

Diweddariad ar Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol **Additional Learning Needs Update**

Mai / May 2023



sirgar.llyw.cymru
carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council



ALN	Additional Learning Needs	<i>Refers to the learning difficulties or disabilities experienced by children and young people that make it more challenging for them to learn than their peers.</i>
ALNET	Additional Learning needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018	<i>The Act was introduced to make provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs, create an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions.</i>
IDP	Individual Development Plan	<i>A personalised plan developed for a child or young person with additional learning needs, outlining the support they require to succeed in their education.</i>
SEN	Special Education Needs	<i>SEN refers to the learning difficulties or disabilities experienced by children and young people that make it more challenging for them to learn than their peers.</i>
CYP	Children and Young People	<i>Refers to children under the age of 16 or, young people, 16 – 25</i>
LA	Local Authority	<i>Local councils, which is the most common type of local authority, are made up of councillors who are elected by the public in local elections. Councillors work with local people and partners, such as local businesses and other organisations, to agree and deliver on local priorities.</i>
DesCo	Designated Coordinator	<i>Designated staff member to coordinate the transition of children and young people with SEN to the ALN system.</i>
ALNCo	Additional Needs Coordinator	<i>A designated school staff member responsible for coordinating the support for children and young people with ALN.</i>
EHE	Electively Home Educated	<i>A form of education in which children are educated at home by their parents/tutors rather than attending a school setting.</i>
FEI	Further Education Institutions	<i>A post-secondary educational institution that offers vocational, technical, or academic courses to students.</i>
ISPI	Independent special post-16 institution	<i>Special post-16 institutions which are legally established to provide education and are not maintained schools or FE colleges, which provide specialist post-16 education and support to young people with some of the most severe learning difficulties or disabilities or low incidence needs.</i>
EOTAS	Educated Otherwise than at School	<i>EOTAS means the education or provision for children or young people outside of a formal educational setting.</i>
OoC	Out of County	<i>Refers to learners who attend schools or educational settings outside their home county (Carmarthenshire).</i>
WG	Welsh Government	<i>The Welsh Government is the devolved government of Wales.</i>
EY ALNLC	Early Years ALN Lead Officer	<i>This Lead Officer has responsibility for co-ordinating the local authority's functions under the ALN Act in relation to children under compulsory school age.</i>
PCP	Person Centred Planning	<i>Person centred care refers to a process that is people focused, promotes independence and autonomy, provides choice and control and is based on a collaborative team philosophy. It takes into account people's needs and views and builds relationships with family members.</i>

ESTYN	Inspectorate of education and training in Wales	<i>Estyn is the Office of His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government. Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales.</i>
SA	School Action	<i>A child should get more intensive help called School Action if they are making little or no progress with the help normally available in class</i>
SA+	School Action +	<i>This is an increased level of support for pupils who need more help than they can receive on School Action.</i>
ULP	universal learning provision	<i>The universal provision is provision that is available to all children and is available across settings and schools.</i>
TC	Teacher Centre	<i>School Management of Information System</i>
DECLOs	Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officers	<i>The DECLO has responsibility for co-ordinating the health board's functions in relation to children and young people who have additional learning needs</i>
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	<i>ASD refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication</i>
PEP	Personal Education Plan	<i>A personalised plan developed for looked-after children, outlining the support they require to succeed in their education.</i>
	Specialist Settings	<i>Educational settings that cater specifically to the needs of children and young people with additional learning needs or disabilities.</i>

The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with information pertaining to the progress and the areas of best practice with pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

The report provides:

1. An evaluation of the progress of transition from Statements of Special Education Needs (SEN) to Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for pupils with ALN.
2. An update on how ALN is categorised.
3. Feedback on the level of success of the transition into the new system, which will include an overview of the areas that are working well and those that need addressing.
4. Statistical data on pupils with ALN in mainstream schools and those requiring specialist setting support.

Introduction

Through the Additional Learning needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, the Welsh Government is transforming the expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with Additional Learning Needs.

The Act introduces a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people (CYP) with ALN. This, alongside a mandatory code, makes sure that the new ALN system has a set of clear, legally enforceable parameters within which local authorities, schools and other partners responsible for the delivery of services to children and young people with ALN must act. The new system sets out to:

- Simplify the system with a unified legislative framework for all children and young people with ALN, regardless of their level of need.
- Ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential.
- Improve the planning and delivery of support for learners, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process.
- Focus on the importance of identifying needs early and putting in place timely and effective interventions which are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes.

Implementation of the 2018 Act commenced on 1 September 2021 with the ALN system being phased in over a period of 3 years up until August 2024. An additional year in order to transfer statements to IDPs has been agreed by Welsh Government, taking conclusion of transfer into the new system up to August 2025.

An evaluation of the progress of transition from Statements of SEN to Individual Development Plans for pupils with ALN.

Children with Statements of SEN are being gradually transitioned to the new ALN system, starting from 1st September 2022. This phased transfer is taking place over three years as follows:

School year 2022 to 2023:

- Nursery, Years 1 and 2, Reception, Year 6, Year 10 and Year 11

School year 2023 to 2025:

- 2023/24: Year 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10.
- 2024/25: any child or young person who didn't transition during 2023/2024 from those mandated year groups and will now be in the following year groups- Year 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11.

It is important to note that the Minister for Education and Welsh Language has recently extended the ALN Act's implementation period from three to four years. This extension implies that children initially scheduled to move to the ALN system between September 2023 and August 2024 will now transition between September 2023 and August 2025.

To move children and young people in this group from the SEN system to the ALN system, the Local Authority (LA) is asking schools to issue an 'IDP notice' or 'No IDP notice' for each child and young person with a statement. Until this happens, the local authority remains under a duty to maintain the statement of SEN and arrange the Special Educational Provision set out in the statement of SEN.

Schools provide the 'IDP Notice' when they invite the child/young person and child's parents to their annual review. This serves as a transfer review instead of the Statement annual review. Schools use a person-centred approach in the transfer review to develop a draft IDP for the child/young person.

The draft IDP is submitted to the Local Authority via the IDP Platform for quality assurance. This draft version is shared with the child/young person and the child's parents for comment and is subsequently finalised by the local authority. This process should be completed within 12 weeks of the IDP Notice/Transfer Review invite letter.

In only the most exceptional circumstances, a 'No IDP Notice' is issued when the Local Authority does not consider the child/young person to have ALN. Schools are advised to contact the Local Authority if they consider a 'No IDP Notice' might be required.

The Local Authority is contacting other local authorities holding statements for Carmarthenshire children and young people (those that are looked after by or reside in Carmarthenshire) and discussing their transfer to IDPs.

For the groups of children and young people with a Statement of SEN mentioned in the section 'Categorisation of Additional Learning Needs,' a Designated Coordinator (DesCo) from the Inclusion Department team has been assigned. The DesCo's role is to ensure these children and young people transition to the new ALN system before the end of the relevant implementation period. If these children and young people attend a setting, the DesCo supports the school's Additional Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) or the specialist setting's Teacher in Charge in carrying out the process outlined earlier. For children and young people who do not attend a setting, such as those who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), a DesCo is assigned based on their experience related to the child/young person's needs and/or circumstances.

The ALNCo of the school or the Teacher in Charge of a specialist setting is responsible for sending out the 'IDP Notice' to families, facilitating the transfer review, and drafting the IDP. This process must be done under the guidance of the DesCo and follow the training and guidance provided by the Local Authority.

Data

Currently we are processing the following year groups as part of the implementation period 2022/23:

- Nursery Years 1 and 2, Reception, Year 6, Year 10 and Year 11

In total we have **231 statements** to transfer to the ALN system this academic year. They are broken down into the following year groups and categories:

Carmarthenshire Schools and Settings						
Year Groups	Maintained Schools	FEI	Specialist Settings	Non Maintained Schools	ISPI	
Nursery 1 & 2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reception	8	0	2	0	0	0
Year 6	37	0	16	0	0	0
Year 10	39	0	31	1	0	0
Year 11	40	0	38	0	0	0
Total	124	0	87	1	0	0

Other				
Year Groups	EHE	EOTAS Package	Home Tuition	
Nursery 1 & 2	0	0	0	0
Reception	0	0	0	0
Year 6	0	0	0	0
Year 10	2	0	0	0
Year 11	1	0	0	0
Total	3	0	0	0

The progress to date (31.03.23) for the 2022/2023 year groups are highlighted in the tables below:

	Carmarthenshire Maintained Schools		Carmarthenshire Specialist Settings		Carmarthenshire Non-Maintained Schools	
Total Number of CYP	124		87		1	
Schools Informed	124	100%	87	100%	1	100%
Transition Review Date Set	54	44%	37	43%	0	0%
Draft IDP Quality Assured	23	19%	29	33%	0	0%
Draft IDP Issued	21	17%	26	30%	0	0%
Final IDP Issued	15	12%	17	20%	0	0%

	Out of County Schools and Settings				
Year Groups	Maintained Schools (OoC)	FEI (OoC)	Specialist Settings (OoC)	Non Maintained Schools (OoC)	ISPI (OoC)
Nursery 1 & 2	0	0	0	0	0
Reception	0	0	0	0	0
Year 6	2	0	0	0	0
Year 10	6	0	1	0	0
Year 11	4	0	0	3	0
Total	12	0	1	3	0

	OoC Maintained Schools		OoC Non-Maintained Schools		OoC Specialist Settings		Other (EHE)	
Total Number of CYP	12		3		1		3	
Schools Informed	12	100%	1	33%	1	100%	0	0%
Transition Review Date Set	11	92%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%
Draft IDP Quality Assured	3	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Draft IDP Issued	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Final IDP Issued	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

For each child/young person that requires to be processed a decision needs to be made as per the decisions mentioned in 'categorisation of Additional Learning Needs' noted below. Local Authority projected decisions for 2022/23 are as follows:

LA Projected Decision	Total
The child or young person (CYP) <u>does not have ALN</u>	DOES NOT APPLY 0.43%
The CYP <u>has ALN</u> , and the <u>school</u> can maintain the Individual Development Plan	IDP-SCHOOL 49.3%
CYP <u>has ALN</u> , but the <u>Local Authority</u> needs to maintain the IDP	IDP-LA 49.8%

The distribution of school and local authority IDPs is nearly equal, with 49.3% being school IDPs and 48.8% LA IDPs. LA-maintained IDPs include children and young people with statements who don't attend Carmarthenshire-maintained schools, except for the 10 Looked-After Children in maintained schools.

2023/24

Starting September 2023, an additional 382 statements will need to be transferred to the ALN system by the end of the 2024/25 academic year. The breakdown of these statements by year group for 2023/24 is as follows:

Year Group 2023/24	Total
2	35
3	28
4	37
5	34
6	53
8	64
9	72
10	59
Total= 382	

Extensive action plans to manage the moving of individual learners, for which the LA retains responsibility, from the SEN system to the ALN system are in place.

Details have been shared with all schools relating to the process involved and the expectations for practitioners in working with the Local Authority to support the moving of learners onto the ALN system.

An update on how ALN is categorised.

As CYP transition to the new ALN system, there are three potential categorisation outcomes:

1. The CYP does not have ALN, and the outcome is categorised as "Does not apply" (DNA). Schools make universal and targeted learning provision for this category of learner.
2. The CYP has ALN, and the school can maintain the IDP. These cases are categorised as "School-maintained IDP" (IDP-SCH). Schools provide additional learning provision for this category of learner.
3. The CYP has ALN, but the Local Authority needs to maintain the IDP. These cases are referred to as "Local Authority Maintained IDPs" (IDP-LA). These children will normally access a specialist school or setting or have the below categorisation.

The following groups of children and young people, if identified as having ALN, will require a Local Authority Maintained IDP:

- Children and young people attending maintained specialist settings or schools.
- Looked-after children, regardless of the educational setting they attend.
- Children and young people with dual registration (attending more than one educational setting).
- Electively Home Educated children.
- Early Years children (under compulsory school age) not attending maintained schools.

- Detained children or young people (subject to a detention order and detained in relevant youth accommodation in Wales or England).
- Children enrolled in non-maintained settings.
- Young people attending independent special post-16 institutions (ISPI).
- Children and young people in maintained schools or Further Education Institutions (FEI) where securing additional learning provision independently would be unreasonable.

Feedback on the level of success of the transition into the new system, which will include an overview of the areas that are working well and those that need addressing.

Inclusion Department remodelling to manage the changing expectations.

The Inclusion Department have made extensive adaptations to accommodate the new way of working. New systems and processes have successfully been created. We have expanded the workforce in anticipation of the forecasted increased demands of delivering the new way of working, however it is recognised that additional funding is required to sustain the new system ensuring that the Local Authority is meeting statutory responsibilities. To address this the year-on-year growth has been requested.

The Inclusion Department has made good use of the additional Welsh Government (WG) funding to ameliorate temporary issues related to increased administrative aspects of establishing new processes and systems and then running both the ALN and SEN systems concurrently. However, we have needed to secure additional core funding as the changes necessary are seen as long-term and not exclusively related to implementation.

We are confident in our ability to manage the moving of the mandated year groups and the specific groups of learners over the forthcoming academic years. However, optimal conditions are necessary for this to happen as there is little resilience within the system to cope with any other demands. For example, there is increasing demands on the Inclusion Services because of the repercussions and on-going impact of the pandemic on learners. Schools are facing unprecedented pressure to improve attendance and support the academic, social and emotional well-being of learners. This consequently impacts on our Inclusion Services as it plays a central role in providing support for schools to adapt or adopt whole-school inclusive practices to cater for a much wider than usual range of needs.

Early Years

The role of the Early Years ALN Lead Officer (EY ALNLO) has enabled strong progress to be made in implementing the Act. Listening to parents and schools suggests that families have more confidence in the system because they are respected as equal partners in all decisions and that their views are taken meaningfully into account. On the few occasions where parents have expressed frustration or dissatisfaction, the EY ALNLO reports that this is usually because misinformation

about the new way of working was provided by other agencies when initial concerns were raised about their child potentially having ALN. Nearly all of the cases have been swiftly resolved once the parents have had an opportunity to engage with the EY ALNLO in person-centred meetings. The EYALNLO is a statutory role, it is recognised that to fulfil the statutory requirements for Early Years significant investment in the central ALN team will be required to support families and children, schools with transitioning young learners into school, advising preschool settings on managing the needs of learners and managing the required central statutory processes from 0-5.

Post 16 Provision for Young People with ALN

Planning for the 'flow-through' of Post 16 learners with ALN is underway, however we have considerable concern about the increased capacity (in terms of LA officer time and knowledge) to both plan and support transition to non-maintained Post 16 settings and the realignment of the current provision with the expectations of the new system.

With regard to Post 16 specialist provision, we are currently voicing our concerns about the uncertainty relating to funding arrangements. Local Authorities have been relieved and reassured by Welsh Government confirmation that it will continue to honour current placements as well as the arrangements made for those in Year 11 during the 2022-23 academic year who will need specialist placements. However, this only provides a temporary reprieve as establishing funding equity across Wales will inevitably lead to gains for some and losses for others, given that practice is vastly different across LAs.

Carmarthenshire is significantly out of kilter with many areas of Wales as we have a significant footprint of Post 16 specialist provision that accommodates young people to 19. The Code directs that there is now only 2 years of entitlement and that pathway options should be available. There is a continuing need to develop a joint and shared vision about how best to meet the needs of Post 16 learners with ALN across Carmarthenshire which will necessitate improved strategic engagement between the Local Authority, local further education institutions (FEI) and health delivery partners.

School Implementation and Development

The new way of working is overwhelmingly welcomed by ALNCOs. There is a consensus that person-centred practice brings a significant and well-needed improvement to supporting learners with ALN and their families. Where schools have applied PCP approaches to a broader range of school-based practices there is evidence of improved strategic management, operational organisation, and staff wellbeing.

All ALNCOs have had access to high-quality Inclusion Department-led professional development relating to person centred practice leading to enhanced levels of understanding and skills. Feedback suggests that person-centred meetings with learners and their families engender higher levels of trust, which in turn elicit better and more meaningful information about how best to support learners. Although this new approach is valued and much preferred, conducting the IDP process as it is intended requires more time than anticipated and far exceeds that allowed for Special

Educational Needs Co-ordinators under the old system. Consequently, many ALNCoS report that there is a significant increase in demands on their time.

Most schools have prepared well for the transformation from SEN to ALN and made good use of the support offered by the Inclusion Department directly and via the cluster model in developing practice. Where cluster working is well-established it has been effective in developing capacity and consistency within and across schools to support ALN practice. Evaluating the impact of the new way of working is in the early stages of development. In a very few instances exemplary practice has been successful in influencing whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning for ALN and creating sustainable processes for quality assuring IDPs, this is evident in a notable number of ESTYN inspection reports.

Despite good early gains in improving whole-school ALN practice, many ALNCoS report that because of the enduring repercussions of the pandemic, schools are having to prioritise addressing the upsurge of learning, social and emotional needs of learners in general. Efforts therefore have been directed at re-establishing equilibrium in schools, meaning that it has not always been possible to focus on developing whole-school ALN practice as originally intended. This has also resulted in financial pressures at a time of reconsideration of the ALN Formula Funding model to align with the new Code. This does not mean that schools are not committed to ALN implementation, in fact the opposite is true, but it is a recognition that more time may be needed to embed robust and effective whole-school ALN practice. The focus of the ALN Formula Funding Model has been to reduce barriers to accessing funding and ensuring that funding is provided to schools to build capacity for all learners rather than specifically to individual children based on need. This supports schools to effectively plan early for the needs of learners.

Initial feedback from ALNCOs suggests that moving the mandated year groups from the SEN system to the ALN system has been manageable during the first year of implementation. This has predominantly been due to the fact that an extension of time was allowed by Welsh Government. Broadly speaking, this granted two academic years for schools to move these groups of learners. However, significant concerns have been raised about the capacity of schools to move the mandated groups during the final year of implementation (September 2023 - August 2024).

Over the first two academic years the numbers of learners at SA and SA+ moving from the SEN to the ALN system across Wales totalled approximately 43,000 (excluding statemented learners). Whereas approximately 33,000 across Wales (excluding statemented learners) are due to move within the final year of implementation. This therefore represents a significant increase for schools to manage within a shorter timescale. Welsh Government responded to concerns of ALNCoS and central service officers and has extended the transition completion period for an additional year.

Key successes fro ALNCOs include:

- Coordination of ALN process across all schools.
- Understanding of the strategic role of the ALNCo.

- Adhering to the ALNET implementation plan, conveying the change in system with children and their parents to ensure a smooth transition from the SEN to the ALN system.
- The understanding and embedding of a person-centred ethos into schools to support the decision-making process.
- Developing a good universal learning provision (ULP) offer and understanding the importance of this in meeting the needs of all learners, not just those with an identified need.

Challenges for ALNCOs include:

- Resources/funding to enhance the school's universal/inclusive offer, which would improve the progress of all learners and therefore reduce the number of children who require additional learning provision.
- Insufficient time for the ALNCO to implement change effectively, some ALNCOs have high teaching commitments and other areas of responsibility.
- Insufficient access to specialist staff due to the small scale of the team/limited capacity centrally. Schools need readily available access to central expertise.
- Schools require time to adjust to the responsibility for statutory decision-making processes, preparing and maintaining plans for children/young people, and adhering to statutory timescales.
- Small schools find it difficult to understand and complete the processes under the new system as they have fewer children that need to be processed. The funding of universal learning provision and targeted support is difficult in small schools due to economies of scale.
- ALNCOs' confidence in using the IDP Platform needs improving, particularly for those who don't have many cases to process, as they don't have the chance to get used to using the platform. Teacher Centre is struggling to evolve at the pace we require.
- Welsh-medium schools consistently express concerns about the lack of parity with English medium schools in being able to access a wide range of standardised assessments and resources to support the early and accurate identification of ALN.

Training and Support for Staff and Stakeholders

Before and during the implementation, a comprehensive training and guidance package has been provided and continues to support both LA staff and schools in implementing the ALNET Act. A continuous professional learning programme is delivered to schools to ensure that ALNCOs have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the new duties.

This training has been delivered through various channels over the years, and it is continually reviewed, implemented, and made available:

The practice of evaluating the quality and impact of IDPs is variable and requires further refinement and cross education discussion as to the most effective means to ensure that schools are providing quality provision for all learners. We are currently running an internal process of quality assuring IDPs, however this is extremely time

consuming on officers and is identifying gaps in the knowledge and understanding of school practitioners in identifying effective outcomes for learners.

- ALN Transformation Conferences
- ALNCo Forums
- Secondary ALNCo For a
- Half-termly cluster meetings- Secondary school and feeder primary school ALNCOs and LA cluster lead. Educational Child Psychologists, members of Behaviour Support and Educational Support Advisors also attend when available.
- Half-termly specialist settings clusters- Specialist settings supporting children and young people with the same areas of need meet with the specialist advisory teacher for that need.
- ALN Bitesize Training: A bi-weekly online training program for schools, with each session focusing on a different aspect of Additional Learning Needs. Guest speakers are invited to share relevant processes and best practices. These sessions are recorded, allowing schools to disseminate the content to appropriate staff within their school or setting.
- Termly school support visits- Advisory teachers meet with their assigned schools to create an action plan for ALN Transformation specific to the school in question. These plans are monitored and reviewed termly. Plans are also shared with Educational Support Advisors.
- Specific training on using the new LA's IDP Platform to monitor statutory processes, prepare IDPs, and refer cases to the LA.
- Specific guidance on how schools can support the LA in transferring statement children and young people to the ALN system.
- Regular headteacher bulletins with ALN transformation updates.
- Presentations delivered to headteachers on ALN Transformation and statutory requirements.
- Advisory teachers supporting schools in quality assuring IDPs, in addition to DesCo's who conduct this role for LA statutory processes.
- Bespoke support/training as needed, identified, or requested.

Working with Health

We work closely with our Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officers (DECLOs) and significant and useful efforts are jointly put into multi-agency working. However, the engagement of health professionals in collaborative working is variable. Issues are compounded by differing expectations between us, schools and health in interpreting the ALN Code regarding health involvement and provision, this requires prompt clarification.

We remain concerned about the capacity of health professional to engage consistently in the IDP process. We are acutely aware of the continuous and cumulous impact of the pandemic, understandably efforts and resources are prioritised to address these

acute issues. Further work is needed to establish joint expectations between LAs and health.

Statistical data on pupils with ALN in mainstream schools and those requiring specialist setting support.

The ALN Strategy Document and 4 Phase Behaviour Model document sets out the Inclusion Departments vision for provision across Carmarthenshire. The aim of the new approach, as stated in the Code is as follows: ***“To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all 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.”***

The LA under the code has a duty to favour mainstream education.

Carmarthenshire Inclusion Department vision is to create *‘21st century learning environment which meets the needs of Carmarthenshire’s growing and changing population. Schools are well-designed to offer inclusive and accessible education equipped with flexible spaces, digital technologies and specialist resources to meet a wide range of additional learning needs.’* This includes both mainstream and specialist setting development. Mainstream schools require the following environments to support inclusion:

- Spaces to create small groups/classes delivering stage and provision specific education.
- Small spaces to provide 1:1/2:1 support.
- Creative outdoor spaces
- Spaces for professionals and families to meet.
- Appropriate changing and toileting spaces
- Assistive Technology available
- Low sensory stimulating environments
- Sufficiently accessible spaces

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Provision

Since September 2021, there has been a significant increase in the demand for ASD provision across Carmarthenshire in line with a national trend. In the 2021/22 academic year there was a shortfall of 30 places which is an over capacity of 20%. This trend continues into years 22/23, and in 23/24.

The significant increase in demand experienced as a result of:

- Inward migration- families relocating to Carmarthenshire.
- A significant increase in the number of pupils being diagnosed with the additional needs/ASD medical diagnosis which is recognised as a national trend. Health Board has increased the capacity of the neurodevelopmental team to process the backlog of ASD referrals resulting in an increase of ASD diagnosis. Across the last 3 years this has seen over a 100 children in Carmarthenshire with ASD diagnosis in our schools.
- School capacity- growth in local school population/building suitability

- Covid related disruption of well-established early identification processes
- Early identification processes re-established.
- Impact of lockdowns on learners with ASD/Social Communication resulting in reluctance and heightened anxiety to return to face-to-face education, lack of routines and specialist support resulting in entrenched/complex behaviours.

The Local Authority has a legal obligation to make provision for these pupils and could face costly legal challenge if the need is not met locally. This could result in the legal obligation to secure costly out of county independent placements (upwards of £150,000 for a given year). Parents readily advised the Department that if specialist provision is not provided, they will be taking legal action via SEN appeals processes.

To counter this position the following specialist ASD settings have been opened/in the process of being opened geographically spread across the county:

Llanelli Area

- Additional class in Burry Port- **Canolfan Goleudy**
- Class in Llangennech- **Canolfan y Fesen** (awaiting completion of works)
- 2 classes in Glan Y Mor- **Canolfan Y Mor** (1 class open, 1 open in Sept '23)

Ammanford/Dinefwr Area

- 2 classes in Ysgol Y Bedol- **Canolfan Y Bedol** (1 class open, 1 open September '23)

Future Requirements for ASD Provision:

- In addition, the Carmarthen area requires a minimum of 1 ASD class.

It is important to note that all the opened classes are already full, and those awaiting opening have waiting list which will mean they too will be full. We would not want to open further ASD classes in the short term to allow the classes and mainstream to embed provision. Yearly review is required.

All other Specialist Settings

All specialist settings within Carmarthenshire are up to/overcapacity currently, many are already full for next year also which aligns with the management of placement request. Termly monitoring is undertaken.

Additional Provision Required/Amendments to Provision:

- Parcyrhun Hearing Impairment Base is over capacity and not fit for purpose. This is to be considered within the reconfiguration of education within the Ammanford area.
- Evaluation and transformation of the provision of specialist settings for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Review of Observation and Assessment Units – align with Early Years ALN Transformation
- Post 16 Provision Review urgently required to meet the needs of the new statutory responsibilities as set out in the ALN Code.