

Changing Additional Needs Support for Wales

Introduction

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 12 December 2017 and became an Act on 24 January 2018. This will create the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision. This legislation will centre around the needs of every individual in Wales who has been determined as having additional learning needs (ALN). There are 11 aims of this Act. At present, all Local Authorities and those who work with children must continue to comply with the current SEN code of practice (2004) as well as the duties outlined by the Education Act (2014). This will ensure that learners who are currently catered for under the term SEN will continue to receive support.

SEN (Special Educational Needs) to ALN (Additional Learning Needs)

All learners who are currently under the umbrella of SEN will soon change to ALN. Learners who are older will now benefit from increased support as the legislation covers those age 0–25. It has been recommended that more is done to look at a broader spectrum of additional needs.

Snap Cymru (2019) explain that there school action plus and statements will be removed and IEPs will be replaced with IDPs.

Practitioner Training and Professional Development

The ALN Transformation Programme (2018) cites further skills development for the workforce throughout the education sector. This will be for all practitioners involved in teaching and supporting children between the ages of 0 and 25, taking into account those wishing to move into further education.

The aim is for new skills to be developed over a period of transition. These skills include:

- The role out of training to deliver a Person Centred Practice.
- Advanced skills development for SENCO's to transition to ALNCO's.
- Graduate training for newly qualified teachers and those undertaking teacher training.
- Online training available to all those involved with teaching and supporting children including parents and carers. (HWB, 2021).

Funding and Costs

The new ALN will come with a cost for the Welsh Government. The proposed costs have been documented in many reports following the call for new legislation in 2017.

A £20 million budget has been designated to support the new ALN Bill. (WAG, 2020).

The Welsh Government intends to lay the Code and regulations before the Senedd Cymru for approval in spring 2021. (GOV.WALES 2020)

ALN implementation timeline



Further reading:

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme-introduction>
www.nationalautisticsociety.org.uk
www.snapcymru.org.uk
<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme>
<https://hwb.gov.wales/news/articles/20686965-8669-40ac-bdc5-599f4a4dfe8b>

Conclusion

The current legislation is not fit for purpose, a complete overhaul of the system is required. (WAG, 2021).

The changes are much needed in Wales in order for all learners with additional needs to be catered for. As we can see from the aims of the legislation and the information on this poster, many factors have been taken into account. WAG have designated funding and training to ensure this takes place.