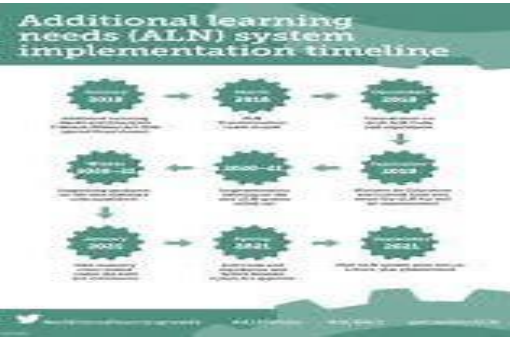


# Implications on practitioners following Additional Learning Needs reform in Wales.

According to the Welsh Government (2015) the current SEN legislation used to support children with additional learning needs is said to be outdated.. Eysn, (2018) and Dauncey, (2016) highlights the need for a more inclusive and anti discriminatory system is needed. In response, The Welsh Government (2021a) plans to introduce a new Additional Learning Needs Code and regulations to be rolled out September 2021. The ALN code aims to improve planning and delivery of additional learning provision for children and young people from 0-25 years (Welsh Government, 2021a). Through the introduction of 11 core aims of the code, the Welsh government is committed to transforming experiences, expectations and outcomes for children and young people. A unified system to support learners with additional learning needs using a rights based approach to planning additional learning needs provision will implemented on a three year phased approach (ALN. Wales 2020; Welsh Government, 2020 and Estyn, 2018).This briefing paper will introduce three of the core aims of the code and how these will impact on policy and practice for Practitioners working with children with additional learning needs.



Source : Welsh Government, 2020

## Core Aim 7 which highlights the requirement for Increased Collaboration.

The new Additional Learning needs system outlines the requirement for agencies to increase collaboration and improves systems for information sharing. Under section 60 of the Additional Learning Needs code Welsh Government, (2021a ) it is the role of the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator, to co-ordinate additional learning needs provision across school, adopting a multi-agency approach to supporting children.

Dauncey, (2016) highlights that under the Special Educational needs regulations SENCO's were responsible for additional learning provision, however there were said to be inconsistencies in delegation and co-ordination of this role. Therefore, under the new Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator regulations, (2021b) schools now have a statutory duty to ensure the designation of an ALNCO. Such is the importance of the role of Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, that the member of staff must now form part of the senior leadership team, (Welsh Government, 2021b).

ALN. Wales (2021) and Estyn (2018) explain that although, the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator will be responsible to coordinate provision for learners and manage the allocation of support staff the designation of this role does not detract from the wider workforce (ALN. Wales, 2020 and Swansea. Council, 2019). Dauncey, (2018) suggests that A significant portion of the 20 million pound budget allocated by Welsh Government will be used for workforce development. Estyn, (2018) state that all staff should be trained to understand the implications of the ALN Act and importance of Person-centred planning so there is a shared responsibility to ensure the needs of the children are identified and provided for. Welsh Government, (2018) state that with over 25% of pupils currently on the SEN register and the requirement to provide an Individual Development Plan for all these children. This will increase the workload of the Additional Learning needs Coordinator significantly. Snap Cymru (2017) suggest that to aid this the ALNCO should not have teaching duties and should be free to concentrate on the role.

## Core Aim 3- A Unified Plan.

Under the new ALN framework any child with an additional learning regardless, of complexity of need will be legally entitled to a statutory document called an Individual Development Plan (Welsh Government, 2020; and Estyn, 2018 ).

A Universal Individual Development Plan template is outlined in annexe A of the ALN code This document will include information on a child's additional learning need and how they can be best supported within the classroom (Estyn, 2018 ).

Welsh Government, 2020 state that Individual Development Plans will replace Statements of Special Educational Needs and the graduated response support system currently used to identify additional learning provision in schools.

The National Assembly for Wales (2018) suggest that the process of Individual Development Plans' will be less complicated than the previous statementing system which has proved timely and costly. However, Snap Cymru (2017) highlights concerns that the removal of the graduated response would provide practitioners with a lack of clarity over severity of need.

In addition, Dauncey, (2016) explains that Parents are concerned that due to the ALNCO having the responsibility to ensure that IDP's are implemented effectively, children will not receive the appropriate support afforded to them under the statementing process.

According to the Guardian (2018) this has been seen in England where health care plans for young people up to 25 have put increased pressure on school budgets and many children have not received the additional staff support they are legal entitled to, therefore, their needs have not been met.

## Core Aim 4

### Increased Participation

The Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Tribunal Bill (2018) highlights that when planning additional learning provision, the needs of the children and the parents must be considered (Welsh Government, 2021a).

The idea of Person-Centred practice is integral to the Additional Learning Needs Act (Snap Cymru 2017). Person centred practice places the child and family at the centre of decisions that affect them (Welsh Government, 2021b). This rights based approach to planning is underpinned by articles 12 and 18 of the United Nations Rights of the Child which state children and parents must be consulted in matters which affect them (Save the Children, no date). Previously, targets and IDP's were set using a generic approach, therefore Practitioners will need training on Person centred practice and how to include children and families (Estyn, 2018). As Dauncey (2016) explains, due schools will be making decisions about which Children have IDP's , this could result in difficulties if parents are not consulted or when parents and practitioners have different opinions of levels of need. The ALN. Code (2021a) highlights that through Person centred practice practitioners will gain a deeper understanding of the children they work with, including who they are and what is important to them.

In addition, Estyn, (2015 and Sanderson associates,(no date) advocate the use of a single page of writing called a one-page profile. This one page profile will include important information about the child. Not only does this aid staff to understand a child's needs, Estyn, (2018) suggest adopting this approach will increase wellbeing, promote positive relationships between children parents and practitioners as well as improving overall attitudes to learning. Similarly, Estyn, (2020) suggests that when children are empowered to be in control of their own learning higher levels of attainment are achieved.

The impact on the Additional Learning needs Act will not be realised for several years after implementation, due to its phased approach. Although it aims to improve outcomes for children, to ensure its success Welsh government need to continue to provide practitioners with training support and additional resources to be able to meet the diverse needs of children with Additional Learning Needs. Failure to do this will see children who need the most support, denied the right to an education which meets their full potential (Dauncey, 2018 and Snap Cymru, 2017).