



CYFLAWNI **TEGWCH** A **RHAGORIAETH** MEWN **ADDYSG** A
GWELL LLES I BAWB

EQUITY AND **EXCELLENCE** IN **EDUCATION** AND **ENHANCED**
WELLBEING FOR ALL

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
Education and Inclusion Services

**Additional Learning Needs
Principles Document**

September 2023

Rhondda Cynon Taf is committed to ensuring that all learners have access to excellent schools that deliver high-quality education that enables them to achieve the very best possible outcomes they are capable of and realise their ambitions. This is reflected in our mission statement 'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced wellbeing for all'.

In doing so, Rhondda Cynon Taf ensures that it is compliant with the statutory requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (Wales) 2018 and its supporting mandatory Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code for Wales 2021.

The aim of the Code is:

To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all children and young people 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 key principles underpinning the ALN system in Wales are as follows:

A rights-based approach where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, young person and their parents / carers are central to the planning and provision of support; and the child, young person and their parents / carers are enabled to participate as fully as possible in the decision-making processes. This can be achieved through the implementation of Person-Centred Practice (PCP).

Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning where needs are identified and provision put in place at the earliest opportunity.

Collaboration where services work together to ensure ALN are identified early, and appropriate co-ordinated support is put in place to enable children and young people to achieve positive expectations, experiences and outcomes.

Inclusive education which supports full participation in mainstream education, wherever feasible, and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN.

A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver Additional Learning Provision (ALP) in Welsh.

The underpinning factors and considerations for decision making processes in Rhondda Cynon Taf in respect of ALN and the ALP required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN, at both a school and LA level, are informed by the above aim and principles described above.

Definition of ALN

For the purposes of the Act, the term 'additional learning needs is defined as:

- (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 child 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 child 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

In summary, the use of the term ALN relates to a child or young person who has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for ALP.

Many children and young people are likely at some point to experience short term issues with their learning, for example because of a period of absence from an education setting caused by a temporary illness, or because they have suffered a bereavement or some other trauma. In these circumstances, schools may need to take action to help the child or young person catch up and / or to prevent the issue from escalating. These situations would not ordinarily amount to ALN on their own; but it is possible that, in some cases, this could result in a difficulty in learning which calls for ALP.

When identifying ALN it is important to understand that children progress at different rates and what appears to be underperformance when compared to other learners of the same age does not in itself mean that a learner has ALN. As noted in the Code (20.10) some learners may be making good progress from a lower starting point and some learners will have lower levels of ability and attainment who will progress at a slower but steady rate. It is essential that these learners have access to an appropriately differentiated curriculum to enable them to make suitable progress. However, this may not amount to ALP.

Where progress is considered to be less than expected over time and the attainment gap between the learner and their peers has not been addressed despite the application of differentiated teaching and standard targeted interventions, this would usually indicate that the learner may have an ALN.

Section 20.8 of the Code characterises less than expected progress as progress which:

- is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline;
- fails to match or better the child's or young person's previous rate of progress; or
- fails to close, or widens, the attainment gap between the child or young person and their peers, despite the provision of support aimed at closing that gap (such as differentiated teaching)

It is also acknowledged that for some children it is clear from the outset that they will require ALP (ALN Code 20.17).

Principles for determining whether a school or LA should secure Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

Section 12.44 of the Code states:

Local Authorities **should**, in consultation with schools they maintain, and any other persons they consider appropriate, establish and publish a set of principles they will apply when determining whether it is reasonable for a school to secure the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) required by a pupil or whether the authority ought to do so.

Principles **should** relate to:

- a) The **extent and duration of advice from external specialists** that is likely to be unreasonable for a school to secure;
- b) The **equipment** that it is likely to be unreasonable for a school to provide;
- c) The **intensity and duration of support** and scale of internal engagement of staff (including the ALNCo) at the school that it is likely to be unreasonable for a school to provide.

This document outlines the principles that Rhondda Cynon Taf will apply when making decisions about the ALP required to support children and young people with ALN.

Inclusion

RCT is committed to promoting inclusive education whereby the majority of children and young people with ALN are supported to participate fully in mainstream education and is an underpinning principle of RCT's Education Strategic Plan.

Central ALN services and schools will work collaboratively to ensure a whole setting approach is taken to meeting the needs of learners with ALN and that staff in schools are upskilled to meet a range of learning needs and ALN through high quality

differentiation as part of their universal learning provision (ULP) and additional learning provision (ALP).

Rhondda Cynon Taf expects all schools to have the following 'universal' elements in place to ensure that children and young people with ALN have access to a fully inclusive learning environment:

- An organisational culture that affirms 'ALN is everyone's business'
- A sound universal understanding of high-quality differentiated teaching amongst the workforce.
- Embedded inclusive practice which makes appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable access to the school environment, curriculum and facilities and a culture that encourages a sense of belonging;
- Good leadership and management that reflects an understanding of the Act and embeds ALN within the school development plan and the capacity building activity of the school.
- An Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) with a recognised strategic role who influences school policy and the curriculum offer as well as encouraging person-centred approaches in the culture of the school.
- A person-centred approach to meeting the needs of learners that shows evidence that participation in decision making has been encouraged and the views, wishes and feelings of the child and their parents/carers and the young person have been seriously considered.
- Sound arrangements for identifying ALN early and providing targeted support and intervention using person centred tools and approaches.
- Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress and the effectiveness of interventions including clarity around how delegated funding is used to promote progress for children and young people with ALN (value-added)
- Arrangements for avoiding or resolving disagreements or disputes early and avoiding escalation of needs and provision.

Universal Learning Provision

Chapter 20 of the ALN Code explains that slow progress and low attainment do not necessarily mean that a child or young person has ALN. For those children who do not have an identified disability, in the first instance, observing and assessing their progress will provide information about areas where they are not progressing satisfactorily. A range of sources of evidence can be used to measure progress, some of which are listed in Section 20.4 of the Code.

All schools and education settings are expected to put in place differentiated teaching strategies and targeted interventions designed to secure better progress for learners. As noted in Section 20.15 *'most children and young people will require a differentiated approach in some aspect of their education at some point. **This is a fundamental element of high quality – but routine – teaching**'*.

This is considered to form part of the high-quality teaching and learning provision made generally available to all learners within an educational setting in Rhondda Cynon Taf and is referred to as 'Universal Learning Provision' (ULP).

School Maintained Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

In line with the principles of the ALN legislation, most children and young people will have their educational needs and ALN identified and met within mainstream schools. Therefore, in most cases, the decision whether a pupil has ALN will be made by the mainstream maintained school following which the school will have a statutory duty to prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for the pupil which details the appropriate ALP the pupil will receive to meet their identified ALN.

The ALN Code sets out how maintained schools and local authorities should adopt a graduated response to meeting the identified ALN of children and young people, using a wide range of strategies. As stated in Section 20.23 of the Code *'This means that the ALP made should be at the lowest level necessary to meet the child or young person's identified needs'*.

The Code is clear that *'schools should make full use of their available resources before bringing specialist expertise to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing. to help support'*.

In many cases the ALP that is put in place initially by mainstream schools will be sufficient to meet fully or resolve the child or young person's needs. It is only where progress continues to cause concern, that increased or different ALP is likely to be needed. Where mainstream schools put in place effective and evidence-based ALP, less ALP may be needed over time by some children and young people as their needs are met successfully.

External agencies, including the Rhondda Cynon Taf's Access and Inclusion Service, can support the process of deciding whether a person has ALN and determining the ALP required in several ways. They can offer advice and support staff with strategies or obtaining more information, undertake assessments and /or observations to provide more information about the child or young person's needs and suggest interventions. As part of their statutory role, ALNCoS must secure relevant services that will support a pupil's ALP as required. Some learners with ALN will need the support of external agencies and professionals. It will be the responsibility of the ALNCo to liaise with these specialist services and when there is agreement to provide such services, ensure that these are secured.

All IDPs maintained by mainstream schools will be resourced from the school's delegated budgets. This includes both the school's overall budget and their Enhanced Capacity Funding (ECF) allocation to meet the ALP included in IDPs for all pupils.

Following consultation with head teachers, mainstream schools receive delegated ECF as follows:

- **Primary Sector:** Funding is top sliced to allow the LA to maintain a contingency fund for medical/physical needs prior to delegation. Remaining funding is allocated using pupil numbers double weighted towards early years pupils (nursery – reception FTE pupils) (50% weighted) and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) (50%) and includes floor funding of values equivalent of a 0.5 LSA.
- **Secondary/All through sectors:** No top slice – all funding is delegated to schools. Funding is allocated using pupil numbers (50% weighted) and WIMD (50%) and includes a floor funding of values equivalent of a 0.5 LSA.

ECF has been increased by an average of 13% per annum over the past 5 years to support mainstream schools to provide appropriate ALP.

Local Authority Maintained Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

Rhondda Cynon Taf will prepare and maintain IDPs for pupils who access placement at the following specialist settings:

Learning Support Classes for Pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Cwmbach Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Gwaunmeisgyn Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Maerdy Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Penrhys Primary	Y3 – Y6	2	20
Ferndale Community	Y7 – Y11	1	14
Tonyrefail Comprehensive	Y7 – Y11	1	14
Treorchy Comprehensive	Y7 – Y11	1	14
TOTALS		11	116

Observation & Assessment Classes			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Abercynon Community Primary	Early Years	1	8
TOTALS		1	8

Learning Support Classes for Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Hafod Primary	Y3 – Y6	1	10
Maesybryn Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Oaklands Primary	Y3 – Y6	1	8
Penywaun Primary	Y3 – Y6	1	10
Perthcelyn Community Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Williamstown Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Aberdare Community	Y7 – Y11	2	24
Bryncelynog Comprehensive	Y7 – Y11	1	12
Ysgol Afon Wen	Y7 – Y11	1	14
Porth Community	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
	Y7 – Y11	3	36
TOTALS		18	186

Learning Support Classes for Pupils with Speech and Language Difficulties			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Llwyncrwn Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	16
Ysgol Afon Wen	Y7 – Y11	1	12
TOTALS		3	28

Learning Support Classes for Pupils with Deaf Learning			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Llwyncrwn Primary	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	1	10
TOTALS		1	10

Learning Support Classes for Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Bodringallt Primary	Y3 – Y6	1	8
Cefn Primary	Y3 – Y6	1	8
Cymmer Junior	Y3 – Y6	1	8
Glenboi Primary	Y3 – Y6	1	8
Ysgol Bro Taf	Y7 – Y11	1	10
Ysgol Nant Gwyn	Y7 – Y11	1	12
TOTALS		6	54

Learning Support Classes - Nurture			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of places (approx)
Cefn Primary	Reception – Y2	1	8
Cwmclydach Primary	Reception – Y2	1	8
TOTALS		2	16

Early Years Assessment and Intervention Learning Support Class			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of Places (approx)
Abercynon Community Primary	Early Years	1	8
Darran Park Primary	Early Years	1	8
Llantrisant Primary	Early Years	1	8
TOTALS		3	24

Welsh Medium LSC for Pupils with Significant ALN			
School	Phase	Number of Classes	Number of Places (approx)
YGG Awel Taf	Reception – Y2 + Y3 – Y6	2	18
Garth Olwg	Secondary	1	14
TOTALS		3	32

Special Schools	
Parklane Special School	
Ysgol Ty Coch	
Ysgol Hen Felin	
Maesgwyn	

Pupil Referral Unit	
Tai Centre	
Ty Gwyn Education Centre	

All specialist placements are agreed by the Access and Inclusion ALN Placement Panels and EOTAS Panels using the Access and Inclusion Specialist Placement Criteria.

Specific Cohorts of Children and Young People with ALN

Rhondda Cynon Taf will prepare and maintain IDPs for children and young people with ALN who are **Children Looked After, Dual Registered**, attending Independent **Schools / Settings** and **Electively Home Educated**.

For **Children Looked After** who are educated in a mainstream setting, the LA will maintain the IDP through the schools' delegated resources.

Specialist Equipment

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty upon schools and local authorities to make reasonable adjustments for learners with disabilities. This includes auxiliary aids such as IT equipment (e.g., laptops, computer software), coloured overlays etc. Access and Inclusion and external agencies such as Health Therapy Services may also recommend bespoke specialist equipment.

Schools will provide all specialist / additional equipment required to support inclusion and access for pupils with ALN.

The LA will provide specialist equipment above the value of £500.

Reviewing arrangements for ALN and ALP

The ALN Code places a duty upon Rhondda Cynon Taf LA to keep under review the arrangements made by both the authority and governing bodies of its maintained schools for children and young people who have ALN. The duty involves Rhondda Cynon Taf LA undertaking a strategic review of the overall provision for ALP and other arrangements to support the identification of needs and provision to meet them. There is no designated timeframe or cycle for undertaking a review. This will be determined by the LA based on ongoing analysis of data and other methods of gathering information.

The review will consider whether the provision available within the LA is sufficient and where it identifies that the arrangements are insufficient in any respect, undertaking prompt action to address matters. A review may also consider the arrangements made in relation to ALP by the local Further Education Institutes, in particular Coleg y Cymoedd, and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board for the children and young people for whom the LA is responsible.

Rhondda Cynon Taf LA will also consider the sufficiency of ALP in Welsh. This will include the size and capability of the Welsh medium workforce available. The LA will take all reasonable steps to remedy any identified insufficiency.

Rhondda Cynon Taf will record the outcomes of reviews and publish on the council website a summary of its conclusions as to the sufficiency of arrangements and any actions proposed to remedy any insufficiencies.

The review should inform the LA of the extent to which the following are available in maintained mainstream schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- (a) high quality, differentiated teaching for individual children and young people;
- (b) targeted intervention and support for children and young people with ALN;
- (c) effective systems for monitoring the progress and achievement of children and young people with ALN and their inclusion in the everyday life of the school;
- (d) arrangements for involving specialists in cases where it is appropriate to do so;
- (e) arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of interventions used to support children and young people with ALN and the skills and expertise of staff;
- (f) arrangements for involving children, young people and parents at every stage.

(ALN Code 7.10)

When undertaking its reviews the LA will consult the persons and/or bodies it considers appropriate and at times in which it considers appropriate.

The LA will review a range of data and evidence when coming to its conclusions regarding the sufficiency of its ALN provision including:

- the findings and outcomes from any recent appeals or claims to the Tribunal and any disagreements about ALP dealt with at a local level;
- the number of learners with ALN in the local authority's area who are due to transition from pre-school to school, from school to further education and those transferring from one nursery education setting/school/FEI/local authority area to another;
- out of area placements at education settings made for those with low incidence or high level needs;
- the findings of Estyn inspection reports and relevant thematic reviews;
- relevant information from the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan;
- any barriers that have been identified which prevent children and young people from accessing ALN services;
- relevant information and evidence gathered by the local authority about the ALP provided to children and young people for whom the local authority maintains an IDP who are educated at home, at an independent school or otherwise than at school;

See Chapter 7 of the ALN Code for further detail.

Closing Statement

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Access and Inclusion Service will continue to work with schools to ensure they are able to meet their statutory duties as outlined in the ALN Code. Support and guidance is provided through a range of methods, including training, drop-in advice sessions, ALP quality assurance processes and referrals to Education Psychology and Learner Support Services.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is committed to working in collaboration with its schools, children and young people, parents/carers and partner agencies to ensure that children and young people with an identified ALN in Rhondda Cynon Taf are able to access a fully inclusive education system that enables them to succeed and become valued and active members of their local communities.