

From SEN to ALN: Current Changes to Legislation

Introduction:

The Welsh government (2018) states that the current legislative framework for SEN is based on a model introduced more than 30 years ago. It is said to be far too complicated and that the assessment process has been deemed not effective. Families also feel that it is too much of a fight to get the proper support for their children, leaving them to not know where or how to seek advice.

Key changes to expect:

- Name change (SEN) to (ALN)
- 0-25 age range
- Unified Plan
- Increased Collaboration
- A simpler system

Dauncy, M (2016).

Name change: SEN to ALN:

The name is changing to Additional Learning Needs (ALN) from Special Educational Needs (SEN). The Welsh government's plan was to use this term for all learners under the age of 25, the hope was to provide equity and to really show you the relevance of the new system. The term ALN was also brought in the hope that it would reduce the stigma surrounding the system, so that this legislation could have a fresh start. Dauncy, M (2016) This does also mean that SENCOS will now be known as ALCOS. (Snap Cymru, 2020)

Individual Development Plans (IDP)

With the new plan individual development plans will be taking over the original three step process. This is in hope to make it a simpler more reliable system. Linking to better communication and learners an individual plan developed to their needs. Snap Cymru states that an effective IDP should contain the following:

- The learners identified needs.
- An agreed outcome
- Provision to meet those needs
- An action plan
- To be reviewed annual at the least but are encouraged to be checked often to keep up to date with a child's needs.
- Information that is sufficient enough to form a legally enforceable document. (Snap Cymru, 2020)

Increased Collaboration:

According to the Welsh Government (2018) ALN is focusing more on Multi-agency work and ensuring that proper communication is taking place. This change is the working together of organisations, this is from local authorities, nurseries, schools and colleges plus many more. All these services will work together sharing the information they know, ensuring everyone knows what they are doing, including families. The Welsh government has invested 2.1 million in the program to help multi-agency work, in the hope to enable best practice in the early years.

Conclusion:

By bringing in the name change we are breaking free from the stigma and showing a new effective, inclusive system that will focus on the needs of the children and learners, making sure that all organisations stay informed and up to date on these changes, and ensuring teachers are prepared to implement these changes in the classroom. (Snap Cymru, 2020)

Further Reading:

Welsh Government (2018). *Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act*.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act-2018-explanatory-memorandum.pdf> [Accessed: 18/02/20]

Dauncy, M (2016). *Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales*.

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/158677/mod_resource/content/1/Dauncy%202016.pdf [Accessed: 13/02/2020]