



Introduction

The purpose of this project is to ensure that the Central South Region is able to meet the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act in transforming expectations and outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). The Act aims to create:

- a unified legislative framework to support all children of compulsory school age or below with additional learning needs (ALN) and to support young people with ALN who are in school or further education (FE);
- an integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions; and
- a fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

The Act is supported by a statutory ALN Code (currently in draft) which details the following five principles that will underpin the ALN system:

- 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 additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh.

The Act and Code coupled with the wider elements of the ALN Transformation Programme of workforce development, transition support and supplementary supporting policy will transform ways of working so that the new ALN system will:

- 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 from 0 to 25 with ALN, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process; and
- 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 new system will begin in September 2021 and be completed by the end of 2024 with the additional expectation that new the statutory roles introduced through the Act, namely the Local Authority Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (LA ALN LO), the school Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) and the Health Board Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) are in post by January 2021.



Regional Context

The following four high-level regional priorities details how the Central South region will prepare for the implementation of the act during 2020-21:

1. Ensure that all local authorities develop consistent practices and collaborate effectively with key partners to prepare for the new ways of working.
2. Ensure that local authority maintained schools develop consistent approaches to improving practice for learners with ALN that meet the expectations of the Act and are complementary to the wider national education reforms.
3. Develop support and provision for post compulsory-aged learners through identifying local and potential regional offers.
4. Develop Health Board preparedness for implementation of the Act

In order to be able to deliver on all aspects of the regional plan collaboration is required at all levels of the system within and between local authorities, school improvement services, FE colleges and the Health Boards. A central theme that runs throughout the regional plan is developing a shared and joint understanding of high quality and effective support and provision for children and young people with ALN and the co-dependency on partnership working to deliver this vision.

This project plan is funded by the Transformation Grant and allocated on a formula funding basis (70% pupil numbers and 30% school numbers). The Central South region has £809,562 this financial year to support the above priorities. The Transformation Grant is administered and monitored by the host authority, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The method of payment to partners will be done through a combination of journal transfers, direct invoicing or service level agreements depending on the activity.

Allocation of grant spend 2020-21

Local Authorities	Schools	FE	Health	Centrally retained	Total
£248,487	£388,575	£80,000	£60,000	£32,500	£809,562

This project plan is supported by service level agreements with the local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan, the health boards of Cwm Taf Morgannwg and Cardiff and the Vale, and the further education institutes of Bridgend College, Cardiff and the Vale College, Coleg y Cymoedd and Merthyr College.



Each high level action is underpinned by detailed plans within local authorities, further education colleges, UHBs that identify timescales, outputs, products and outcomes which are subjected to termly monitoring arrangements. Progress against the plan is monitored by the Regional ALN Transformation Project Board.

This Central South Region ALN Transformation Plan has been created during a time of considerable turmoil and uncertainty following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The ability to deliver on the plan in its entirety is dependent on services and settings being able to commit suitable time and effort to the ALN Transformation Programme. All partners have expressed an intention to make best endeavours to achieve the identified objectives, but because of the continuing disruptions caused by the pandemic these may need to be amended as implications become manifest, in response to the recovery plans in place across all settings, health boards and local authorities



PRIORITY 1: Ensure that all local authorities develop consistent practices and collaborate effectively with key partners to prepare for the new ways of working

Objectives:	
1.1	<p>Develop consistency of practice across the region in relation to Individual Development Plans through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting the roll out of Individual Development Plans on a pre-determined cohort within each LA • Improving inclusion officer knowledge of IDPs, their role in contributing to the process and how to collaborate in writing effective and appropriate recommendations that address identified specific barriers to learning • Ensuring that quality assurance processes are in place so that recommendations by inclusion officers concerning ALP are research-informed and evidence-based • Collaboration with Early Years settings, mainstream and special schools and FEIs on pilot IDPs within each LA • Involving health and social care on appropriate cases within each LA • All LAs sharing the feedback from each IDP pilot to inform regional best practice • Exploring the changes needed in internal LA processes for identifying, maintaining an IDP and securing ALP • Disseminating the learning from the IDP pilot with teaching practitioners and providing exemplar guidance on effective IDP processes • Improving practitioners' skills in writing effective IDPs that inform teaching and learning and address specific barriers to learning
1.2	<p>Develop management information systems, including IT infrastructure to support improvement of provision for learners through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each LA refining current arrangements or if necessary exploring new electronic systems for collecting and managing information in readiness for the new way of working. • The use of the electronic platform is consistent across all inclusion teams/officers • Exploring the developments needed to allow other stakeholders to access and contribute using the electronic platform • Refining LA based monitoring processes to gather information about the progress of learners with LA maintained IDPs/statements • Consideration of staffing needs to enable timely transfer of information from the old system to the new system, as well as continuing to manage the old system until the end of the mandatory roll out in 2024 • Identification of a lead in each LA as the main point of contact to receive and transfer information with the health and FEIs • Use of process maps to ensure compliance with the prescribed timescales for identifying ALN and creating and reviewing IDPs.



1.3	<p>Develop consistency of practice across the region for Early Years through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that LA ALN Lead Officers are in place by January 2021 and that the duties and responsibilities reflect the regional job description • The delivery of the regional training modules to early years practitioners/settings • Continued involvement of a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach in evaluating and refining the EY training modules • Integration of the Early Years training offer into the LAs continuing professional development training plan as a rolling programme • Improving LA monitoring systems and process to ensure consistency of practice across EY settings • Updating/creating Early Years toolkit that reflects both regional expectations and provision at a local level • Ensure engagement of social care and health in developing the EY toolkit with consideration given to working at an inter-regional level, for example on a health board footprint
1.4	<p>Developing a joint and agreed approach on what provision schools should ordinarily be expected to make available for learners with ALN through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between LAs and the Central South Consortium in developing an understanding of their reciprocal and co-dependent roles in promoting consistent practice across all schools • Exploring operational arrangements between the LA and the CSC to ensure that the LA will be able to undertake its statutory duty to review ALP and have a view on the extent to which schools provide: high quality, differentiated teaching for learners with ALN; targeted intervention and support for learners with ALN; effective systems for monitoring the progress and achievement of learners with ALN and their inclusion in the everyday life of the school; processes for reviewing the effectiveness of interventions used to support learners with ALN and the skills and expertise of staff; and methods for involving learners and parents at every stage • Designing joint arrangements between LAs and the CSC so that schools are effectively and consistently held to account for the progress of learners with ALN and the quality of provision and leadership for ALN • Joint working between the LA and the CSC in promoting a school-to-school approach to building capacity and improvement planning for ALN based on a wide range of quality assured information • Training opportunities to support school governors in providing strategic direction for schools in line with the legally enforceable parameters of the Act. • Co-construction of regional guidance for schools between LAs, CSC and practitioners on universal teaching and learning and additional learning provision. • Continued joint working between LAs in creating a regional definition of ALN and criteria for IDPs • Updating the graduated response of each LA so that it reflects local ALP and corresponding service pathways • Each LA to revisit criteria for school/LA maintained IDPs and if appropriate refine in the light of the regional definition



1.5	<p>Continuation of professional learning opportunities for ALNCoS that focus on developing skills and expertise to carry out the new statutory duties through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination of approach between LAs and the CSC in providing a coherent and comprehensive professional learning programme to support ALN Act school readiness for leaders and practitioners • Analysis of a wide range of sources including reviews/ audits/surveys to inform collaborative LA and CSC improvement planning for ALN at school, cluster, LA and regional level • LA-led training for schools on their statutory duties and the legally enforceable parameters of the Act • LA-led training for schools on the statutory duties on LAs and the local arrangements in place to comply with all requirements • Developing quality assured processes between LAs and the CSC that identify excellence to support capacity building through a school-led, school to school approach
1.6	<p>Develop a shared understanding between Health Board and LAs for supporting identifying and supporting the needs of learners with ALN (0-25).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with health in LA-led working party to consider and refine the graduated response from occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and CAHMS and ensure that proposals are fit for purpose and deliverable in all educational settings. • LAs and health professionals to co-create a regional document detailing expectations on provision in mainstream and specialist settings and how the respective support is provided to develop the graduated response as identified. • LAs to contribute to Health Board training plan to increase capacity about universal, inclusive provision and joint approaches to early intervention for children and young people with ALN
1.7	<p>Continue to develop strategic links with post 16/19 providers and settings to develop an agreed vision for inclusion and supporting the needs of learners with additional learning needs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with colleges on LA-led working party to complete a joint graduated response for FE and LA maintained IDPs • LAs to scope and cost proposals, including commissioning arrangements for supporting ALN practice in FE • Agreeing and implementing the LA multi-agency Transition Protocol/Guidance • LAs to identify future local needs and secure early engagement with FEIs on potential action planning • Regional collaboration on the development of guidance/protocol into employment and work-based learning other than FE • LAs to work together to identify any collective gaps in specialist provision and work with the FE Transformation Lead to explore regional solutions.
1.8	<p>Provision of advice and guidance for parents/carers through:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of accessible information about the new way of working to include the statutory duties on LAs and the corresponding local operational arrangements • Use of regionally agreed easy read resources to promote the same message across the region • Consideration given to the identification and resource implications of a named contact point so that parents/carers have access to objective advice and guidance promote avoiding dispute and early resolution • Continued use of parent/carer focus groups to inform the development of LA information, guidance and advice so that is shaped by service users
1.9	<p>Improving independent parent/carer/young person support services through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with the independent parent/carer service to review and amend the current regional guidance • Each LA to review current parent partnership and advocacy services in line with the ALN Code • Extending the provision to include the service for young people up to the age of 25
1.10	<p>Continue to develop a regional approach to support Welsh medium provision and increase consistency and sharing of best practice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a regional training that is accessible to all Welsh medium schools • Delivery of the regional training plan • Development of Welsh medium resources • Evaluating the success of the training plan and planning to meet future needs. • Collaboration between Cardiff University, CSC, LAs and schools to pilot the roll-out of the regional commissioned standardised Welsh medium reading test
1.11	<p>Improving knowledge on the legal implications of the new ALN system through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional training for legal services on the statutory duties • Consultation between legal departments and other directorates and services within LAs on the implications of the Act and Code • Review and update council policies to reflect the new ALN system • Raise awareness of implications of the new duties to all stakeholders
1.12	<p>Improving the capacity of the sensory specialist work force by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of training programme to meet demand as identified in each LA



PRIORITY 2: Ensure that local authority maintained schools develop consistent approaches to improving practice for learners with ALN that meet the expectations of the Act and are complementary to the wider national education reforms.

Objectives:	
2.1	<p>ALNCOs will need to be in post in all schools by January 2021. School leaders will need to ensure that the ALNCO has the necessary skills to enable the school to deliver the functions prescribed in law. Professional learning activities will focus on the development of the strategic role of the ALNCO in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping schools plan, manage and deliver their duties and responsibilities in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with ALN. • Guiding the senior leadership team in advising, supporting and challenging the systems and process to identify and meet the needs of pupils with ALN. • Involvement in the strategic co-ordination of ALN resources and decisions about budgets and resources and to have a view on value for money. • Ensuring that they are not directly involved in day to day process for supporting pupils ALN and that all teachers are held to account for the progress of learners with ALN in all lessons. • Providing professional guidance to class teachers on effective pedagogical practice that accelerates learning for pupils with ALN. • Reporting to governors on the quality of progress, provision and leadership for ALN.
2.2	<p>Develop consistency across the region in relation to school practice for meeting the needs of learners with ALN through joint collaboration between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and LAs on pilot IDPs. • Schools, LAs and the CSC on good quality universal teaching and learning and evidence-based additional learning provision. • Schools, LAs and CSC on improving quality assurance systems for evaluating learner progress, provision and leadership. • Schools, LAs and CSC in promoting the regional ALN Transformation resources and guidance.
2.3	<p>Guidance for governors on providing strategic direction for schools in line with the legally enforceable parameters of the Act. This will focus on the duties of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying ALN • Preparing, creating and maintaining Individual Development Plans • Ceasing IDPs • Holding schools to account for the educational provision and leadership for ALN as well as the progress of learners with ALN.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing accessible information to parents/carers, children and young people• Ensuring that children, young people and their parents/carers are fully involved in decisions that affect them• Inclusive whole-school practices that ensure the full involvement of learners with ALN in all aspects of school life
2.4	<p>Schools to support parents/carers and children and young people in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding the new ways of working• Providing information about processes at school for identifying ALN and providing ALP.• Promoting regionally created easy read and accessible resources.• Signposting to the LA for further information, advice and support• Avoiding disputes and early dispute resolution• Promoting the rights of appeal• Signposting to independent parent/carer services



PRIORITY 3: Develop support and provision for post compulsory-aged learners through identifying local and potential regional offers.

Objectives:	
3.1	<p>Develop consistency of practice across the college in relation to Individual Development Plans through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with LAs on pilot IDPs • Disseminating learning from previous college-based IDP pilot in terms of effectiveness of impact on outcomes and progress of learners • Improving lecturers' knowledge of IDPs, and how they inform teaching and learning • Developing processes that allow lecturers to contribute to the IDP process • Ensuring that quality assurance processes are in place so that the ALP provided is research-informed and evidence-based
3.2	<p>Develop management information systems, including IT infrastructure to support improvement of provision for learners so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each department/subject area contributes to the information gathering on learners and that arrangements are in place to let staff know about the needs of learners and how to meet those needs • Quality assurance processes are refined and that college-based monitoring of teaching and learning demonstrates that all lecturers address the barriers to learning in their subject area • Monitoring and tracking the effectiveness of the ALP ensures accelerated learning • A college lead is identified as the main point of contact to receive and transfer information with the LA • The prescribed timescales for identifying ALN and creating and reviewing IDPs are met.
3.3	<p>Provide advice and guidance for young people about the new ALN system and what support they can expect from the college and its partners through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the national Pathfinder website • Ensuring that college websites display what is available to learners with ALN • Providing accessible information about the new way of working and processes at the college for identifying ALN and appropriate ALP • Putting in place arrangements for avoiding disputes and early dispute resolution • Signposting to the LA for further information, advice and support • Promoting the rights of appeal • Engaging with the LA to secure access to independent advocacy services



3.4	<p>Continuation of professional development for staff that focuses on developing skills and expertise to support young people with ALN through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating and delivering a training plan for staff that emphasises inclusive practices and focuses on pedagogical approaches to mitigate barriers to learning• Ensuring that all staff have access to a central bank of quality-assured, resources/information to support professional development• Evaluating the effectiveness of the training plan on improving outcomes for learners
3.5	<p>Continue to develop strategic links with LAs and UHBs to establish an agreed vision for inclusion and supporting the needs of young people with additional learning needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging in LA-led working party to refine FE Universal and ALP and collaborate on a joint graduated response• Inclusion officers and college staff co-creating a local document detailing expectations for provision and how the respective support is provided to develop the graduated response as identified.• Collaborating with the LA on the Transition Protocol• Continuing to host events that promote the college offer with schools and wider partners• Strengthening links between colleges and adult health services through the identification of key leads• Working with other colleges to compare and contrast ALP and where appropriate share good practice to develop capacity



PRIORITY 4: Develop Health Board preparedness for implementation of the Act

Objectives:	
4.1	<p>Ensure that a Designated Educational Clinical Lead is in post by January 2021 through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB and Cardiff and the Vale UHB to secure a DECLO to cover both areas
4.2	<p>Develop consistency of practice across the Health Board in relation to Individual Development Plans through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with LAs and schools on pilot IDPs • Identification of capacity within services to support engagement in the LA IDP pilot • Improving professionals' knowledge of IDPs, their role in contributing to the process and how to write effective and appropriate health specific recommendations for ALP • Ensuring that quality assurance process are in place so that all recommendations for ALP are research-informed and evidence-based • Improving collaboration between children and adult departments to create a seamless approach for children and young people with ALN within the 0-25 age range
4.3	<p>Develop management information systems, including IT infrastructure to support the planned new way of working to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope and develop IT infrastructure requirements • Explore possibility of single point of entry and exit in terms of communicating with LA • Increase consistency of operating processes across and between different therapies and disciplines of managing referrals within prescribed timescales. • Create reporting mechanisms that analyse performance of effectiveness of managing referrals, providing advice where appropriate and providing ALP when necessary.
4.4	<p>Continue to provide a professional development programme for staff to support the new way of working by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a training plan, based on internal audit, for key staff that is linked to performance management • Ensuring that all relevant staff have access to and engage with the Eliesha e-training modules in line with their development need
4.5	<p>Collaborate with LAs and FEIs to develop a shared and joint understanding of meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN between the ages of 0-25 by:</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in LA-led working party to refine and improve the graduated response from occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and CAHMS • Inclusion officers and health specialists co-creating a regional document detailing expectations on provision in mainstream and specialist settings and how the respective support is provided to develop the graduated response as identified. • Strengthening links between adult health services and local colleges through the identification of relevant personnel in the adult teams • Working with FE to increase understanding of how best to support the health needs of young people
4.6	<p>Embed the regional multi-agency, multi-disciplinary Early Years training programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key health professional to deliver the training modules in-house • Identify and release key health professionals to continue working with LA officers to refine the training programme
4.7	<p>Increase knowledge of the Act and its implications for those with Putting it Right responsibilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training for key professionals on the Act • Identify potential resource implications and risks for the Health Board
4.8	<p>Improve effectiveness and efficiency of internal health arrangements for early identification of ALN to provide timely information for LAs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining health multiservice identification processes • Collaboration with LAs on discreet pilots, for example special school triage/ Early Years