Easy Read

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

A guide about the rights of children, their parents and young people under the additional learning needs (ALN) system

ADDYSG CYMRU
EDUCATION WALES
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July 2026

How to use this document

This is an Easy Read version of: **A guide about the rights of children, their parents and young people under the additional learning needs (ALN) system.**

You may still need support to read it. You can ask someone you know to help you.

Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government.** For more information contact:

Email: additionallearningneedsbranch@gov.wales

Easy Read Wales made this Easy Read document.
Click here to tell us what you think.

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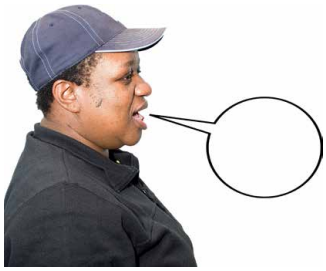
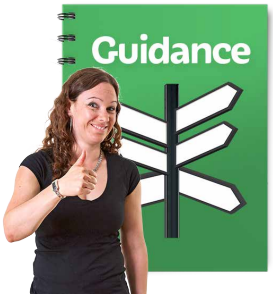
About this guide

In Wales, there is a system to help children and young people who need extra support to learn.



This support is called the additional learning needs system. We call this the ALN system for short.



This Easy Read guide explains the rights of children, their parents and carers, and young people in the ALN system.

This guide explains:

- What to do if you disagree with decisions made by a nursery, school, college or the local council.

- What support is available through the ALN system.

In this guide, when we say **parent** it also means any person who is responsible for a child. Or anyone who has care of a child.

What the ALN system is

The ALN system in Wales helps children and young people who need extra support to learn.

It makes sure they get the right help so they can do their best.

You can find more information about the ALN system here: gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-aln-parent-and-carers-toolkit

Rights under the ALN system

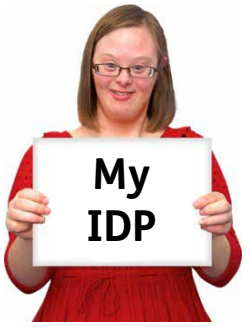
Children have rights under the ALN system. Most of these rights also apply to their parents.

If a child is 16 years old, they are called a young person. A young person has the right to make decisions about their ALN support.

This means they must say yes and agree before decisions are made.

Parents do not have the same rights after the child becomes a young person.

The rights of children and young people



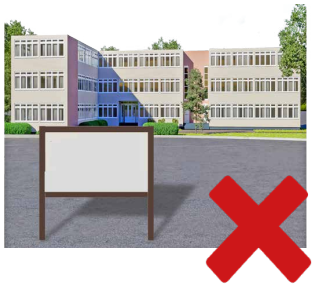
1. If they have ALN, they will have an **individual development plan**. This is also called an **IDP**. The **IDP** shows how they will be supported.

2. They can challenge decisions they do not agree with.

3. They can ask their local council to look again at decisions made by a nursery or school.

4. They can ask for an advocate. This is someone who will speak up on their behalf.

5. They can appeal to the **Education Tribunal for Wales** about some decisions. It is also called the **ETW**.



The Tribunal is independent. This means it is separate from the people who made the decision.

The Tribunal listens to everyone, looks at the information, and decides what should happen next.

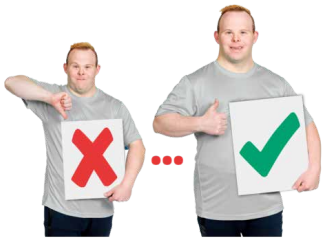
The individual development plan

What the IDP includes

The IDP will say:

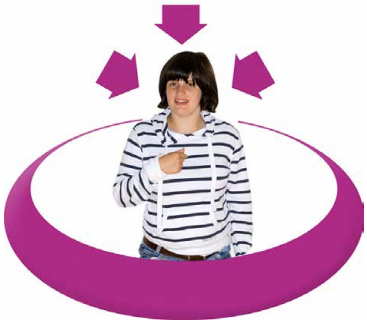
- The ALN a child or young person has.

- The support they need. This is sometimes called additional learning provision.



- The difference the support should make.

- Details about their support.



Every IDP is different. It is based on the needs of the child or young person.

Reviewing the IDP

The IDP must be reviewed every 12 months. It can be reviewed earlier if needed.

How the IDP is made

The IDP should be made using a person-centred approach.

This means putting the child or young person first. It means people work together to think about what support the child or young person needs.

Timings for the IDP

Usually, a school will write an IDP within 35 school days. This starts when the school finds out the child has ALN.

Usually, a college will write the IDP within 35 term days. Term days are the days when the college is open for students.

This starts when the college finds out the young person has ALN.

Usually, a local council has 12 weeks to write an IDP.

Getting a copy of the IDP

A copy of the IDP must be given to you. You must also be given information about what to do if you do not agree with it.

If you disagree with decisions

If you disagree with decisions made, you can challenge them.

You can speak to the school's **ALN co-ordinator** first. They are also called an **ALNCo**. An ALNCo helps arrange support for children with ALN.

If you still disagree you can talk to your local council. It is good to put it in writing if you can. Give them all the information they may need.

Ask the nursery or school to give you information about how to contact your local council.

The local council will talk to the nursery or school and collect information. The local council will then make a decision.

7 weeks

The local council has 7 weeks to make its decision.

Getting support to speak up

An advocate is someone who speaks up for another person. They can help people share their views and wishes.

Children have the right to an advocate if they need one.

Or sometimes people ask a friend or family member to speak up for them.

An advocate can help with dealing with disputes and appeals.

The local council can give you information about advocates.

Education Tribunal for Wales

You can find more information on the Education Tribunal for Wales website here: educationtribunal.gov.wales

The Tribunal deals with appeals about some ALN decisions. An appeal means asking for a decision to be looked at again.

A child, their parent or young person can appeal against some things on their IDP.

You have 8 weeks to appeal. This starts from the date on the local council letter.

Dispute Resolution Service

You can also use the local council's Dispute Resolution Service. This is an independent service that helps resolve issues about ALN.

16 weeks

If you use this service, you have 16 weeks from the date on the local council letter.

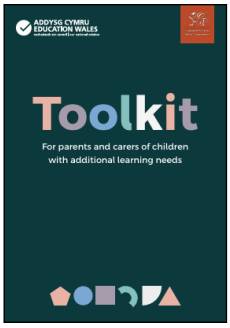
You can find more information from your local council or on their website.

What support is available

The local council must give you information about the ALN system.

You can find information about support from your local council here: gov.wales/get-help-additional-learning-needs-your-local-authority

You can also get support and information from the school or college or on their website.



There is also advice and support in our Toolkit for parents and carers of children with ALN.

Complaints and concerns

If you are unhappy with your NHS care or treatment, you can tell someone. You can find more information about this here: Listening to People.

Try to talk to the staff involved as soon as you can. They may be able to sort out the problem straight away.

If this does not help, you can contact the complaints team at your health board or NHS trust here: gov.wales/nhs-wales-complaints-and-concerns-putting-things-right

Getting help from a case friend

Some children or young people may need help to understand their rights under the ALN system. A case friend can:

- Speak up for them.
- Support them to make decisions.
- Help them understand more about ALN.
- Make an appeal to the Education Tribunal for Wales.

You or your child can ask Education Tribunal for Wales for a case friend.

More information

You can find out more about the ALN system on our website: gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-aln-parent-and-carers-toolkit

You can contact the ALN branch in the Welsh Government:

By email:

additionallearningneedsbranch@gov.wales

By writing to them:

ALN Branch
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Useful links

- Additional learning needs: guidance for parents and carers page

  This page helps parents and carers understand the ALN system and the support available.

- The Education Tribunal for Wales

  This organisation makes decisions on appeals about ALN and claims of disability discrimination in schools.

- Family Information Services

  These services give free support and advice for families, including additional needs support.

- Neurodivergence Wales

  This service helps people understand neurodivergence. They provide free information, training and resources.

Neurodivergence means some people's brains work in different ways, such as people with autism and ADHD.

- Learning Disability Wales

  This is a national charity representing the learning disability sector in Wales.

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