

# Early Years Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Guidance and Process

**September**

**2023 - 2025**



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## Introduction

This Early Years Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Guidance and Process document outlines the Blaenau Gwent Local Authority approach to supporting Early Years settings (maintained and non-maintained) with their responsibilities under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) 2018 and the corresponding ALN Code of Practice. The approach within this guidance intends to meet the needs of our young learners with additional needs (AN) and/ or Additional Learning Needs (ALN), to overcome barriers and challenges to enable those learners to reach their full potential.

This guidance is inclusive of the Early Years 0-5 age range and the ALN Act 2018. The pathways to support learners with Additional Needs and/or with Additional Learning Needs are included as appendices within this guidance.

The authority has a designated Early Years ALN Lead Officer in post and this role works in partnership with health and social care colleagues.

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## **Definition of Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, provides a clear definition of what constitutes an **Additional Learning Need**:

### *2.3. Definition of additional learning needs:*

*(1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision.*

*(2) A learner of compulsory school age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she —*

*(a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or*

*(b) has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.*

*(3) A learner under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is, or would be if no additional learning provision were made, likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age.*

*(4) A person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been used at home.*

Just because a learner or young person has a disability or a medical condition, this doesn't automatically mean that they have ALN. It is only if their disability or medical condition prevents them from accessing mainstream provision and they need ALP that they are considered to have ALN.

*2.18. Those learners and young people who are considered 'more able and talented' do not have a difficulty in learning on the basis of their enhanced ability or talent. These learners and young people may require enhanced opportunities and challenge in order to reach their full potential, but this ought to be provided as part of differentiated teaching.*

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## Definition of Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, provides a clear definition of what constitutes an **Additional Learning Provision**:

*2.4. Definition of additional learning provision:*

*(1) “Additional learning provision” for a **person aged three or over** means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in—*

*(a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales,*

*(b) mainstream institutions in the further education sector in Wales, or*

*(c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided.*

*(2) “Additional learning provision” for a learner aged under three means educational provision of any kind.*

*(3) In subsection (1), “nursery education” means education suitable for a learner who has attained the age of three but is under compulsory school age.*

*2.15. ALP for those aged under three can take many forms; for instance, group work or individual support - where it is educational provision of any kind. This might include, for example, educational provision in Flying Start or specialist health, physical, communication or sensory support. This can take place in an education setting or elsewhere.*

*2.42. In the case of young learners, learning ought to provide the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of the world through exploratory play and experiences. Learners with ALN might require ALP in the form of exploratory play, or other ALP to enable them to access appropriate play opportunities/activities.*

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## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 states that we must promote equality of opportunity and must not discriminate against, harass or victimise learners with a disability. Maintained and non-maintained settings have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that learners with a disability are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory: setting must look ahead and anticipate what disabled learners might need and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent any disadvantage.

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## **Definition of Disability**

The Act defines that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

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## **Discrimination**

The law prohibits 'direct discrimination', for example if a setting refused to offer a learner a place because the learner has a disability; and 'indirect discrimination' where policies or practices within a setting may particularly disadvantage learners who share a particular 'protected characteristic' including, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion and belief. This means that all learners and adults should be treated with equal concern and respect and that the setting complies with relevant anti-discriminatory legislation and good practice in all areas, including employment, training, and admission to settings and access to the resources, activities and facilities available. The setting is responsible for ensuring that there is an equal opportunities policy, which is consistent with current legislation and guidance and is regularly reviewed. All practitioners and volunteers understand and implement this policy and it is available to parents.

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## **Vision**

The vision of the Welsh Government is to deliver a fully inclusive education system for the learners of Wales; Blaenau Gwent Local Authority is in full support of this approach. Planning should be flexible and responsive, and professionals should be skilled and confident in identifying needs. The learner should be at the centre of everything we do, and they and their parents or carers seen as equal partners in their learning; this is known as Person Centred Practice (PCP).

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## Inclusion For All

The vision for Wales is to have strong and inclusive setting committed to excellence, equality and wellbeing. All learners should have their needs met enabling them to participate, benefit from, and enjoy learning and play in a diverse growing and changing world.

All learners will be welcomed and included in all settings across Blaenau Gwent. Where learners require additional or particular support to meet their needs, care will be taken by practitioners to identify and implement this both inclusively and sensitively.

Successful inclusive practice happens primarily when practitioners accept, understand, and attend to learners physical, social, cognitive, emotional and academic differences and diversity. In its simplest form, inclusive practice means that every learner, no matter what their barrier is to learning or play, has equal access to learning and opportunities to succeed.

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## The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET)

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018 (ALNET) was implemented in Wales from September 2021.

The principles underpinning the ALN system are:

- A rights-based approach
- Early identification, intervention, and prevention
- Collaboration and integration
- Inclusive education

- A bilingual system

## There are 11 key changes from the previous legislation.

### The core Principles are:

1. **The Introduction of the term Additional Learning Needs (ALN)** - Replacing the term 'Special Educational Needs' with 'Additional Learning Needs' (ALN) and 'Special Educational Provision' with 'Additional Learning Provision' (ALP)
  2. **0–25 age range** - Improved transition between early years education providers and schools
  3. **A unified plan** - Individual Development Plans (IDP) will replace Statements of Special Educational Needs and other non-statutory SEN plans for learners.
  4. **Increased participation of learners and young people** - The Act requires that learners' views should always be considered as part of the planning process, along with those of their parents.
  5. **High aspirations and improved outcomes** - The emphasis of IDPs will be on identifying ALP that delivers appropriate positive outcomes for all
  6. **Clear and consistent rights of appeal** - Learners and their parents will have the right to appeal to the Education Tribunal against decisions made by a Local Authority (LA) in relation to their ALN or their ALP.
  7. **Increased collaboration** - Improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies including education, health and social services, which will be essential to ensuring that needs are identified early and the right support is put in place to enable learners and young people to achieve positive outcomes.
  8. **Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution** - Where disagreements occur about an IDP or the provision it contains, the matter is considered and resolved at the most local level possible.
  9. **Clear and consistent rights of appeal** - When disagreements about an IDP cannot be resolved at a local level, parents and young people will have the right to appeal to Tribunal.
  10. **ALN Code** - The ALN code will impose mandatory requirements in respect of decisions about ALN; preparation, content, form, review and revision of IDPs and ceasing IDPs.
  11. **A bilingual system** - The Act requires that services must consider whether a learner or young person needs ALP in Welsh. If they do, this must be documented in the IDP and 'all reasonable steps' must be taken to secure the provision in Welsh.
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## **The Early Years Additional Learning Needs**

### **Lead Officer (EYALNLO)**

It is the duty on Local Authorities to designate an Early Years ALN Lead Officer. This statutory role has responsibility for coordinating the Local Authority's functions under the 2018 Act.

The EYALNLO will:

- Hold the register of all AN and ALN learners in the Early Years sector in Blaenau Gwent.
- Have a role in the strategic planning for and allocation of any budget and/or the funding the authority provides for learners under compulsory school age.
- Be directly involved with the development of the authority's policy on AN and ALN provision for learners under compulsory school age.
- Develop and deliver training to settings on matters related to ALN, engaging other professionals where appropriate for specialist input.
- Maintain their own continuing professional development in the field of ALN to remain an authoritative and expert source of knowledge.

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### **The Local Authority Duties Include:**

- Deciding whether a learner has an ALN and the designation of an officer to be to be responsible for coordinating the actions required to make that decision and if an IDP is required, to be responsible for preparing it.
- Preparation of a Local Authority Individual Development Plan (IDP) in line with a statutory 12-week timeline.
- Maintaining a LA IDP and securing the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) described in it.
- Reviewing and revising an IDP.
- Reviewing the ALP arrangements.
- Making arrangements to provide advice and information and taking reasonable steps to make the arrangements known to parents and case friends of learners in its area.
- Making arrangements for the avoidance and resolution of disagreements and promoting the use of them to parents.
- Making arrangements for the provision of independent advocacy services.
- Outline any action the Local Authority will undertake in light of its consideration to ensure the learner's needs are met if ALN is not agreed at this time.

## Person Centred Practice (PCP)

Person Centred Practice (PCP) means focusing on the learner and keeping them at the centre of everything we do.

A person-centred approach is all about:

- Understanding the learner's needs and wishes.
- Thinking about what is important **to** them and **for** them.
- Thinking about what **is** working and **not** working.
- Making sure that the learner gets the best support from everyone involved.

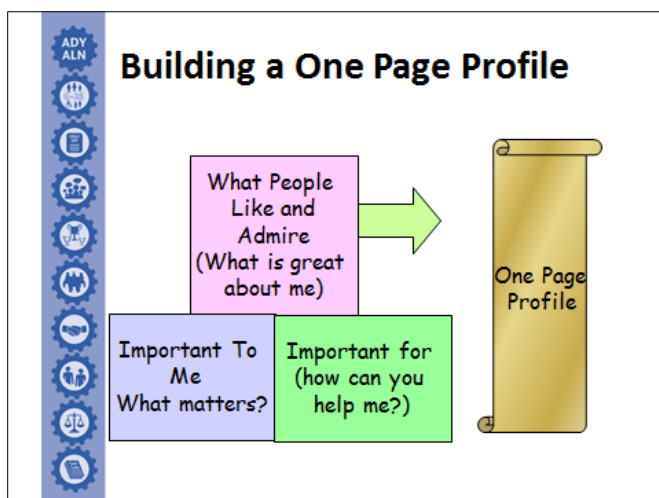
All meetings that are held in relation to learners should be person centred.

If there are concerns that a learner may have Additional Learning Needs, a PCP meeting will be arranged to gather and share information. It is an opportunity for parents and any professionals involved with supporting the learner to meet to celebrate the learner's achievements and to discuss the way forward. It will have an informal atmosphere, and everyone will contribute to develop a realistic action plan for the future of the learner.

The areas that will be covered during an entry planning meeting are:

- Relevant background information
- What is unique about your learner?
- What is important to your learner?
- What is important for your learner?
- Parents / carers views
- Learner's view
- What currently works well?
- What is not working so well?
- Details of agreed next steps.

## One Page Profile



A one-page profile is a simple summary of what is important to a learner or young person and how they want to be supported.

This information will be gathered during the PCP review meeting with learners with an Additional Need (AN) or with identified learners with an Additional Learning Need (ALN).

### All About Me

Blaenau Gwent

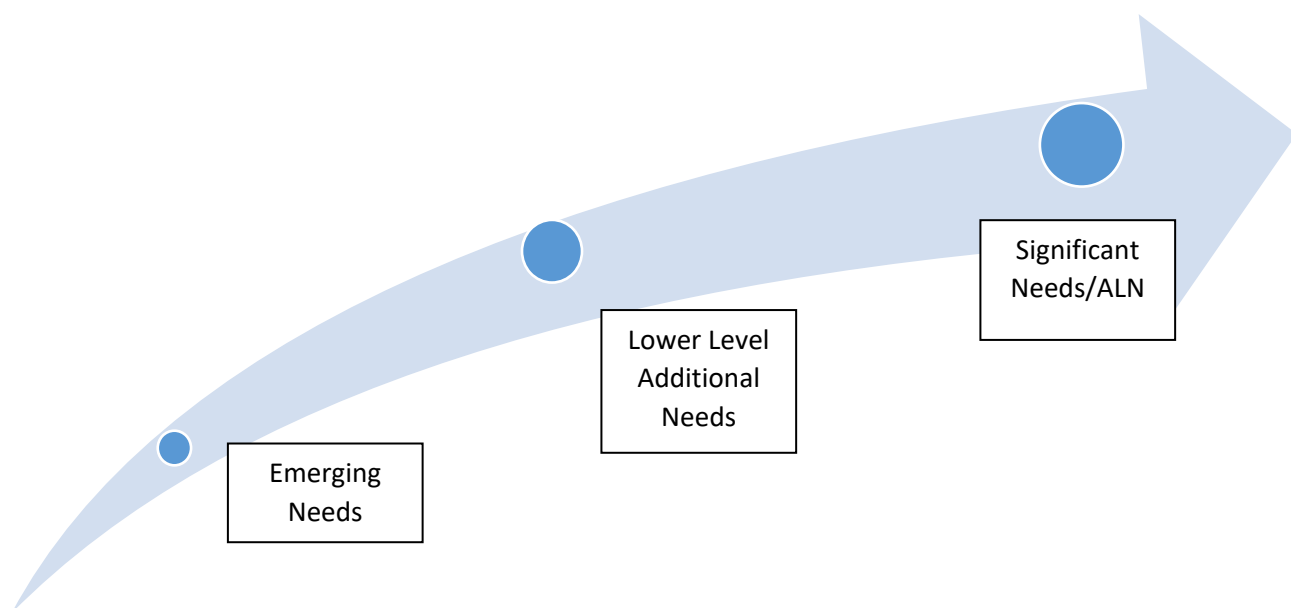
Name:		D.O.B:	
Entry date:	Photo here		
Exit date:			
What is great about me?		Who are in my family?	
What and who is important to me?		What is unique about me?	
What do I need a little help with? How can you help me?			
Parent/Guardian Signature:		Date:	

The information that is included on a One Page Profile / All About Me is as follows:

- **What is great about me?** – What do people like and admire about the learner? This can include personal attributes such as ‘I am always happy’.
- **What and who is important to me?** – What and who really matters to the learner from their perspective? What is needed for them to have a good day?
- **What is unique about me?** – Is there anything specific people might need to know about the learner? This might include allergies or additional needs.
- **What do I need a little help with? How can you help me?** – What is needed to keep the learner safe, healthy and to help them develop?

## Graduated Response

Early intervention is key in Early Years and we apply a graduated response. Support and strategies are put in place when learners are exhibiting emerging or lower level needs. This may prevent them from developing significant needs and reduce the need for identification of ALN later on by the Local Authority.

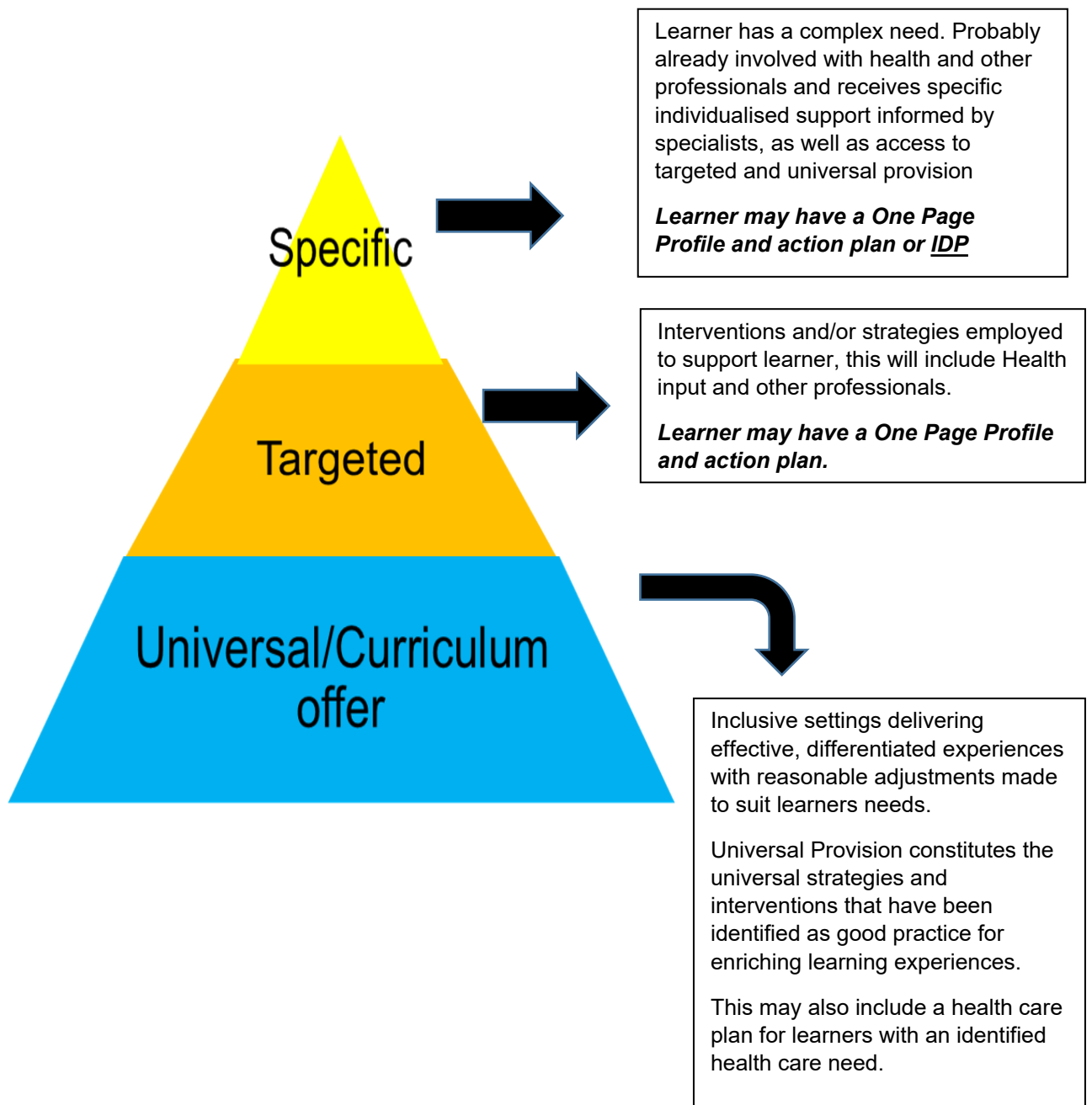


## Graduated Response - Levels of Support

Provision for a learner with Additional Learning needs will differ depending on the individual needs of the learner but should fall into one of three categories;

1. **Universal Offer** - Learning environments are tailored to meet the needs of all learners and young people, so they are able to make progress in learning and wellbeing.
2. **Targeted Support** - Professionals working with the learner or young person have appropriate knowledge and skills to monitor the specific needs. They can act accordingly if additional help is needed.
3. **Specific Support** - The learner or young person has a complex need which means that specialised/specific individualised provision is required in order to meet the learner's needs and enable them to make progress.

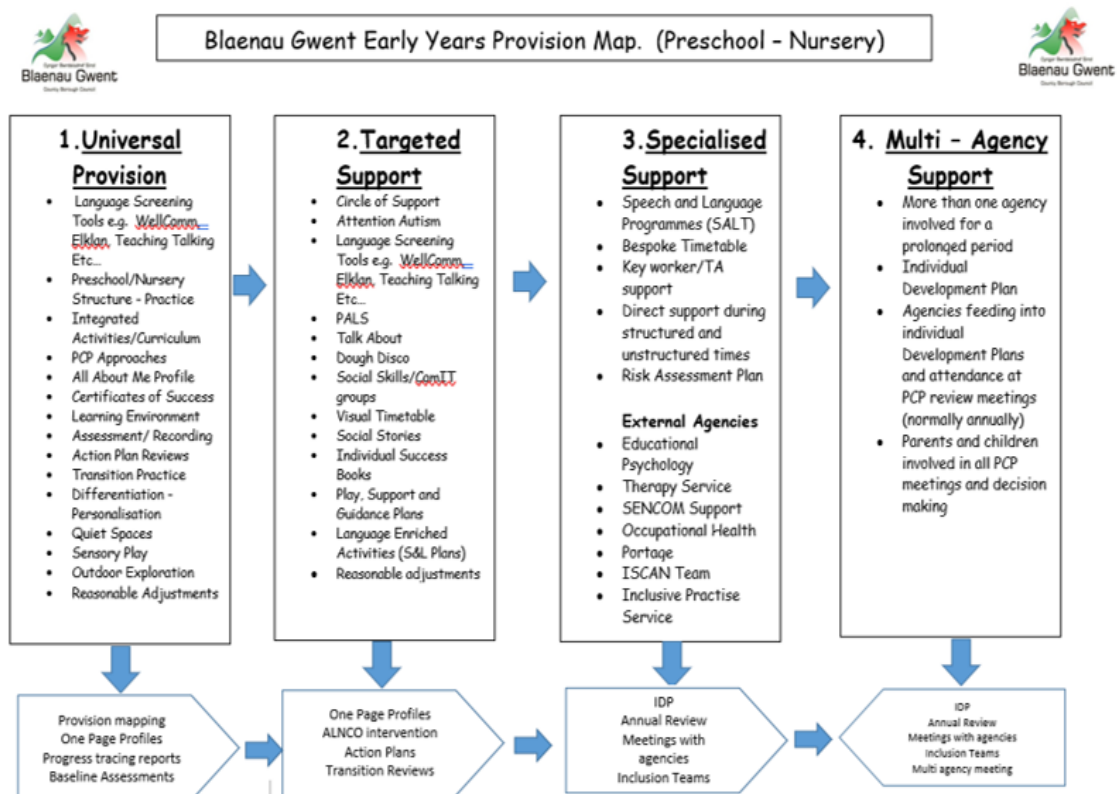
As the triangle suggests, the majority of learners will only need to access the universal offer, some will be receiving targeted support and a relatively small number of learners will require specific support (ALP).



## Early Years Provision Map

Below is the Early Years Provision Map for Blaenau Gwent. This map has been put together with a comprehensive overview of what is available in our authority. This is a guide to what provision maps could look like.

An individual setting or school provision map will capture what they are offering and unique to their setting or school.



# Early Years Funding & Local Authority Early Years Panels

There are two Early Years funding panels in Blaenau Gwent.

1. **Early Years Additional Needs Support Panel (EY AN Panel). This panel is co-ordinated by social care.**

The purpose of this panel is to...

- To coordinate the identification of early years/pre-school learners with Additional Needs (AN) and to ensure learners are supported to have high quality early years support.
- To identify needs early and offer support and advice as appropriate to ensure needs are met, potentially mitigating the need for ongoing support/more intervention at a later age.
- To ensure the early years workforce are supported and their training needs are identified and provided for.

2. **Early Years Additional Learning Needs Panel – (EY ALN Panel). This panel is co-ordinated by ALN Education.**

- The purpose of the Early Years Additional Learning Needs Panel is to support learners in regard to their identified additional needs and is chaired by the EY ALNLO.

Additional funding to settings and/or schools is allocated to support AN/ALN where this has been identified via either of the above panels and will require evidence.

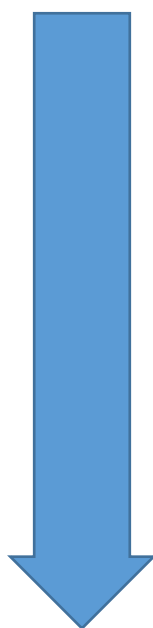


## Notification of an ALN

When a notification is made to the local authority regarding a learner who **may** have ALN the following process is initiated:

1. If the learner is **under statutory school age** (under 5 years old) and **NOT** attending a maintained school, the co-ordination of the statutory process will be the responsibility of Blaenau Gwent's Early Years Additional Learning Needs Officer.
2. If the learner is over three years old and **is** attending a maintained school setting, the co-ordination of the IDP process will be the responsibility of the school, as this will be a school based IDP.
3. If the learner is **over statutory school age** (The term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday), the co-ordination of the IDP process will be the responsibility of the school or the Local authority's ALN statutory team.

The pathway below is a step by step guide of the twelve week statutory process. This pathway is a clear timeline that will follow from a notification to the local authority of a learner who may have ALN.








## Statutory Process for an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Early Years.

Reference:





1. EYALNLO - Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer.
2. Local Authority - LA

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Event /Action taken</b>	<b>Actioned by?</b>	<b>Correspondence to Learners/parents/others</b>  <b>Steps to be taken</b>
<b>12 week statutory process begins</b>	Local authority is notified that a learner is considered to have significant Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and may need an IDP with an Additional Learning Provision (ALP)	ISCAN partners  Health Professionals  Parents	
<b>Day 1 To Day 5</b>	Day 1 - LA acknowledges notification and requests consent from parents	LA ALN panel  EYALNLO	LA to send the following correspondence to parents. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consent Letter</li> <li>2. PCP guide for parents</li> <li>3. ALN Act – Information for parents.</li> </ol>
<b>Day 6</b>	Has consent been received from parents? NO – End process  YES 		If no consent is received, LA ALN panel will send a letter to end process.
<b>Day 6 to Day 10</b>	YES, consent received.  Day 6 to Day 10 EYALNLO will ensure that a graduated response has been implemented by all professionals.	EY Setting  LA EYALNLO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One page Profile (If applicable)</li> <li>• Barriers to Learning Matrix – (If applicable)</li> <li>• Targets/strategies must be in place and progress</li> </ul>

			<p>evaluated for at least 2 terms / 12 weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will follow the Graduated Response Workflow.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 10.</b>	Day 10 – Arrange a PCP meeting	School LA EYALNLO	<p>Letters to be sent to all professionals and parents.</p> <p><a href="#">Appendix 2 - Parent Carer.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Appendix 2a Parent Carer Report Dec 21</a></p> <p><a href="#">Appendix 4 Professional Guidance Dec 21.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Appendix 4a Professional Report Dec 21</a></p> <p>If professionals are not able to attend, an up to date report is required.</p>
<b>Day 19</b>	Day 19 - PCP meeting is held to gather information	School LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PCP meeting held with all professionals and parents.</li> <li>All information will be gathered and all reports to be considered to be submitted to ALN panel for a consideration of an IDP.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 20</b>	Submission to LA for consideration of IDP to panel	<p>School to email LA ALN Panel with the following documents</p> <p>or LA EYALNLO to email all paperwork to LA panel.</p>	<p>Consideration of an IDP document to be completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PCP Review document</li> <li>One page profile</li> <li>Target plan</li> <li>Risk assessment (if applicable)</li> <li>EP reports</li> <li>Agency reports</li> <li>Parents written report</li> <li>Views of the learner This will be reviewed at next available LA panel</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">LA have 6 weeks to request professional reports</a></li> </ul>

<p><b>Local Authority now has 6 weeks – 30 days to draft and finalise an IDP</b></p>	<p>LA ALN Panel – From paperwork received, panel agrees that learner does not have ALN.</p> <p>Learner will continue to be monitored through targets set through universal and targeted provisions, in the school of placement.</p>	<p>LA ALN Panel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written confirmation to be sent to parents from the Local authority regarding the decision given, with right of appeal/dispute resolution</li> </ul>
	<p>LA ALN Panel agrees that learner does have ALN – A draft IDP is to be written</p>	<p>LA ALN Panel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA ALN panel to inform parents / settings / health that an IDP has been agreed and a draft IDP is in the process.</li> </ul>
	<p>EYALNLO drafts IDP – LA Panel to agree the written draft IDP</p>	<p>LA ALN Panel EYALNLO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blaenau Gwent ALN team to send out agreed draft IDP to parents and school.</li> </ul>
	<p>Do parents agree of draft IDP – Yes</p> <p>Parents do not agree </p>	<p>LA EYALNLO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If parents agree - LA will issue final IDP</li> <li>• Parents and EYALNLO to discuss changes and make amendments.</li> </ul>
	<p>LA issue final IDP. Review in 12 months</p>	<p>LA ALN Panel EYALNLO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and school to receive final IDP.</li> </ul>

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Pathway 0 – 7 Years	 Pathway 0-7 Years
Appendix 2	Pathway – Early Years Additional Needs Panel 0-3 Years	 Pathway into Early Years Additional Neec
Appendix 3	Pathway - Early Years learner arriving in a maintained setting from Preschool	 Pathway - learners arriving in a maintaine
Appendix 4	Pathway - Early Years learner arriving in a maintained setting <b>without</b> Preschool Experience	 Pathway learners arriving in a maintaine

For any queries regarding this guidance and/or the processes please email: [ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:ALNEnquiries@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)