

LOOKING AT THE ALN/SEN REFORM

ALN/SEN Reform

The new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal Act Wales (2018) was passed in January 2018, according to (Dauncey, 2018), this is being phased by the new school year 2021. During this time, early years education will be seeing some significant changes. The old Special Educational Needs (SEN) that practitioners were used to is being replaced by Additional Education Needs (ALN). The Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) will be known as Additional Education Needs Coordinator ALNCo (SNAP CYMRU, no date).

ALN Policy

In 2018, Duff stated that it was recommended by the new ALN Code of Practice, that all maintained schools and educational settings here in Wales would need to write their own policies. These policies would need to identify WHY some children were in need of support, HOW the support would be implemented, recorded, and monitored, WHEN intervention would be in place and by whom. This new policy responds to children's diverse learning needs being recorded and monitored as required by the Welsh Government (Welsh Government, 2019).

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The new ALN and Educational Tribunal Act Wales (2018) sees the introduction of the new Individual Development Plans (IDP), removing the old school action and school action plus system, statements of learning will no longer be in place, this will also put the ALNCo under more pressure. Implementing the Independent Development Plan (IDP), supplying resources to provide enhanced learning, both in and out of the classroom. Developing all areas of learning, social, emotional, and motor skills. Providing records and evidence of observations to support planning and outcomes. (NSW Government, No date). Monitoring the effectiveness of any additional learning provision made (Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Regulations 2021), Will be the responsibility of the 1-1 and ALNCo.

The new reform and the process of evidence may take staff away from working with named child. Any support given, would also need to be monitored and recorded, ensuring that the child is receiving the best education possible. Diverse lesson plans will be required, being prepared by teachers or support staff. The Pontarddulais Comprehensive School (2019) works on Creating a learning environment that is fully responsive to the Additional Learning Needs of each pupil. Therefore, this being a major concern for schools and early years, that the added pressure this will put on already over stretched schools could be a negative to the school (Welsh Gov, 2018b).

Welsh Assembly Government (2018) have produced the guidelines for the IDP, it should have a time frame and be reviewed every 6 months or before if required. The IDP is not an evaluation tool (OPM.Gov, no date; Torfaen County Borough, 2018), it is, an agreed plan, learning strategies and outcomes. The IDP will include the child's likes and dislikes, what they feel they are good at, or not so good at. What they would like to improve on and how they would like to achieve these goals. Very much like the one-page profiles that practitioners work with previously (Welsh Government, 2019). Once the new IDP is in place it will continue to offer support for children and young adults up to the age of 25 years supporting them into further education. (SNAP CYMRU, no date ; Special Needs Jungle, 2018 and Welsh Gov , 2021).

The school needs to prepare this with 35 school days of the ALN being bought to their attention (Welsh.Gov 2020; Welsh Government, 2019), where the present Statement can take up to 26 weeks (Welsh Government, 2019), again putting pressure on schools. But giving the child support help much quicker. Welsh Gov (2018b) supports this saying it also provides a good transition between educational settings. Making changes to the environment as easy as possible.

If for any reason the Local Authority rejects the recommendation for an IDP, the Welsh Gov (2018b) and Welsh.Gov (2020) confirm, if the child, parents, or young person are not entirely happy with the decisions, they have the right to appeal.

Increased collaboration

The reform presents a more increased collaboration, which will now involve the parents/cares, outside agencies and the schools, making the child the centre of the whole process (Welsh Government, 2019).). Duff (2018) indicates that local authorities, educational setting, and parents of children will work closer together to provide evidence to identify that a child has Additional Learning Needs, and these are being supported by everyone connected to the named child.

The old non statutory SENCo is now being replaced statutory ALNCo ensuring the needs of the student with additional learning needs are being met (Welsh Government, 2019), they will now need to work with colleagues, multi agencies, parents, and the children, collaborating evidence and putting together a referral. This new role for the ALNCO will be committing to providing extra curriculum provisions, planning, and ensuring all staff are on board and working in collaboration with each other, Taigwaith Primary School (no date). ALN (Wales) Regulations (2021) ensure that all pupils have access to high quality resources and expertise. In Welsh Gov (2017) and Welsh Gov (2018b) it is said that providing training and knowledge on the condition being dealt with is a must. The ALNCo will recommend assessments, support the child to receive time with a teaching assistant or 1-1. The role of the 1-1 will not only support the child during education as it takes place but building upon an inclusive curriculum. There will also be additional strategies to equip staff to be able to make a adapted response to the diverse learning needs of pupils (Pontarddulais Comprehensive School, 2019). Then following these procedures, if progress is not being made, the staff and family would jointly need to produce or update the IDP, with the aim to provide provisions and collaborative learning (Welsh Gov 2018b; Welsh.Gov 2020).