like monitors and attendants - who meet the physical needs of one or more children, such eating, toileting, mobility, and the physical assistance needed to use technology – number approximately 5,640. The number of aides – personnel who implement instructions of teachers - is not provided in the data.

3.12 Paraprofessional employment structure and career path

3.12.1 Employment structure

Nine respondents did not answer question, while a further eleven indicated that either data was not available to answer the question (e.g. because it was not collected at all, or was only available at a local or school district level) or provided answers which could not be examined further (e.g. links provided linked to non-English sources, or general education information websites).

Of the twelve remaining responses (Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Spain, Sweden, Victoria, Tasmania, Switzerland, South Australia, New South Wales, Lithuania) the majority indicated that paraprofessionals can be employed on a part-time or full-time basis, either generally or dependent on the nature of the paraprofessional and/or work (e.g. teaching assistant).

3.12.2 Career path

Eleven respondents did not answer question, while a further eleven indicated that either data was not available to answer the question (e.g. because it was not collected at national level) or provided inconclusive answers (e.g. career paths may be open to paraprofessionals, but

ultimately such decisions are the responsibility of districts or individual schools, or career paths are not formalised at all, or career path is only envisaged as becoming a teacher).

Of the ten remaining responses, five explicitly indicated that there was no career path open to paraprofessionals (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Lithuania and Estonia), while five indicated that there was. In three of these cases (Malta, Victoria and South Australia), opportunities to progress within the paraprofessional sector were described (e.g. moving from level 2 learning support assistant to level 1 learning support assistant). In one case (Tasmania), where paraprofessionals possess a certain level of qualifications they can progress through university to gaining a teaching degree. In a fifth case (Scotland), career progression was viewed as opportunities to gain professional development awards at college and via whole-school approaches to learning and training.

3.13 Data on costs of paraprofessional support provision

Nine respondents did not reply to this question, while a further 10 noted that data on costs of provision of paraprofessional support were not collected. Of the 13 who noted that such data was collected, only five actually provided figures (Croatia, Cyprus, Portugal, New South Wales, Tasmania, with only Croatia detailing costs on a per paraprofessional basis), while both England and Belgium (French) noted that the provision of paraprofessional support was part of an overall workforce funding model for schools. The remaining provided no data, (Austria, Malta, South Australia, Lithuania, Germany), or not in English (Sweden)

3.14 Monitoring the impact of paraprofessional support

Ten respondents did not reply to this question, while a further 11 said there was no monitoring arrangement. Of the remaining 11, Portugal's Inspectorate monitors resource centres, while the remaining (Scotland, England, Malta, Spain, Sweden, Victoria, Tasmania, Ohio, New South Wales and Belgium (French) cited local arrangements, i.e. monitoring happens at the school level through student plans (e.g. IEPs).

3.15 Existence of noteworthy reports

21 responses indicated that there was no material, no material in English, or simply did not respond to this question in the survey. Of the remaining 11 responses, the majority provided links/direction to particular education websites, with some exceptions (external audit review report of the entire inclusive education system in Iceland, a similar report in Malta, a review of the health scheme in Ontario, and a publication on making the best use of teaching assistants in England).

4. General observations on the findings

It is not possible to directly compare schemes or mechanisms that operate in surveyed countries/jurisdictions which are aimed at supporting students with disabilities who have additional needs. It is worth restating the main reasons for this, including the different types of states surveyed (unitary and federal) and the different levels at which responsibility of education policy is held (central and/or regional and/or local) and of course the different education contexts and systems. The poor quality of much of the data provided by many respondents also precludes such comparisons. Unfortunately, this greatly limits what we can definitively learn from other countries about how they are meeting the needs of these students. However, analysis of the data and that summarised below reveal some patterns in country/jurisdiction responses which are noteworthy and highlighted below.

The first thing to note is that all countries/jurisdictions surveyed are attempting to meet the additional needs of students with disabilities through the provision of non-teaching adult support. In the majority of countries, this is through the implementation of a formal scheme which explicitly provides for this form of support. There is a significant minority which do not have a formal scheme, but rather leave the decisions about the suitability and subsequent provision of such support at the level of the school.

Secondly, there is great variance in the titles of non-adult teaching support provided in each of the countries/jurisdictions. Some use the term 'paraprofessional', which can cover a range of different non-teaching adult support personnel, while others are specific in the title given to such staff. At a functional level, the personnel titles reveal a focus which is in the main education-oriented. Role descriptions, where outlined, tend to split between those which are focused on supporting the teacher and those focussed on supporting the student. Together, these points may suggest that there is no one model or way in which the additional needs of students with disabilities can be met in an educational context. The vast majority of countries are putting in place additional adults, but who those adults are, what their focus is and what they actually do differs.

Thirdly, notwithstanding such variance, the data where provided suggest that these positions internationally are not ones which require a high level of qualifications or offer much by way of career progression. Secondary level qualification is the requirement in most countries and jurisdictions where data was provided, with little requirement for formal training. The majority of responses noted that there was no formal career path open to individuals filling these roles. This suggests that some consideration or reflection may be required regarding the future level of qualifications and training for such individuals.

Formal assessment and/or diagnosis of the presence of a disability are common mechanisms used in the implementation of these schemes. A range of professionals are listed as having a role in these mechanisms, again indicating variance in scheme operation. Professionals range from educational to psychological to medical, and were located from the school level to national level structures.

Where it was possible to identify in the data, allocation of such support was applied for in the majority of cases by individual means, such as diagnosis and/or needs assessment, with some responses noting allocation as part of a general /school block allocation. There is no consistency across the data in when formal reviews of support allocation occur, with wide variation in the timing of such reviews, if they occur at all.

Finally, there is lack of good administrative data and monitoring mechanisms from the information provided by countries/jurisdictions. Where monitoring mechanisms are referred to, the student's individual education plan is referred to as the main tool, with the school being the main actor in reviewing the support provided and identifying its impact. However, in the main the data suggest that tracking impact or student outcomes as a result of the support provided does not happen beyond the school level, permitting any form of global reporting and analysis.

Appendix 1: Survey on additional non-teaching adult support for students with special educational needs and additional care needs

General questions about the scheme

1. Is there a scheme, policy or programme in your country/region/state which provides additional non-teaching adult staff (other than direct class/subject/specialist teachers) to students in the classroom with special educational needs? If so, what is it called?
2. Is so, could you forward a copy of the scheme, policy or programme or statement which guides the scheme?
3. Is there a particular agency/department which has responsibility for the scheme's (a) development and (b) implementation?
4. Are these additional non-teaching adult staff given a particular title? If so, what is it (e.g. paraprofessional, care assistant, behaviour therapist, teaching assistant, other)?
5. Are there specific types of needs which students with special educational needs have which the Scheme aims to meet (e.g. medical needs, eating, toileting, staying on-task, mobility, using technology)? Could you list them please?

Assessment and allocation

6. Are there eligibility criteria which must be met before such support can be applied for? If so, could you list them?
7. How is support for these additional non-teaching adult staff applied for and could you outline the application process?
8. How are these forms of support allocated (e.g. to settings, to individual pupils)?
9. Can the amount of support provided change over time? If yes, what dictates such a change (e.g. particular criteria, regular assessment process, changing needs of student, something else, changing level of school, age of student, other)?
10. Is there a formal review process regarding the allocation of these forms of support to individual students? If so, how often does it occur and which individuals are involved in the review?

The individuals providing support and the support provided

11. Is there a defined profile/job description for these roles (If so, could you please provide/attach a copy) and what is the salary associated with these roles?
12. How is the work of these additional non-teaching adult staff managed and supervised?
13. Are there training and qualification requirements for these roles? If so, are certain requirements mandatory, and are certain requirements desirable/discretionary?
14. How many individuals (fulltime equivalents) are employed in these roles?
Are demographic data available (e.g. the total gender breakdown) on the individuals providing this form of support? If so, could you provide it please?
And how many students do they provide support to?
15. What is the employment structure of the individuals providing this form of support (e.g. part-time, full-time, term-time only)? Do they have a career path open to them? Could you provide some information on this?

Impact and costs

- 16.** Do you collect any information on the costs associated with the provision of this type of support (per student, per setting, per additional non-teaching adult staff individual, overall), or is it part of a broader allocation model? If it is the latter, what is the model?
- 17.** Is there a monitoring scheme in place to assess the impact of this form of support (e.g. support output, impact on student outcomes)? If so, could you describe it?
- 18.** Are you aware of any noteworthy reports published in English related to this scheme in your jurisdiction (value for money reviews, evaluation/review reports, inspection reports, guidelines, policy documents or research reports)? If so, could you list them?

Appendix 2: States/jurisdictions in the sample

<p>Proposed sample (n=64 in total)</p>	<p>European Agency states/jurisdictions (n=33):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Austria* 2. Belgium (Flemish speaking community) 3. Belgium (French speaking community) 4. Bulgaria 5. Croatia* 6. Cyprus* 7. Czech Republic 8. Denmark 9. England 10. Estonia 11. Finland 12. France* 13. Germany 14. Greece 15. Hungary 16. Iceland* 17. Italy* 18. Latvia* 19. Lithuania 20. Luxembourg 21. Malta* 22. Netherlands* 23. Northern Ireland 24. Norway* 25. Poland 26. Portugal 27. Scotland* 28. Slovak Republic* 29. Slovenia 30. Spain* 31. Sweden* 32. Switzerland 33. Wales <p><i>*denotes inclusion in previous survey administered by Irish National Coordinator for European Agency.</i></p>	<p>Rix et al (2013) states/jurisdictions in the sample (excluding European Agency Countries) (n=31):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Australia (Queensland) 2. Australia (Victoria) 3. Barbados 4. Belarus 5. Brazil 6. Cambodia 7. Canada (Nova Scotia) 8. Canada (Ontario) 9. Chile 10. China 11. Cuba 12. India 13. Iran 14. Israel 15. Japan 16. Jordan 17. Kenya 18. Mexico 19. New Zealand 20. Nigeria 21. Romania 22. Russia 23. Singapore 24. South Africa 25. South Korea 26. Uganda 27. United States (Federal) 28. United States (Connecticut) 29. United States (Ohio) 30. United States (New York) 31. Venezuela
<p>Actual sample when contact details could be retrieved and survey sent (n=53)</p>	<p>European Agency states/jurisdictions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Austria* 2. Belgium (Flemish speaking community) 3. Belgium (French speaking community) 4. Bulgaria 5. Croatia* 6. Cyprus* 7. Czech Republic 8. Denmark 	<p>Rix et al (2013) states/jurisdictions in the sample (excluding European Agency Countries):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Australia (Queensland) 2. Australia (Victoria) 3. Barbados 4. Cambodia 5. Canada (Ontario) 6. Canada (Nova Scotia) 7. China 8. India

	<p>9. England 10. Estonia 11. Finland 12. France* 13. Germany 14. Greece 15. Hungary 16. Iceland* 17. Italy* 18. Latvia* 19. Lithuania 20. Luxembourg 21. Malta* 22. Netherlands* 23. Northern Ireland 24. Norway* 25. Poland 26. Portugal 27. Scotland* 28. Slovak Republic* 29. Slovenia 30. Spain* 31. Sweden* 32. Switzerland 33. Wales</p> <p><i>*denotes inclusion in previous survey administered by Irish National Coordinator for European Agency.</i></p>	<p>9. Jordan 10. Kenya 11. New Zealand 12. Romania 13. Singapore 14. South Africa 15. South Korea 16. Uganda 17. United States (Federal) 18. United States (Connecticut) 19. United States (Ohio) 20. United States (New York)</p>
<p>Additional states not listed above for which contacts were received, which the survey was sent to (n=3)</p>	<p>1. Australia (New South Wales) 2. Australia (Tasmania) 3. Australia (South Australia)</p>	

ⁱ There were at the time of administering the survey 29 member states covering 33 jurisdictions. Bulgaria became a member of the European Agency in January 2017 and the survey was forwarded to its national board member at a later stage. Hence, the sample size for the European Agency is 34.

ⁱⁱ Contacts were also used in an attempt to secure any state from the Middle East through links with an academic based in the UAE, as well as any South American country through links with an academic based in Madrid.

ⁱⁱⁱ It should be noted that many of these titles were similar but not identical (e.g. school support assistant and school assistant, pupil assistant and pupil support assistant).

^{iv} Note for the Netherlands, the response indicated that that support teacher interns had a role in supporting the teacher, but these are not non-teaching adult support staff but are more akin to trainee teachers.

^v It was stated in the Swiss response that the practice was that assistants can help nay child but for children with special educational needs there is an eligibility procedure to be performed.

^{vi} **SSOs for students with disabilities in mainstream** under the supervision of teaching staff, provide special education classroom/curriculum support for students with special needs NOT involving students with severe and multiple disabilities. Tasks, according to the program could include:

- working with students with disabilities on a one-to-one basis in the areas of handwriting, language, phonics and fine motor skills (according to a program set by teachers)
- providing support to students experiencing learning difficulties eg language disorders, speech problems and early development problems
- preparing any teaching aids and modifying specific activities
- reporting student progress of students on NEP/individual Education Plans(IEO).

SSO in special school, unit or class under the supervision of the teaching staff, provide curriculum, behaviour and social skill support for students with disabilities. Tasks could include:

- providing classroom support for students with disabilities
- personal care support
- working with students with communication complexities.

SSO for students with severe and multiple disabilities under the supervision of teaching staff, provide classroom . Curriculum support for student with special needs, including those with severe and multiple disabilities in mainstream and special schools. Tasks could include:

- Monitoring the physical condition of each student and reporting injuries, illness or problems with support equipment
- Repositioning the student according to particular activities
- Feeding, dressing and attending to personal hygiene of students
- Applying minor therapy to improve or maintain the physical condition of students.

^{vii} In mainstream settings in South Australia, Classroom Support Officers provides curriculum support to teaching staff by working under the direction of the teacher to do tasks, including delivering the curriculum to small groups of students, administrative tasks and records management, and contribute to the planning and delivery of the curriculum with teachers.

^{viii} School Learning and Support Officer (SLSO) role statement:

- implementation of individual education programs and individual transition programs;
- providing opportunities for students to develop personal, social, independent living and pre-vocational skills;
- toileting and personal care needs of students at all age and dependency levels, to include washing, bathing, showering and changing;
- washing of soiled items of clothing and nappies and in the disposal of used sanitary items;
- direct food preparation and assisting students with eating and drinking;
- the implementation of travel training programs;
- the supervision of students on excursion, work experience and travel training programs;
- supervision of students with severe and/or multiple, physical and/or intellectual disabilities which can involve;
 - frequent physical lifting, also involving changing students from one piece of equipment to another;
 - therapy or nursing type duties (which include duties carried out under the guidance of professional staff);
 - administering prescribed medication, keeping medication register;
 - minor maintenance of physical and or electronic equipment used by students;
 - organising the regular servicing of physical and or electronic equipment used by students;

- serving as part of a transdisciplinary (educational/therapy) team in the development and implementation of individual educational programs;
- communicating with students using an augmentative communication system most appropriate to the needs of students;
- taking performance data during the implementation of individual educational programs.
- Administration tasks
 - Operating audio-visual aids, computers and other teaching equipment.
 - Recording school broadcasts and telecasts and maintaining a catalogue of records, cassettes, video-tapes and other audio-visual software.
 - Duplicating materials and photocopying.
 - Issuing learning materials from resource rooms.
 - Arranging furniture within classrooms where required.
 - Managing lost property and clothing pools.
 - Performing minor clerical duties.
 - Caring for sick students and, when in receipt of a first aid allowance, administering minor first aid.

^{ix} Role of Learning Support Assistant

The duties and responsibilities of a Learning Support Assistant shall include the following:

- Supporting and collaborating with the class teacher and other colleagues. Under the guidance of the class teacher, assisting in the education of all pupils in class, in particular pupils with special educational needs so that their individual curricular entitlement is ensured and their learning needs are catered for;
- Participating fully in Making Action Plans sessions (MAPs);
- Together with the class teacher, developing and implementing an Individual Educational Programme (IEP) by adapting the lesson plans and resources;
- Attending IEP and Individual Transition Plan (ITP) meetings;
- Reviewing IEPs, including recording and reporting progress of such IEP implementation on regular basis;
- Supporting the class teacher to prepare and write the IEP document of every student with a statement in class;
- Assisting in the preparation of educational materials and playing an active part in all the components of the instructional and educational process in class under the direction of the class teacher;
- In collaboration with the class teacher, participating in the observation, assessment and documentation process of the performance and behaviour of included learners;
- Participating in the respective individual transition programmes as students move from one educational level to another, from school to school, and from school to work, handing over to the other LSA's and personnel all relevant information and documents so as to ensure a smooth transition for the student;
- Promoting an inclusive community of learners, in collaboration with Inclusion Coordinators, specialists, resource workers, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders, where all pupils are valued and respected. This will include collaborative work in school and with other agencies, such as the Child Development Assessment Unit (CDAU), Resource Centres, NGO's and other educational and therapeutic environments;
- Participating in hydrotherapy, multi-sensory, sensory integration and other sessions, in schools, Resource Centres or other centres where such services are available, so as to ensure access to educational and personal entitlements of students;
- Promoting at all times the aims, ethos and policies of the school, College or Resource Centre deployed in, and actively working as a member of the staff team;
- Assisting in the preparation, dissemination and use of teaching resources ensuring their upkeep in class, school and Resource Centres;
- Supporting student/s during activities held outside the school premises including experiences in the community, work places and other further and higher educational establishments;
- Encouraging participation in EU projects and other projects in accordance with the SDP targets and as agreed with the Senior Management Team.

Personal Support:

Supporting pupils with special needs in their personal care and hygiene needs including:

- Toileting - cleaning and washing, including accompanying the child to the toilet; undressing and dressing; cleaning, washing and showering; and changing of sanitary towels and incontinence pads;
- Seeing to the mobility, posture and seating needs, including lifting pupils and pushing pupils in wheelchairs according to Health and Safety Regulations issued under the Health and Safety Authority Act taking into consideration international guidelines. The present guidelines shall be: Lifting up to 27 kilograms shall be undertaken by one Supply LSA, lifting up to 54 kilograms shall be undertaken by 2 persons; beyond 54 kilograms, a mechanical lift is to be used: Pushing wheelchairs: up to 45 kilograms occasionally; up to 28 kilograms frequently; and up to 9 kilograms as necessary¹⁴⁶.

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- Ensuring the maximum educational benefit and safety for individual pupils at all times by providing them with assistance during physical education, games, excursions and therapy sessions, as well as normal feeding during mid-morning and mid-day breaks and at other times as required.

Transport-related Duties:

Without prejudice to the obligations of the owner and driver of the vehicle concerned regarding the safety of passengers and the full observance of the law and regulations related to transport matters, a Learning Support Assistant may be required to carry out transport-related duties should the requirement be indicated by the statement or by the Head of School or other competent authorities. In such cases, the LSA shall:

- Assist in the boarding and un-boarding of pupils on and off the transport vehicle and, in the case of students who are wheelchair/buggy users, put on the restraints on the wheelchair/buggy and also put on the passenger restraint on the students to ensure safety during transportation;
- Carry out transport supervision duties to and from school when the transport of pupils during normal school hours is necessary;
- Shall be remunerated at the established rates when supervision duties are carried out outside school hours.