



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

National ALN Steering Group meeting: 15 September 2022

Agenda and summary of National ALN Steering Group
meeting 15 September 2022.

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Attendees

Attendees included: local authority (LA) inclusion leads and directors of service, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW), the National Academy for Educational Leadership, colleges, Estyn, the Education Tribunal for Wales (ETW), SNAP Cymru, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, health board directors of service, and the Welsh Government (WG).

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Steering Group (the SG) welcomed new representatives for health boards, ETW and the Children's Commissioner for Wales' office. Apologies were given for 3 members.

2. Governance

a) Minutes and actions of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, and the SG discussed updates on actions.

The SG agreed to establish task and finish groups to focus on key areas.

WG noted that the SG's specific focus on accountability would come into play in Phase 2.

b) Membership & c) Terms of Reference

The SG discussed DECLOs' comments on the Terms of Reference.

WG agreed to discuss the addition of a WG health policy colleague to the SG.

3. Implementation Leads updates

a) Post-16

Colleges are continuing to develop their ALN staffing structures.

Development of local agreements between colleges and LAs is ongoing. LAs have new responsibilities for post-16 learners in the Code, so clear understanding between relevant parties is essential. Some LAs have appointed FE officers who have previously worked in FEs, to bring expertise into LAs and improve partnerships.

Guidance for parents with information on how LAs are going to handle their new responsibilities for post-16 learners will go out to parents later in September.

b) National update

The SG discussed figures about the forthcoming year and the numbers of CYP being transferred from the SEN to the ALN system which was presented in meeting papers. Members agreed SEN to ALN transfers should be monitored by the SG.

LAs and schools were currently coping with managing transfers to the ALN

system, and the system itself, but there was concern for the potential for more emergence of social and emotional needs in young people. All schools and LAs had seen increases in demand for services, including but not exclusive to ALN. Concerns about timescales for and numbers of SEN to ALN transfers in the third year had also been raised.

4. Group workstreams & networks

a) Planning Group workstreams

WG officials asked the SG to feedback on proposed workstreams and consider which sub-groups could be established to support the SG, and who could contribute towards those groups from the members' networks.

5. Welsh Government Business

a) Electively Home Educated (EHE) Task and finish group

WG officials discussed a national EHE stakeholder group which has representation from LAs, Estyn and WLGA. A sub-group has been established to look at EHE/ALN and wider packages of support.

WG have provided additional funding to support LAs to enhance capacity, to enable LAs to appoint additional members of staff, given the increasing numbers and to support education that is delivered at home.

b) Looked After Children (LAC)

WG shared a LAC scenario paper which had been developed in response to several queries around cross-county responsibility for LAC. It is intended to support consistent interpretation of the Act and Code across Wales.

WG asked the SG to consider the paper outside of the meeting and respond with feedback by 27 September – whether it meets requirements, if there are gaps, if there are other issues that haven't been considered.

c) PLASC data

The **latest PLASC data release** showed a 20% reduction in ALN numbers to 74,600. WG expected fluctuations, LAs had provided insight to reasons for drops in numbers and WG were content that in preparation of the commencement of the Act, the needs of users have been reviewed and additional learning provision (ALP) revised as appropriate. WG will continue to seek LAs' reassurance around data and ensure the needs of learners are being met.

WG would establish a working group to plan for future changes to data capture and to inform monitoring of ALN numbers and reform but did not expect any further changes until January 2025.

6. Health and Local Authority forum

WG would establish a forum to manage common queries and issues that are received from LAs and Health colleagues. An event was planned for mid-October, focussing on:

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- Meaning of and what constitutes ALP, and how Health colleagues should be involved in the development of ALP
- Looking at person centred practice (PCP) and how to ensure the service user/learner voice is heard,
- Disputes, complaints, parental rights, and Tribunal
- Sharing emerging practice and ways of working

The SG agreed these themes and suggested development of scenario papers focussing on topics like EHE, educated other than at school (EOTAS), cross-border issues, etc.

7. Any Other Business

WG officials confirmed work to recruit of a substantive National Implementation Lead was on-going. WG were also exploring options to extend the Interim Lead role to avoid gaps in delivery and would update the Group once this was resolved.

Meeting closed, next meeting 17 November 2022.

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