



Additional Learning Needs Policy Expectations

ADOPTED ON : 02 / 12 / 25

Signed by the Chair of Governors

Article 28:

You have a right to education.

Article 29:

Education must promote your rights and help you fully develop your skills and talents.

Neath Port Talbot Additional Learning Needs 'Expectations' Document

Revised January 2025

This document will outline the expectations placed upon schools and the Local Authority in relation to supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs under the new legislative framework, Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021

Introduction

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales (ALNET) 2018 Act provides new legislation for supporting children and young people with ALN, and is accompanied by a mandatory Code. The aim of the new approach, as stated in the Code is as follows:

‘To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all children and young people are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.’

The new statutory framework is underpinned by the following key principles and aims:

A rights-based approach where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, young person and their parents / carers are central to the planning and provision of support; and the child, young person and their parents / carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the decision-making processes. This can be achieved through the implementation of Person Centred Practice (PCP).

Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning where needs are identified and provision put in place at the earliest opportunity.

Collaboration where services work together to ensure ALN are identified early, and appropriate co-ordinated support is put in place to enable children and young people to achieve positive expectations, experiences and outcomes.

Inclusive education which supports full participation in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN.

A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver Additional Learning Provision (ALP) in Welsh.

What is the purpose of this guidance?

Under the new ALN system, every Local Authority (LA) has a duty to review the arrangements made by schools to meet the needs of children and young people with ALN. This is to ensure that the overall provision available is sufficient to meet need. Therefore, the purpose of this guidance is to support schools in understanding:

- What Neath Port Talbot Local Authority are expected to review;
- What is expected of mainstream schools in meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN in Neath Port Talbot;
- What is the Neath Port Talbot Local Authority offer in terms of supporting schools in meeting their statutory duties under the new legislation.

Expectations on Neath Port Talbot LA

Local Authorities, in exercising their functions under Part 2 of the Act in relation to a child of compulsory school age who should be educated in a school, must secure that the child is educated in a mainstream maintained school, namely, a maintained school which is not a special school or a Learning Support Centre (LSC). This reflects the principle that mainstream education will be in the best interests of the child or young person in most cases. The exceptions to these are limited ([Section 51 of the Act](#)).

As a result, Neath Port Talbot LA is expected to have a view on the extent to which the following are available in the maintained schools in its area:

- high quality, differentiated teaching;
- targeted intervention and support;
- effective systems for monitoring the progress and achievement of children and young people with ALN and their inclusion in the everyday life of the school;
- arrangements for involving LA and wider support service specialists in cases where it is appropriate to do so;

- arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of interventions used to support children and young people with ALN and the skills and expertise of staff;
- arrangements for involving children and young people and parents/carers at every stage. ([Section 7.10 of the Code](#))

In order to establish a clear picture of the capacity and effectiveness of provision for children and young people with ALN, the Inclusion Service, in partnership with Education Support Officers (ESOs), will work collaboratively with schools to review whether local arrangements are sufficient to meet need.

Neath Port Talbot Inclusion Service has developed a Consultation Offer of Support which is available to all schools, including mainstream, Learning Support Centres (LSCs) and Special Schools. Furthermore, a comprehensive training programme is offered to all schools across the LA, which is reviewed and revised on an annual basis, in line with need.

It is also recognised that Neath Port Talbot LA may need to review its existing funding mechanism for schools in relation to ALN, as the new statutory framework becomes embedded.

Expectations on Schools

Every school should expect, in exercising its functions under the ALNET Act, to take all reasonable steps to secure provision to meet the needs of children and young people with ALN and to adhere to its underlying principle of [inclusive education](#).

Successful inclusive education is a combination of effective school leadership, providing the conditions for an inclusive and innovative environment to flourish, along with teachers having the right skills and knowledge to create inclusive classrooms. The role of the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) is critical in ensuring the strategic development of inclusive practices within a school and plays an important role in advising on and contributing to the broader support provided within the education setting, as well as the professional learning for other staff members. It is for this reason that the

ALNCo is expected to be highly qualified and to actively undertake training to support their own Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

It is also expected that the ALNCo forms part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and is provided with sufficient time and resource to undertake their responsibilities effectively. However, the designation of an ALNCo does not remove the responsibilities of the wider workforce and all staff who work with children and young people with ALN have a responsibility for ensuring that their learners' needs are identified and provided for ([Section 8.4 of the Code](#)).

Inclusive pedagogy places emphasis on the view that teachers teach all children in a positive, inclusive environment, ensuring that every learner feels valued, respected, nurtured and has a sense of belonging. There is a shared understanding that children will progress at different rates and, as a result, there cannot be a 'one size fits all' approach to teaching. This means that every child, no matter what their barrier to learning is, has equal access to learning opportunities to succeed.

Support in developing inclusive pedagogy is available to all staff in Neath Port Talbot through regular advice and consultation opportunities with Inclusion Service staff, the Inclusion Service Training Menu and support provided by Education Support Officers. There are also additional opportunities provided by wider partners, such as Swansea Bay University Health Board, as well as the professional learning offer from Welsh Government and the regional training resources held within Y Storfa on the Hwb digital platform. All teaching practitioners who are involved in teaching and supporting learners with ALN will be expected to access this support regardless of previous experience, qualifications or the education setting in which they are based. As outlined in the Code:

Teaching practitioners have responsibility for their own professional learning and development; in addition, professional learning requirements ought to be identified as part of the education setting's planning process and practitioners' professional learning profiles.

For most children, their needs will be met through school, utilising **Inclusive Learning Provision (ILP)**. This includes high quality teaching and learning opportunities, differentiation and standard targeted interventions. Where ALN is identified that requires Additional Learning Provision (ALP) an Individual Development Plan (IDP) will be put in place. Again for most pupils, this IDP will be maintained by the school.

However, in some cases, the needs of the children will be over and above what could be reasonably expected to be provided by school, and the LA will adopt the IDP (please refer to the Neath Port Talbot Additional Learning Needs ‘Principles’ Document).



Degree of complexity – can move up or down depending on individual learner needs



Effective inclusive whole-school practice with high quality routine teaching to meet individual learner needs. Advice and support in developing whole-school capacity can be sought from external agencies as appropriate.



ALN identified, and school maintained IDP in place. Advice and guidance can be sought from external agencies to support schools in meeting the needs of individual learners. In some instances, external agencies may be directly involved with individual learners.



An LA maintained IDP is required to support the school in securing the additional learning provision to meet the needs of individual learners.

Why is there a need to improve inclusive practice in schools?

As part of the wider reform agenda, the Curriculum in Wales is changing, and the Welsh Government has set out a clear statement of what is important in delivering a broad and balanced education for all learners. It sets out expectations for schools that the curriculum, built around four core purposes is accessible to **all** children and young people.

Any sustainable whole-school systemic change is dependent on creating a joint understanding and shared language of what inclusive education looks like in schools.

Successful inclusive education is a combination of effective school leadership providing the conditions for an inclusive and innovative environment to flourish, along with teachers having the right skills and knowledge to create inclusive classrooms. Therefore, a sensible place to start is ensuring that professional learning opportunities currently exist in school. This will support staff in fulfilling their professional responsibility to include all learners in their classroom.

Evidence shows that certain groups of children and young people are more vulnerable to underachievement and marginalisation. These pupils are more at risk of disengagement and social exclusion. They have more diverse needs and potentially may need more support than their peer group. This will necessitate a different way of working with an explicit focus on learning and teaching that influences a broader range of cognitive, social and emotional outcomes for children and young people.

Statutory Duties

As well as being a moral purpose for schools, inclusive practices are explicitly supported by law and the corresponding statutory duties of the Equality Act Wales (2010), the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales (2018) Act and the accompanying Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021.

The Equality Act (2010) mandates schools to make reasonable adjustments and take positive actions for children and young people with protected characteristics to ensure equal access to education provision. It goes beyond the formal education provided, covering all school activities such as extra-

curricular and leisure activities, afterschool and homework clubs, sports activities and school trips, as well as school facilities such as libraries and IT facilities.

The reasonable adjustments duty is an anticipatory and continuing one. This means that a school should not wait until it has learners with a learning difficulty or disability to make the necessary adjustments and should plan ahead through the mandatory *Strategic Equalities Plan*. It is expected that schools take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of particular pupil groups, known as positive actions provisions, and publish its intentions through its *Accessibility Plan*. It is recommended that schools consult widely with appropriate stakeholders, including LA specialists and health professionals, to create this.

The ALNET Act makes it clear that schools must make sure that children or young people identified with ALN are included in all activities of the school. To succeed in doing so, the accompanying statutory Code makes it clear that a whole-school approach to improvement is critical.

The ALN system relies on the knowledge and experience of teaching staff to identify ways of providing appropriate access to the curriculum for every child and young person. Meeting the needs of learners with ALN ought to be part of a whole school or institution approach to school or institution improvement. The key to this lies in the teaching staff's knowledge of each child and young person's skills and abilities. Consequently, improvements in the teaching and learning of children and young people with ALN cannot be isolated from improvements in the teaching and learning for children and young people across a school ... as a whole.

Inclusive Learning Provision

Every school will be expected to develop their Inclusive Learning Provision, which will be available for all pupils, including those with ALN. This will form the foundation for all other support or provision in schools and includes:

- 1) *Good Teaching, Learning and Differentiation.*
- 2) *Targeted teaching strategies to support each area of need.*
- 3) *Standard targeted short-term/ catch-up interventions.*

Good Teaching, Learning and Differentiation.

Differentiation is a cornerstone of day-to-day Inclusive Learning Provision. Differentiation has a broad meaning, because it includes any way in which modifications are made to the content, presentation, environment or expectations of teaching and learning. It can range from something which has been carefully planned, for example a specific activity, but it can also be something that occurs in the moment, such as a pupil's response to teaching. Differentiation can occur on many levels; it can be resource-intensive, for example, using a Teaching Assistant to support a particular pupil, or it can be low-key and inexpensive, such as rephrasing a question. Crucially though, effective teachers ensure that differentiation is continuous and permeates all aspects of the lesson and is not a one-off activity, such as the use of a bespoke worksheet or specific materials. Differentiation should be integral to all lessons.

To ensure good teaching and learning takes place and the needs of all learners within the classroom are met, it is also critical that the organisation of the learning environment itself is given careful thought and planning. For example:

- Does the seating plan take into account left-right handedness, sensory or physical needs, friendship or peer groups?
- Is the environment obstacle free and is there sufficient space for those learners who have physical/ mobility and sensory needs?
- Do all learners have easy access to materials and equipment, which will enable them to fully engage in their learning? This could include left- and right-handed equipment; reading rulers; coloured overlays; communication aids; emotional check-in systems; fiddle toys; visual timers; clear, well-contrasted, clutter-free text worksheets; desk top

versions of key vocabulary word banks; and numeracy support i.e. calculators, number lines etc...

Targeted teaching strategies to support each area of need.

Where there is good teaching and learning, some pupils may start to display emerging needs or have an identified need which requires targeted strategies within the classroom. The first response to inadequate progress would often be teaching which is targeted at a learner's areas of weakness.

Staff will be expected to work in a person-centred way, with the pupil and the parents to trial and evaluate which strategies best support the pupil. The impact evidence of these targeted strategies will inform future person-centred planning and decision-making processes.

Standard targeted short-term/ catch up interventions.

Where there is good teaching and learning, and targeted strategies implemented, some pupils may also be identified to require standard targeted short-term/ catch-up interventions. These are interventions that are generally made available for all children and young people of the same age and which help identify emerging needs and/or support them to make adequate progress. These are a fundamental element of high-quality, but routine teaching, and will support different emerging needs, or areas of identified needs, in the following areas:

- **Cognition & Learning**- some children and young people who demonstrate features of moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, may require specific programmes to aid progress in cognition and learning. Some of these children and young people may have associated sensory, physical and behavioural difficulties.

- **Communication and Interaction**- some children and young people might experience difficulty in one, some, or all aspects of speech, language and communication. This area of need may encompass children and young people with speech and language delay, impairments or disorders, specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, hearing impairment and those who demonstrate features within the autistic spectrum; it may also encompass some children and young people with moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties. The range of need will include those for whom language and communication difficulties are the result of a permanent sensory or physical impairment.
- **Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development** - some children and young people will demonstrate features of emotional and behavioural difficulties. They may be withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive or lacking concentration; they may have under-developed social skills; or present challenging behaviours.
- **Sensory and/or Physical**- this area of need includes the wide spectrum of sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment through to lesser levels of loss, which may only be temporary. Physical impairments may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes that only require appropriate access to educational facilities and equipment. Others may lead to more complex learning and social needs; some children and young people will have multi-sensory difficulties some with associated physical difficulties.

For some children and young people, their identified need will fit clearly into one of these areas, but some have needs that span two or more areas, whereas for others the precise nature of their needs may not be clear at the outset. Consequently, it is important to conduct detailed individual assessment(s) to ascertain an accurate understanding of any barriers to learning. Improving provision and reviewing its effectiveness in securing progress, should be an integral part of an assessment that informs teaching and learning.

Where additional support is needed to develop school practice, all schools and settings in Neath Port Talbot have access to the Local Offer of Support, from the LA and its wider partners, including NHS Health services, for advice on early identification and a wide range of interventions to address emerging needs.

Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

Provision, which is in addition to or different from what is normally made available in a mainstream school, is considered Additional Learning Provision. ALP will of course be an enhancement of what is available at an inclusive level and will build on highly effective practices in the first place.

In order to have a sustained impact on learning, any ALP needs to be related to whole class teaching. It should not be left to the pupil to make the links between the content of the intervention and the curriculum covered back in the classroom. Given that pupils with ALN are often those who find accessing learning difficult, the integration of the intervention with the mainstream curriculum is vital. Furthermore, the impact of the ALP will need to be monitored in terms of how effective it has been in addressing any skill deficit. Choosing the right ALP for the child and their ALN is of crucial importance.

It is reasonable to expect a school to provide specific strategies and adult-led interventions to address typical barriers to learning. It would make life much easier if it were possible to prescribe a set of evidence-based ALP for every school. However, the reality is much more complex than that, as all schools will need to provide the ALP which specifically addresses the identified barriers to learning for its own children and young people. The ALP that a school provides will be unique, contextual and will reflect the needs of its own community.

Depending upon the school context (size, location, budget), the driving force for improving ALP will be different for each school. For example, this could include a change to current or future school cohorts; the need to address underperformance of different ALN groups; access to expertise in different ways; or a decision to take a fresh look at what is happening in school. Consequently, it will be the role of the ALNCo, in conjunction with the SLT and the support of the LA, to advise, support and challenge the systems and processes of the education setting to establish what educational provision needs to be in place to support their learners with ALN.

Annual LA 'Plan and Review' facilitate the above process, providing schools with the opportunity to reflect on their current level of ALN, the ALP in place, and what needs to be done to further improve outcomes and progress for learners with ALN. In addition, there is also an ALN Self-Evaluation Framework available to schools, based on the *ESTYN Supplementary Guidance: Additional Learning Needs Autumn 2024*, which can be used to support schools in evaluating specific aspects of their own provision.

Although it is not possible, and neither should it be, to dictate to schools what and how much ALP should be provided, it is possible to agree on minimum standards. Every school should expect, in exercising its functions under the ALNET Act and adhering to its underlying principle of inclusive education, to take all reasonable steps to secure provision which will remove barriers to learning.

Where a school considers the need to increase its capacity to provide ALP to remove barriers to learning, it will have access to a range of specialist support through the LA's Local Offer of Support and its wider partners, including health professionals.

Roles and Responsibilities in school

Role of the Governing Body

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales (2018) Act, specifies that the Governing Body has overall responsibility for deciding whether or not children and young people have ALN and where relevant, to prepare and maintain the IDP.

Where it is brought to the attention of, or otherwise appears to, the governing body of a maintained school in Wales that a child or young person who is a registered pupil at the school may have additional learning needs, it must decide whether the child or young person has additional learning needs.

If a governing body decides under section 11 that a child or young person has additional learning needs, it must:

a) prepare an individual development plan for him or her, unless any of the circumstances in subsection (2) apply, and

b) maintain the plan, unless the circumstances in paragraph (b) or (d) of subsection (2) apply. (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales Act 2018)

This responsibility, as is the case with most Governing Body functions should be carried out with the aim of taking a broadly strategic role. A strategic role means that the Governing Body decides how they want the school to carry through that responsibility and establishes a strategic framework for making this happen.

The Headteacher and other members of the school's leadership team have actual responsibility for the management and direction of the school, working within the strategic framework established by the Governing Body. The Headteacher has direct responsibility for the leadership, management, internal organisation and control of the school. The Headteacher also advises upon the Governing Body's strategic framework in addition to implementing it.

In this way, the Governing Body will meet its responsibility for deciding whether children and young people have ALN or not, by establishing a strategic framework to ensure that all learners with ALN are identified and ALP is provided to meet their needs. This will then be outlined within an IDP. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will develop the systems which will identify those learners as having ALN and will put ALN in place as required. In this endeavour, the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will shape the school's ILP, develop Person Centred Practice and make arrangements for targeted interventions and specialist input within their setting. The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body upon the progress of these developments.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for implementing the ALNET (Wales) 2018 Act and the accompanying Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, playing a pivotal role in driving cultural change and curriculum development. Key to this is supporting the ALNCo in engaging the whole teaching community and ensuring everyone understands that legislative reform is about whole school improvement. In order to achieve this, the ALNCo will be empowered to influence strategic decisions about ALN.

The Headteacher drives the understanding that all teachers and education staff are educators of children and young people with ALN, and the ALNCo is the individual, who at a strategic level, ensures the needs of all learners with ALN within the education setting are met.

The Headteacher must ensure that the ALNCo forms part of the senior leadership team, or has a clear line of communication to it. This will support the education setting to plan, manage and deliver its duties and responsibilities in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN.

Role of the ALNCo

All mainstream maintained schools in Wales must designate a person who will have responsibility for co-ordinating provision for learners of ALN. That person is known as the Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, or ALNCo. The ALNCo is the individual who at strategic level ensures the needs of all learners with ALN are identified and met.

Critical to achieving the above is the effective deployment of staff, ensuring they are well-supported with an appropriate and ongoing professional learning offer, as well as the sufficient allocation of resources and provision of effective ALP, which can be demonstrated/ evidenced in terms of impact on learner progress. As a result, the ALNCo should be actively involved in decisions around the funding provision for learners with ALN.

The ALNCo is not expected to be directly involved with the day-to-day process of supporting every learner with ALN; this is the class teacher's responsibility.

All staff who work with children and young people with ALN have a responsibility for ensuring that their needs are identified and met.

Embedding a Person Centred Approach

Embedding parental and pupil involvement is based on extensive evidence that greater parental and pupil involvement has a dramatic impact on progression, attainment and wider outcomes, as well as improved attendance and behaviour. This is especially relevant for children and young people with ALN, who are already vulnerable pupils.

As a result, the Code makes explicit that:

‘A person exercising functions under the Act, which relate to an individual child or young person, must have regard to:

A) the views, wishes and feelings of the child and the child’s parent, or the young person;

B) the importance of the child and the child’s parent or the young person participating as fully as possible in decisions relating to the exercise of the function concerned; and

C) the importance of the child and child’s parent or young person being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions.

This duty reflects the ethos of Person Centred Practice. ‘

A range of training and resources is available both locally, regionally and nationally to support practitioners in using Person Centred Practices (PCP).

All schools in Neath Port Talbot will have received and will continue to receive ongoing training in PCP and Outcomes. The LA has developed a wealth of tools and resources that are available to schools to fulfil their responsibilities as outlined in the Code in relation to adopting a person centred approach. Key to the Neath Port Talbot decision making process is the role of the Person Centred Review (see the Neath Port Talbot ALN ‘Principles’ Document).

Transition

Partners have a critical role in promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people and helping them reach their full potential. They should therefore be committed to work in a manner aligned with the Principles below:

- Early planning.
- Multi agency collaboration.
- Good quality communication.
- Promote inclusion.

All of the above should be underpinned by a Person Centred approach.

It is important that transition at key stages must:

- Be developmentally appropriate and reflect the maturity, cognitive abilities, social and personal circumstances, and communication needs of the child and young person;
- Capture the holistic needs of the child and young person as they progress through their education and move into the future; and
- Be aspirational in terms of the child and young person's future goals and the outcomes that matter to them.

To ensure a smooth transition, when a child or young person is at a critical stage in their education, the relevant body with responsibilities for preparing, considering and maintaining IDPs should plan for these changes well in advance. The Neath Port Talbot Inclusion Team is able to offer support and advice to schools and parents / carers in relation to facilitating key transitions for children and young people with ALN.

Consideration should be given to Children who are Looked After in managing transitions in conjunction with the Education Coordinator for Children who are Looked After (CLA).

