



Additional Learning Needs Policy

The Welsh government is changing the way children with 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) are supported. The Welsh government is fully replacing the old SEN system with the new 'Additional Learning Needs' system, between September 2022 and August 2024 for children who have SEN and do not attend a local authority school.

1. Additional learning needs, provision, and plans.

1.1 A child or young person who finds it harder to learn than other children of the same age, or have a learning, physical or sensory needs that means they cannot use, or find it difficult to learn and to use facilities for learning in the school, has 'Additional Learning Needs' (ALN). However, this does not apply to children who just need extra help with 'catching up'. For a child, or young person with an ALN, then additional support is made available, that is not required to most of the children the same age.

1.2 The extra support given to children with ALN to help them learn, is called 'Additional Learning Provision' (ALP).

1.3 A child with an ALN, will have a written support plan – which also includes the ALP – this is called the 'Individual Development Plan' (IDP).

1.4 The old system's 'Special Educational Needs co-ordinator' (SENCo), becomes the 'Additional Learning Needs co-ordinator' (ALNCo) – currently YCA headteacher.

1.5. ALP can be any resources, or training provision that is additional to, or different from, what is made available to most young people of the same age. Additional resources can mean using technology, such as radio aids, particular computer programs, an app, or even a pencil grip to aid writing.

1.6 ALP can be delivered by teachers, teaching assistants, or specialist services like a speech and language therapist, or a teacher for the deaf.

2. Identifying additional learning needs

2.1 Assessment is an ongoing process gathering (including referral information) and making sense of information about the children at Ysgol Caban Aur (YCA) and their circumstances. The purpose of assessment is to help identify the actions required to support development and learning. Assessment plays a key role in identifying children and young people who have additional learning needs. Assessment identifies and builds on strengths, whilst taking account of needs and difficulties. It will usually include discussion with carers and other professionals and builds on other assessment information already available. It may involve observation in day-to-day situations and/or individual work with the child, or specific screening assessments (eg dyslexia). A range of professionals may support the assessment of the child's additional learning needs. These may include educational psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists.

2.2 Children with additional learning needs may demonstrate difficulties through one, or more areas, including:

- schoolwork – reading, writing, numeracy or understanding information
- expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying
- making friends or relating to adults
- behaving appropriately at school
- medical, physical or sensory needs, which may affect their progress at school.

YCA will use a range of assessments, observations and professional guidance to help to determine if a child has ALN.

2.3 YCA will usually give IDP notices to children, however, the LA IDP team may give notices to children who are 'looked after children' if they are registered at more than one education place. For example, a learner registered with YCA for some GCSE subjects, but undertakes some GCSE studies for other subject(s) at a local authority school.

2.4 YCA, or the LA IDP team may issue a 'no IDP notice' if it is decided that the child did not have an ALN, or that the ALP has suitably addressed the ALN.

3. Individual Development Plans (IDP)

3.1 All IDPs are statutory. This means that all children, young people and parents/carers, will have rights in law to do something about decisions regarding ALN, if they are not satisfied with the arrangements.

3.2 From 1st September 2021 a child of compulsory school age up to, and including Y10 who do not attend a LA school, or their parents, or carers, can let the local authority know that the child has or could have ALN. The LA ALN team must make a decision about whether the child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP. The LA must do this in 12 weeks. Children do not need to have complex need, or a particular type or level of need for the LA to make a decision. It does not matter who tells the LA that a child might have ALN, it could be done by parents, school staff or other professionals (educational psychologists, therapist, medical profession).

3.3 The IDP must say:

- the sort of ALN the child or young person has (need)
- how the child or young person will be supported to learn, and who will support them (provision)
- what the child or young person will be able to achieve when the support is put in place (outcome)
- the name of any nursery, school or college the child or young person may need to go to
- if the support should be in Welsh
- information about the reasons for what is set out in the plan
- things that have happened that make a difference to the child or young person's ALN

(see appendix A for YCA's blank IDP)

3.4 The IDP will use the 'graduated approach' relating to the levels of support that is set out in the IDP. Under the ALN system, all levels of the graduated approach will be put into the IDP if required. These ALP levels are; low-level (school action*), medium level (school action plus*) and high-level (complex needs for a statement*). An IDP can have only low-level ALP, this is because IDPs are used for all levels of the graduated approach.

*Old system SEN intervention levels

3.5 An IDP may start off by saying a small amount of additional learning provision will be provided by the YCA. If the child does not make progress, then the IDP will be reviewed and will set out any more support a child may need. This might include provision delivered by teachers or by other services such as a speech and language therapist.

3.6 If a child, or young person needs ALP in Welsh, this will be documented in the IDP and 'all reasonable steps' will be taken to secure the provision in Welsh.

3.7 An IDP for a looked after child (LAC) must be incorporated into the child's personal education plan (PEP).

3.8 Under the ALN system, duties to identify ALN and prepare and maintain IDPs in respect of looked after children are placed on the local authority that looks after the child. This is to allow for a more holistic approach to meeting the educational and other needs of looked after children with ALN.

3.9 The IDP for LAC does not include Part 1. This is because there is a requirement that the IDP for a looked after child is incorporated within the child's personal education plan (PEP) and the information which is required under Part 1 is expected to be contained elsewhere in the child's PEP.

3.10 If a child continues not to make progress, they may need more support than the school can provide. YCA will then refer the IDP to the LA IDP team.

4. Challenging decisions about the ALN and resolving disagreements

4.1 Children, their parents and young people can challenge decisions made by YCA, or the LA about ALN, if they disagree with them. This includes decisions about:

- if a child or young person has ALN
- the way a child or young person's ALN is described in an IDP
- the support described in the IDP
- who is responsible for maintaining an IDP – a school, or local authority

4.2 Children, and their carers will be invited to take part in preparing IDPs. This could be meeting up with the ALNCo and discussing the ALN support required. Working together will provide opportunities to discuss any problems and help them to be sorted out at an early stage.

4.3 Advocates - Children and young people have a right to have an advocate help and speak up for them if there is a disagreement. An advocate will speak up for a child or young person when they are using dispute resolution services. Children and young people can ask the local authority for an advocate. Also, local authorities must tell children, their parents/carers and young people about advocates.

4.4 Dispute resolution services - Children, their parents and young people can ask for some decisions to be changed. This includes decisions made by local authorities when they reconsider decisions made by YCA. Asking for a decision to be changed is called 'making an appeal'. Making an appeal means a group of independent people, one with legal qualifications, will decide whether a decision should be changed or reconsidered. This is called the 'Educational Tribunal'. The child, their parent/carer or the young person will be able to use the local authority dispute resolution service before making an appeal to the Tribunal. All local authorities must make arrangements for independent dispute resolution services to help resolve disagreements between parents, local authorities and schools. The service does this by helping all involved to discuss the disagreement and work towards a solution.

4.5 Case friends - Children have rights under the ALN system. These include rights to be given information, to request things such as a review of an IDP, and to challenge decisions. Some children will not be able to understand these rights. If a child does not understand, a case friend can speak for the child, support the child and take decisions for the child. In particular, case friends help children take a disagreement – a case – to the

Tribunal. A case friend does this by acting on behalf of a child when making an appeal. Children and their parents can ask the Tribunal for a case friend for the child. Case friends can also help children to understand information given to them about the ALN system. A Case friend can have an advocate in the same way that a child can have one.

4.6 Tribunal - If a child, their parent/carer or a young person disagrees with the local authority decision about what should happen next, they can appeal to the Tribunal. Children, their parents/carers or young people can make an appeal to the Tribunal about:

- a decision by a college or local authority about whether a child or young person has ALN
- a decision by a local authority that it is not necessary to make an IDP for a young person
- the way a child or young person's ALN is described in their IDP
- the additional learning provision that has been included in an IDP
- the additional learning provision that has not been included in an IDP
- a decision about if additional learning provision should be in Welsh
- not including a particular school or college in an IDP
- not including other provision that is needed
- a local authority decision not to be responsible for an IDP instead of YCA
- a local authority decision not to change an IDP that the YCA is responsible for
- a college or local authority refusing to decide if a child or young person has ALN because it has decided this before and does not think that anything has changed
- a decision to end an IDP

4.7 Getting support from organisations about ALN - A lot of organisations can provide information and advice about ALN, including:

- your local authority
- SNAP Cymru
- the National Deaf Children's Society
- National Autistic Society Cymru
- the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Cymru
- the Children's Commissioner for Wales
- You can also email the Welsh Government.

Appendix A: YCA's blank IDP

References:

Welsh Government: The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021

Welsh Government: The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme – Frequently Asked Questions Feb 2019

The Independent Schools (Provision of Information) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021

The Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Regulations 2021

The Equality Act 2010 (Disabled School Pupils) (Wales) Regulations 2021

YCA ALN policy July 2022

Welsh Government: The Additional Learning (ALN) system: parents' guide – A guide for parents and families about how children will move to the additional learning needs (ALN) system between Sept 2021 and Aug 2022

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