

Introduction Within Wales, there is a piece of legislation known as the Additional Learning Needs tribunal (Wales) act of 2018. This act sets out standards for health and social care services and education in order to support children with additional learning needs. This act supports children and young people from birth to the age of 25. The act brought in the use of individual development plans (IDPs for short) for children and young people in both statutory and non-statutory education or further education to ensure that the rights of children with additional learning needs are protected. The legislation started in September of 2021 and will be phased out every school year up until the end of the school year in 2024. According to Lord et al in 2018, autism spectrum disorder is used as a broad term to describe a variety of social and communication deficits and sensory-motor behaviours, which usually appear in early childhood. The National Autistic Society (2022) estimate that one in 100 people in the UK are on the autistic spectrum. Research from Hollucks et al in 2019 also suggests that adults with autism also have a clinical diagnosis of anxiety. Previous studies from Chang, Quan and Wood in 2012 have shown a correlation between having communication difficulties and the presence of social anxiety or deficits in children.		Barriers Research from Levey et al in 2010 suggests that up to 63% of children with an autism diagnosis also have language related difficulties, which can lead to challenges of understanding directions set out in a classroom and interaction between their peers and staff (Barry, Holloway & McMahon, 2020). Communication impairments are categorized by the delay or non-existence of spoken communication or gestures or challenges to initiate or maintain conversations (Prelock and Nelson, 2012). Prelock and Nelson in 2012 conducted research which suggests that toddlers with an autism spectrum disorder struggled to communicate through gestures such as showing interest in other children or pointing as an expression of interest. Children with symptoms similar to these may find difficulty in mainstream classes which do not have specialist training to support children with autism. Another barrier to children receiving positive outcomes and inclusive education could be perceived views of autism from educational staff. Teacher and other educational staff opinions and attitudes is a variable factor that can determine the effectiveness of interventions and strategies within a classroom (McGregor and Campbell, 2001). Research conducted by Syriopoulou-Delli et al in 2011 Found that 45.2% of the sample group had the opinion that children with autism would not develop good language skills later in life, and only 59% of the sample group declaring themselves as capable of pinpointing characteristics of autism. Similar to Syriopoulou-Delli’s 2011 study, a study conducted in the United Kingdom in 2009 by Emam and Farrell indicated that teachers and teaching staff had negative views of children with autism due to tensions caused by related behaviours displayed by children with ASD. Furthermore, a research study conducted by Chung, Smith, and Palmer in 2015 showed that even though overall the attitudes of staff towards children with autism were positive, they were significantly more negative when compared with the attitudes towards typically developing children without autism. Chung, Smith, and Palmer (2015) suggested that a potential reason for this negative attitude is because of lack of knowledge and understanding on how to deal with related behaviours.		ECEY6006 1906195 Word Count: 1013 Strategies/Interventions ‘The Picture Exchange Communication System’ or PECs, is a common intervention and strategy to support children with autism who have concurrent communication difficulties, to communicate using this method, children use cards with pictures, words, or symbols on, this can be used either to make requests, join in on conversation, give answers or ask questions (Lerna et al, 2012). Studies conducted by Lerna et al in 2012, found that the use of PECs as an intervention improved the social-communicative skills in children with autism. There is ample amount of research which suggests that the consistent use of PECs for children with autism has a positive impact on their communicative abilities, one study conducted by Bondy and Frost in 1994 found that 59% of children within a sample group, developed independent speech following the use of PECS, however it is important to note that other interventions to improve communication were used alongside PECS. More recently, studies conducted by Jurgens, Anderson, and Moore in 2012 found that there were positive correlations between communication and using PECS however, there is scope for further research on testing the validity of their use. Conclusion Research suggests that there is good evidence for the use of PECS as a means of improving communication difficulties in children with autism, and according to the additional learning needs tribunal (Wales) 2018, children with additional learning needs must receive adequate support to enhance their education and learning. It is important to ensure that all methods of intervention are explored, as every child will have varying needs and different areas, they need support with.	
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