

Impending changes to ALN legislation in Wales

Introduction: The additional learning needs and education tribunal act 2018 will replace the existing 'Special Education Needs' (SEN) framework with a reformed 'Additional Learning Needs' (ALN) framework. Therefore, SENco's become ALNco's. All children with ALN regardless of the complexity of their learning difficulty or disability will be entitled to statutory support called an 'Individual Development Plan' (IDP) designed to replace statements, early years action and early years action plus. The Welsh Government plans to introduce the new ALN system on a phased basis over a period of three years commencing in September 2020. Therefore providing a unified legislative framework to support all young persons from birth to 25. Which will provide an integrated collaborative, process of assessment, planning and support provided to ALN learners which facilitate early, timely and effective interventions.

(Dauncey 2016, Snap Cymru.org, no date and Welsh Government,

Core aims for ALN framework:

- Increased participation of children and young people – The Act requires learners views should always be considered as well as those of their parents/carers. Including children in what is being done with them as appose to for them.
- A simpler and less adversarial system – the process of devising and revising an IDP should be much simpler.
- Increased collaboration – Encourages improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies, ensuring early identification of needs and the appropriate support is put in place to enable children and young people to achieve their best potential.

(welsh Government, 2018)



Children with disabilities should be helped to take part in things

U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 23

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S Commissioner Scotland

SEN—ALN
SENco—ALNco
Statement—IDP

Implications for Early Years Practitioners:

- A designated Early Years additional needs lead officer - The role is strategic and coordinates the planning for pupils below statutory school age who have ALN and will improve early identification and intervention ensuring better planning for future provision. Facilitating smoother transition to early years education. It is their responsibility to establish referral routes and raise awareness among multi-agencies, cross-sector partners including the local authority.
- A holistic inclusive framework supporting children from birth with one consistent system. Providing smoother transition between early years providers and schools and from secondary schools to further education.
- The definition of ALN will include all of those currently regarded as having special educational needs i.e. children and young people currently supported through school with statements of special educational needs, early years action and early years action plus.
- A mandatory ALN code of practice for all, including non-maintained early years education providers that are in receipt of local authority funding.

(learning communities overview and scrutiny committee, 2019 and Welsh Government, 2019)

Conclusion: A unified reformed child centred more inclusive practice which will support practitioners across the board, especially those in the early years sector as it facilitates recognition of additional learning needs and offer support from birth. Promotes multi-agency working across sectors including health and social services with clear procedures for individual development plans that identifies clearly which agency is responsible for delivering the individual elements.

(Welsh Government, 2019)

Further reading available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/additional-learning-needs-aln-transformation-programme-v2.pdf>
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act-2018-explanatory-memorandum.pdf>