

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Rights under the additional learning needs (ALN) system

## A guide for parents and families



This document was written by the **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of '**A guide for parents about rights under the additional learning needs (ALN) system**'.

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# How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what all the words in blue mean on **page 25**.



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Where the document says **we**, this means **Welsh Government**.



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# Introduction



This is a guide for parents about rights under the additional learning needs (ALN) system.

## This guide will give you information on:



- how children and young people with ALN will be supported under the ALN system



- how the ALN system will work



- what parents can do if they disagree with decisions made by groups of people providing support for their child



- the rights children, their parents and young people have under the ALN system.

## The new law



We have introduced a new law and rules in Wales.

This law is called the **Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act** and the new rules are explained in the **Additional Learning Needs Code**.



Schools, colleges and local authorities will give you lots of information about the new **ALN** law.



One of the main points of the new law is to make sure that everyone in charge of helping children and young people with **Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**, listen.



For example, people who work in:

- schools
- colleges
- local authorities
- health.



They will make sure children, their parents and young people are involved in making decisions about things that are important to them.

# What is changing?



These are the new names that will be used:

- **Special educational needs (SEN)** will become **additional learning needs (ALN)**
- **Special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCo)s** will become **additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCo)s**
- **Special educational provision (SEP)** becomes **additional learning provision (ALP)**



Plans like **individual education plans (IEPs)** and **learning and skills plans (LSPs)** will be changed to **individual development plans (IDPs)**.

# What is ALN?

Children and young people with **additional learning needs (ALN)** need extra support to learn. This could be because they:

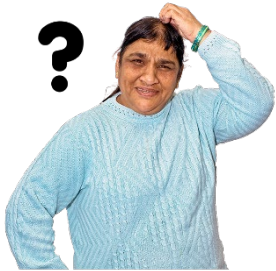


- have a difficulty or disability that means they need extra support
- find it harder to learn than other children and young people the same age
- have a disability that means they cannot use the local school or college.





# What to do if you think your child has ALN



If you think your child has **ALN** what you can do depends on the age of the child.



It also depends on if they go to a local authority nursery, school or pupil referral unit (PRU).



When a child or young person attends a school, the child, their parents, or the young person can tell:

- the ALNCo
- the headteacher
- or the class teacher

they think that the child has ALN.



When a young person attends a college, they can tell the ALNCo or their tutor.

Parents of children from birth up to age 5 who do not attend a local authority nursery or local authority school can tell the:

- local authority early years additional learning needs lead officer (EY ALNLO)
- early years ALN team.



Once you have told the local authority, they then must decide if your child does need extra support with learning.



When a child or young person does not attend a local authority nursery, school or PRU, they, or their parents can tell the local authority they think that the child has ALN.

# A plan for each child and young person with ALN



All children and young people with ALN will have a plan. This will be called an **individual development plan**.



The **individual development plan** will say what the child or young person needs to be able to learn.

And what will be done so the child or young person is properly supported in school or college



Children, their parents and young people must be part of **all** the decisions that are made for this plan.



The thoughts, feelings and choices of the child, their parent or young person must be thought about for this plan.



Children, their parents, and young people should be given information about this plan before any meeting.



The local authority, school or college will make the plan. But everyone will be part of writing it.



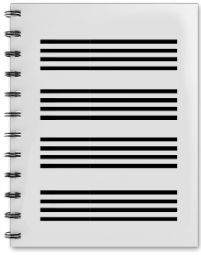
Sometimes a school or college may not think they can support the child or young person's ALN.



If they think this, they can ask the local authority to help



If the child, their parents or young person are unhappy with the plan, they can say so.



The **individual development plan** is a legal document, so everyone involved must do what it says.

The plan will be checked:



- every 12 months or
- when someone asks for it to be checked or
- when anything changes for the child or young person

# What to do if you do not agree



We want to work together to make sure that any problems can be sorted as soon as possible.



We want to try to stop any disagreements about a child or young person's plan.



Schools, colleges and local authorities must make sure children, their parents and young people have support to:

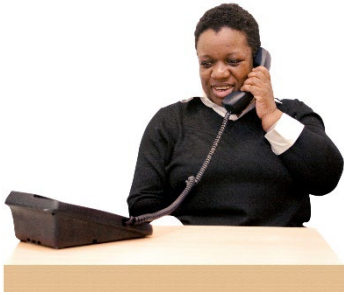
- understand the plan
- be part of writing the plan
- be part of decisions that affect them in

the plan

- talk about their worries
- get their questions answered



Children, their parents and young people may still disagree. When this happens, things need sorting out quickly and locally.



When anyone does not agree with some of the plan local authorities must:

- make sure someone **not** involved can listen and help.
- make sure children, young people and parents know this is possible.



Local authorities must have a way to sort problems out quickly.



This will help to make sure that children, their parents and young people don't have to **appeal**.

An **appeal** is a formal way to ask for a decision to be looked at because you want it changed.



But if the child, their parents or young person are still not happy, they can **appeal**.

Children, their parents and young people can challenge decisions about ALN.

This includes:



- whether or not a child or young person has **ALN**



- the way a child or young person's **ALN** is written about in the individual development plan



- the support that is written about in the individual development plan





- who is in charge of looking after the individual development plan.



Children, their parents and young people can also ask a local authority to reconsider some decisions if they are unhappy.

- a school decision whether a child or young person has ALN or not
- a school IDP with a view to changing it
- a school's decision to end an IDP

# Advocate



A child or young person can have an **advocate** to help them with sorting problems out and making an **appeal**.

An **advocate** is someone who speaks up for someone else. They can make sure people know what children and young people think. And how they are feeling.



Local authorities must tell the child or young person how to get an **advocate** if they ask for one.



Local authorities will tell people about **advocates** through posters, leaflets and websites.

The **advocate** must be someone who is separate from the local authority. The **advocate** may come from an **advocacy** service in their area.



The **advocate** will help the child or young person to **appeal**. The **advocate** can help to do things like:

- think about the **appeal** and advise what can be done
- write letters
- go to meetings to speak up for the child or young person.

## Right to appeal



Children, their parents and young people can ask the **Education Tribunal for Wales** to look at disagreements



The **Education Tribunal for Wales** is a group of people whose job is to deal with a disagreement.

A child, their parent and young person can **appeal** to the Education **Tribunal** for Wales about things for example:



- a decision about what **ALN** a child or young person has.



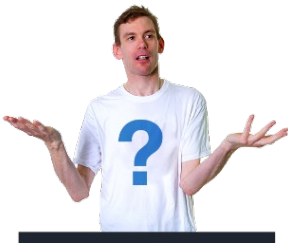
- a local authority deciding if a person needs a plan.



- what support the plan says the child or young person needs.



- the school the plan says the person should go to.



- no school being named in the plan.



- a decision not to check a plan.



- a decision not to keep going with a plan.



- a decision about whether support should be provided in Welsh.



- a decision to end an individual development plan.



Everyone must go along with the decision of the **Education Tribunal for Wales**.



Any **appeal** against the Education **Tribunal for Wales** must be about how they used the law. If needed, this can go to a higher **Tribunal**.

# Case Friend

Some children may not fully understand their rights under the ALN system. Children can have a case friend who will help:



- support the child



- speak for the child



- take decisions for the child



- help the child to understand **ALN** information.



Children and their parents can ask the Educational Tribunal for Wales for a case friend.

# Further Support



There are lots of organisations that can provide you with information about **ALN** and your rights

Here are some of the organisations who can help:



- [SNAP Cymru](#)
- [National Deaf Children's Society](#)
- [National Autistic Society Cymru](#)
- [Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\) Cymru](#)
- [Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)
- [Careers Wales](#)



# Hard words

## Advocate

An advocate is someone who speaks up for someone else. They can make sure people know what children think and how they are feeling

## Appeal

An appeal is a formal way to ask for a decision to be looked at because you want it changed.

## Advocacy

This is when someone speaks on your behalf.