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# Consultation on draft Additional Learning Needs Code – summary of feedback from engagement events with children, young people and parents

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## **Audience**

Maintained schools, further education institutions, local authorities, local health boards, early years settings, third sector organisations and anyone else with an interest in additional learning needs.

## **Overview**

This report presents a summary of the feedback provided at workshops on the consultation on the draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales through engagement events held with children, young people and parents during the consultation period.

## **Action required**

To be read in conjunction with the summary of responses to the consultation on the draft Additional Learning Needs Code.

## **Further information**

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## **Additional copies**

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at

<https://gov.wales/draft-additional-learning-needs-code>

## **Related documents**

*Draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales (2018)*

*The Draft Additional Learning Needs Code Consultation Document: A consultation for children and young people (2018)*

*Draft Additional Learning Needs Code easy read consultation (2018)*

*Draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales summary of responses (2019)*

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- Llwyncrwn Primary School
- Portfield School
- Rhyl High School
- Coleg Cambria Northop
- Ysgol Y Gogarth
- Glyncollen Primary School
- Ysgol Ty Coch
- Tai Educational Centre
- Home education Group Neath
- Bridgend Collage
- Ysgol Y Strade
- Ysgol Penmaes

# 1. Introduction

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ('the Act') received royal assent in January 2018. The Act makes provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs ('ALN'). This will replace existing legislation surrounding special educational needs ('SEN') and the assessment of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ('LDD') in post-16 education and training.

The Act has three overarching objectives, which the draft ALN Code and proposed regulations are intended to support. These are:

- A unified legislative framework that supports all children of compulsory school age or below with ALN, and young people with ALN in school or further education;
- 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 requires Welsh Ministers to issue an ALN Code, and provides a number of regulation-making powers to Welsh Ministers. The ALN Code will replace the current Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales 2002. Local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (FEIs) in Wales and a number of other public authorities<sup>1</sup> will be required to have regard to relevant guidance in the ALN Code when exercising functions under the Act, and to comply with the mandatory requirements it contains.

A public consultation on the draft ALN Code was held between 10 December 2018 and 22 March 2019. The consultation sought views on the draft ALN Code's regulations relating to the Education Tribunal for Wales and ALN Co-ordinators ('ALNCos'), and the policy intent for a number of other proposed regulations. In addition, it sought views on proposed revisions to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Part 6 Code of Practice – Looked After and Accommodated Children, that have been primarily made relating to looked after children with ALN.

The Welsh Government also published both an 'easy read' version of the consultation document and one aimed at children and young people.

In order to ensure that the views of children and young people were gathered to inform the consultation process, the Welsh Government commissioned Re:Cognition to design and deliver a series of accessible, bilingual, pan-Wales engagement events with a range of children, young people and parents. This included the development of bespoke

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in Section 4(3) of the Act

bilingual consultation materials suitable for use at the participation sessions. These were designed to allow the participants the necessary understanding of the nature, extent and effect of the draft ALN Code to fully contribute their personal views in response to the consultation questions. This report presents a summary of the views of those who attended engagement workshops during the consultation period.

The engagement sessions were held with learners with SEN and LDD and from different education settings including:

- mainstream schools;
- special schools;
- pupil referral unit;
- primary and secondary education;
- further education settings; and
- English and Welsh medium settings.

In addition, Re:Cognition sought the views of the families and carers of children in the above groups, and of children who are looked after by local authorities (for whom there are specific provisions in the proposed new system).

There were 21 engagement workshops, with a total of 228 participants. Each workshop was structured to provide participants with the relevant information to allow them to make informed and empowered decisions when responding to the 15 consultation questions.

This work was in line with Welsh Government's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as reflected in the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. This work also supports the Welsh Government's statutory requirements in regards to the public sector equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. Consultation questions

The list below identifies the consultation questions which underpin this consultation:

- Q1 Do you think these are the right ideas?
- Q2 Do you like our ideas of what must be included in the Plan?
- Q3 Do you have any ideas of what else should be included in the Plan?
- Q4 What do you think about how long schools, colleges and local authorities will have to make Plans?
- Q5 What do you think about people having 6 weeks to answer a local authority's question about the help you need?
- Q6 What do you think about the health services having 6 weeks to tell people how they can help you at school?
- Q7 What do you think about schools, colleges and local authorities having 7 weeks to review the Plans they make?
- Q8 What do you think about local authorities will having 7 weeks to review the Plans made by schools?
- Q9 What do you think about of our ideas about what local authorities should do to help prevent arguments and sort them out?
- Q10 What do you think about of our ideas about what local authorities must do to make sure you know where to find an advocate?
- Q11 What do you think about how it will work when you ask a judge to decide who is right?
- Q12 When you receive your plan, if you are not happy with it, you or your family have 8 weeks to tell the judge you are not happy with a decision made about your ALN. During these 8 weeks you or your family will also need to tell the judge all about why you are not happy with the decision. This is called a case. What do you think about how long you or your family will have to write to the judge saying why you are not happy with the plan.
- Q13 Within 4 weeks of getting your case, the local authority or the college must tell the judge why they think their Plan is right. What do you think about how long local authorities and colleges will have to send a case to the judge?
- Q14 Do you think these things are the right things for ALNCoS to do to help children and young people with additional learning needs?
- Q15 Do you think it is important the ALNCo is a teacher or someone who is already a SENCo?

### 3. Methodology

Our purpose throughout this consultation was to gather meaningful opinions from children, young people and parents who will be directly affected by the proposals within the draft ALN Code. Our methodology was geared towards ensuring that the participants felt comfortable and secure while understanding the issues, in order that they were thoroughly willing and able to give truthful, well considered opinions.

In order to ensure participants were enabled to participate as fully as possible, it was essential that we communicated the required details and background of the Act and the draft ALN Code in a clear and engaging manner. The ways in which we did so varied between groups in order to tailor the approach appropriately to the experience and level of understanding of each audience, but always centred on the use of simple drama techniques, active exercises and animated presentations.

Our aim was to generate qualitative as well as quantitative data by encouraging participants to share their ideas about each issue. With each of the 15 questions, we asked participants to explain why they thought the draft ALN Code proposals were a good or bad idea or did not know, and to consider what potential benefits or problems the draft ALN Code proposals may produce. However, questions were only asked once the facilitator was satisfied that the level of the participants' understanding was sufficient to enable meaningful responses. The complexity of the issues being discussed, coupled with the cohorts with whom we engaged, meant that a recapitulation of learning was often required including the revisiting of previously worked through slides.

To enable participants to engage with the content of the consultation and how it directly connected to their educational life, for each thematic area we:

- a. Gave information
- b. Explored issues
- c. Recapitulated knowledge
- d. Gathered opinions

The workshops generally followed a similar structure:

1. Welcome and warm up
2. Exploring laws, codes, plans and the role of Welsh Government
3. Comparing SEN and ALN
4. Comparing the existing plans and the new IDP
5. What is in, making and updating the IDP
6. Making and reviewing timeframes
7. Stopping disagreements and appealing decisions
8. ALNCo role and position
9. Ending the workshop



## 4. Engagement Events

The participant sample was created to include children, young people and parents who will be directly affected by the proposals within the draft ALN Code. The sample included children and young people across a spectrum of needs, from school action/school action plus, to those with statements. In addition, we also held a workshop with a mixed group which included a number of children and young people who did not have SEN. Interestingly, in the mixed groups, it was notable that those who expressed the strongest views were those who self-identified as having SEN. It was also noted that these children with SEN were very well supported by those who did not have an additional learning need.

The exercise was never intended to provide statistically significant results, which would have required a far wider study, but rather to provide a snapshot of the views from a range of children, young people and parents who took part in this work.

There were 15 workshops for children and young people held at the 11 settings identified in the table below. These settings included special schools, primary schools, secondary schools, further education settings, and a pupil referral unit (PRU). The total number of learner participants was 167.

Children and young people workshops				
Setting	Sector	Area	Workshops	Numbers
Portfield	ALN	South West	KS4	11
Portfield	ALN	South West	KS5	11
Ty Coch	ALN	South East	KS1/2	16
Ty Coch	ALN	South East	KS3/4/5	8
Penmaes	ALN	Mid	KS4	6
Ysgol Y Gogarth	ALN	North	School Council KS4 / KS5	9
Glyncollen Primary	Primary	South West	KS2	14
Llwyncrwn	Primary	South East	KS1	24
Llwyncrwn	Primary	South East	KS2	22
Ysgol Y Strade	Secondary	South West	KS4	8
Rhyl High School	Secondary	North	KS3	5
Rhyl High School	Secondary	North	KS4	5
Coleg Cambria Northop	FE	North	KS5	8
Bridgend College	FE	South East	KS5	12
Tai Centre	PRU	South East	KS2 – KS4	8
<b>Total number of participants</b>				<b>167</b>

There were seven workshops for parents with a direct interest in the draft ALN Code. There was a total of 61 participants.

<b>Parents support groups</b>				
<b>Setting</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Workshops</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Rhyl High School	Secondary	North	Parent support group	7
Home education parent group	Home education	South West	Home educators / parents	7
Bridgend College	FE	South East	Parent support group	40
Ysgol Y Gogarth	ALN	North	Parent support group	2
Glyncollen Primary School	Primary	South West	Parent support group	1
Llwynrwn Primary School	Primary	South East	Parent support group	4
<b>Total number of participants</b>				<b>61</b>

## 5. Responses by questions

### Children and young people

#### Q1 – Do you think these are the right ideas?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	61 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Amongst the children and young people, there was universal support with all being in favour of the outlined new ideas. Their comments included:

**“important that parents and teachers are involved”**

**“Yes, they will help me learn”**

**“I agree with them, they will help you develop a bit quicker”**

**"We all need different help that works for us and people need to understand what our needs are"**

**“It is good that they recognise I need to have my needs met even if I don't have a diagnosis”**

**“It is really important that people listen to us”**

Secondary school learners took a more active relationship to these ideas stating:

**"We need to be included whenever our Plan is changed"**

**"We need to be able to get the Plan as soon as possible so that we get the education and help that is right for us"**

## Parents

### Q1 – Do you think these are the right ideas?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total votes	54	0	0
%	100	0	0

Amongst the parents, there was also universal support with 100% being in favour of the outlined new ideas.

Education through the medium of welsh was seen as particularly difficult to access even where it is the predominant language.

Comments included some observations that alluded to concerns regarding how it would work in practice:

**“Children don't necessarily know what they want or what is best for them but it is important that they are asked”**

**“Getting all the professionals to work together is a nightmare especially CAMHS”**

**“It is important that children can be in a mainstream school of that is where they want and need to be.”**

## Children and young people

### Q2 – Do you like our ideas of what must be included in the Plan?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	61 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total votes	167	0	0
%	100	0	0

Amongst the children and young people, there was universal support with all being in favour of the proposed ideas of what must be included in the IDP. Comments included:

**"Things won't get missed out when changing schools"**

**"It sounds like a good idea"**

**"It seems obvious that these points need to be included"**

**"It is good for teachers to understand how you are and feel and that should be in the plan"**

Primary school participants were keen for siblings to keep attending their local school:

**"it would be really unfair if your brothers and sisters went to another school and you could not go to it just because you needed extra help"**

**"Yes, I would be upset if I had to go to another school"**

Looking towards the positive effect that the developed plan may bring, a participant from the FE sector identified a different type of benefit, stating that following its introduction:

**"We should be shown more respect and understanding"**

## Parents

### Q2 – Do you like our ideas of what must be included in the Plan?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total votes	54	0	0
%	100	0	0

As with the children and young people, amongst the parents, there was also universal support with 100% being in favour of the proposed ideas of what must be included in the IDP.

There was also concerns regarding how realistic the changes were with concerns over funding and ALNCo resource time. It was reported the SENCo's were leaving and not being replaced.

**“Where will the resources come from to meet the needs on the plans - if schools have the decisions to make, they may not prioritise meeting your child's needs above others – schools make children share PA's or don't give them access to them at all, this has major issue not just on the child but the family as a whole”**

**“All very good ideas but how will this be resourced, cannot see how any of this will work without more money and staff.”**

**“ALNCo's are leaving all over the place and they are not being replaced, so how can this work?”**

**“It is really difficult to get people in the same room to develop the plan, so what's going to change that?”**

**“What is the role of ESTYN in this, what will the training be for teachers & TA's”**

**“How is information going to be made available to schools and school staff”**

Lack of good communication was also highlighted:

**“The continuous battling back and for between health, school, local authority, CAMHS etc delays children getting support, information is constantly having to be repeated, the way in which the information is recorded doesn't transfer from one organisation to another. Things get missed.”**

## Children and young people

### Q3 – Do you have any ideas of what else should be included in the Plan?

The responses from children and young people to this question was very good, reflecting their own expertise in their own life, thus enabling them to produce a far more comprehensive list than what was provided by the parents.

<p><b>“That I like walking”</b></p> <p><b>“That I like writing”</b></p> <p><b>“That I like to read”</b></p> <p><b>“My favourite subject”</b></p> <p><b>“Lessons I don’t like”</b></p> <p><b>“Classrooms I don’t like going to”</b></p> <p><b>“What I like to eat and drink”</b></p> <p><b>“The medication that I take and if it changes”</b></p> <p><b>“Things that make me feel stressed/angry”</b></p> <p><b>“I enjoy cooking”</b></p> <p><b>“My favourite sport”</b></p> <p><b>“That I am doing Duke of Edinburgh award”</b></p> <p><b>“My hobbies”</b></p> <p><b>“Awards that I have”</b></p> <p><b>“My football team”</b></p> <p><b>“Who my friends are”</b></p> <p><b>“Who I like to sit next to”</b></p> <p><b>“My favourite lesson”</b></p> <p><b>“What extra help I need”</b></p> <p><b>“Being able to sit with the person who gives you extra support”</b></p> <p><b>“Help people stop being bullied”</b></p> <p><b>“The plan should have a place or a thing to do you like if you are feeling sad so the teacher knows what to do”</b></p> <p><b>“Sometimes I think (the plan) can develop like, the world develops it”</b></p> <p><b>“Not putting me in class with people who annoy me because tension builds up”</b></p> <p><b>“All children need to know who is there pastoral officer”</b></p>	<p><b>“Who my friends are and who I like to sit with”</b></p> <p><b>“If I haven’t been well”</b></p> <p><b>“That I like to play rugby”</b></p> <p><b>“About my brothers and sisters”</b></p> <p><b>“Who I go to if I have a problem, my favourite person”</b></p> <p><b>“Who is important to me”</b></p> <p><b>“What I want to do when I leave School”</b></p> <p><b>“help needs can change”</b></p> <p><b>“Having a 1-1 that you can keep all through school and college”</b></p> <p><b>“If I am moving house”</b></p> <p><b>“If I argue with my friends”</b></p> <p><b>“Sitting with my friends”</b></p> <p><b>“My favourite food”</b></p> <p><b>“How to manage my money”</b></p> <p><b>“How I can get a flat”</b></p> <p><b>“family issues”</b></p> <p><b>“If you have depression”</b></p> <p><b>“How I can go to college in England”</b></p> <p><b>“How I can get help to get a job”</b></p> <p><b>“All your relationships”</b></p> <p><b>“How we learn best”</b></p> <p><b>“Transport stuff. The transition from school to college is really difficult and getting transport can be a real problem”</b></p> <p><b>“Having a cup of coffee/tea or hot chocolate and snacks to start the day”</b></p>
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In a mixed (ALN/Non ALN) group, there were a number of constructive observations regarding access to their teacher when their teacher may need to spend much time with learners with ALN. These learners reflected upon their own struggles to learn stating

that they were already missing out on teacher time and feared the future changes would make that worse:

**“The problem is that if you need some help in class the teacher is normally with the person who needs lots of help so you never get any support at all. I am not saying it is their fault but it’s still not fair”**

**“I know that people need extra support as I do sometimes, but I never get help in class because, I know it’s not their fault, but I also want help”**

**“We need more teachers, there is not enough”**

**“Yes we have 28 in our class and if the teacher is with someone who needs extra help, we need another teacher who knows the same things so you could go to them”**

**“Classes should be smaller” another child responded “we need more teachers in the large class”**

Reflecting on the length of time it can take to make a plan and put it in place, one primary school learner, and with agreement from all stated:

**“There should be one big plan for people with learning needs with information on every need so you can just go to the page and see what help you need”...**

**“Yeah, like a master plan” ... “this will work while waiting for your plan”**

## Parents

### Q3 – Do you have any ideas of what else should be included in the Plan?

The responses from parents were not as comprehensive as those from children and young people. There was a lot of concern about how the new system would be enforced when the current system is not being implemented effectively.

A number of parents used this opportunity to raise other comments or concerns that weren’t directly related to this question:

**“Parents should be listened to and involved”**

**“There should be a consistency on how things are recorded and information should be shared easily and routinely.”**

**“The plan would need to be updated regularly otherwise the section about what is happening would become out of date really quickly”**

**“The plan should be online with passworded access for parents/children/young people to update the what is happening section in particular”**

**“Substitute teachers should be updated too so there should be flags on online registers like some school’s do already.”**

**“GDPR is a potential issue but headline issues should be accessible to substitute/supply teachers.”**

**“Local authorities are strapped for cash and use deprivation as a rationale for not meeting their obligations.”**

**“The long-term implications of children’s needs being met is finally being recognised in terms of their outcomes and opportunities.”**



## Children and young people

### Q4 – What do you think about how long schools, colleges and local authorities will have to make Plans?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	8 (13%)	44 (72%)	6 (10%)	3 (5%)
Primary Schools	10 (17%)	41 (68%)	2 (3%)	7 (12%)
Secondary Schools	0 (0%)	17 (94%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	3 (15%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)
Pupil Referral Unit	1 (13%)	4 (50%)	3 (38%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

After much discussion regarding the relationship between schools, colleges and local authorities and how plans were made, the consensus was that 35 school days was far too long for schools and 12 weeks was too long for local authorities. The proposal only received support from 13% of the voters, the lowest learner response form the 15 questions. Some of the general comments included:

**“It should be done immediately”**

**“You should not even wait a day”**

**“Waiting makes people worry, it should be done as soon as possible”**

**“If it is going to be a big plan or take a while to do, the main obvious help should happen straight away while we are waiting for the plan to be written” – all agreed**

**“Make a little plan first”**

**“35 days could be a whole term missed, that’s far too long to wait”**

**“It’s too long, people will be desperate”**

**“If you have learning difficulties, teachers don’t know what to do because the work is making them stressed out so the plan should be done in two weeks”**

**“12 days in enough working with the person”**

**“It’s a term, could be a whole topic missed and that is very unfair”**

While all setting types were opposed to this proposal, secondary schools were the most opposed with none of their participants offering any support. Their comments included:

**“12 weeks is too long that's ridiculous”**

**“12 weeks just give local authorities time to delay and put things off and not tackle the issues it shouldn’t take them much longer than schools as everyone else will give them information”**

An FE learner participant speaking from some experience said:

**“I was a student rep so I know how it works and how long it takes to get people together and get information to do a plan”**

Answers for how long it should take included:

**"Not very long", "A day", "A day and a half", "An hour" and "A week"**

**“It is not fair that local authorities have so much longer than schools”**

**“They should take no more than a week to see who needs help then spend the rest of the time making the plan”**

**”35 days may be enough to start with but then it should get quicker especially in secondary school and college because needs should have been identified in Primary School”**

## Parents

### Q4 - What do you think about how long schools, colleges and local authorities will have to make Plans?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Total votes	11	41	9	0
%	18	67	15	0

Parents firmly rejected the proposals but were slightly more supportive (18%) than the learners (13%). In addition to thinking that the proposal gave schools, LAs and colleges too much time, they also thought that there was insufficient resource to allow the proposals to be met.

**“It is difficult to see how things will improve without additional staff and resource to support this “**

**“Potentially big issues for primary schools where issues are likely to be first identified “**

**“The system is already failing with the current level of demand, how will raising expectations and demand on the system make things better. “**

**“The NHS is not able to cope currently with demand, they will have no hope with additional demands placed on them.”**

**“The changes will introduce more levels of management and structure will make the system fail, the concept won't match the reality “**

**“It is good that there is consistency in the plan following the child”**

**“There will be too many children being put into the system that will make it fail”**

## Children and young people

**Q5 – What do you think about people having 6 weeks to answer a local authority's question about the help you need?**

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	15 (25%)	39 (64%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)
Primary Schools	18 (30%)	29 (48%)	6 (10%)	7 (12%)
Secondary Schools	5 (28%)	12 (67%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	0 (0%)	16 (80%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

Developing the discussions and learning from Q4, only 28% of children and young people voted in favour of the proposal with 66% voting against. Of those 66%, 57% considered the 6-week timeframe to be too long. Comments included:

**"it may take a while because people can be slow"**

**"6 weeks to answer a question?!"**

**"How long is the question?"**

**"We only get a few hours in an exam to answer lots of questions - why do they need 6 weeks?"**

**"That's a month and a half!"**

**"They could say we have got 6 weeks they could wait it out and do it at the last minute"**

**"If they responded quicker, then the plan could be done quicker"**

**"They should do it quicker so I can get my help quicker"**

While the votes from special, primary and secondary schools, reflected some support for the proposal, none of the FE college respondents were in support, however all the respondents from the Pupil Referral Unit fully supported the proposal.

## Parents

**Q5 - What do you think about people having 6 weeks to answer a local authority's question about the help you need?**

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Total votes	25	17	19	0
%	41	28	31	0

Unlike the learners' response to this question, the parents were split with a smaller majority against the proposal.

**“If the children are already known to a service then why does it take so long to get the information”**

In relation to the respondents who were not in favour of the proposal, more than half of them felt more time and resources were needed not less largely based on their experience and cynicism.

**“There are not enough resources to deal with demand now and the existing rules are not being adhered to, how will this be any better you are asking them to do more with no extra money or staff”**

**“This all sounds great but so unrealistic and I think unachievable”**

## Children and young people

**Q6 – What do you think about the health services having 6 weeks to tell people how they can help you at school?**

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	15 (25%)	39 (64%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)
Primary Schools	18 (30%)	29 (48%)	6 (10%)	7 (12%)
Secondary Schools	4 (22%)	13 (72%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	0 (0%)	16 (80%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

Developing the discussions and learning from Q4 and Q5, respondents voted against the question's proposal with a voting pattern that was almost the same as question 5. 58% of the respondents considered allowing the health services 6 weeks to answer questions was wrong believing that it should be able to carry out that task far quicker than that.

**"If they responded quicker, then the plan could be done quicker"**

**"It is not fair on the local authority if they take too long and I won't get any help when I need it"**

**"It may be an issue if someone has complex health needs working out what to do"**

**"Why do they need such a long time?"**

Not all agreed:

**"It may be an issue if someone has complex health needs working out what to do"**

## Parents

**Q6 – What do you think about the health services having 6 weeks to tell people how they can help you at school?**

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Total votes	31	19	11	0
%	51	31	18	0

Unlike the learners' response to this question, there was a majority in favour with the proposal receiving 51% support. Similar to other question responses, many parents were concerned with the perceived lack of resources:

**“Health services are overstretched and impossible to deal with, you can wait 12-18 months just for an initial appointment how does this impact on the assessment process and the development of the plan?”**

One parent with support from others identified organisational issues:

**“The school, social services and health services don't talk to each other and criticise and blame each other, how will imposing deadline improve this relationship?”**

While 51% supported the proposal, 49% did not:

**“Again... if a child is known to services then information should be readily, easily and quickly available”**

## Children and young people

### Q7 – What do you think about schools, colleges and local authorities having 7 weeks to review the Plans they make?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	15 (25%)	39 (64%)	1 (2%)	6 (10%)
Primary Schools	7 (12%)	41 (68%)	8 (13%)	4 (7%)
Secondary Schools	0 (0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	8 (40%)	12 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

Overall, 18% of respondents supported this proposal with most respondents not understanding why a review would take so long.

Only 7 out of 60 Primary Schools voters supported the proposal with these learners stating:

**"They only have to read it"**

**"They have already made the plan in 7 weeks why do they need 7 weeks to read it again?"**

**"They are not putting young people first"**

No respondents from secondary schools or the pupil referral unit supported the proposal, with some stating:

**"The plans need to be adjusted regularly so how can that happen if it's taking so long to write them"**

**"For the Plans to work for us, they need to be updated, so 7 weeks is far too long"**

**"If you need to change the Plan, you should have the right to have it changed at any time"**

**"They already have the plan"**

There was some support for the proposal:

**"The time sounds about right as it is difficult"**

After the formal votes and much discussion, most learners thought 4 weeks was about long enough, but not all learners agreed:

**"it should only take a week or 2"**

## Parents

### Q7 – What do you think about schools, colleges and local authorities having 7 weeks to review the Plans they make?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Total votes	23	21	13	4
%	38	34	21	7

Only 38% of the parent respondents supported the proposal. Comments from parents included:

**“If they already have all the information from developing the plan then why does the review process take so long?”**

**“Health services are overstretched and impossible to deal with, you can wait 12-18 months just for an initial appointment how does this impact on the assessment process, any need for review of proposals and the development of the plan?”**

**“Does this mean they have to get more information to support the review? What if there is no other evidence available to support your wishes for your child’s needs’**

**“Why can’t transport providers link into the process to support children, young people and their families?”**



## Children and young people

Q8 – What do you think about local authorities having 7 weeks to review the Plans made by schools?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	15 (24%)	39 (64%)	1 (2%)	6 10(%)
Primary Schools	4 (7%)	42 (70%)	5 (8%)	9 (15%)
Secondary Schools	0 (0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	8 (40%)	12 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>

Developing the discussions and learning from the previous questions, these learner respondents voted against the question's proposal with 70% not understanding why a review would take so long.

None of the respondents from the secondary schools were in favour of this proposal with one stating:

**"Like I just said, 7 weeks is far too long - it's almost 2 months"**

Respondents from FE colleges were more evenly split with the comments below reflecting their different viewpoints:

**"Why should everything have to take too long"**

**"Sounds about right they need to make sure they have all the information they need – I want them to get my plan right"**

## Parents

Q8 – What do you think about local authorities having 7 weeks to review the Plans made by schools?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>

Unlike the learners' who strongly rejected this proposal, nearly half (49%) of parents were in favour. 51% rejected the proposal with 34% thinking the timescale was too long:

**"If the local authority already has the information the school used to develop the plan then why does the review process need to take so long"**

## Children and young people

**Q9 – What do you think about our ideas about what local authorities should do to help prevent arguments and sort them out?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	61 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total votes	167	0	0
%	100	0	0

The ideas within this question's proposal received universal support and when asked who else could help prevent arguments and what else the local authority could do, participants came up with many creative ideas with Special School respondents stating:

**"Need someone to help me understand the information that is available too"**

**"Put stuff on notice boards"**

**"Cartoons"**

**"Use Alexa/Siri – voice technology"**

When asked who else could help prevent arguments Primary School respondents stated:

**"Good to talk to your nan"**

**"And your GP"**

**"Make sure your family know about it"**

**"Make sure they know some people need more help"**

**"They should know how to calm you down"**

**"Put information on our (school) website"**

When considering communication issues, secondary school learners stated:

**"I have anxiety and can't talk on the telephone, I would like to be able to do live chat if I had a problem"**

**"I might want to write a letter or an email to someone rather than having to talk to a stranger"**

**"Could have instant messaging service for us to use so we can get an immediate response and we know someone is listening"**

The concept of live chat was very popular and by way of representation, an FE learner stated:

**"I would like a telephone helpline or Live Chat for my questions"**

Being unsure of which behaviours were appropriate, led to one PRU respondent to state:

**"Make sure people know what the right thing to do is"**

## Parents

**Q9 – What do you think about our ideas about what local authorities should do to help prevent arguments and sort them out?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

The ideas within this question's proposal received universal support from those who voted. When asked who else could help prevent arguments:

**“Should do more to involve parents in the process, and provide support to parents struggling with the process.”**

## Children and young people

**Q10 – What do you think about our ideas about what local authorities must do to make sure you know where to find an advocate?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	61 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The ideas within this question's proposal received universal support. The majority of respondents, while understanding the concept of an advocate did not recognise the word itself. A number of primary school respondents described advocacy situation:

**"My nan helps me"**

**"I sign (BSL) for my mum and dad"**

Two respondents from the PRU stated they already had an advocate. When asked what else could be done to ensure access to an advocate, participants stated:

**"Ask the big companies to put adverts on"**

**"Adverts on Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, popups, ads on videos"**

**"It sounds pretty obvious - and we speak Welsh so we need that"**

**"Facebook"**

**A KS2 group said they were not on Facebook but all used Instagram, Snapchat & WhatsApp**

**"Could we have a bio online for advocates so I can pick one that I like or who thinks like me?"**

**Could we have a tinder for finding advocates?"**

**"Local newspaper"**

**"On the notice boards"**

**"Advocacy helpline"**

**"School boards"**

**"Advocate website"**

**"School website, it's bad"**

**"Use the tv news to tell people"**

**'In town shops windows"**

**"We have a school website it can go there"**

**"Parents go on the school websites so yes"**

A number of respondents could see how they could immediately benefit from having an advocate:

**"Can I speak to an advocate now?"**

**"Who do I speak to?"**

**"I shouldn't have to wait for the code to come in to have one"**

**"Why don't we know who an advocate is?"**

**"Should we have one now?"**

## Parents

**Q10 – What do you think about our ideas about what local authorities must do to make sure you know where to find an advocate?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total votes	56	5	0
%	92	8	0

92% of parent respondents supported this proposal. In discussion, participants stated:

**“It is almost impossible to find out who provides advocacy never mind know if it is any good”**

**“It is really important that parents know that they can access an advocate to support them as well”**

## Children and young people

**Q11 – What do you think about how it will work when you ask a judge to decide who is right?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	61 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total votes	167	0	0
%	100	0	0

All readily agreed. The participants mainly had a very good understanding of what a judge is with most referring to Judge Rinder and Judge Judy. Many also understood that sometimes a lawyer might be needed.

Secondary school and FE learners were immediately concerned in regards to how long it would take for the judge to decide who is right:

**“How long will that take?”**

**“Is this going to be 6 weeks or 7 weeks or more?”**

**“How long is it going to take to get a judge to talk to me they are very busy”**

**“How long do I need to wait for the judge to take my case?”**

**“Why can't they just get my plan right”**

## Parents

**Q11 – What do you think about how it will work when you ask a judge to decide who is right?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>

Unlike the learner's response to this question, the parents were more split but still with a large majority in favour of the proposal.

**“Parents had enough stress without having to go to court”**

**“Who was going to pay for us to go to court”**

**“How long would the case take to be heard”**

Some parents were concerned that the option to go to a judge was putting more pressure and responsibility on them which was unfair, as all the emphasis was on what they needed to do.

## Children and young people

**Q12 – When you receive your plan, if you are not happy with it, you or your family have 8 weeks to tell the judge you are not happy with a decision made about your ALN. During these 8 weeks you or your family will also need to tell the judge all about why you are not happy with the decision. This is called a case.**

**What do you think about how long you or your family will have to write to the judge saying why you are not happy with the plan**

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	41 (67%)	2 (3%)	14 (23%)	4 (7%)
Primary Schools	27 (45%)	11 (18%)	22 (37%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	10 (56%)	8 (44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>

There was a majority in favour for this proposal with some respondents stating:

**“I want to have time to think what I want to say”**

**"I'd know very quickly if my plan wasn't working for me"**

**“KS2 class unanimously thought that that they and parents may need more than 8 weeks to create their case agreeing on around 12 weeks.”**

**“8 weeks is ok but the sooner I do it the better for me”**

Comments from those not in favour included:

**“You don't need 8 weeks because you should know why you want to complain or there is nothing really to complain about”**

**“They would know why they were not happy with their plan so could write a letter quickly”**

**"If I'm not happy with the plan, I won't take 8 weeks to tell someone"**

## Parents

**Q12 – When you receive your plan, if you are not happy with it, you or your family have 8 weeks to tell the judge you are not happy with a decision made about your ALN. During these 8 weeks you or your family will also need to tell the judge all about why you are not happy with the decision. This is called a case.**

**What do you think about how long you or your family will have to write to the judge saying why you are not happy with the plan**

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Total votes	45	0	8	8
%	74	0	13	13

There was a large majority for this proposal with no one thinking the deadline was long. When asked why...

**“By the time you get to this stage you know what your arguments are so could probably do quicker”**



## Children and young people

Q13 – Within 4 weeks of getting your case, the local authority or the college must tell the judge why they think their Plan is right. What do you think about how long local authorities and colleges will have to send a case to the judge?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
Special Schools	21 (34%)	22 (36%)	13 (21%)	5 (8%)
Primary Schools	34 (57%)	16 (27%)	8 (13%)	2 (3%)
Secondary Schools	9 (50%)	9 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>

Overall, half of the respondents supported the proposed four-week deadline:

**“It’s better than the 6 weeks and the 7 weeks”**

**“That is long enough for them”**

Not all agreed:

**“They should be able to do it quicker”**

All of the Pupil Referral Unit respondents thought that the proposed four-week time scale was too short, while all of the FE learners agreed with the proposal.

## Parents

Q13 – Within 4 weeks of getting your case, the local authority or the college must tell the judge why they think their Plan is right. What do you think about how long local authorities and colleges will have to send a case to the judge?

Setting	Agree	Disagree Too long	Disagree Too short	Don't know
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>

Unlike the learner cohorts where half of the respondents supported the proposal, only 13% of parents were in agreement with this proposal. Their comments included:

**“If they have all the facts, which they will have from the review why waste even more time, they should just submit how they come to their decision and let the judge decide”**

## Children and young people

Q14 – Do you think these things are the right things for ALNCoS to do to help children and young people with additional learning needs?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	61 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	60 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary Schools	18 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total votes	167	0	0
%	100	0	0

The proposed tasks for ALNCoS received universal support across all settings, however, one primary school learner indicated that tasks have to be contextual to learner needs:

**“it depends what you are struggling with”**

In discussion one secondary school group felt that the support they currently receive from their ALNCo was very good. The issues they communicated were around other teachers not following the Plan despite it being communicated by the ALNCo. When asked why they thought this was happening, they stated:

**"They need to be followed right across the school"**

**"If we have a supply teacher, they don't always know what my needs are - they need to understand the situation"**

**"People can't see my needs"**

Following the engagement event, the ALNCo explained that in the case of supply teachers, there are limits on what information can be disclosed; however, they would be able to see that the individuals have needs and requirements as the system used for taking the register contains this information.

## Parents

Q14 – Do you think these things are the right things for ALNCoS to do to help children and young people with additional learning needs?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total votes	48	4	9
%	79	7	15

A large majority, 79% of parents were in favour of this proposal.

The parents who knew the SENCo in a number of schools said that they already did this where it was working it appeared to be working well. Parents who did not have a relationship with the SENCo were much more cynical and dissatisfied. They felt it was a way to downgrade the role and “give it to just anyone”. They felt that existing SENCo’s who also taught had no time for their children or them and were very suspicious of how the proposed changes would benefit them at all.

## Children and young people

**Q15 – Do you think it is important the ALNCo is a teacher or someone who is already a SENCo?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special Schools	12 (20%)	49 (80%)	0 (0%)
Primary Schools	5 (8%)	51 (85%)	4 (7%)
Secondary Schools	8 (44%)	10 (56%)	0 (0%)
Further Education Colleges	0 (0%)	20 (100%)	0 (0%)
Pupil Referral Unit	0 (0%)	8 (100%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>2</b>

This proposal only received 15% support.

Opposing comments from primary schools included:

**“I think it does not have to be a teacher”**

**“teachers don't have time”**

**“what if my teacher is the ALNCo person and I don't like the plan?”**

**“Yeah, who do you tell if your teacher is the ALNCo and you think the teacher is not helping you properly?”**

All FE college respondents opposed the proposal:

**“Teachers aren't always good if you are different”**

**“The TA's and my PA help me they aren't teachers”**

Two of the secondary school groups unanimously opposed to the proposal:

**“we need someone who has time for us”**

**“What if the teacher you have a problem with is too busy to speak to me when I have a problem?”**

**“ALNCo and teacher are different jobs”**

One secondary school group all voted in support of the ALNCo being able to be a teacher, however, the presence of the very popular ALNCo in the room may have affected this vote.

## Parents

**Q15 – Do you think it is important the ALNCo is a teacher or someone who is already a SENCo?**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Total votes	2	53	6
%	3	87	10

This proposal only received 3% support from the parent voters. Opposing comments included:

**“Teachers don't have time to be an ALNCo, it needs to be a dedicated role.”**

**“ALNCo's have to available to speak to parents outside school hours too”**

One parent was however concerned that if it wasn't a teacher they would go for the cheapest option and use unqualified staff. This view was however not widely supported even by other parents at the same institution.

All parents thought the person should have a clear role, be well trained to do the job, and have the dedicated time to do the role.

It was also highlighted by a number of parents that ALNCo's often need to be available outside school core hours, meaning that the role may be better served by it not being held by an active teacher.

## 6. Conclusion

There were 21 engagement workshops, with a total of 228 participants, and while there was overall majority support for the proposals (59%), this does not fully describe the pattern of the responses.

The proposals outlined in six of the questions, (Q1, Q2, Q9, Q10, Q11 and Q14), were almost universally supported receiving 97% positive support, however, other proposals were not so well received. Questions Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q12 and Q13 reflected proposals in relation to timescales for:

- creating an individual development plan (IDP),
- reviewing IPDs,
- evidence gathering, and the
- appeal timetable,

and proved not to have the backing of the participants, receiving only 34% support. In general, the feedback to these questions indicated that the proposed length of time organisations were being given to complete tasks was seen as too long by the participants, thus creating delay in regards to receiving support.

In addition, question 15 that suggested the ALNCo should be a teacher was overwhelmingly rejected with 84% voting against.

In conclusion, the principles reflected within the consultation questions were very well supported, as was the principle to shorten the process timescales from their current state. However, these proposals to shorten some of the process timescales were seen as too conservative, thus allowing unnecessary obstructions to remain within the ALN system, with the resulting delays to learners receiving the support they require.