

Committee: **Executive Committee**
 Date of meeting: **Wednesday 15th December 2021**
 Report Subject: **Education Directorate – ALN Reform Update**
 Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member of Education, Cllr. Joanne Collins**
 Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director of Education, Lynn Phillips and Head of School Improvement and Inclusion, Luisa Munro-Morris**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18/11/2021	30.11.21			30/11/2021	15.12.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Executive Committee with an overview of the progress made against ALN reform and associated policy renewal.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Additional Learning Needs Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, makes provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). This replaces existing legislation surrounding special educational needs (SEN). The LA has a duty to review the arrangements made by the authority and the governing bodies of maintained schools in its area for children and young people with additional learning needs, having regard to the additional learning provision that may reasonably be arranged by others.
 - 2.2 Principles of the Act:
 - a) **A rights-based approach** where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, child's parents/carers or young person are central to planning and provision of support;
 - b) **Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning;**
 - c) **Collaboration** where all involved work together in the best interests of the child or young person;
 - d) **Inclusive education** supporting participation fully in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN; and,
 - e) **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh.
 - 2.3 **From 1st September 2021** the revised ALN system commenced for children of compulsory school age and below who are **newly identified** as having ALN (that is, those without already identified SEN, or are not awaiting or undergoing an SEN assessment).
 - 2.4 **From 1st January 2022** the ALN system will commence for children of compulsory school age and below who attend a maintained setting in: Nursery (N1 and N2), Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 and Year 10 who have special educational provision via early years' action/ early years' action plus or school action/school action plus.

2.5 Children who currently have special educational provision via a statement, are awaiting or are in the process of an SEN assessment, and those who are over compulsory school age, **will not be** included in the first year of implementation.

2.6 Children or their parents can request they move to the ALN system earlier than they are due to move to the ALN system. However, they will not be able to request a move to the new system **until 1st January 2022** (and onwards). The statementing process will cease for those captured by the Commencement Orders on December 31st 2021.

2.7 Regional Implementation Plan 2020/21

A Regional Implementation Plan 2020/21 for ALN reform is in place. Progress against this plan is monitored monthly by the Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead and SEWC ALN panel.

The strategic priorities in the Regional Implementation Plan for 2020/21 are:

1. Early Years
2. Schools
3. Post 16
4. Collaboration – SEWC, Health and Social Care

2.8 Update on Priority 1: Early Years (EY)

- 11 training modules have been developed regionally (specifically on ALN and Act/Code requirements) and this is available to all BG settings (maintained, non-maintained and child minders);
- Regional EYs steering group set up - sharing good practice and develop best practice.

2.9 Update on Priority 2: Schools

- Training offer 2021/22 available to all schools and all school staff;
- SEWC ALN Transformation network on HWB;
- Code process training and all resources, including leaflets for parents, developed;
- Implementation training guidance and all relevant resources available for all schools;
- Cluster lead ALNCos meet half-termly. Facilitate progress of their clusters on their action plans;
- BG ALNCos meet half-termly;
- School Development Plans have a specific action on ALN transformation, which is monitored and supported by the EAS;
- Removing Barriers to Learning matrix is available to all schools electronically - supports all teachers and teaching assistants to use the most appropriate strategies and resources to help every pupil make progress.

2.10 Update on Priority 3: Post 16

- LA Post 16 steering group- multi-agency including ABUHB and Social Care;
- Post 16 transition protocol developed;
- Principles and expectations work - LA/Colleges working together to support young people and ensure successful transitions.

2.11 Update on Priority 4: Collaboration

- Social Care - ALN leads meetings bi-monthly. Training and raising awareness has taken place and specific training for Children's teams e.g. Disability teams;
- Separate Health Implementation Plan;
- ALN champions meet monthly;
- Q and A sessions organised for ALNCOs monthly;
- Gwent Attachment Service delivered attachment training for schools;
- Statutory officers working together have developed Code process guidance and Removing Barriers to Learning matrix;
- SNAP CYMRU - regular parent forums and co-construction of parental leaflet;
- Regional Youth Forum - produced presentations to support other young people to understand the Act and their rights.

2.12 LA Implementation - Lead Organisation

Tredegar Comprehensive School (TCS) was approached in May 2021 by the LA to support with the realisation of the Regional Implementation Plan. It was agreed that the school would lead on Priority 2 for all mainstream settings across the LA.

2.13 Since September 2021, TCS has met with nearly all maintained schools across the LA, and engaged in high-quality professional dialogue with headteachers/SLT and ALNCOs. Following these initial discussions, TCS will now put in place relevant and tailored support for each school, in order to realise fully the implementation plans for mandated years by Summer 2022. A more comprehensive report can be found in Section 8 – ALN Education Transformation Summary.

2.14 The Council are well on track for implementing ALN reform. Where challenges for implementation have been identified, relevant training opportunities are being put in place for both senior leaders and ALNCOs. Further training will also be commissioned for Governors.

2.15 ALN Policy - Updates

A number of LA policies have been created or updated in line with the Act, please see section 8 (please note that where policies have been updated, updated parts are highlighted for ease of reference):

- Traveller School Attendance Guidance
- Pastoral Support Plan Guidance
- Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents
- Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables
- Hard to Place Protocol
- Exclusion Guidance
- Education Other Than at School Guidance
- Blaenau Gwent Policy for the Education of Children and Young People with Medical Needs
- Admission Guidance

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT and CLT. This report will also be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee on 30th November 2021, and any feedback will be presented verbally to the Executive.

Option 1: Members considers and accepts the report, associated documentation and proposed course of action.

Option 2: Members considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made to the associated documentation and proposed course of action.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 Education is a strategic priority and key to facilitating effective delivery of the Corporate Plan.
- 4.2 One of the objectives in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan is for every child to have the best start in life. Implementation of the Act will support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners 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.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

- Cost of translation of key documentation for schools.
- Posts to support the Act's implementation (ALN Officer and CLA ALN officer) that are currently supported through the WG ALN grant, could create a cost pressure for the Education Portfolio if the ALN Grant ceases next year. However, this is likely to be a component of WG's financial settlement arrangements.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

- The current delay in the publication of the WG implementation guidance is placing schools and LAs at risk. The new ALN system went live on September 1st and we have yet to receive WG guidance on which pupils are included during the first term of implementation and the subsequent remaining two terms of this academic year. Furthermore, schools and LAs need to understand the longer implementation programme in order that they can plan strategically. However, once the guidance is released relevant training for all schools and ALN leads will be put in place by the Regional Implementation Lead;
- There is lack of clarity regarding how implementation will be supported post March 31st 2022 as the ALN Transformation Lead post will cease at this point. Alternative support models are currently being explored with the other Inclusion leads from SEWC;
- Schools are engaged but some attendance at meetings has been affected by pressure placed on schools by Covid. To mitigate this risk, all training is

recorded and uploaded onto Hwb so that relevant staff can catch up with any missed training;

- Impact of lockdowns and interruptions to regular routines and learning of pupils, creating a rise in learning needs over academic year 2020/21 which will impact on schools and LA services in the short and long term – possibly leading to an over identification of pupils with ALN 2021/22. This situation will be monitored and schools will be supported by the Inclusion Service to support with both early and correct identification of learners with ALN;
- Large numbers of referrals to all ABUHB children's therapy services is causing anxiety as waiting lists are constantly growing and increasing COVID numbers may lead to pressures, which could impact negatively on collaborative working with ABUHB; The SEWC Inclusion group is working with ABUHB to continue to monitor this situation;
- Pressure of work on social care – steep rise regionally in numbers of CLA will have impact on workload with new Code requirements. The appointment of a CLA Officer in the ALN team will support the mitigation of this risk.

5.3 **Legal**

This report provides information relating to the Additional Learning Needs Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Education are in the process of mapping individual schools existing progress against the requirements of the Act, please see section 8 for further details on progress.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

There is a commitment from the Council and its schools to provide quality education for our children and young people to improve their life chances, this includes pupils with ALN.

6.3 **Involvement**

- Young people have been involved via the regional youth forum, the participation officers in each LA and via the Youth Service across SEWC;
- Parents have been engaged termly via SNAP facilitating local parent forums for each LA and Coleg Gwent;
- Partnership work with the EAS has led to the development of training and support for schools, GBs and ALNCOs;
- Governor training is delivered to all LAs;
- Termly newsletters for all headteachers and ALNCOs are produced by SEWC to update on progress.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term**

The Act has been partially implemented since September 2021. However, it is imperative that we now receive WG guidance on the Code to ensure that the Act is implemented correctly over the long term period.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The LA will continue to work closely with SEWC and different partners to ensure the best provision can be in place for all learners, particularly those identified as having an ALN.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The report outlines the significant amount of partnership working at a strategic and operational level. This has resulted in a strengthening of the working relationships between the Council, schools and other key partners.

6.7 **Integration**

The approach to ALN readiness has been based on partnership working with SEWC and the EAS.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Any physical works planned and undertaken within education settings are planned in order to take account of decarbonisation and reducing carbon emissions.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

An assessment will be carried out in relation to each priority area during the autumn-term review process.

6.9b **EqIA**

The application of EqIA's to each priority has been considered as part of the Regional Plan.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The report will be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and then subsequently through to the Executive Committee for monitoring purposes.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar Comprehensive – Evaluative Summary

Appendix 2 – Traveller School Attendance Guidance

Appendix 3 – Pastoral Support Plan Guidance

Appendix 4 – Policy for the Education of Pregnant School Girls and School Age Parents

Appendix 5 – Policy and Guidance for Schools on the Use of Reduced Timetables

Appendix 6 – Hard to Place Protocol

Appendix 7 – Exclusion Guidance

Appendix 8 – Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Policy

Appendix 9 – Policy for Education of Children and Young People with Medical Needs

Appendix 10 – Admission Guidance