

Introduction

At present, Special Educational Needs children are taught in our schools under Section 312(1) of the Education Act 1996. This states that children with SEN must have a special education provision made for them, if they have a learning difficulty.

One in Five learners in Wales have SEN and these needs are met through 3 stages of intervention:

1. School Action
2. School Action Plus
3. SEN statement.

Currently, £362 million is budgeted by local authorities, in Wales, for SEN provision.

From 2020, the new ALN Act will introduce a more modern approach to multi-agency working which will support them in their education and life choices until the age of 25. The Welsh Government has three objectives:

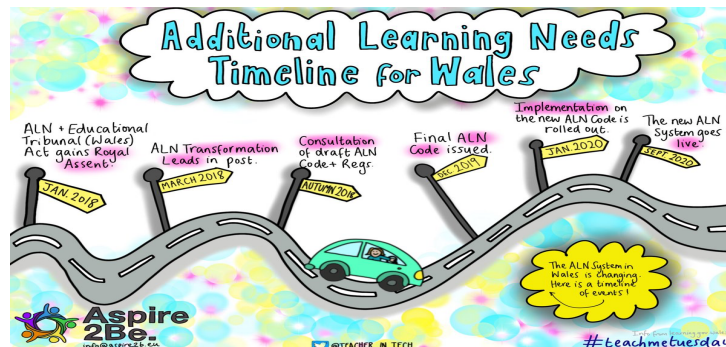
1. A unified legislative framework
2. An integrated, collaborative process with early and effective interventions.
3. A fair and transparent system.

The new plan promotes the use of the PCR (Personal Centered Review) which is a yearly meeting of all agencies involved to discuss the needs of the child. The child is present at the meeting and he is very involved, as he is given the opportunity to say what is working for him, what is not working and how he would change things, if necessary. He will share his aspirations and be part of developing the person centred outcomes which will move them towards their future within school and employment. Parents during these meetings will be able to contribute on an equal and fair footing as the information is shared as they are given the opportunity to plan for the future of their child.

This will be beneficial to the family and the professionals as they are given the chance to discuss the help they might need with specialists, such as Physiotherapists, Specialist Teachers, Social Workers and Behavior Specialists.

During the PCR, all questions are answered and recorded and then a comprehensive SMART action plan is made with good person-centred outcomes, which cover all aspects of the learners life and aspirations.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act (2020)



The 10 aims of the ALN Act

1. Introduction of the term ALN.
2. 0 to 25 age range.
3. A unified plan from 0-25.
4. Increased participation of children
5. High aspirations and improved outcomes.
6. A simpler system
7. Increased collaboration
8. Avoiding disagreements
9. Clear rights of appeal
10. The ALN Code

Age Range 0-25

Children in Wales have previously been covered by two separate pieces of legislation, which are still operating. These cover children of compulsory school age who have SEN (Special Educational Needs) and young people in further education who have LDD (Learning Difficulties/ Disabilities)

With the introduction of the new ALN code, there will be a single legislative system relating to the support given to children and young people between 0 to 25 years who have ALN.

SENCO to ALENCO

There will be some significant changes. For instance, as the name of the act suggests, the term 'special educational needs (SEN)' will be replaced by 'additional learning needs (ALN)'. This in turn means the SENCOs will be known as ALNCOs. The ALNCO's will have to be highly trained in the new code and as was suggested by Cambrian News (2019) it may be beneficial to employ one ALENCO on a full time basis to cover a cluster group of Primary Schools.

The ALNCO is a statutory role which will replace the existing non-statutory SENCO role that exists in most maintained schools in Wales

School/Early Years Action, School/Early Years Action Plus and statements will disappear and every child with a recognised ALN will eventually be issued with a new statutory document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP). This is not to be confused with individual education plans (IEP) which will also be phased out. Unlike statements, which stop when a young person leaves school, IDPs will continue up to 25 years of age if the young person goes onto further education.

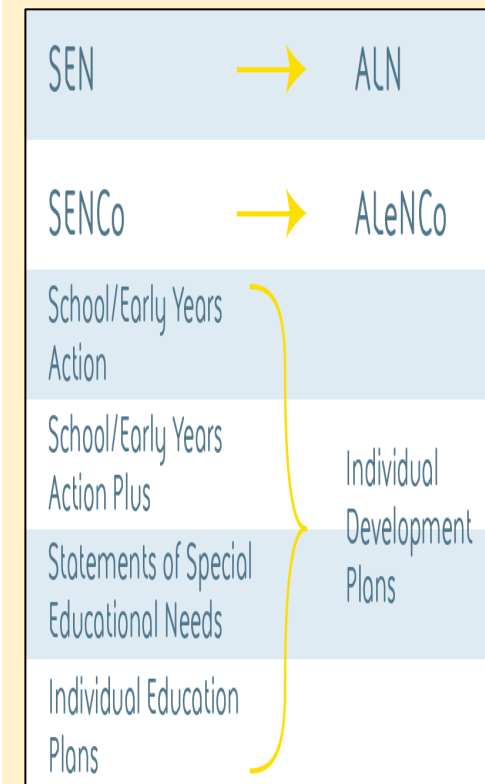
Further Reading

Additional Learning Needs transformation programme. (2020) Welsh Government Document.

MA Ed in ALN. Trinity St David's. <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/ma-education/>

ALN and Education- Children in Wales. <https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ALN-Bill.pdf>

Michael Charles response to the Welsh Government. <http://www.sinclairslaw.co.uk/news/michael-charles-response-to-the-welsh-government/>



(Cerebra, 2018)