



Information for parents and carers about the ALN data consultation

Changing the information we collect about
children and young people with additional learning
needs (ALN)



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About this consultation

We are Welsh Government. This is a plain language version of the additional learning needs (ALN) data consultation for parents and carers. You may prefer to read and respond to the full consultation: www.gov.wales/data-monitor-additional-learning-needs-aln-system

We collect information from schools and local authorities (councils) about many different things.



We must collect this information by law. The information we collect is used to:

- **help children and young people get better support;** the information helps make sure children and young people with ALN get the right help they need
- **help schools and councils to do their jobs well;** they need to record important information to help them run smoothly
- **plan for the future;** the information helps us decide where to spend money and how to help more children and young people
- **make sure everyone knows what's happening;** parents, schools and others can see helpful information on ALN
- **spot problems early;** by looking at the information, we can see if something isn't working and fix it quickly

We need to change the information we collect about children and young people with ALN.

Why do we need to make changes?

We have been rolling out the ALN system to replace the special educational needs (SEN) system since 2021.

From September 2025, the ALN system has replaced the SEN system.

The ALN system supports children and young people aged 0 to 25 in Wales with ALN.

ALN means some children and young people need extra help to learn because of certain needs. For example:

- communication and interaction (finding it hard to talk, listen, or understand others)
- cognition and learning (finding it harder to learn, remember, or understand information)
- behaviour, emotional and social development (struggling with feelings, behaviour, or getting along with others)
- sensory and/ or physical (having difficulties with hearing, seeing, moving, or using learning spaces)

The aim of the ALN system is to improve education for children and young people with ALN.

We now need to change the information we collect to match the ALN system, and to make sure the ALN system works well for children and young people.

We want your views as a parent/carer on the changes we are proposing.

What this consultation covers

This consultation is about the data we collect from schools, pupil referral units (PRU's) and councils each year.

This includes:

- **mainstream schools** – schools that provide general education for students of all abilities. For example, local primary and secondary schools and some nursery schools
- **special schools** – schools that provide education for students with additional needs
- **non-school settings** – like Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) and council run home schooling services



We already collect some information about:

- whether a child or young person has an Individual Development Plan (IDP). These are legal plans that describe what support a child with ALN needs and what they would like to achieve in education
- the kind of needs children and young people with ALN have
- staff who provide support to children and young people with ALN



What new information might be collected about your child and the ALN system

We want your views on **new information** we are proposing to collect.

Information we might collect about your child's support:

- whether a school or council has decided in the last year if your child has ALN, so we can understand how many decisions schools and councils are making
- if your child lives in England but goes to school in Wales and receives support for ALN
- what kind of needs your child has (like help with talking, learning, behaviour or physical needs)
- if your child gets help from health services
- whether your child needs help in Welsh and if they're getting it
- whether your child gets help in a special class and the time they spend in the special class in a mainstream school. Mainstream schools provide education for students of all abilities

Information we might collect about schools:

- how many special classes a mainstream school has, and how many children and young people get help in special classes
- whether Additional Learning Needs Coordinators (ALNCos) are senior staff members. ALNCos are responsible for overseeing support for children and young people in schools. This is an important role and ALNCos should be part of the senior leadership team at school
- how quickly schools or councils make decisions about children or young people's needs and the help they require
- how often children or young people's IDPs are reviewed



How will this information be used?

Any information we collect from schools must have a clear purpose and be needed by the school itself to do its job.

The information helps:

- schools plan the right support for children and young people
- check if the ALN system is working well
- make sure children and young people get help quickly
- see if children and young people can get support in Welsh when they need it
- put resources where they're needed most
- compare with other countries to learn new ways to help

We will make sure the changes we make to data collection does not put extra pressure on school staff.

Your child's privacy and rights

All information is kept safe and secure.

When reports are published, no one can tell which children or young people the information is about.

We follow UK Data Protection laws when collecting information.

More information about the data we collect about children and young people in schools, what we do with it and why can be seen in our [Privacy notice](#).

How to tell us what you think



Please send us your answers by **Wednesday 3 December 2025**.



You can answer the questions in this form and email it to:
schooldatacollectionsconsultation@gov.wales



You can write to us at:

ALN Policy Team
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ



For more information see the main consultation document www.gov.wales/data-monitor-additional-learning-needs-aln-system



Please read our UK GDPR information to find out how we will keep your information in this consultation safe and private:
www.gov.wales/welsh-government-privacy-notice#8569

Question 1: On page 8 we talk about information we might collect about your child's support:

- whether a school or council has decided in the last year if your child has ALN
- if your child lives in England but goes to school in Wales and receives support for ALN
- what kind of needs your child has
- if your child gets help from health services
- whether your child needs help in Welsh and if they're getting it
- whether your child gets help in a special class and the time they spend in the special class in a mainstream school

Do you have any comments about information we might collect about your child's support?

Question 2: On page 9 we talk about information we might collect about schools:

- how many special classes a school has
- how many children and young people there are in special classes
- whether ALNCo's are senior staff members
- how quickly decisions about children or young people's ALN are made
- how often children and young people's IDPs are reviewed

Do you have any comments about information we might collect about schools?

Question 3: Is there any other information you think we need to collect to:

- **help improve support for children and young people with ALN?**
- **better understand how well the ALN system is working?**

Comments: