

Report to Scrutiny - June 2024

Progress made regarding the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and the areas of best practice with pupils with Additional Learning Needs within Carmarthenshire

What's going well in Carmarthenshire:

- Reforms largely welcomed by schools, practitioners, stakeholders, parents and carers. ALNCo's are enthusiastic and committed, although compromised by the workload. ALNCo role and pay currently under consultation by Welsh Government.
- Where ALNCo's are members of the school senior leadership team they champion ALN across all aspects of a school, however not all ALNCo's are part of the senior leadership team.
- Steady progress to monitor and review provision to meet the requirements of the Code is being made by all schools.
- Carmarthenshire schools have worked hard to develop workforce capacity and to deliver transformation within the timeframe set by Welsh Government. The schools are able to undertake PCP approaches and identify needs early to make prompt and effective provision.
- Carmarthenshire schools have a sound understanding of their responsibilities in relation to IDPs.
- Carmarthenshire schools have embedded person-centred planning and approaches.
- For those learners that no longer are identified with ALN Carmarthenshire schools implement strategies to continue to meet their needs and provide ongoing progress monitoring as appropriate and they continue to receive suitable targeted support.
- Central Inclusion Team support with cluster working has supported school-to-school working, sharing of practices and specialist resources. ALN School Support Visits delivered by the ALN Advisory Team offer ongoing support with tracking and tailored school visits to address ALN transformation and quality assurance.
- Through the support of central services the close working relationship and guidance documentation has supported schools to apply the act and the code ensuring consistency in determining ALN and ALP.
- Parity of bilingual system – resources, assessments, staffing and sufficiency of specialist provision.
- Following the ESTYN Inspection Carmarthenshire was successful in hosting the National Lead Programme for Welsh Government and is working with the Welsh Language Lead to develop Welsh language tools and resources.

Update on Carmarthenshire's Status with the New ALN Act:

1. Local Authority's Position on Transferring All Children to the New ALN System:

On Target: Our Local Authority is on target to transfer all children to the new ALN system by the end of the 2024/2025 academic year.

Progress Overview:

- Mandated Year Groups 2022/23: All children in mandated year groups (Years 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10) have been successfully transitioned to the new ALN system, with only a few exemptions which have been resolved.
- Mandated Year Groups 2023-2025: Schools are making excellent progress for the mandated year groups 2023-2025, with many schools completing the process early.

2. Main Challenges for ALN Implementation:

Capacity Building:

- Ensuring all schools have adequate staff capacity to handle the transition efficiently.
- Until the reform agenda is fully embedded across all areas of classroom practice and operational /strategic leadership the role of the ALNCo will continue to be workload heavy.
- Increasing complexity of needs and identification of children and young people leading to social and emotional issues and increased ALN. Within Carmarthenshire the impact of this has been seen in the requirement to expand specialist setting provision for ASD.

Consistency in ALN Identification:

- Ensuring consistency in identifying ALN across all settings and aligning ULP/ALP principles.
- Addressing discrepancies in ALN school/LA IDP thresholds between neighbouring LAs to prevent complications for children moving across borders.
- A minority of schools preparing an IDP at a late stage to get a specialist placement when there is no evidence of an IDP being in place previously.
- Schools making decision in year 5/6 in order to ensure that provision is in place in year 7 decisions need to be made early.

Funding and Resource Allocation:

- Managing the transition from the SEN to the ALN system, which has proven to be not cost-neutral as originally advised.
- This financial impact has affected both schools and the Local Authority, requiring strategic management of resources.
- Necessity to review ALN Funding formula on a yearly basis to ensure sufficient funding, value, distribution and timely response to change.

Quality Assurance of IDPs:

- Maintaining consistency and accuracy in IDP preparation, particularly in aligning school and LA practices.

Health and Multi-Agency Collaboration:

- Implementing a clear standard operating procedure for health involvement in ALN decision-making.
- Developing a multi-agency approach for integrating mental health needs within ALN classifications.

Standard Operating Procedures for Health Services:

- Capacity for both schools and LA in ensuring all relevant health provisions are added to existing IDPs.

Engagement with Non-Maintained Settings:

- Supporting non-maintained settings in understanding and implementing ULP/ALP principles.
- Creating bespoke training for early years and non-maintained settings

Post 16

- Post 16 - New responsibilities to meet needs of post 16 learners in mainstream and specialist provision for FEI and local authorities We have a large post 16 provision offer in schools and specialist settings which may not be the same in other authorities.

3. Future developments to support ongoing reform

- Develop self-evaluation processes aligned to curriculum and school improvement reform to monitor and review inclusive practices and delivery of provision.
- Whole school developments to underpin more efficient IDP processes. Continue the development of Teacher Centre as a data system to effectively manage process across schools and the LA.
- Broaden the method of communicating with parents and careers to ensure parental confidence, communication, awareness of rights to appeal.
- Health and education - expectations and multiagency involvement
- While effective ALN transition guidance is in place, post 16 transition planning requires further development.

Hosting National Leadership Roles

National Welsh Language Lead

- Strengthen support challenge and active dialogue with and between deliver partners – via monitoring, leads.

National ALN Improvement Champions Network

- Build national leadership capacity, embedded in a self-improving system, to realise the ambitions of ALN reform (Via Champions and ADEW)