

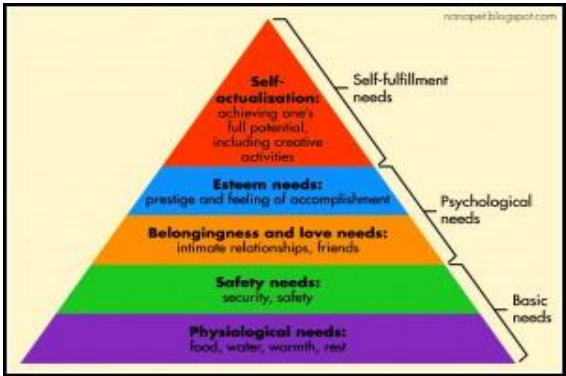
As of 2020, Following the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and the Educational Tribunal Act (2018) there will be a change in the way children's special education needs will be identified, assessed and met in Wales. Welsh Government (cited in Dauncey, 2016) reiterates the importance of this new law as the SEN Act (2005) was dated and no longer fit for purpose. The Welsh Government are aiming for a more modern approach to multi-agency working. However, in order to ensuring continuity and a consistent roll out of the new act, Huw Lewis has assured that existing legal requirements will remain in place at present. (SEN Code of Practice, 2004).

The Main Changes:-

- SENCO TO ALNCO
- Increased roles and responsibilities for ALNCO
- Statements AND IEP replaced by IDP
- Continuous development plans for every individual up until the ages of 25 years furthering their education.
- Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer
- The Additional Learning Needs Code (ALN) issued by Welsh Government outlining ALN process and supported by Liz Jones. (Snap Cymru, 2019).

Next Steps: What inclusive practice looks like for a child with ALN.

ALNCO responsibility to promote inclusion and Equity and ensure every child reaches self-actualisation.



(Maslow Hierarchy of Needs, 1943)

**Additional Learning Needs (ALN):
The New Law in Wales**

SENCO TO ALNCO

The most significant change to practice is that the term 'special educational needs' will be replaced with 'additional learning needs', which will also mean that SENCO's will now be known as ALNCO. Section 60 of the Act places a greater emphasis on all schools to appoint a designated senior member of staff as their ALNCO. (Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (Wales) Regulations, 2019). However this excludes maintained special schools where every staff member will have a focus on ALN. Within their new role the ALNCO will now have the responsibility of allocating funding to ALN children within the provision. Despite this role being given to a qualified teacher with extensive knowledge and experience with ALN, Canavan (2016) states that there is a likelihood of added pressure as it will be difficult for the ALNCO to remain subjective when allocating funding. Thomas (2018) also highlights some of the key implications needed for practitioner to undertake in line with the new law. He also highlights that although the role of the ALNCO is being focused on all practitioners working with children will need to adopt a flexible approach in order to find beneficial methods of working with ALN children in line with the new law. (Devarakonda, 2013; Department of Education, 2002).

FURTHER READING

Dauncey.M. (2016) 'Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Wales' <http://www.assembly.wales/research%20documents/16-059%20sen/16-059-web-%20english.pdf> [Accessed 26th May 2019].

Snap Cymru (2019) 'SEN/ALN Reform' <http://www.snapcymru.org/help-for-families/aln-reform/> [Accessed 23rd May 2019].

National Assembly for Wales (2019) 'The additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (WALES) Bill' <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=16496> [Accessed 2nd June 2019].

Welsh Government (2016) 'Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill' <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/pri-ld10862/pri-ld10862-e.pdf> [Accessed 07th June 2019].

STATEMENTS TO INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

According to the new law, Statements and Individual Educational Plan (IEP) are being replaced by Individual Development Plans (IDP) which will highlight the support of the additional needs provision (ANP). The current system covers children up until the end of their education provision. i.e 16/19 years. However, under the new law support will be given to children and young people up until the ages of 25 within further education. Which the Learning and Skills Act 2000 states will benefit children be receiving support and extended education so that each ALN individual can reach their potential. (Welsh Government, 2019).The Code of Practice has also been implemented as a means of overcoming the criticism surrounding the IDP. Local Authorities, Early years provisions and schools and therefore ensuring that there is accountability for the ALN provisions (Welsh Government, 2019). However, Dauncey (2016) does point out concerns that the IDP's are too simple compared to the statements and lack specificity. Estyn (2018) also believe that time and funding can potentially become a barrier to settings under the new act. Unlike a statement for SEN, IDPs will be provided to children and young people with ALN irrespective of the severity or complexity of their needs. ALN (2019) stresses the importance of this as no all children will have the same rights of appeal to the Education Tribunal for Wales for anyone with an IDP which Peer and Reid (2006) states ensures inclusive practice. However, Snap Cymru (2019) highlight that there will be some ambiguity as the IDP is intended to be a flexible document that will vary in length and complexity depending on the different needs of learners and the way in which an individual learner's needs develop and change over time. (Public Policy institute for Wales, 2015).

SUMMARY

As the law is yet to come into force in Wales, the true extent of its effectiveness is yet known (Estyn 2019). However there does seem to be significant changes which all suggest an improvement as it puts the child at the centre of practice ensuring the best possible support. To support this, the Welsh Government are prepared to spend £30 million in order to ensure all practitioners are supported with training prior to the implementation. Five ALN Transformational lead have also been appointed in order advise and support the implementation of the reforms and lead the improvements of ALN provisions (Welsh Government, 2014).