

Introduction

There is a new piece of legislation that in the process of being implemented in Wales, known as the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. This act is shown by Legislation (2018). This poster aims to look into these changes, what they mean and how they will have an impact on early years practitioners. In accordance to the Welsh Government (2018), even though the new legislation gained royal assent back in January 2018, it does not go live until September 2020. Welsh Government (2018) state that during this transition time all existing plans will be converted into Individual Development Plans (IDP's).

What Are The Changes?

There are several changes made as a result of the new legislation. These are shown by Welsh Government (2018) within the eleven aims of the new act. These eleven aims are also discussed in depth by Dauncey (2018).

The eleven aims are:

- 1. Changing the terminology from Special Educational Needs to Additional Learning Needs
- 2. 0-25 year age range
- 3. Unified Plan
- 4. Increased participation
- 5. Higher aspirations
- 6. Simpler system
- 7. Increased collaboration
- 8. Avoiding disagreements
- 9. Clearer and consistent rights to appeal
- 10. Introducing a mandatory ALN code
- 11. Bilingual system

Inclusion And Equality

One question that arises with the new legislation is how well it takes into consideration inclusion and equality for those with ALN. UNESCO. (2018) discusses how inclusion is concerned about removing all barriers to education so that it is accessible to all. Doorn (2003) talks about how inclusion is all about making changes and keeping up to date with how inclusion is seen in modern society. This is something that Daucey (2018) and Welsh Government (2018) show that the new legislation making attempts to do. The new legislation is showing this by changing from outdated terminology and introducing the new terminology that is ALN. Ladau (No Date) and Gernsbacher (2016) both claim that using the term 'special' for those with disabilities has now become a negative term and needs to change. This new terminology is aimed to be positive and more inclusive.

Dauncey (2018) shows that this new legislation is to be bilingual, this shows that effort is being made to be inclusive to those with ALN who can only communicate in Welsh. Furthermore, the legislation shows that it will introduce a mandatory ALN code, this shows that all with ALN will be treated equally as the same code will be followed for all. However, the Draft Additional Learning Needs Code For Wales 2018 as shown by the Welsh Government (2018) uses words such as 'promptly' and phrases like 'take reasonable steps'. These are ambiguous terms and can be interpreted differently by different people and as a result lead to lack of equality. This shows that early years practitioners still need to take the language used into consideration and work together with others to ensure that children with ALN are included and treated as equals.

SENCo to ALNCo

Welsh Government (2017) and Szwed (2007) discuss how the role of a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) is to plan for the accommodation of special needs throughout the whole school. They state that one disadvantage is that SENCo's may not have whole-school organisation expedience. However, as SnapCymru (2020) explains, the new legislation is going to be individualised for each child. This could mean more work when the role changes from SENCo to Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo).

The Welsh Government (2017) states that their document will be updated from SENCo to ALNCo, but this at the moment is only in draft form, as shown by Welsh Government (2019). This can potentially lead to ALNCo's being unprepared as there is no clear definition of their role as yet.

However, Edwards (2017) and Provision Map (2017) states that an ALNCo will need to be a senior member of staff. This calls into question if that would be a beneficial idea. Senior staff members already have significant work-loads and don't generally work with children on a one-to-one-basis in order to know the individual child and what is in their best interests.

Individual Development Plans

The Welsh Government (2018) states that all new children diagnosed with an ALN will have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) personalised to their individual needs. Those who have been diagnosed with a SEN will also have their current plan converted into an IDP. SnapCymru (no date) also explains this implementation of new plans. They state that the process of starting these plans would be down to the ALNCo, and that it would create a simple plan easy for practitioners to follow and meet the individual needs that those with ALN require. Dauncey (2018) explains that these new IDPs will clear away any differences between school led intervention and local authority issued statements, resulting in clarity and everyone working together to assist those with ALN following the same ideas.