

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

The Special Educational Needs code of practice for Wales (2004) is the current legislation used in schools across Wales. This is due to change as the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act was passed in January 2018, and according to SnapCymru (2018) is due to be put into practice from September 2020.

SEN to ALN

SnapCymru (2018) highlights some of the significant changes that will take place with the SEN/ALN reform. As the term 'Special Educational Needs' is changing to Additional Learning Needs, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will then be known as the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO). The ALN Transformation Programme (2018) shapes the 11 aims of the ACT:

1. The introduction of the term 'additional learning needs' (ALN)
2. A 0-25 age range
3. A unified plan
4. Increased participation for children and young people
5. High aspirations and improved outcomes
6. A simpler and less adversarial system
7. Increased collaboration
8. Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution
9. Clear and consistent rights of appeal
10. The ALN code
11. A bilingual system

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The Welsh Government (2018) state that all children in Wales identified with additional learning needs will have an individual development plan (IDP) written by the local authority and containing the mandatory information about the child. According to SnapCymru (2018) All IDPs will include an action plan which sets out any agreed additional learning provision and the local authority must ensure that this is put in place for all children aged 0-25 who have been determined as having ALN who wish to receive education or training. Details such as what will be delivered by whom and how frequently will also be included. A review date will be set and those responsible for accessing the report will be identified. The information will be stored on a secure online tool which only professionals with consent will have access to. The National Assembly for Wales (2015) states that as a minimum, IDPs should be reviewed on an annual basis, however, with greater accessibility to IDPs, they can be updated more frequently in order to meet the changing needs of the child. Additionally, the Act states that the system must be bilingual and if a child needs educational provision in Welsh, this must be included in the IDP and all reasonable steps made to provide this.

Early Years Provisions

The Welsh Government (2017) have set up an Early Years expert group who specifically look at and find solutions to any problems that early years providers may face, and state that they aim for early years provision to be strengthened.

According to the Welsh Government (2019), there will be a new role of an 'Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer' who will raise awareness across multi-agency partners and establish referral routes, as well as ensuring that early years practitioners have the appropriate skills and tools for supporting the needs of young children with ALN. For non-maintained settings, local authorities will still have clear responsibilities under this new Act.

Individual
Education Plan
Individual
Behaviour Plan
Personal
Education Plan

Individual
Development
Plan



ALN implementation timeline



To conclude, the SEN to ALN reform aims to be a much simpler, effective and inclusive way to ensure all children with ALN receives the appropriate support across multiple agencies, from birth to 25.

Further Reading

Gov.wales. (2018). [online] Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/additional-learning-needs-aln-transformation-programme-v2.pdf> [Accessed 11 Feb. 2020].
 SNAP Cymru. (2018). *ALN/SEN Reform - SNAP Cymru*. [online] Available at: <http://www.snapcymru.org/help-for-families/aln-reform/> [Accessed 11 Feb. 2020].