

# ALN Transformation Information

November 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 January 2022, a new simpler and more responsive system of meeting the needs of children and young people with special needs came 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 (ALNET) 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 was revised following consultation with the final Code published in 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 Senedd approved the the final Code and regulations before in Spring 2021.
- The new ALN system went live in September
- 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.
- The Minister for Education updated the implementation approach in July 2021 to:
  - Only those learners 'new' to the ALN system would be catered for under the new code
  - Those learners already identified as having SEN would only start to move to the new ALN system in January 2021
  - Learners with Statements of SEN would not transfer in the first year of implementation

# 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
- As of **January 2021**, each school is 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 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

# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## A 0–25 age range

- Local authorities may have responsibilities for some learners with ALN from 0 to 25 depending upon their needs. This may include learners accessing Further Education.
- An Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer role will contribute to improving early identification and intervention in relation to ALN, and ensuring better planning for future provision.



# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## Welsh language

- Local authorities will have a duty to take all reasonable steps to secure provision in Welsh where required and, when reviewing IDPs, to consider the sufficiency of Welsh language additional learning provision.

## Increased participation of children and young people

- Local authorities 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.

# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## A mandatory ALN Code

The ALN Code will impose mandatory requirements on local authorities in respect of:

- information and advice services
- independent advocacy services
- the preparation, content, form, review and revision of IDPs
- ceasing to maintain IDPs.

# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## A unified plan

- 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.
- Local authorities will be required to prepare and maintain an IDP in instances where the child or young person are for example: dual registered, looked after or detained
- Many IDPs will be the responsibility of the maintained school or further education institution.

# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## Clear and consistent rights of appeal

- All children, their parents/carers and young people up to the age of 25 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.

# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution

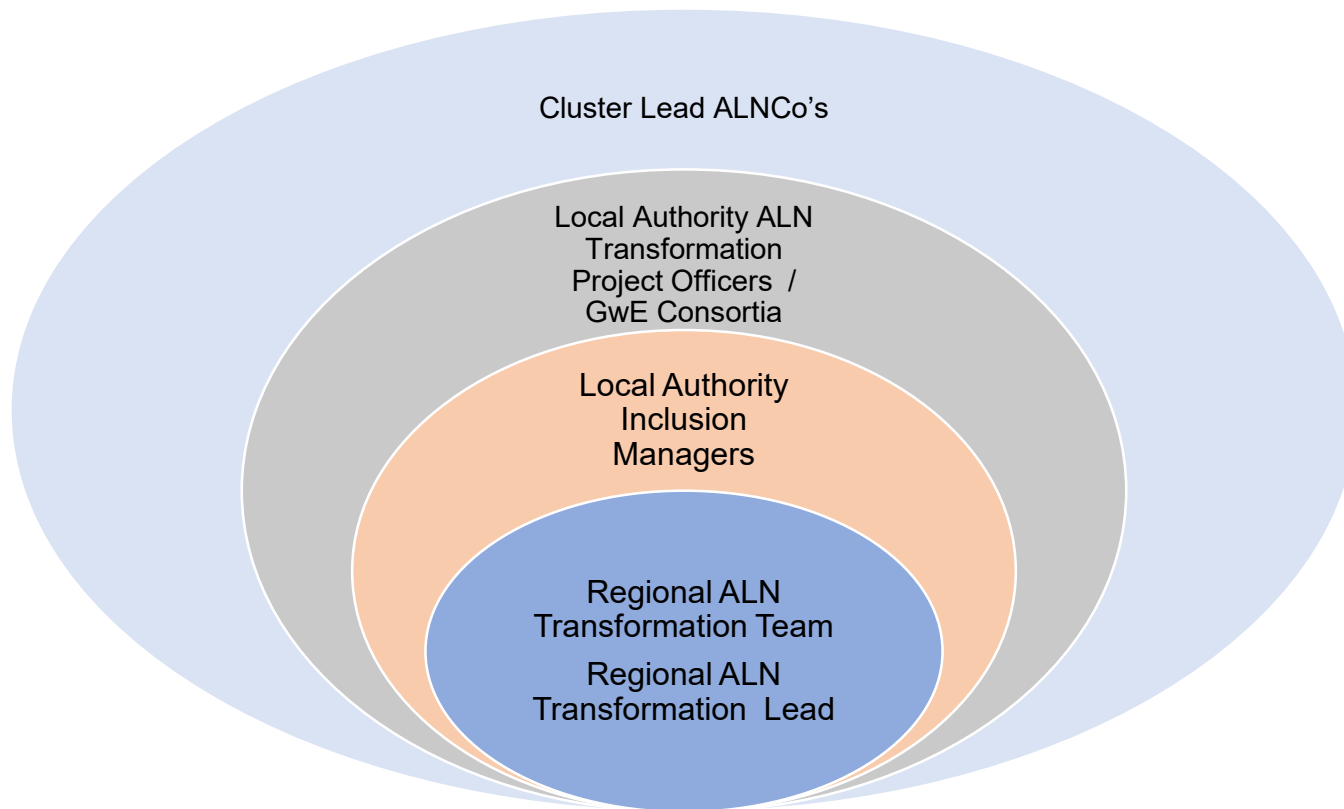
- Local authorities must make arrangements for avoiding and resolving disagreements.
- If disagreements arise, Local authorities' arrangements should ensure they are resolved at the earliest opportunity and at the most local level.

# How do the reforms affect Local Authorities?

## Increased collaboration

- Where local authorities request help or information from another body in the exercise of any of their ALN functions, that body should comply with the request.

# How are schools being supported to prepare for these changes?



# 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 action plans and receives 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



## What has happened so far.....

- 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

# Welsh Government 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

- <https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-aln-factsheet-local-authorities>

## Twitter

#additionallearningneeds #ALNWales #ALNAct

## Further points for consideration:

- Not all children receiving interventions / support will have ALN
- Not all children with a diagnosis will have an ALN
- Not all children that are working below expected outcomes/developmental outcomes will have ALN
- The determination of ALN is based upon progress and the need for Additional Learning Provision (ALP).
- For a child to be classed as having ALN, they will have needed to have gone through a statutory consideration process either by the school or LA.