EAEE6002 -Additional learning needs (ALN) transformation programme.

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What is the ALN transformation programme? The Education Act 1993 set an obligation on the Secretary of State to set a Code of Practice and the ability to revisit it once in a while. Through this the first SEN code of practice came into effect in 1994 and has since been updated and improved on a number of occasions and this brought to fruition the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (welsh government, 2004). The Special Educational Needs code of Practice Wales 2004 defines a child with SEN as 'having a significantly greater difficulty in learning of a child the same age' or 'have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities'. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (The Act) creates provisions for the new legislative framework that supports children and young adults with additional learning needs (ALN). The Additional Learning Needs transformation programme 2018 has been created to unify the current separate systems of SEN and LDD in further education to combine these into a unified system that will support learners with ALN from the age of 0-25 (Welsh Government, 2018a).

The new bill/ programme has been created to improve planning and delivery of the provision whilst also identifying needs of the learner early on and being able to ensure effective support is put in place and being able to adapt interventions to suit the learning needs of the child and also make provisions for Individual Development Plans for each child (Michael Dauncey, 2018).

The ALN Code.

The 2018 Act requires the Minister for Wales to issue a ALN code and gives the Minister for Wales a number of regulatory powers. The ALN Code is designed to strengthen the implementation and operation of the new framework system and support the new Act (Welsh Government, 2021).

According to the welsh government (2018a) the implementation training will begin in January 2021 and run alongside the current SEN policies and will go live in September 2024, giving practitioners 3 years to become familiar in using the new framework, IDP's and PDP's. However, practitioners are expected to adhere to the SEN code of practice Wales 2004 during this time (Welsh Government, 2018b). According to ERW (2021) ALN National Professional Learning Programme is being created to support the ALNco with targeted training and development which will be tailored and relevant to the individual, however it is possible many practitioners will feel the training is aimed at purely the ALNco and not fed down the line to the classroom staff.

SEN/ALN practitioners in schools are already feeling the pressure of keeping up to date with paperwork, perhaps the next three years of training will feel like added pressure, however once the ALN transformation is complete practitioners may find the new code and framework simpler and easier to maintain as is expected by the Welsh Government (2018). According to the Welsh Government (2018a) the new system will mean more flexible and responsive planning with practitioners being skilled in identifying needs earlier on.

SENCO TO ALNCO.

The Welsh Government (2018) have stated that the current SENCO will be replaced by ALNCO through the new ALN Wales Act 2018.

The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (Wales) Regulations 2020 state that a ALNCO must be a school teacher, in a senior position or a SENCO previous to the changes. ALNCO's should be highly qualifies and have expertise in person centred practice in dealing with a wide spectrum of ALN (Welsh Government, 2021). ALNCO's should be able to ensure learners needs are met which incorporates the UNCRC that children have a right to an education (Article 28), and that children who have a disability should have care and support so that they can lead full and decent lives (Article 23) (Welsh Government, 2017). The Welsh Government (2017) state that they want to be inclusive by supporting learners to overcome barriers as is described in Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and an ALNCO role within schools provides that support for children with ALN. ALNCO's will also have support form learning support workers within the classroom, according to the Welsh Government (2021) the ALNCO will be expected to arrange and provide the training they to the learning support workers and in turn the support workers will provide the ALNCO with practical and administrative support.

Individual Development Plan

Currently in Wales Individual Educational Plans and statements are used for children with ALN, however The Act 2018 states that The Individual Development Plan will take over both of these. The IDP will be central in the way children are assessed and how their needs are met (Snap Cymru, 2019).

IDP include child/young person involvement (Welsh Gov, 2018a) putting their wants and needs at the center of the IDP.

One implication for the ALNCO as stated in a review finding by Holton and Lloyd Jones (2014) is that the process has increased the workload of the ALNCO meaning they are feeling the added pressures of the process and planning of the IDP.

In Conclusion.

With the new legislation being in its early stages with regards to being implemented it is perhaps premature to have a solid view of the impacts, however it is clear from pilots of the transformation that there are both pros and cons. For example, the Welsh Government (2018c) state there will be the unified plan, increased participation from children and young people and high aspiration and outcomes for children. Whether this means a higher and more pressurized workload for practitioners and ALNCO's (Holton and Lloyd-Jones, 2014) is yet to be fully explored. However, Snap Cymru (2018) explain that the Welsh Government emphasize the support with working with multi agencies and use of evaluation to ensure issues are dealt with effectively.

Source: SnapCymru (2018b).