

### Introduction

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (2018) has replaced the current Special Educational Needs legislation all around Wales, with the purpose to support individuals between the age of zero and twenty-five with additional learning needs. The Welsh Government (2018) states that the new legislation will promote equality and inclusion for every child within an educational setting.

According to Snap Cymru (2018) the new legislation of Additional Learning Needs will include every individual currently regarded as Special Educational Needs, such as:

- School/Early Years Action Plus
- Children with Special Educational Needs statements
- Children and young people supported through School/Early Years Action.

Children in Wales (2016) believe that the new system of support for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs, which is introduced under the 2018 legislation, will be implemented over a period of three years that will begin in 2021.

Furthermore, Educational through Regional Working (2018) believe that the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Programme focuses on the development of teaching staff skills to enable practitioners to deliver effective support to children with Additional Learning Needs within the classroom. However, The Welsh NHS Confederation (2017) suggest that the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (2018) will have implications as there is concerns about availability of resources in terms of competencies to fill the role and finances to enable practitioners to access further training.

Welsh Government (2018) states that the new Additional Learning Needs Legislation has been created to progress the planning and delivery of additional learning within the classroom through a person-centred approach. Similar to the Welsh Government (2018), Children's Commissioner for Wales (2019) believe that creating a person-centred approach allows practitioners to recognize. A child's needs early by creating an effective support by monitoring and adapting interventions to ensure that all children with Additional Learning Needs are accessing the best form of education.

### Individual Development Plan

Snap Cymru (2018) believe that an Individual Development Plan has been created to change the form we assess and meet Special Education Needs throughout Wales. Similar to Snap Cymru (2018), Welsh Government (2018) states that Individual Development Plans are created to help plan, teach, monitor and evaluate a child's progress and to support every child to reach their full potential during their education.

According to the Welsh Government (2019) Individual Educational Plan (IEP) have been replaced as the new system created supports this statutory plan and is called an Individual Development Plan (IDP). However, Welsh Government (2020) believe that if a child is not attending an early year setting then the local authority may consider whether it is necessary for a child to maintain and Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Welsh Government (2017) believe Individual Development Plans (IDP) benefits practitioners as it enables them to understand the targets the child with an Additional Learning Need is reaching, which encourages the practitioner to support a child with their development within the classroom. However, National Education Union (2019) suggest that Individual Development Plans will be extra work for practitioners within an educational as practitioners will experience:

- extra workload implications
- extra management of transfers of pupils onto the IDP system.

According to Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2018) practitioners in Wales will work alongside the classroom teacher to support a child's Individual Development Plan (IDP) by ensuring that a child's targets are met and supporting the teacher by monitoring the child's progress within the classroom. However, Children in Wales (2016) believe that there is a barrier when working with a range of children with different needs and requires additional support as it has been proven that practitioners are unable to support every child's needs within the classroom.

Practitioners should play an active part in supporting Individual Development Plans by providing suitable provision for their needs. According to the Estyn (2017) it is important for practitioners to ensure that every child with an Additional Learning Need is meeting their Individual Development Plan targets, while achieving the highest standard of learning available. However, Richards (2017) believes that practitioners may take their time to complete each child with an Additional Learning Need's Individual Development Plan as it takes a lot of time to complete each one which allows restrictions for practitioners when supporting and encouraging young children to develop their skills.

Observing a child participating in different activities within an early-years setting gives practitioners the opportunity to observe how a child's skills are developing and what they are able to do to allow a practitioner to complete an Individual Development Plan for each child with an Additional Learning Need (Pascal, Bertram and Peckham, 2019). However, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) believe that children without statements will need to wait longer for an Individual Development Plan rather than a child with a statement.

# New Additional Learning Needs Legislation in Wales

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### SENCo to ALNCo

The new legislation has made changes to the role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), as it will be replaced by an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) (Welsh Government (2018). Carmarthenshire County Council (2020) suggest that Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) should ensure that all children with additional learning needs are given the best possible education within their educational setting. However, Smith (2015) suggest that practitioners found that staff training was lacking as some ALNCo shared concerned that less experienced members of staff had received no training despite such experience being central to early identification.

Welsh Government (2019) states the role of ALNCo should be considered to be a teacher or an individual within the leadership team to support a child as well as a child's classroom teacher to plan, manage and deliver its duties and responsibilities in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with Additional Learning Needs. Furthermore, The Senedd (2020) believe children with additional learning needs must have a designated officer who is a part of the 'Additional Learning needs co-ordinator' (ALNCo) to co-ordinate additional learning provisions for the children. However, the Welsh Government (2021) suggests that ALNCo should not remove responsibility of a whole approach from other practitioners as it is important that a child's needs are identified and provided in a way which is inclusive through a shared role.

One responsibility within the new role of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) will be to develop a child's Individual Development Plan to allow children access to the correct support within the classroom (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018).

The Welsh Government (2018) suggests that funding has been invested into Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) training to develop and ensure that all ALNCo are equipped to meet the requirements set out in law, to allow them to support children within the educational setting. Furthermore, According to Welsh Government (2017) Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) play an important role in working with the practitioners within the child's classroom to enable that every child is given the correct support to enable the child to progress. However, funding for training for Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) to allow them to develop their knowledge and understanding may be restricted as funding may be restricted due to the number of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) within Wales (National Assembly for Wales, 2015).

According to Llewellyn et al (2018) practitioners are required to work with the school's Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator to plan additional support for each child with an ALN, which will involve the preparation of an Individual Development Plan. Teachers and support staff of children with Additional Learning Needs have the responsibility of supporting all children within the classroom through their Individual Development Plan to support every child's individual needs (Lewis et al, 2017).

### Additional Learning Needs Implementation timeline



### Welsh Language

The Welsh Government (2018) state that one aim of the new legislation is to create a bilingual system of support for individuals with Additional Learning Needs as their Individual Development Plans can enable children to reach their targets. Similar to Welsh Government (2018), Thomas et al (2019) believe a statutory framework has been created in the Welsh language to allow individuals to have the option to follow every step of the framework in the Welsh language. Furthermore, Children's Legal Centre Wales (2019) believe that the Welsh language must be treated as equally as the English language under the new Additional Learning Needs legislation. However, Jones (2019) suggests that there is implication with the Welsh language provision as there is not enough funding to teach practitioners in the Welsh language, to enable them to give children with an Additional Learning Needs the support that is required.

Children's Commissioner for Wales (2019) suggests that a child's first language should be considered when completing a child with an ALN Individual Development Plan, and should consider the learning provision's being taught in Welsh to Welsh speaking children. Ware (2019) supports Children's Commissioner Wales (2019) as they believe a bilingual system will enable practitioners to consider whether a child with Additional Learning Needs should have provision in the Welsh language which requires all information to be documented in Welsh throughout their education. Furthermore, Children in Wales (2017) suggest that there is significant development using the Welsh language within the new Additional Learning Needs legislation as more Welsh speaking children are now offered provision through the Welsh language and practitioners and Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators must have all information documented in Welsh.

Education through Regional Working (2018) believe that partitioners must develop their knowledge and understanding of the new Additional Learning Needs legislation, and the importance of provision in the Welsh language to enable good practise when working with individual children throughout their education. Furthermore, Welsh Government (2021) state that training courses are important to allow school staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of children with additional learning needs which allows practitioners to develop their knowledge of the new legislative policies and the rights of the child. However, Maxwell et al (2020) believes that the Welsh language may be an implication to early years practitioners as there may be lack of Welsh speaking practitioners within the early years which may have an effect on the Welsh language provision within early years settings.

Snap Cymru (2018) believe that the New Additional Learning Needs legislation focuses on the learners to encourage early and effective intervention in the Welsh language as well as the English language which enables practitioners to encourage children to use their Welsh language during early interventions. However, Conn and Hutt (2020) suggest that the new Additional Learning Needs legislation will affect practitioners in the early years as practitioners will participate in early intervention with each child in their preferred language, which may take extra time depending on how many Welsh speaking practitioners there are at the setting.

The Welsh language will be an important focus on the new Additional Learning Needs legislation as interventions will be adapted to ensure that the best possible outcomes are delivered for every child with Additional Learning Needs. (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, 2018).

### Conclusion

To conclude the new Additional Learning Needs legislation promotes inclusion and equality for every child with an ALN, which allows every child to receive the best possible education within an educational setting (Welsh Government, 2018). Furthermore, it is important to see every child with the right to equality during their education as it allows each child to reach their full potential.

Secondly it is important to allow children to access the Welsh language through their Individual Development Plan as it allows children to access early interventions through their first language which encourages children to develop their skills comfortably. Snap Cymru (2018) believe that the new Additional Learning Needs legislation enables children to access early and effective intervention through the use of the Welsh language. However, the Welsh language may be an implication to a variety of early years practitioners as there may be a lack of Welsh speaking practitioners within the early years setting (Maxwell et al, 2020).