

ALN STRATEGY

August 2022



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy

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1. Executive Summary

The Education Directorate's agreed purpose is to deliver 'Better Schools, Better Citizens and Better Communities' and the work of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy is fundamental in supporting our learners with identified needs. The ALN Strategy defines Blaenau Gwent Local Authority's approach, objectives and plans (within the context of current legislative changes) to support schools to meet the needs of children and young people with additional learning needs to overcome barriers and challenges to enable them to reach their full potential. Blaenau Gwent has a proportionately high-level of learners experiencing ALN, therefore, this strategic approach is of high importance.

The strategy sets out the Welsh national context for meeting the needs of all learners, as outlined by the Education in Wales: Our National Mission Action Plan 2017-21 and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. Both the plan and the Act advocate the need to work in partnership to ensure that all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential and that every learner has access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning. The duties placed on Local Authorities by the Act and the new Additional Learning Needs Code (2021) are highlighted.

The local context demonstrates how Blaenau Gwent's ALN Strategy is supported by the aims and objectives identified in wider local authority strategies. The holistic view that Blaenau Gwent Local Authority (LA) has taken to understand how key issues in children's early years, such as poverty and exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), can affect attainment is outlined. Within this context, the LA focus is on: improving the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners; early intervention; reducing the rates of exclusions (as these impact upon pupil attainment and outcomes); securing excellence in learner well-being; and ensuring that the LA is fully compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018.

Definitions of ALN and disability are provided. The principles underpinning the ALN system are discussed and the importance of including children and young people in decisions which affect them are highlighted, as this contributes to better outcomes for them.

The key partnerships with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services, schools and other educational settings are set out to emphasise the importance in facilitating high quality support and provision and developing the knowledge and skills of school staff to effectively support children with additional learning needs.

The roles and responsibilities of schools and early years settings (including the governing body, senior leadership team, additional learning needs coordinator and teachers) and the local authority with respect to the duty outlined in the Additional Learning Needs Act and Code to: identify whether a child or young person has additional learning needs, prepare, maintain and transfer an IDP, Partnership/Dispute resolution, Safeguarding and Monitoring, Evaluation and Review are highlighted.

2. Strategic Context

National Context

All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at settings, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners. We will strengthen partnership working to improve the early childhood experiences of children and ensure a widespread understanding of the importance of the first thousand days in a child's life. The reformed twenty-first century curriculum will help schools focus effectively on learner well-being, equity and excellence. Each learner must be respected and challenged to achieve the best that they are capable of, including our most able learners, while being supported to overcome barriers that inhibit their learning. Children and young people who have strong relationships and a positive sense of self – and who can understand and manage their own health and emotions – are in a better position to reach their full potential in the future.

Working in partnership, WG are determined that no challenge should prevent any learner from reaching their potential, including those learners who experience several Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

(Education in Wales: Our National Mission Action Plan 2017 – 21)

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.

There is a clear duty on local authorities to secure education at mainstream maintained schools, where possible. The power of local authorities to secure additional learning provision (ALP) at independent schools will be limited.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensure that all learners are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential. Every learner should have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

The Act places a range of duties on the local authorities in relation to additional learning needs (ALN) which can be grouped as follows;

- Specific duties in relation to individual learners (usually those in their area) such as duties to maintain Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for some learners (including learners who are dual registered and those with more complex needs).
- General duties – to support the functioning and effectiveness of the additional learning needs system – including the duty to provide information and advice and the duty to keep additional learning provision under review.
- Local authorities will be directly responsible for meeting the needs of children and young people with the most complex and/or severe needs, those who do not attend a maintained school or further education providers in Wales (including those below school age).

- To have due regard to the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a child or young person. (It provides guidance on actions local authorities and NHS bodies might consider taking when discharging these duties).

The new ALN Code imposes a duty on local authorities, early years settings, schools, providers and further education providers to determine whether children and young people aged 0-25 have additional learning needs (ALN), which calls for additional learning provision (ALP). Once a school or setting has decided that a child has additional learning needs (ALN), it must prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for that child. Where emerging needs are identified particularly in very young children this does not necessarily require an identification of an additional learning need but may require early intervention.

The Code sets out the general principles underpinning the additional learning needs system which are reflected in the 2018 Act.

- A rights-based approach where the views, wishes and feelings of the child or the child's parent(s)/carers are central to the planning and provision of support; and the child, child's parent are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the decision-making process.
- Early identification intervention and effective transition planning where needs are identified and provision put in place at the earliest opportunity, and transitions are planned in advance.
- Collaboration where all those involved in planning and providing support to children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) should work in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Inclusive education where children and young people are supported to participate fully in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach is taken to meeting the needs of learners with additional learning needs (ALN).
- A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh over time.

In following the additional learning needs legislation and guidance, the Local Authority will also be mindful of other relevant legislation and guidance such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Social Services and Wellbeing Act and The Equalities Act.

Blaenau Gwent - Local Context

This policy is supported by the aims and objectives identified in wider local authority policies and strategies including, amongst others, the BGCBC Education Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan, Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan, BG Council Well-being Objectives, Inclusion Equity and Diversity Strategy, Wellbeing Strategy, Education Other than at School (EOTAS) Strategy and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) strategy.

Objectives that relate to this includes those which aims to:

- Raise the standards of attainment;
- Support those who are not able to follow a traditional attainment path;
- Improve the learning environment;
- Improve skills for a digital age;
- Support learning that enables young and adult employment opportunities;
- Safeguard all children and young people in order to create a climate for learning, particularly for those most vulnerable.

Blaenau Gwent Local Authority takes a holistic view of education such as understanding issues in children's early years and aspects like poverty and how they can affect attainment. Much has been done to develop a multi-agency approach and learn from relevant research, such as our work on 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).

The Local Authority is committed to the delivery of statutory education for children and young people, alongside providing support and guidance to families to provide opportunities for those children and young people to achieve within their schools and communities. It provides opportunities for adults and young people to improve their life chances by gaining qualifications and supports them into sustainable employment.

The Education Directorate will focus on:

- Improving the provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups of learners.
- Early identification and intervention.
- Reducing the rates of exclusions, therefore impacting upon pupil attainment and outcomes.
- Securing excellence in learner well-being.
- Ensuring that the Local Authority is fully compliant with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act 2018.

Exceptionally, it is recognised that for a small minority of children and young people with severe and complex needs, alternative provision arrangements will need to be identified. Within the Local Authority (LA) there is a continuum of specialist provision that includes Pen-y-Cwm School and the River Centre 3 -16 Learning Community, and specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools. These facilities are appropriately resourced to meet the needs of children and young people with more significant additional learning needs.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council believes that for many children and young people the best place to undertake their education is in their local mainstream school. It is recognised that schools must respond to a diverse range of pupil need and they may require help and support from other agencies, including the Local Authority. There will be a small but significant group of children and young people who may be unable to be educated in school at a given point in their life. Where a child is not electively home educated, a key priority for the Local Authority is returning these children to school as soon as they are able to do so; therefore, Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) provision is not to be considered as a long term solution. The Local Authority's EOTAS policy and guidance provide further detail regarding the approach taken by the Local Authority in this area.

(A full list of specialist provision within the Blaenau Gwent County Borough is attached – Appendix 1)

3. Definitions

Additional Learning Needs

A child/young person is said to have 'additional learning needs' if they need more, or different, support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to children of the same age. Children might need extra help to be able to take part in school or get the most from their education.

Key questions:

- Does the child have significantly greater difficulty in learning than many others of the same age?
- Does the child have a disability (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) which prevents or hinders the child from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained school or mainstream further education providers?

In the early years, providers will focus on early intervention to support emerging needs thus supporting children where possible to have their needs met in mainstream alongside their peers. In some instances, it may be appropriate for a child in the early years to have an individual plan. In nearly all cases the maintained school will be responsible for deciding whether a child has additional learning needs (ALN) and for preparing and maintaining an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Identifying whether a child may have additional learning needs (ALN) and the subsequent decision as to whether the child has additional learning needs and if so, what those additional learning needs are, needs to be based on evidence; this evidence might come from staff within the early years setting, school or further education provider, other services which have been involved with the child or young person, it might also come from the child, their parents or the young person themselves.

Disability

According to legislation, children and young people are considered to be disabled if they are:

“blind, deaf or dumb or suffer[s] from a mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed. Section 17 (11), Children Act 1989.

A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Section 1(1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995.”

4. Blaenau Gwent's Principles and Aims

The principles underpinning the additional learning needs system are to 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 enable them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning.

Blaenau Gwent include the participation of children and young people and families in decisions which affect them, which ultimately may contribute to better outcomes for them.

This will ensure that:

- Families are supported with their child's development.
- Practitioners supporting children and young people with additional learning needs having a better understanding of the child or young person, including who they are and what are important to them.
- Increased expectations of children and young people based on an understanding of the child or young person's strengths and potential.
- The development of personalised learning based on the identification of targets that build on the strengths of children and young people with additional learning needs.
- More effective planning and delivery of ALP which supports children and young people to work towards achieving positive outcomes based on their ambitions and aspirations.
- The empowerment of children and young people and their families through celebrating their achievements and abilities and focusing upon the possibilities, rather than the problems they face.

The Local Authority's objective is to achieve high quality support and provision by working in partnership with the Education Achievement Service (EAS), local and regional services and school and other educational settings. The LA is committed to supporting schools and other educational settings to raise attainment levels and achievements, celebrating progress towards realistic goals which are motivating and jointly developed with children and young people.

The Local Authority in collaboration with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) will provide a range of training and professional development programmes and information sharing forums for schools and other agencies in order to maintain and develop knowledge and skills to effectively support children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). Further details can be found in section 10.

The aim is to ensure that the Local Authority:

- Incorporates processes and practice that adheres to the stipulations set out in the ALN Code of practice and the ALNET Act.
- Works together to deliver the best outcomes for children with additional learning needs.
- Support schools and settings to develop an inclusive and highly skilled universal provision.
- Support schools and settings to improve educational and inclusion opportunities.

- Attempts to raise achievement and attainment by removing barriers to learning.
- Ensures early identification and intervention for children and young people who have additional learning needs and establish coordinated approaches across services and settings that work.
- Increases physical and curricular access for all children and young people with additional learning needs.
- Promotes inclusive education in all educational and early years settings and colleges.
- Develops a fair and equitable system for providing resources and support to schools and settings to meet an array of additional learning needs.
- Builds on existing expertise and enhances the professional development of all staff working with children and young people with additional learning needs.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Person centred practice puts the child, child's parents or young person at the centre of decisions. The Local Authority, schools and settings will use a range of resources to gather relevant information and to inform actions to support learners with an additional learning need. The Local Authority has developed person centred templates in readiness for the move to Individual Development Plans.

Identifying ALN and ALP Needs and Provision

Additional learning needs processes are based on the premise that:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child and the child's parent or the young person are central to the process;
- the child and the child's parent or the young person should be enabled to participate as fully as possible in decisions; and
- appropriate information and support are provided to enable participation in decision making.

Local Authority and school / settings paperwork reflects person centred approaches and information collated through person centred reviews forms the focus of decisions about additional learning needs.

Schools, Early Years Settings and LA Responsibilities

Schools and Early Years settings are responsible for operating in accordance with legislation and adhering to the ALN Code, recognising and responding to the diverse needs of their learners, while also offering a continuum of support and services to match those needs.

When it is brought to the attention of, or appears to, a maintained or non-maintained early years setting or school that one of its pupils (who does not have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) or Education Health Care (EHC) Plan) may have additional learning needs, these settings must follow the process outlined below: (different arrangements apply if pupils are dual registered, looked after, detained, an English resident without an EHC plan):

- Obtain child (or parents) consent to decide about whether the child has additional learning needs.

- Prepare an Individual Development Plan when the school considers the child has additional learning needs.
- Where the setting has determined that the child has additional learning needs, which calls for Additional Learning Provision (ALP) and it would not be reasonable for the setting to secure, they can refer the matter to the Local Authority responsible for the child or young person for support and consideration.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body must have regard to relevant guidance in the ALN Code when exercising functions under Part 2 of the Additional Learning Needs Act. The Governing Body, with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will maintain Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and ensure appropriate Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for learners with Additional Learning Needs.

Senior Leadership Team (Schools)

The SLT will advise, support and challenge the systems and processes to identify and meet the needs of the learners. The SLT and Governors will work strategically to ensure the education setting is meeting its responsibilities under the additional learning needs Act, the additional learning needs Code and Act.

Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo)

The additional learning needs coordinator, at a strategic/operational level, ensures the needs of all learners with additional learning needs are met within the education setting. The additional learning needs coordinator will either form part of the Senior Leadership Team or have a clear line of communication to the SLT in accordance with the ALN Code. The additional learning needs coordinator has responsibility for deploying and supporting staff and will be involved in decisions around budgets and resources to plan appropriate provision. The additional learning needs coordinator will ensure IDPs and other associated records are maintained and kept up to date and will have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child, the child's parent or the young person.

The additional learning needs coordinator will secure relevant services that will support the learner's ALP as required and this may involve liaising with specialist external services. The additional learning needs coordinator must also prepare, and review information required to be published by the governing body pursuant to the additional learning needs Code.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for the day-to-day process of supporting every learner with additional learning needs. The class teacher will work closely with the additional learning needs coordinator to assess the child and to track child's progress in order to provide a differentiated learning programme. The class teacher will also make effective use of teaching assistants deployed to support learners.

Local Authority

Where it appears that a child or young person may have additional learning needs the LA **will** decide whether the child or young person has additional learning needs unless:

- an IDP is already being maintained for the learner;
- the LA has previously decided the issue and is satisfied that the child's needs have not changed materially since that decision and there is no new information which materially affects that decision;
- the LA is satisfied that the question of whether or not the child has additional learning needs is being decided by a Governing Body; and/or,
- the child is a young person who does not consent to the decision being made.

If the LA decides that a child or young person has additional learning needs the LA **will**:

- prepare and maintain an IDP,
- or
- prepare an IDP and direct a Governing Body to maintain it,
- or
- direct the Governing Body to prepare and maintain the plan.

Following such a direction the Governing Body **must** prepare and/or maintain the plan unless the young person does not give consent.

The circumstances in which the LA duty to maintain an IDP ceases; in the case of an IDP maintained by the LA for a child or young person, the local authority's duty to maintain the IDP ceases to apply in the following circumstances:

- the LA decides that the child or young person no longer has additional learning needs, and that decision has not been successfully challenged;
- in the case of a young person, the young person no longer consents to the IDP being maintained or, in the case of a child becoming a young person, does not consent to the IDP being maintained;
- the LA ceases to be responsible for the child (provided the child is not looked after) or young person - that is, if the child or young person ceases to be in the area of the Blaenau Gwent Borough;
- in the case of a child who is looked after by Blaenau Gwent LA, the person ceases to be a looked after child (for whatever reason, including because the child has become a young person) and the LA is not responsible for the person (i.e., the child is not in its area). Where another LA is responsible for the child or young person, the duty to maintain the IDP transfers to that LA;
- in the case of a child or young person who is a registered pupil at a maintained school in Wales, the LA will direct the school to maintain the plan;
- in the case of a young person who is enrolled as a student at an FEI in Wales, the FEI agrees to a request from the LA to become responsible for maintaining the IDP or the Welsh Ministers have determined that the FEI should maintain the plan;
- the child or young person becomes subject to a detention;
- in the case of a young person, the young person attains the age of 25, in which case the duty to maintain the IDP will cease at the end of the academic year in which the person attains that age;
- in the case of a young person who is neither a registered pupil at a maintained school in Wales nor enrolled as a student at an FEI in Wales, the LA decides that it is no longer necessary to maintain the IDP to meet the young person's reasonable needs for education or training.

Transferring an IDP Responsibilities:

Where a child or young person with an IDP maintained by a school transfers to another maintained school in Wales or to an FEI in Wales, responsibility for maintaining their IDP will usually transfer at the same time. Similarly, where a child or young person with an IDP maintained by Blaenau Gwent LA moves to another local authority's area, responsibility for maintaining the IDP will normally transfer between the local authorities.

Where a child or young person with additional learning needs becomes the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent LA, the LA will maintain the IDP if immediately before the child or young person became its responsibility, an IDP was being maintained for the child or young person by another local authority.

The LA will provide children, young people and others with information and advice about additional learning needs and the new system, and ensure that it is accessible for all who need it.

Decision-Making Processes:

Currently, the LA use multi-agency panels to moderate decisions in a consistent and robust manner. Evidence based decisions include;

- Whether to proceed with the full statutory assessment of additional learning needs.
- Whether to issue / amend Statements of Special Educational Needs.
- Whether to provide additional resources / provisions at School Action Plus.
- Whether a child requires access to a specialist placement (both in/out of the Blaenau Gwent Borough).
- To allocate Additional Learning Needs specialist transport. Eligibility criteria can be found in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policy.

The decisions are based on the written information received according to the criteria for Statutory Assessment / School Action Plus. In the context of the ALN reform Blaenau Gwent LA are revising processes and practices. This includes developing a fair and consistent approach in the form of an ALN Assessment Matrix which will support:

- Effective identification of additional learning needs
- Effective identification of interventions / provision appropriate to meet the identified need
- The identification of who has the duty to maintain the IDP
- Compliance of the additional learning needs and Tribunal Act 2018

This approach will apply to all children and young people aged 3-19 on roll at Local Authority maintained and grant-maintained schools. The system will be flexible and support learners' needs at all significant transition points. The matrix links robust identification of need to targeted provision/interventions which would support for children and young people, demonstrating a more efficient and effective use of resources. The purpose of the matrix is not to categorise or diagnose, but to identify the barriers to learning a child may be experiencing.

The LA has worked with colleagues across the South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) region to develop this as a regional approach, thereby allowing for consistency and coherence.

6. Partnership / Dispute Resolution

The LA is committed to working in partnership with parents /carers and values the contribution they can make to enable children and young people with additional learning needs achieve their potential. A parent independent partnership service is currently provided by SNAP Cymru.

SNAP Cymru's aim is to ensure families have access to information, advice and guidance in relation to the Additional Learning Needs of their children and young people so they can make appropriate, informed decisions. SNAP Cymru make sure that the views and wishes of children and young people are listened to and taken into consideration and they, along with parent's views, can inform and influence the development of local additional learning needs policy and practice. This service also has in place processes for avoiding and resolving disagreements (Dispute Resolution).

The LA also provides information and advice about additional learning needs and the additional learning needs system. The information and advice is provided in an impartial manner. In addition to working with parents / carers and SNAP, effective collaboration will be secured through active involvement with;

- LA teams including:
 - The Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
 - The Inclusive Practice Service (IPS) from Pen y Cwm Special School
 - Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLo)
 - LACE/CLA
 - Safeguarding in Education Lead
 - Youth Service
- Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- Gwent-wide Sensory and Communication Support Service (SENCom)
- Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS)
- Careers Wales
- Local Health Board
- Social Services

7. Safeguarding Children

Children and young people with ALN may be more vulnerable to issues such as bullying, emotional, sexual and physical abuse and neglect. All those working with children must be alert to these issues and their responsibilities in accordance with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures and Safeguarding in Education guidance.

Children and young people who have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties or who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion or who have physical medical difficulties may require a risk assessment to ensure their health, safety and well-being.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The LA has a statutory duty to ensure the quality of educational provision, and as part of this to ensure that the needs of individual children / young people are met. In carrying out its responsibilities towards children with additional learning needs the LA will monitor how effectively schools and governing bodies fulfil their duties via:

- the Monitor, Challenge, Intervention and Support process undertaken by the Education Achievement Service (EAS) including scrutiny of school development plans in relation to ALN;
- Professional Discussions with all schools on an annual basis;
- Termly Team Around the School (TAS) meetings
- Progress against Estyn recommendations;
- Termly review of individual service areas provision and the effective use of its resources through the evaluation of Service Improvement Plans and against service standards and national & local performance indicators as well as impact evaluation of specialist staff visits;
- Self-evaluation; and,
- use of relevant data.

Through termly analysis of data, the LA will:
track vulnerable learners;

- monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions for an individual child, groups of children and at school level;
- monitor trends and identify emerging areas of need;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of additional funding, both delegated and centrally held on outcomes for children with ALN; and,
- target additional funding appropriately and identify future funding needs.

The LA will collate and share information in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018). The LA will keep Additional Learning Needs provision under review and will link their activity to action linked wider strategic duties including:

- The Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

9. Training

Support / Training for Schools: the LA has developed a range of training / resources which have been designed to support schools including:

- ALN transformation and implementation.
- ALN training
- NQT training
- Assessment Matrix Tool
- Training and intervention provided by the Teams within Education and Inclusion Service (e.g., EPS, Inclusive Practice Service, ALN teams)
- EAS (Education Achievement Service) professional learning offer focuses on the 'universal provision' for vulnerable groups of learners in the eight areas

- Awareness of other training opportunities through signposting schools to relevant training opportunities. These include Communication and Intervention Service (ComIT), Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

APPENDICES

<u>Appendix 2.1</u>	Specialist Provision Details
<u>Appendix 2.2</u>	The Education Directorate - Additional Learning Needs Services
<u>Appendix 2.3</u>	Sources of Information
<u>Appendix 2.4</u>	Regional Principles and Practice Document

APPENDIX 2.1

Specialist Provision Guide

Provision	Contact Details
Pen y Cwm Special School (PMLD)	Strand Annealing Lane Ebbw Vale NP23 6AN Tel: 01495 357755
The River Centre 3-16 Learning Community (SEBD)	River Centre 3-16 Learning Community Pontygof, Ebbw Vale Blaenau Gwent NP23 5AZ
Abertillery Learning Community - Six Bells Primary Campus SNRB (Complex Needs)	Bryngwyn Road Six Bells Abertillery NP13 2PD Tel: 01495 212678
Coed y Garn Primary School SNRB (Complex Needs)	Parrot Row Blaina NP13 3AH Tel: 01495 290044
Glanhowy Primary School SNRB (ASD)	Coach Bach Tredegar NP22 4RW Tel: 01495 722312
Willowtown Primary School SNRB (Complex Needs)	Brynheulog Street Ebbw Vale NP23 6NJ Tel: 01495 302436
Ystruth Primary School SNRB (ASD)	East Pentwyn Blaina NP13 3XG Tel: 01495 290955
Abertillery Learning Community - Secondary Campus SNRB (Complex Needs)	Alma Street Abertillery NP13 1YL Tel: 01495 217121
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community SNRB (ASD)	Lime Avenue Ebbw Vale NP23 6GL Tel: 01495 354690

APPENDIX 2.2

List of Additional Learning Needs Services within Blaenau Gwent LA

Service	Email	Contact Number
ALN Team (Statutory Assessment)	TBC	01495 355443
Communication Intervention Team (ComIT)	TBC	01633 645468
Educational Psychology Service	TBC	01495 357890/1
Education Safeguarding	TBC	01495 355823
Education Welfare Service	TBC	TBC
GEMS	TBC	01633 851500
Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) Officer	rebecca.bevan@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk	TBC
Hearing Impairment Service	TBC	01633 645458
The Inclusion Service – Service Manager	julie.sambrook@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk	TBC
Inclusive Practice Service	TBC	01495 357841
School Admissions	TBC	01495 355493
Visual Impairment Service	TBC	01633 645420

APPENDIX 2.3

Sources of Information

Hyperlinks:

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs>

<https://gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act>

<https://gov.wales/the-additional-learning-needs-code-and-regulations>

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#)

[Estyn Thematic Report \(2020\). Knowing Your Children - Supporting Pupils with Adverse Childhood Experiences](#)

[Welsh Government \(2020\). Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#)

[Estyn Thematic Report \(2020\). 'Effective School Support for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Pupils' – Case Studies of Good Practice](#)

[Welsh Government \(2018\). Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act](#)

[DfE \(2010\). The Equality Act](#)

[Welsh Government \(2015\). Inclusion and Pupil Support](#)

[Rights, Respect, Equality Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools \(2019\).](#)

[New Curriculum for Wales 2022](#)

APPENDIX 2.3

Principles and Expectations of School's and PRUs ALN Education Provision for Pupils with ALN and Disabilities

Nov 2020

Aims and Purpose of this Document

This document summarises the Local Authority's expectations of the support arrangements in mainstream educational settings for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN)

The information contained in this document, produced in consultation with primary and secondary settings, sets out how schools and PRUs are expected to use delegated budgets to ensure that the needs of pupils with ALN are met.

Consultation with the LA Parent Forum has also taken place.

The purpose of this document is to create a shared understanding between schools, PRUs families and the local authority in respect of:

- improving progress and securing better outcomes for learners with ALN
- clarifying what parents can expect schools to provide
- a reference point for ensuring that requests for an LA to provide additional learning provision (ALP) are appropriate

Therefore, the LA can base its decision making on the evidence that schools and PRUs have made good efforts to apply the principles and person-centred processes above before reaching the decision to refer to the LA.

Key Aims and Principles of the Code

Aim

To 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

Principles

- 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.
- e) **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh.

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. (Chapter 5 of the Code)

Principles for all professionals working with children and young people who have ALN

Alongside the expectations of all teachers identified within the Welsh Government professional standards for teachers, the following principles will be observed by all professionals working with children and young people who have ALN as stated in the Code.

“Maintained schools in Wales have a key role to play in identifying ALN and in delivering ALP to support learners with ALN. They are directly responsible for identifying and meeting the needs of the majority of their pupils who have ALN.”
ALN Mandatory Code (draft 2018)

The head teacher and school leaders

It is the role of the head teacher to:

- Advise the governors on policies to meet their statutory responsibilities under the ALN ET Act
- Work to agree the ALN Transformation policy and to implement the agreed vision and policy.
- Oversee all aspects of operational leadership and management.
- Ensure that the ALNCo has enough time and resources to carry out their duties. The Code recommends that ALNCos are most effective when they are a member of the senior leadership team or have a direct line of communication to the senior leadership team.

The role of the ALNCo:

- Ensuring all practitioners understand their responsibilities to children with ALN and understand the school's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils
- Ensuring there is an overview of all children who have ALN including their relevant stage of support
- Ensuring the close and continuing involvement of parents, and that their views inform action taken by the setting
- Liaising and make referrals to specialist professionals

The ALNCo should:

- Play an important role in the strategic development of ALN policy and provision in the school advising the leadership team of what is necessary regarding staff and resources.
- Have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the ALN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with ALN, including those who have IDPs
- Be allocated enough time and resources to carry out these functions
- Have access to appropriate levels of administrative support and time away from teaching to enable the fulfilment of responsibilities
- Support staff with guidance and direct assistance in the identification and assessment of pupils with ALN
- Provide advice and guidance on suitable interventions and strategies
- Be involved in transition planning between schools and college
- Consider the views of children, young people and their families; ensuring that they are involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support
- Enable children, young people and their parents to participate in decision-making
- Collaborate with partners in education, health and social care to provide support
- Making high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people
- Focus on inclusive practices and removing barriers to learning
- Provide ALN support that should be evidence based, informed by effective practice and personalised to the students.
- Endeavour to deliver ALP in Welsh if requested to do so.

In all schools teachers are:

- Responsible and accountable for the progress and development of all pupils in their class, including where support staff are involved
- Appropriately qualified and experienced
- Supported to gain skills and knowledge in areas that will improve their teaching and their support of child or young person with ALN
- Able to access support and guidance from the ALNCo in school

- Supported to access advice and training where needed
- Responsible for differentiating the curriculum to accommodate the needs of all pupils and students in the class
- Equipped with the skills to implement the assess, plan, do and review cycle effectively.
- Are aware of the needs of the pupil or student as necessary
- Have access and are familiar with planning documents, IDPs and pupil profiles.
- Clear about what is expected of them in relation to named pupils/students and groups of pupils/students
- Plan to implement a child or young person's individual targets into their teaching where the child or young person is in their teaching group.
- Demonstrate person-centred practice-person-centred practice puts the child, child's parent or young person at the centre of decisions.

Responsibilities of the governing body/management board:

- Have legal duties under the ALN ET ACT 2018; Equality Act 2010, and the ALN Code in relation to pupils with additional learning needs and disabilities
- Be clear about the arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities, the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably than others, the facilities provided to assist access, and their accessibility plans should be addressed through the school Strategic Equality Plan.
- There should be in place a Governor with specific oversight for the school's arrangements for ALN.
- Use their best endeavours and provide reasonable adjustments to make sure that a child with ALN or a disability gets the support they need – this means doing everything they can to remove barriers to learning. Through reviewing IDPs, they should consider what reasonable adjustments have been made to ensure fair and equal access to the curriculum. This may include staffing, timetable changes, adjustments to the physical environment, whilst also acknowledging that what matters most – and has the biggest impact – high quality teaching. (see Appendix 2)
- Work in partnership with the head teacher and school leaders to ensure the curriculum offered meets the needs of all learners and that there is a teaching and learning policy that is understood by all staff. It should reflect equalities legislation, accessibility requirements, and ALN Transformation.
- Ensure that children and young people with ALN and/or disabilities engage in the activities of the school alongside all pupils
- Ensure information is provided to parents when ALP for a pupil is made and that the provision made, is accurately recorded and kept up to date.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions, including Individual Health Care plans.
- Have a clear approach to identifying and responding to pupils with ALN and determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with ALN.

- Ensure that a member of staff is designated as the ALNCo and that the ALNCo's key responsibilities are outlined and monitor how effectively they are carried out
- Ensure that the school's budgetary priorities reflect the needs of children with ALN, and they should assist staff in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of ALN resourcing decisions within the school.

Teaching assistants:

Accordingly to recent research there is most impact on teaching and learning when teaching assistants clearly understood their role and knew exactly what they needed to do in order to help pupils make progress. Key to this is effective communication between teachers and TAs.

Adults support learning in the classroom by:

- Reducing children's anxieties, helping them to feel safe and secure in their classroom/school
- Being familiar with how the learner gains knowledge and by understanding the learners individualised targets
- Engaging and motivating learners to learn
- Assisting with pre-teaching, including on subject vocabulary, new concepts, early experience of practical activities
- Facilitating engagement and learning of learner in whole or small group learning activities
- Teaching daily programme of skills / concepts in fixed timetable periods, and monitored by teacher
- Classroom presence to refocus, encourage, explain, facilitate responses
- Supporting targeted subject areas, being prepared for what is to be taught and understanding the learning needs of the pupil/student
- Making sure transactional supports are consistently available e.g. Schedules, and within task check lists) this will help to increase independence and avoid over- reliance on adult support
- Monitoring the impact of any support provided.

Staff should be trained in the needs of the learner and understand how to:

- Communicate instructions
- Communicate new knowledge and concepts
- Provide opportunities for skills reinforcement and practice
- Recognise when a child is using behaviour to communicate
- Deliver specific programmes / interventions.

Parents and carers:

The ALN Code recognises that effective engagement with parents and carers has a clear impact on children reaching their potential.

Embedding parental involvement is based on extensive but often ignored evidence that greater parental 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 learners.

The ALNCo and key pastoral staff should act as a communications bridge between their school, colleagues and parents and carers. Providing accurate and updated information from parents is an absolute pre-requisite. This is most effective in the context of a mutually trusting relationship between school and home.

To create the best partnerships there needs to be:

- A commitment to joint working and building the relationship between school staff and parents
- Opportunities for parents to communicate with the key staff on a regular basis- open channels of communication, whether that is face-to-face, phone or email

Provision Mapping

Support for children and young people with ALN begins with a range of provision that is available to all children and young people and becomes increasingly specific and personalised as the needs of the child/young person are identified as being long term, complex and exceptional. All schools, early years' settings and colleges are expected to admit and provide appropriate support to children and young people with ALN.

Each school/LA provision map is divided into 3 levels of provision:

- **Universal**
- **Targeted**
- **Specific**

It is expected that in almost all cases, earlier levels of provision will have been effectively implemented and evaluated before higher levels of the graduated approach are considered.

Expectations of School's and PRUs ALN Education Provision for Pupils with ALN and Disabilities

1. Identifying the particular ALN of children and young people

Schools will:

- Monitor the progress of all pupils through whole school data scrutiny processes
- Regularly review the ALN register and other processes used for identifying and supporting ALN pupils.
- Have clear processes for staff and parents/carers to raise concerns
- Provide teachers and TAs with comprehensive guidance around the identification processes
- Pay regard to advice and information from parents/carers, professionals and previous settings at transition points; liaising as necessary to continue the use of successful strategies and person-centred approaches
- Be able to distinguish between pupils who may need some targeted support through high quality teaching and pupils with an identified ALN that requires ALP
- Identify barriers to learning and know how to, or seek advice, so that the nature of each pupil's ALN can be identified and work to remove that barrier. Sometimes a pupil can have needs in more than one area which requires an individualised approach
- Have access to a range of appropriate screening and assessments in order to identify needs
- Maintain robust records so that evidence describing a pupil's needs can be gathered through the assess, plan, do, review cycle
- Consult with parents / carers when they are making additional learning needs provision for their child and have processes in place for them to provide feedback about provision
- When appropriate, seek advice from advisory services and outside agencies including the Educational Psychology Service, CAMHS, Speech and Language Service, Local Authority support services etc. in order to gain a better understanding of a pupil's needs

2. Consulting with parents

Parents know their child best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about them. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

Schools will:

- Have in place a transparent complaints procedure
- Have in place a robust annual review process that is underpinned by person centred planning through which aspirational outcomes are identified and appropriate provision is secured.
- Sign-post parents to services that provide independent advice and support

for ALN and disability, for example SNAP CYMRU; NYAS

- Provide or sign-post pupils and their parents/carers to sources of advice and information about matters relating to ALN and disability, for example, the LA web-site
- Be aware that a families and schools have the right to request an IDP. Families should feel able to tell their school if they believe their son/daughter has or may have ALN
- Inform parents when they are making additional learning needs provision for their child and have processes in place for engagement with pupils and their families to provide feedback on provision so that future provision is founded on the insights of families and pupils themselves
- Ensure parents/carers are fully aware of planned support and interventions and, where appropriate, plan to seek the involvement of parents/carers to reinforce and contribute to progress at home
- Ensure a clear date for reviewing progress is agreed and the parent/carer, pupil and teaching staff are clear about how they will help the pupil reach the expected targets or outcomes
- Ensure that pupils with ALN are included in 'whole school' mechanisms to capture pupil voice
- Develop parent consultation with the purposes of enabling families to play a role in developing and reviewing ALN provision. For example, feedback on annual review processes, transitions.
- Develop parent consultation with the purpose of providing families with information relating to ALN and disability

3. Securing the services, provision and equipment required by children and young people with ALN or disabilities

Schools will:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a pupil with an identified ALN receives the support they need from within the school's own delegated resources
- Understand how their duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 translates into day-to-day practice
- Keep key indicators under review for ALN pupils, such as attendance, exclusion and progress so that the support of relevant services can be secured when necessary
- Know routes for referral for relevant education, health and care specialists in order to secure equipment and services for specific pupils in a timely manner
- Have knowledge of the expertise and training provided by support services and agencies so that it can be accessed on an individual pupil or whole school basis
- Seek further advice from advisory services and outside agencies in order to remove barriers to learning
- Understand the processes for accessing additional learning provision from

the LA

- Use IHPs, where appropriate, for those pupils with medical needs

4. Supporting disabled children and young people and those with ALN in moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood and independent living

Schools will:

- Implement a coherent transition programme that priorities links with common feeder schools and takes a flexible approach to group and individual student needs so that planning can begin at the earliest stage
- Review their transition processes to take account of feedback from pupils, parent/carers and professionals
- Use an enhanced transition process to support pupils with ALN if required
- Pay regard to the LA Post 16 transition protocol so that local processes can be applied and evaluated consistently.
- Develop and implement an appropriate person-centred planning approach to all transitions between schools, key stages or phases so that the pupil and family are at the heart of the planning process
- Share advice and information from parents/carers, previous settings and supporting professionals, liaising as necessary to continue the use of successful strategies and approaches
- Provide or sign-post pupils and their parents/carers to impartial sources of advice and information, for example, SNAP Cymru; NYAS

5. Approaches to teaching, adaptations to the curriculum and the learning environment for children and young people with ALN or disabilities and additional learning support for those with ALN

Every school is required to meet the ALN of the children or young people that they support. Every teacher is accountable for the progress of the pupils within their class

Schools will:

- Ensure all pupils access good quality teaching which takes account of pupils' differing needs
- Ensure that a personalised approach is implemented for pupils with ALN if required
- Make appropriate use of their delegated budgets so that pupils with additional needs are supported as part of a whole school approach to securing and deploying resources
- Carry out regular monitoring of progress so that adaptations to the learning environment and/or teaching can be made
- Provide teachers and TAs with appropriate training and resources so that learning can be differentiated to match the pupil's level of learning
- Implement a consistent graduated approach to meeting pupil need. For example, by reviewing class teaching and access strategies before moving

on to develop a more individualised approach

- Provide ALNCoS with sufficient time to use their knowledge and understanding of areas of need to plan provision and to focus on interventions that are relevant and evidence-based
- Refer to the comprehensive range of examples of best practice within Local Authority, Consortia and national guidance documents
- Seek further advice from advisory services and outside agencies about removing barriers to learning so that individualised support programmes for more complex pupils can be put in place.

6. Securing expertise among teachers, teaching assistants, to support children and young people with ALN or disabilities – this should include continuing professional development for all staff

Schools will:

- Audit and review staff training needs on an annual basis so that relevant training can be planned into the school's CPD schedule
- Have clear systems in place for evaluating ALN provision and reviewing staff expertise through the schools review/quality assurance procedures. For example, through performance management processes; classroom observations, learning walks, book looks.
- Provide staff with information that describes effective strategies to use within their class and ensure staff are able to share best practice
- Embed the principle that 'All teachers are teachers of children with ALN'
- Provide sufficient time for the ALNCo to provide professional guidance to colleagues and contribute to wider professional development themes
- Ensure all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) have had training to develop knowledge of the areas of need and the nature of the difficulties linked to each area.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of relevant local and national guidance for example, the transition protocol, The Equality Act Advice for schools etc.
- Identify and develop specific teacher and TA knowledge through 'surgery' time or the opportunity to liaise with external professionals
- Access external training opportunities so that groups of staff can develop specific knowledge in order to meet the predominant need in a given cohort
- Identify on-going sources of training and development so that knowledge around specific needs can be embedded through a sustainable approach
- Develop and budget for a sustainable approach to succession planning for the ALNCo
- Ensure their ALNCo, if new to the role in a mainstream school, is given the opportunity to complete the National Middle Leadership Programme and the ALNCo Progression Pathway and is provided with adequate support to do so.

7. Enabling available facilities to be accessed by disabled children and young people and those with ALN (this could include ancillary aids and assistive technology, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC))

Schools will:

- Pay regard to duties outlined in the Equality Act (2010), specifically duties relating to strategic equality plan and accessibility planning, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty
- Regularly review the impact of provision and resources secured through their delegated budgets to support children and young people with additional needs
- Implement a robust graduated approach which includes a clear rationale for access to specific resources
- Understand the processes for accessing additional learning provision from the LA to meet the needs of the most complex pupils
- Appropriately follow advice provided by supporting professionals, including the appropriate use of resources provided to the school for groups or individual pupils
- Ensure that referrals are made to relevant agencies in order to ensure that progress towards outcomes in IDPs can be secured where additional resources and facilities are required

8. Assessing and reviewing pupils' and students' progress towards outcomes, including how schools work with parents and young people in doing so

Schools will:

- Ensure that they have procedures in place for consulting and working with parents/carers
- Track and monitor pupil progress on a regular basis in line with whole reporting processes
- Set up / review 'additional to' or 'different from' **ALP** in the light of information gathered through the assess, plan, do review process
- Identify key outcomes, which are aspirational, along with steps to be taken that will support achievement of them
- Ensure robust use of school / setting data to identify and monitor progress of pupils with ALN
- Ensure that every teacher is responsible for pupil progress in their own class and feeds into wider school processes that monitor pupil progress
- Ensure that high expectations are in place and progress is considered against all pupils with similar starting points
- Have clear monitoring processes in place, including scrutiny of pupil books and work, ensuring that all staff are clear about what is expected and adjust practice accordingly
- Evaluate the impact of interventions through pre- and post- assessment data

analysis

- Gather pupil feedback as part of the process to review interventions and provision
- Hold regular parent meetings, with the child or young person, as appropriate, to discuss pupil progress
- Regularly review and evaluate the impact of ALP on the progress, attainment and well-being of ALN pupils

9. Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the education provision the school, PRU and local authority makes for children and young people with ALN or disabilities

Schools will:

- Regularly review and evaluate the impact of ALP on the progress, attainment and well-being of ALN pupils
- Review attendance and exclusion data for ALN pupils
- Monitor the impact and success of specific interventions through comparison of pre and post intervention data
- Use the feedback from ALN self-reflection framework; LA/EAS reviews and Estyn inspections to inform their evaluation of provision
- Engage with Regional and LA development work for example, network opportunities, cluster developments; new initiatives and LA ALNCo forums

10. Activities that are available to disabled children and young people and those with ALN, including physical activities and extra-curricular activities

Schools will:

- Pay regard to duties outlined in the Equality Act (2010), specifically duties relating to strategic equality planning including accessibility planning, reasonable adjustments and the public sector equality duty
- Promote the health and wellbeing of each pupil by supporting them to access appropriate extra-curricular activities
- Ensure that children and young people with ALN engage in and are included in the activities of the school alongside pupils who do not have ALN through monitoring ALN pupils engagement with extra-curricular activities
- Promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development and ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact
- Review the schools equality plan on an annual basis and renew the plan every 4 years.
- Raise awareness about opportunities for community involvement for families of pupils with ALN

11. LA quality assurance and support

The Local Authority will, through quality assurance, ensure that the processes described above are in place. This will include:

- Supporting schools by assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of education provision
- Supporting schools through LA and regional development work, including ALNCo forums
- Review school provision maps and ALN self-reflection framework on an annual basis and identify areas of good practice and areas for development.
- Ensuring annual reviews for pupils with IDPs take place and are of high quality
- Delivering the National Middle Leadership qualification in partnership with the EAS
- Supporting ALNCos to access the Welsh Government ALNCo Progression Pathway
- Supporting schools in developing effective ALN provision
- Reviewing and updating the LA arrangements for meeting the needs of ALN pupils, including updating the LA provision map.
- Offering central and school-based training
- Responding to feedback from training and support to further enhance practice.