

Introduction

Currently Wales use the Special Educational Needs (SEN) framework however, will be reforming to the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act (Dauncey, 2019). The expectation of the new system of ALN is to be in practice in September 2020, and expected to take 3 years to transition phase of existing plans to the new Individual development plans (IDPs) (Welsh Government, 2018). To begin with, the change of terms within the title from SEN to ALN implies it includes medical conditions which cause ALN (Welsh Government, 2018). The new legislation that will be implemented presents 11 aims in order to support and to provide good practice of a person centred approach to children with additional learning needs (ERW, 2018). Within Wales the Welsh Government have stated that the system used currently (Special Educational Needs) is 'no longer fit for purpose' as it was implemented 30 years ago implying it is out dated (Dauncey, 2016). As well as this, evidence gathered from the Welsh Government (2018) stated that the outcomes for children who have additional needs were poor. Therefore, in order to support children and young adults in their education the new ALN legislation in Wales aims to enforce a modern approach to multi agency working (Dauncey, 2016). By doing this, it allows learners in Wales to receive a fully inclusive education, helping them to overcome their barriers to learning (Welsh Government, 2018). The transformation from SEN to ALN will be delivered with support and monitoring to ensure that it is effectively implemented with successful outcomes (Welsh Government, 2018). This will be done by legislation and statutory guidance, workforce development, implementation/transition support, awareness and supporting policy.

A 0-25 age range

The ALN legislation refers to children of the age range of 0-25 in education unlike the SEN legislation to the age of 16-18 years (Snap Cymru, 2020).

By opening the age range up to 25 years, it provides further equity (Dauncey, 2016). The need for a more learner-centred approach and better information sharing and collaboration can be raised if the reform is successful (Dauncey, 2018).

However, research gathered implies there may be issues as ALN supports up to 25 years whereas paediatric services only run up to 16/18 years (Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2017) this can lead to miss communication and contradicting support in the child's future.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) to Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO)

ALNCO's are a designated teacher or a previous SENCO, who is responsible for coordinating children with additional learning needs with their care and provision within education (Williams, 2019).

However, research gathered suggests that ALNCO's should not have teacher duties in order to achieve their role to their full potential (Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2017). As this role can cause stress and pressure on the individual due to the work load.

As well as this, training should be implemented by the Welsh government in order to create consistency of the ALNCO role. Therefore, the Welsh Government have stated that there will be additional funding to support ALNCO in their new job role (ERW, 2018).

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

IDP's will replace individual education plans, statements of SEN and learning skills plans (ERW, 2018).

According to the Minister of Lifelong learning, the reform from SEN to ALN within Wales will change the system to become more inclusive. This will be done by providing learners and parents' views to be considered throughout the child's process of developing through the system (Duff, 2018). As a result this, element of ALN demonstrates that the new legislation is person centred (Welsh Government, 2018) and complies with the rights of the child (UNCRC).

IDP's are perceived to be beneficial as they focus on the needs of support rather than the diagnosis (Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2017).

However, this may result in conflict as parents may not agree with decisions being made or not engaging with professionals (Children, Young People and Education Committee, 2017).

ALN implementation timeline



The diagram shows the expected timeline to be followed in the implementation of the new ALN legislation in Wales (Welsh Government, 2018).

Conclusion

To conclude, the process of implementing the changes to the educational legislation in Wales from SEN to ALN has gathered much debate in the process of being drawn together. It has however, addressed that it is best for Wales to move forward away from the terminology and process of 'Special Needs Education' to allow further inclusion and equity for children with ALN.