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*Learning Support Report:
Support Statements for
Learners with Additional Learning Needs*

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Part 1:

Regulatory, Legal and Policy Frameworks for Inclusive Practice in Post-16 Education

The regulatory and legal landscape governing additional learning needs (ALN) and inclusive practice in post-16 education in Wales has undergone significant evolution in recent years, driven by a broader national and institutional commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and to removing barriers to accessible education (Central South Consortium Cymru, 2021). At the centre of this commitment is the Equality Act 2010, which provides a unified legal framework to protect individuals from discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all, including those with protected characteristics such as disability, race, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (GOV.UK, 2010). This act imposes a statutory duty on education providers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled learners are not placed at a disadvantage compared to other students (ECU, 2013a).

Further reinforcing the statutory landscape is the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which marked a tangible shift in Wales by introducing a unified framework for supporting children and young people with ALN up to the age of 25 (Welsh Government, 2021). This legislation requires post-16 education and training providers to identify, assess, and address additional learning needs in partnership with learners and, where appropriate, their families. This act places a legal obligation on institutions to maintain Additional Learning Provision (ALP), to involve learners in decision-making, and to ensure that support is coordinated and reviewed throughout a learner's educational journey. This statutory framework aligns with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010, which requires further education institutions to have a duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (GOV.UK, 2023).

An example of institutional responses is the UWTSD Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028, which articulates the university's commitment to removing barriers, valuing differences, and embedding inclusive approaches across teaching, learning, and assessment (UWTSD, 2024a). The plan aligns the university's mission to "transform education and transform lives" with broader governmental, social, and economic initiatives for Wales. Additionally, it sets out key objectives for continuous improvement in equality and diversity, supported by ongoing collaboration with students, staff, and external stakeholders. The plan also recognises the statutory requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, embedding sustainability and well-being as core considerations in the delivery of inclusive education (Welsh Government, 2015).

Therefore, within the post-16 compulsory sector, inclusive practice is not simply a legal obligation but is recognised as an essential element of effective pedagogy (Welsh Government, 2023). Inclusive practice encompasses an approach to teaching that acknowledges the diversity of the student body and ensures that all learners can access content, participate fully in learning activities, and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths in assessment. According to ECU (2013b), this approach is underpinned by a proactive stance that anticipates potential barriers and designs out exclusion rather than relying solely on individual support. The value of diversity is emphasised as a resource that enriches the learning experience for all students, with

inclusive practice aimed at maximising engagement, achievement, and employability in an increasingly diverse society (Welsh Government, 2025).

Professional standards for educators in Wales reinforce these expectations by embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion as core values and competencies in daily practice. According to Educators Wales (2026a), educators are required to actively promote equality of opportunity and inclusion, remove barriers to learning, and value the contribution of all learners. Practitioners are expected to reflect critically on their own practice, engage in ongoing professional development, and collaborate to share best practices for supporting learners with ALN. Similarly, the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education highlights respect for individual learners, the promotion of equity, and the use of evidence-informed approaches as fundamental to effective teaching and learning (Advance HE, 2023a).

Furthermore, at a policy level, recent Welsh Government reforms have established Medr, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, with a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity for under-represented groups across all forms of post-compulsory education and training (Medr, 2025). Expert analysis highlights persistent inequalities in access, participation, and achievement within the Welsh tertiary sector, with disadvantaged learners, those from minority backgrounds, and students with ALN facing particular barriers to success (Huxley and Davies, 2024a). Addressing these challenges requires not only robust regulatory frameworks but also data-driven interventions, targeted support, and a whole-institution commitment to inclusive culture and practice (Wales Centre for Public Policy, 2026).

GOV.WALES (2025a) states that practical teaching strategies for fulfilling regulatory and legal requirements include systematically identifying learner needs, implementing reasonable adjustments, such as alternative assessment methods, accessible materials, assistive technologies, and flexible teaching approaches, and monitoring progress and outcomes. The importance of universal design principles, which seek to make learning environments accessible to all from the outset, is recognised as best practice (CAST, 2024). Institutions are also required to ensure that staff are adequately trained to understand and meet the needs of learners with a range of diagnosed impairments, including neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD and dyslexia, mental health conditions, sensory or physical impairments, and other complex needs (ADHD UK, 2022). GOV.WALES (2025b) notes that contemporary challenges — including the integration of AI and digital learning tools — present both opportunities and risks for inclusion. Indeed, while technology can offer new ways to personalise and support, there is also a need for clear policy guidance and robust safeguards to ensure that digital innovation does not inadvertently disadvantage disabled or neurodivergent learners. Similarly, Fletcher, Chen and He (2024) assert that institutional and national policies must be responsive to technological change, embedding digital accessibility and data protection within the broader agenda of inclusive practice.

To recapitulate, the regulatory and legal framework for accommodating additional learning needs and promoting inclusivity in the post-16 sector in Wales is comprehensive and multi-layered, encompassing statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, the ALN Act 2018, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, alongside institutional commitments seen in strategic plans and professional standards. It was found that effective compliance requires a comprehensive approach that uses inclusive pedagogical and assessment practices,

an institutional culture that fosters respect, engagement, and continuous improvement, and robust systems for identifying and meeting needs. All in all, the real effectiveness of this approach is measured not only by legal compliance but by the extent to which all learners can achieve their full potential in an inclusive, supportive environment.

Part 2:

Scenario-Based Support Statements for Learners with ALN in Post-16 Education

I have my PCET placement at UWTSD. I teach business-related disciplines to CertHE (Level 4) and MBA (Level 7) students, both domestic and international. In accordance with the assignment requirements, I approach this task as a full-time CertHE lecturer who regularly teaches the Digital Skills for Personal & Professional Growth module — not my real position. The students, situations, and scenarios mentioned below are entirely fictitious and have been used solely to demonstrate my knowledge from the ANL module.

Support Statement for Iwan

As a digital skills lecturer at UWTSD, I frequently support students like Iwan, whose academic journeys are shaped by significant socio-economic challenges. I am aware that financial hardship is not simply about a lack of resources — it also profoundly affects a student's confidence, participation, and sense of belonging in higher education (Bridge Group, 2024). Evidence shows that working-class and first-generation students in Wales continue to experience lower participation, progression, and achievement rates, often due to persistent structural inequalities and limited access to support (Huxley and Davies, 2024b).

Recognising these challenges, my first step is to foster a welcoming, stigma-free environment where Iwan feels comfortable disclosing his difficulties. Building trust is fundamental because students facing financial barriers often feel embarrassed or reluctant to seek help. I would initiate a sensitive conversation with Iwan, reassuring him that many students face similar challenges and that the university is committed to providing support as outlined in the UWTSD Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028 (UWTSD, 2024d).

Also, I will refer Iwan to our Student Services, which administers funds, bursaries, and available loan schemes, ensuring he can access a laptop and reliable internet if needed. I would also guide him towards study skills workshops and encourage him to join peer mentoring schemes, supporting both his academic development and sense of belonging. While doing all aforementioned, I would work in partnership with Student Services, in line with UWTSD's Support for Study Policy and Procedure, ensuring that any additional needs are identified early and addressed holistically (UWTSD, 2023).

Within my module, I would adopt Universal Design for Learning principles to minimise the impact of financial disadvantage (Cardiff University, 2024). This includes providing all resources digitally and in accessible formats, arranging UWTSD's library training, offering flexible deadlines, and incorporating collaborative activities that do not disadvantage those with limited resources. I would also make an explicit effort to check in with Iwan regularly, offering encouragement and tailored feedback.

I am also committed to critically reflecting on my assumptions about student engagement and achievement. The Professional Standards for Further Education in Wales require me to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion actively, and to remove barriers to learning through continuous reflection and development (Educators Wales, 2026c). I see Iwan's experience as a powerful reminder that achievement gaps often result from structural inequalities, not from a lack of talent or motivation.

I maintain regular communication with Iwan, monitoring his progress, offering encouragement, and adjusting support as his needs evolve. I encourage him to participate in Students' Union activities and wider opportunities at UWTSD to build confidence and broaden his horizons. My goal is to empower Iwan to succeed and ensure that his financial background does not hinder his full participation or progression in higher education.

Support Statement for Efa

Efa is a first-year student experiencing racial isolation and discrimination in the post-16 learning environment. Her situation requires a comprehensive, proactive approach that is informed by legal and moral considerations. I believe that the sense of marginalisation and repeated exposure to offensive comments, microaggressions, and social exclusion can undermine Efa's confidence, academic engagement, and overall well-being, reinforcing structural inequities well documented in the Welsh and UK post-compulsory education context (The Wales Centre for Public Policy, 2024).

As both the Equality Act 2010 and the UWTSD Strategic Equality Plan (2024–2028) stipulate, it is essential to have a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. These frameworks require all staff members to actively eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations among diverse student groups. To fulfil these obligations, the first step would be to make clear, both in written module documentation and through classroom communication, the commitment to inclusivity and respect. This includes explaining procedures for reporting discrimination incidents safely and confidentially, and ensuring that Efa is aware of available communication channels, such as Student Services, BAME support networks, and specialist counselling or advocacy services (UWTSD, 2024b).

Moreover, fostering a sense of belonging is fundamental. As research and institutional guidance highlight, students from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to face barriers to group participation. They are at increased risk of social isolation, impacting both attainment and retention (ECU, 2013c). Hence, my teaching practice will be intentionally inclusive. Within the digital skills module, this means using diverse and representative case studies, inviting discussion on digital inclusion and equity, and openly challenging stereotypes when they arise. By creating learning activities that require collaboration across diverse backgrounds and carefully allocating groups to avoid marginalisation, I can promote meaningful interaction and mutual respect. Additionally, I will monitor group dynamics and classroom interactions, look for subtle signs of exclusion or microaggressions, intervene promptly when issues arise, and facilitate peer support systems.

In accordance with the Professional Standards for FE and HE in Wales, reflective practice is critical. I must continually examine my own assumptions, language, and responses to ensure they are modelling inclusive behaviour (Advance HE, 2023b). Participation in professional development focused on race equity and anti-racism is not only best practice but also a requirement under sector standards for ongoing learning and improvement.

Also, I will ensure that curriculum design visibly values and celebrates diversity. I can achieve this by incorporating materials, guest speakers, and project opportunities that reflect a wide range of voices and lived experiences, enabling Efa and other students to see themselves represented and valued. I aim to ensure that every learner, regardless of background, feels respected, heard, and able to contribute fully to class discussions and activities.

Empowering Efa also involves supporting her agency and resilience, recognising and celebrating her contributions, offering constructive feedback, and providing leadership opportunities, such as involvement in student ambassador programmes or student-led initiatives on equality and inclusion. I think that collaboration with the Students' Union and the Equality POC can amplify her voice and ensure institutional accountability.

Support Statement for Megan

As Megan's tutor, I recognise that supporting a student struggling with mental health issues requires a compassionate, person-centred, and emotionally intelligent approach. I am fully aware that mental health challenges can impact every aspect of a student's academic life, from attendance and concentration to assessment performance and engagement with peers. Early intervention and a supportive environment are essential to prevent escalation and enable recovery, so I prioritise creating a safe, non-judgemental space for Megan to share her experiences.

First, I will reach out to Megan empathetically and confidentially, reassuring her that her well-being is a top priority for me and the university. I make it clear that mental health is taken seriously as an aspect of learning and academic achievement. In line with both the Equality Act 2010 and UWTSD's Strategic Equality Plan (2024–2028), I am legally and institutionally obligated to remove barriers to participation, eliminate discrimination, and make reasonable adjustments for any student experiencing a substantial disadvantage due to health-related needs — even where there is no formal diagnosis. This anticipatory duty means I am proactive, not reactive, in ensuring equitable access to learning (UWTSD, 2024c).

In line with UWTSD's policy, I signpost Megan to our Support for Study process and refer her to Student Services, where she can access counselling, well-being support, and advice on appropriate adjustments to assessments or attendance. I also encourage her to engage with the Students' Union, recognising that social connection and a sense of community are protective factors for mental health recovery and resilience (ECU, 2013d).

Regarding my module, I strive to offer flexibility wherever possible, providing adaptable assignment deadlines and ensuring all resources are accessible in advance. I regularly provide constructive, encouraging feedback that emphasises Megan's progress and strengths, while also

monitoring her workload and offering clear guidance to prevent her from becoming overwhelmed.

As a teaching practitioner, I am required under the Welsh Government's Professional Standards for further education teachers, work-based learning practitioners and adult learning practitioners in Wales to value and respect learners' diversity and to actively support their well-being and mental health through inclusive, reflective practice (Educators Wales, 2026b). Hence, I will undertake additional professional development, such as mental health first aid training, to deepen my understanding and ensure I am equipped to support students like Megan (Advance HE, 2023c).

I believe that it is crucial for students like Megan that my support is continual and adaptive. I maintain open communication and regularly review and adjust the support I offer as her needs change. My main objective is to ensure Megan feels supported and able to achieve her goals, despite the challenges she faces. By embedding flexibility, pastoral care, and inclusive pedagogy within my teaching practice, I help Megan — and all my students — thrive academically and personally.

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