

Introduction

The Welsh Government is determined to deliver a fully inclusive education system for learners in Wales. A system where needs are identified early and addressed quickly, and where all learners are supported to reach their potential. This is why the Welsh Government developed the Additional Learning Needs and Education Act (2018).

The ALN Act transforms the separate systems for special educational needs (SEN) in schools and learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) to create a unified system for supporting learners from 0 to 25 with ALN The Welsh Government(2018)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

From SENCO to ALNCO

The SENCo has always been a critical role in ensuring that children with special education needs and disabilities within a school receive the support they need. Gradually over the years the SENCo role has grown in importance. Under the new legislation the role will be developed further and known as the 'ALNCo' – Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator.

All maintained schools must designate a person to be the ALNCo. The ALNCo is responsible for the day-to-day co-ordination of pupil's ALN including:

- Promoting inclusion within the education settings
- Becoming a source of expertise on ALN by developing specialist skills and knowledge
- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the setting's policy on ALN
- Coordinating provision across the education setting for learners with ALN including a role in managing the allocation of learning support staff

The Welsh Government (2020)

From SEN Statement to IDPs

The new system replaces existing support plans (including Statements of SEN, individual education plans (IEPs) for learners with a new statutory plan called an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Under the new ALN Act: All children and young people with ALN regardless of the severity or complexity of their learning difficulty or disability will be entitled to an IDP. Senedd Wales(2017)

Welsh Language

The Code of Practice includes guidance on how local authorities should make provision for SEN through the medium of Welsh. One of the strategic objectives of the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy is to develop improved planning of Welsh-medium education for learners with additional learning needs (ALN). The Welsh in education Action plan 2017–21, sets out the direction for the development of compulsory Welsh-medium and Welsh language education over the next four years, in line with the vision of Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers¹ (2017) and Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action plan 2017–212 (2017). It recognises the important part that the early years sector plays in the development of children's Welsh language skills. The Welsh language Education Plan(2021)

To conclude, the fundamental aim of the new ALN Act was to offer a unified and streamlined approach to delivering effective support to individuals with ALN. Its implementation has meant however, additional workloads for practitioners ranging from further training to understanding how to use and implement IDPs, the lack of available resource is also of further concern for practitioners. The Welsh Government states its Workforce Development Programme will help practitioners develop their skills and understanding of the new legislative framework. The role of the ALNCO also aims to strengthen the delivery of the framework.