

Appendix 3

ALN Transformation Information

June 2021

What is Changing?

- Welsh Government want to transform expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). To do this, they have developed an ALN transformation programme, which transforms the separate systems for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in schools and Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD) in further education, to create a unified system for supporting learners from 0 to 25 with ALN.
- From September 2021, a new simpler and more responsive system of meeting the needs of children and young people with special needs will come into force.

The Vision

- Welsh Government are striving to deliver a fully inclusive education system for the learners of Wales. A system where needs are identified early, addressed quickly and all learners supported to reach their potential.
- It wants planning to be flexible and responsive, for professionals to be skilled and confident in identifying needs and deploying strategies to help learners overcome their barriers to learning.
- They believe that the learner should be at the centre of everything we do and that they and their parents and carers are equal partners in their learning.(Person Centred Approach)

The reform vision: wider reform

ALN reforms are a vital part of the wider educational reform to ensure all children and young people have access to high quality teaching and equal opportunities regardless of background or circumstance.

Curriculum

Enabling pupils with ALN to access the curriculum by understanding their needs and adapting teaching approaches. **Donaldson**

Assessment

Identification of **ALN** should be built into the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils.

Professional Standards

Standards of teaching for pupils with **ALN** and progress made by pupils should be considered as part of the school's appraisal arrangements.

Categorisation Framework

Clear focus on the progress of all pupils – **ALN** support crucial to school performance.

ALN Transformation Programme

What is the ALN Transformation Programme?

- A programme to transform the education and support of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), to improve their educational experience and help them realise their potential.
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill is the cornerstone of the programme – but in addition to changes in the law, there are changes in culture and practice, which will deliver the improved outcomes for learners we are striving for.
- The ALN transformation programme is a fundamental element of wider education reform – if we get it right for ALN learners, we get it right for all learners.

ALN Transformation Programme Continued

The ALN transformation programme consists of 5 main themes. In summary these are:

1. Legislation and statutory guidance - the process of developing the legislative framework, including the Bill, regulations and the new ALN Code;
2. Implementation/ transition support - activities to support partners to prepare, plan and manage implementation and transition to the new system;
3. Workforce development - aimed at three levels: core skills development for all practitioners supporting learners with ALN; advanced skills development through the development of the role of Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCo); and specialist skills development for local authority-provided specialist support services;

ALN Transformation Programme Continued

4. Awareness-raising - activities to engage stakeholders about their new legislative duties, and to explain and promote the system and the rights it confers to children, young people and parents; and
5. Supporting policy - including developing resources to help all those in the system understand the evidence for best practice, what can be expected from interventions, the interventions that are likely to be most effective, and the role of professionals to help ensure realistic expectations and effective deployment of resources.

Background

- The Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Bill gained Royal Assent in January 2018. The Bill created the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, through a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting in place effective support and monitoring and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes. The Bill was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales in December 2016.
- A draft Code was published in December 2018.
- The draft Code is currently being revised following consultation and a final Code will be published Spring 2021.

Why are Things Changing?

- There is a need for a fully inclusive education system for all learners with high aspirations and improved outcomes for all
- The current system is now over 30 years old and is no longer fit for purpose
- There is a need for a more flexible and responsive approach with more involvement from parents, carers, children and young people through person centred approaches, placing learner's needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process
- There is a need for better collaboration between agencies, so that needs are identified early and the right support is put in place.

When is it changing?

- The Welsh Government intends to lay the final Code and regulations before Senedd Cymru for approval in Spring 2021.
- The new ALN system is expected to go live in September 2021. The implementation period will last three years until summer 2024, during which time existing statements of SEN, Individual Education Plans, and learning and skills plans will be converted into Individual Development Plans (IDPs). This will be done in a mandatory phased approach on the basis of particular age-based cohorts. During this time, the ALN system will operate in parallel to the existing SEN system.

Key Messages

- The term Additional Learning Needs (ALN) will replace the terms Special Educational Needs (SEN) and will now cover 0 – 25 year olds. A child will be identified as ALN only where there is a need for additional learning provision (ALP) to be made to support their education
- From January 2021, each school will be required to have an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO) who will be responsible for coordinating the school ALN processes at a strategic level. ALNCOs will replace current special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs)
- Individual development plans (IDPs) will replace the existing variety of statutory and non-statutory plans for learners of compulsory school age and below and those over compulsory school age in school or further education

Key Messages

Increased collaboration

- There is a focus on increased collaboration between all agencies involved in supporting children and young people. Where a local authority requests help or information from another body in the exercise of any of their ALN functions, that body should comply with the request.

Clear and consistent rights of appeal

- All children, their parents and young people up to the age of 25 years will have the right to appeal to the Education Tribunal against decisions made by a local authority in relation to their ALN or their IDP. Local authorities must provide access to independent advocacy services

Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution

- Local authorities must make arrangements for avoiding and resolving disagreements. If disagreements arise, local authorities' arrangements should ensure they are resolved at the earliest opportunity and at the most local level

Key Messages

- There will be an increased participation from children, young people, parents/carers in the creation and maintenance of IDPs. Local authorities schools and colleges must provide children, young people and others with information and advice about ALN and the new system, and ensure that it is accessible for all who need it.
- Person Centred Practice is the underpinning approach to support and enhance participation. One Page profiles are the foundation of personalised education support. They gather key information about a learner so it can be quickly shared and understood.
- All reasonable steps must be taken to secure provision in Welsh if required.

Definition and Timescales

A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision.

A child of compulsory school age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she—

(a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or

(b) has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 (c. 15) which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.

Definition and Timescales

Under the draft Code, the following time scales will apply:

- Schools will have 35 school days to determine if a child has an additional learning needs(ALN) that require additional learning provision (ALP) and to develop their Individual Development Plan (IDP) where appropriate
- Under the draft Code, the following time scales will apply:
 - The Local Authority will have 7 calendar weeks to re-consider a school's decision if asked to do so by a parent or carer
 - The Local Authority will have 12 calendar weeks to identify the ALN and ALP, if asked to do so by the school. This will be due to the school believing that they are unable to identify complex needs or provide the ALP required to support them

What does the reforms mean for Local Authorities?

- The Code imposes requirements on **local authorities** in respect of their duties under the Act to make arrangements for the:
 - provision of advice and information;
 - avoidance and resolution of disagreements; and
 - provision of independent advocacy services.
- The Code imposes requirements on the governing bodies of maintained schools in Wales and FEIs in Wales, and on **local authorities** in Wales, in respect of:
 - decisions about whether a child or young person has ALN;
 - the preparation, content, form, review and revision of individual development plans (“IDPs”); and
 - ceasing to maintain IDPs.

How are schools being supported to prepare for these changes?

Cluster Lead ALNCo's

**Local Authority ALN
Transformation Project
Officers / GwE Consortia**

**Local Authority
Inclusion Managers**

**Regional ALN
Transformation Team
Regional ALN
Transformation Lead**

What has happened so far.....

- There is a strong, collaborative approach across the North Wales region. All Local Authorities are working together at a strategic and operational level to ensure effective cross-border working.
- Schools have been working in clusters, engaging in a collaborative approach to prepare for the implementation of the Act. Each cluster has developed an action plan and received additional funding through the Welsh Government Implementation Grant. Each cluster has an identified Cluster Lead who attends regular meetings and co-ordinates the cluster working model.
- Each Local Authority has identified a Transformation Lead; to develop local processes and practice to implement the ALN Act and Code
- Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board has appointed a Designated Education Clinic Lead Officer (DECLO)
- In order to embed change, the North Wales region has developed a comprehensive professional learning development programme to support practitioners through
 - improving their awareness to meet the requirements of the ALN ET Act (18)
 - access training and development opportunities to meet the requirements of the ALN ET Act (18)

Summary objectives of the ALN reforms

- Act to cover 0-25 year olds
- ALN to replace the term SEN
- A unified statutory plan – the individual development plan
- Increased participation of children and young people [person centred practice]
- High aspirations and improved outcomes
- A simpler less adversarial system
- Increased collaboration
- Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution
- Clear and consistent rights of appeal
- The ALN Code
- A bilingual system

Training

- Interactive e-learning course giving an introduction to the new ALN system is now available on the Welsh Government's Hwb platform.
- Hwb news article introducing the course, which is currently on the Hwb homepage:
<https://hwb.gov.wales/news/articles/20686965-8669-40ac-bdc5-599f4a4dfe8b>
- Link to the course itself:
<https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/publishers/9fb2afc9-6408-4aa3-9474-3c745006535b/resource/c8033263-aaa0-42fc-9511-ab7d33bd8084/en>
- The course should take between approximately 40 to 60 minutes to complete and is aimed at staff in all sectors who work with children and young people, including school support staff, and gives a broad overview of the new statutory roles, key principles of the Act, identifying ALN, and where to find further information.

Summary

Please take a minute to watch this short video which summarises what's happening with regards to Additional Learning Needs in Wales.

<https://youtu.be/00gHqzWowPg>

Find Out More

Online

www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-06/aln-factsheet-how-will-the-act-affect-maintained-schools-including-maintained-nurseries.pdf>

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