

EAEE6002 - Impending changes to ALN Legislation in Wales - 1004302

What is the ALN Legislation in Wales?

The term Special Educational Needs (SEN) is changing to Additional Learning Needs (ALN) as part of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (Dauncey, 2021). As well as the terminology, the ALN Code of practice will replace current SEN code, under the Additional Learning Needs and Educational (Wales) Act 2018 (Welsh Government, 2021). The SEN framework has been in place for more than 30 years and is now seen as being outdated and no longer fit for purpose (Dauncey, 2016). However, the definition for ALN will remain the same as the current SEN definition, this is defined as an individual having a greater difficulty in learning than those of the same age or has a disability that effects their ability to access education or training (Dauncey, 2021). The new system will ensure all individuals from the age of 0-25 years old are supported and reach their full potential through identifying learners needs early and addressing them immediately (Welsh Government, 2020).

SENCO → ALNCO

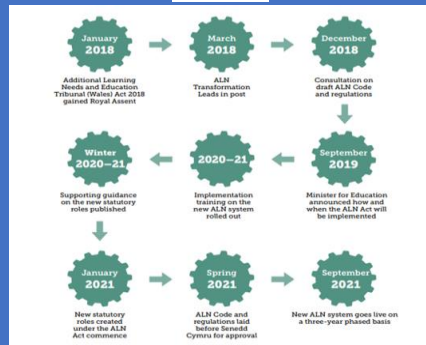
The Special Education Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) plays a critical role in a school setting, through ensuring all children with disabilities and special educational needs receive the correct support (Thompson, 2018). The role will be developed further as part of the new legislation and the term will change to the Additional Learning Needs Co-Ordinator (ALNCO). A senior member of staff must be appointed in every school to complete this role (Thompson, 2018). Estyn (2018) says an ALNCO must co-ordinate additional learning provision (ALP) for all learners with ALN. The ALNCO should have a broad knowledge of ALN and be proficient in person centred practice (PCP) (Welsh Government, 2021). The ALNCO will work as an advocate in ensuring there is a smooth transition between each setting and by becoming the point of contact for agencies, professionals, and local authorities (Thompson, 2018).

Links to further reading

SNAP Cymru -
<https://www.snapcymru.org/?s=aln>

Welsh Government -
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-11/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act-2018-implementation-guide-for-individual-development-plans.pdf>

ALN system implementations timeline



(Source: Welsh Government, 2020).

0 to 25 age range

The SEN system currently covers children from the age of 0-16 or 19 (depending on their post-16 provision) (Snap Cymru, 2021). However, the ALN Act will combine both SEN in schools, and Learning Difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in further education (FE), to create a single system for ALN, in order to support learners from 0 to 25 years old (Welsh Government, 2020). Welsh Government (2018) believe through using a single term across this age range, this will provide greater equity for all learners through underlining the system's coherence. As well as this, the single term will help move away from some of the stigma associated with the current terms of SEN (Welsh Government, 2018).

Implications for Early Years Practitioners

ALNCO

- Increased workload and responsibility
- Funds for training
- Collaboration with agencies and professionals.

IDP

- Time spent creating new plans.
- No set template for IDP

0-25 age range

- Improved transition between settings
- Learner known to ALN system, creating strong connection with practitioner.

Conclusion

Implementing the ALN legislation over the 3 years will allow practitioners to develop their knowledge and understanding on the new act. However, Welsh Parliament (2017) believe there will be many challenges during the implementation period.

Education Wales (2020) believe working with a range of services when preparing for the new system will benefit the workforce through developing a closer working relationship which in turn will benefit the learner. However, consistent support and training is required to ensure the practitioners are prepared for the changes that come with the new ALN legislation.

Individual development plan (IDP)

SNAP Cymru (2021) says the ALN act will create a new statutory document for all learners with recognised ALN, replacing all current plans and documents with an Individual Development Plan (IDP). All learners with ALN have a legal right to receive help and provision to support the plans set out in their IDP (Education Wales, 2020). National Deaf Children Society (2019) state the IDP will focus on the learners needs, giving a detailed plan and outlining what support is needed in order for the learners to reach their full potential. Education Wales (2020) say learners, carers and parents will be involved in creating the plans, ensuring the process is much simpler.