



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Additional learning needs (ALN) transformation programme

What's changing?

We want to transform expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN).

To do so, we have developed the ALN transformation programme, which transforms the separate systems for special educational needs (SEN) in schools and learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in further education, to create a unified system for supporting learners from 0 to 25 with ALN.

The transformed system will:

- ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential
- improve the planning and delivery of support for learners from 0 to 25 with ALN, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process
- focus on the importance of identifying needs early and putting in place timely and effective interventions which are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes.

New legislation and statutory guidance is only one aspect, albeit a fundamental one, of the wider package of reforms needed. The ALN transformation programme also focuses on skills development for the education workforce, to deliver effective support to learners with ALN in the classroom, as well as easier access to specialist support, information and advice.

Why it's changing

We are 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.

Around 22 per cent of all learners at maintained schools in Wales have SEN. Overall the academic attainment of learners with SEN is poor compared to the rest of the learner population.

Under the new system, planning will be flexible and responsive, our professionals will be skilled and confident in identifying needs and deploying strategies to help learners overcome their barriers to learning, and the learner will be at the centre of everything we do.

How it's changing

In order to effectively implement, support transition and deliver the new system, the ALN transformation programme will be delivered through the following five themes.



1. Legislation and statutory guidance

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 12 December 2017 and became an Act on 24 January 2018 after receiving Royal Assent. This will create the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, through a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting in place effective support and monitoring, and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes.

The Act will be supported by:

- **regulations** – secondary legislation where further detail is required
- **an ALN Code** – statutory guidance and mandatory requirements to help people and organisations work within the law.

The 11 aims of the Act



1. **The introduction of the term 'additional learning needs (ALN)'**
The Act replaces the terms 'special educational needs (SEN)' and 'learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD)' with the new term 'additional learning needs (ALN)'.



2. **A 0 to 25 age range**
There will be a single legislative system relating to the support given to children and young people aged between 0 to 25 years who have ALN. This is instead of the two separate systems currently operating to support children and young people of compulsory school age who have SEN, and young people in further education who have LDD.



3. **A unified plan**
The Act creates a single statutory plan (the individual development plan (IDP)) to replace the existing variety of statutory and non-statutory SEN or LDD plans for learners in schools and further education.



4. **Increased participation of children and young people**
The Act requires that learners' views should always be considered as part of the planning process, along with those of their parents/carers. It is imperative that children and young people see the planning process as something which is done with them rather than to them.



5. **High aspirations and improved outcomes**
The emphasis of IDPs will be on making provision that delivers tangible outcomes that contribute in a meaningful way to the child or young person's achievement of their full potential.



6. **A simpler and less adversarial system**
The process of producing and revising an IDP should be much simpler than is currently the case with statements of SEN.



7. **Increased collaboration**
The new system encourages improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies, which are essential to ensuring that needs are identified early and the right support is put in place to enable children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.



8. **Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution**

The new system focuses on ensuring that where disagreements occur about an IDP or the provision it contains, the matter is considered and resolved at the most local level possible.



9. **Clear and consistent rights of appeal**

Where disagreements about the contents of an IDP cannot be resolved at the local level, the Act ensures that children and young people entitled to an IDP (and their parents/carers in the case of those that are under 16 years) have a right of appeal to a tribunal.



10. **The ALN Code**

The ALN Code will provide a set of clear, legally enforceable parameters within which local authorities and those other organisations responsible for the delivery of services for children and young people with ALN, must act.



11. **A bilingual system**

The Act requires that services must consider whether a child or young person needs additional learning provision in Welsh. If they do, this must be documented in the IDP and 'all reasonable steps' must be taken to secure the provision in Welsh.



2. Workforce development

This is a programme of skills development for education practitioners focused at three levels.

- **Core skills development** for all practitioners to deliver the new ALN system. This includes the roll-out of person-centred practice, which is a central aspect of our new approach, across all education settings/schools. We provided a two-year funding grant to local authorities and further education institutions (FEIs) for developing person-centred practice skills across the workforce.
- **Advanced skills development** through the development of the role of additional learning needs coordinators (ALNCos), who will replace current special educational needs coordinators (SENCos).
- **Specialist skills development** through funding to support post-graduate training for local authority-provided specialist support services available to education settings/schools, e.g. educational psychologists and teachers of the visually or hearing impaired.



3. Implementation/transition support

To ensure successful and consistent implementation of the new system, we have been helping services to prepare for the changes ahead and to develop closer multi-agency and cross-sector working practices, including the following.

Delivered

- **ALN Innovation Funding:** for regional partnership projects between local authorities; schools; FEIs; specialist providers; health services; social services; the early years sector; and the third sector.
- **ALN Strategic Implementation Group:** a joint working group between Welsh Government and local authorities, local health boards and the further education sector. The group considered practical solutions and provided advice and recommendations to the Welsh Government to support implementation of the ALN transformation programme.

In progress

- **Readiness, compliance, and impact monitoring and evaluation:** to ensure that implementation of the Act is monitored closely, that issues are effectively addressed for the benefit of children and young people, and that best practice is being identified and shared across Wales. The approach will consider implementation in stages.
 - **Readiness:** assessing the extent to which local authorities and other delivery agents are prepared for the changes ahead.
 - **Compliance:** how effectively they are complying with the new legislative requirements once they take effect.
 - **Impact:** how and the extent to which the changes are embedding and making an impact on outcomes for learners.
- **ALN Transformation Leads:** a team of five transformation leads who provide advice, support and challenge to local authorities, FEIs and other delivery partners in preparing for and managing transition to the new ALN system.
- **ALN Transformation Grants:** funding to support delivery partners (including local authorities, FEIs, local health boards, the Tribunal and Estyn) to prepare for transition to the new system.
- **ALN Implementation Guide:** a detailed implementation guide to explain the timescales for roll-out of IDPs to each cohort of learners in the phased approach, information on post-16 learners, and learners in specific circumstances.



4. Awareness raising

- Interactive materials to help all those in the system understand the evidence for best practice, what can be expected from interventions, the interventions that are likely to be most effective, and the role of professionals to help ensure realistic expectations and effective deployment of resources.
- Awareness-raising activities in preparation for implementation of the transformed system, focusing on engaging stakeholders about their new legislative duties, and explaining and promoting the system and the rights it confers to children, their parents/carers and young people.



5. Supporting policy

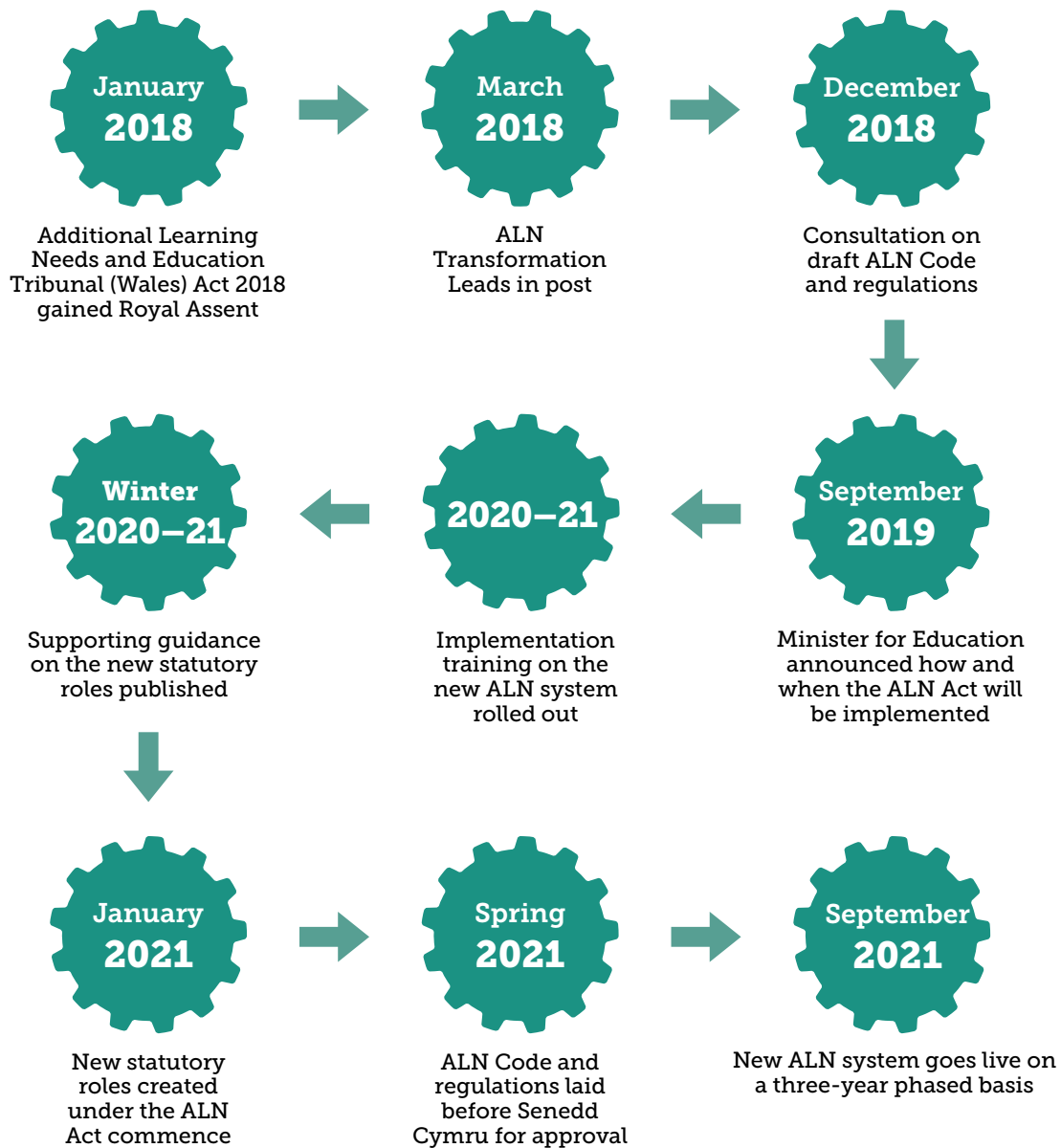
- As we move into the implementation phase, we will continue to ensure the existing special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) system operates smoothly until the new ALN system comes into effect.
- Local authorities and all those who work with children and young people with SEN must ensure that they continue to comply with the duties placed upon them by the Education Act 1996. They must also continue to have regard to the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales (2004)* (gov.wales/special-educational-needs-code-practice)

When it's changing

In 2018, the draft ALN Code and regulations which support the Act were consulted on. The Welsh Government intends to lay the Code and regulations before Senedd Cymru for approval in spring 2021. To accompany the commencement of the statutory roles in January 2021, regulations will be laid in relation to the ALNCo role, together with guidance on all three statutory roles created under the Act. The guidance will include text from the aspects of the Code related to these roles and will clarify their responsibilities. The guidance and regulations will be informed by the responses to the consultation on the draft ALN Code and the ALNCo role regulations.

Implementation training will be rolled out in 2020 and 2021, and the new ALN system is expected to go live in September 2021. The implementation period will last three years until summer 2024, during which time existing statements of SEN, individual education plans, and learning and skills plans will be converted into individual development plans (IDPs). This will be done in a mandatory phased approach on the basis of particular age-based cohorts. During this time, the ALN system will operate in parallel to the SEN system.

ALN implementation timeline



Find out more

Online

www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-transformation-programme

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