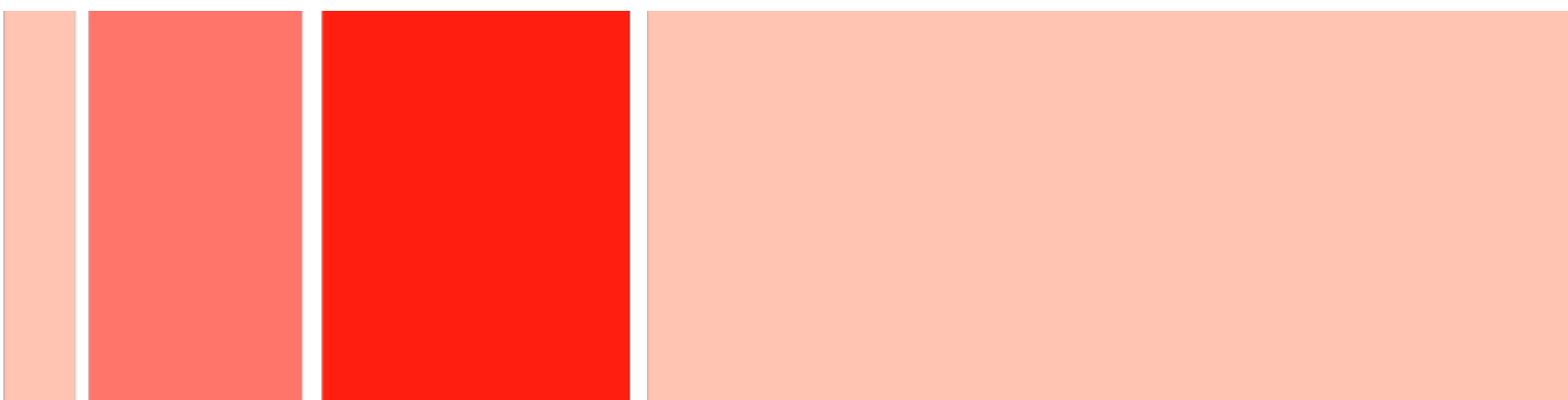


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Quinquennial review of Welsh-medium additional learning provision



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

Quinquennial Review of Welsh-medium additional learning provision

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This report can be found on the Statistics and research pages of the Welsh Government website: <https://www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

AAC

Augmentative and Alternative Communication

ADEW

Association of Directors of Education in Wales

ALN

Additional Learning Needs

ALNCo

Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator

ALNLO

(Early years) Additional Learning Needs lead officer

ALNLO cohort

Children under compulsory school age not attending a maintained school

ALP

Additional Learning Provision

ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASD

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

CAMHS

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CYDAG

Cymdeithas Ysgolion Dros Addysg Gymraeg / Association of Schools for Welsh Education

DECLO

Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer

DLD

Developmental Language Disorder

EOTAS

Education Other Than at School

EP

Education Psychologist

FE

Further Education

FEI

Further Education Institution

IDP

Individual Development Plan

HLTA

Higher-Level Teaching Assistant

LA

Local Authority

LHB

Local Health Board

LLWR

Lifelong Learning Wales Record

NHS

National Health Service

OT

Occupational Therapy

PLASC

Pupil Level Annual School Census

PRU

Pupil Referral Unit

RNIB

Royal National Institute of Blind People

SLT

Speech and Language Therapy

School-designated special classes in mainstream settings

There is no official definition of school-designated special classes in mainstream settings, however, these were described by stakeholders who participated in this review as dedicated spaces within schools, providing interventions funded through delegated school budgets.

SRB

Specialist Resource Base (term used to refer to LA ALN specialist classes in mainstream settings)

SWAC

School Workforce Annual Census

TA

Teaching Assistant

WESP

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

1. Introduction

In July 2025 the Welsh Government commissioned Arad Research to undertake the first Quinquennial Review of Welsh-medium Additional Learning Provision (ALP). This report presents findings based on evidence gathered from across the education system.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 outlines the policy context underpinning the duties placed on the Welsh Government, LAs and education providers to deliver Welsh-medium ALP and presents the aims of the review
- Chapter 3 details the methodology used
- Chapter 4 presents the review findings
- Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations

2. Background

The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reforms replace the previous Special Educational Needs (SEN) system for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and aim to support children and young people aged 0 to 25 in Wales with ALN. The current ALN legislative framework was created by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act) and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the ALN Code). Implementation of the ALN system was phased-in over a 4-year period from September 2021 to August 2025.

The ALN Act establishes the statutory definitions of ALN and additional learning provision (ALP) and sets out the requirement for all learners with ALN to have an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

In 2023, the Welsh Government commissioned Arad Research to conduct a four-year formative evaluation of the implementation of the ALN system. To date a series of reports have been published from the evaluation, including:

- A [scoping report](#), which presents the findings from the first phase of the evaluation, in addition to the plans and priorities for the remaining phases, was published in December 2023;
- A [report](#) based on a survey of practitioners and professionals was published in March 2025;
- A [report](#) based on a survey of parents and carers was published in October 2025; and
- An [area studies report](#), published in March 2026, based on qualitative research with practitioners and professionals in schools, pupil referral units (PRUs), early years settings, FEIs, LAs and Local Health Boards (LHBs), as well as learners with ALN and parents/carers of learners with ALN.

The ALN Act and Welsh ALP

A key feature of the ALN reform is the commitment to delivering a bilingual ALN system and ensuring that learners who require ALP in Welsh are able to access it. The ALN Act places clear duties on LAs, schools, FEIs and LHBs to consider whether a learner's ALP should be delivered in Welsh and, where appropriate, to specify this in their IDP. The ALN Act requires these bodies to take "all reasonable steps" to secure Welsh-medium ALP, although this is not explicitly defined. It also gives Welsh Ministers the power to strengthen these duties in the future, potentially making them absolute rather than conditional.

The development of a bilingual ALN system sits within a wider national policy context that seeks to expand and strengthen Welsh-medium education. Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) set out how LAs intend to increase

Welsh-medium education provision over a ten-year period, and these plans explicitly include commitments relating to ALN through their focus on improving access to Welsh-medium ALP. WESPs therefore provide an important source of evidence on how LAs are planning for the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP at a strategic level. As high-level planning documents, however, they are more informative about intent and system capacity than about individual learners' experiences or the sufficiency of ALP in practice.

In addition, the [Welsh in education workforce plan](#) outlines long-term strategies to increase the number of Welsh-speaking teachers and specialist practitioners. In particular, the plan outlines the objective to “develop capacity and expertise to support learners with additional learning needs in the Welsh-medium sector”. The [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Act 2025](#) further reinforces the need for systematic and national approaches to developing Welsh-medium provision.

The [More than just words 2022-2027 plan](#) highlights the Welsh Government's commitment to embedding the Welsh language across health and social care so that people receive care that meets their linguistic needs without having to request it, reflecting the principle of the “Active Offer,” in which services are proactively provided in Welsh rather than relying on users to ask for them.

Defining Welsh-medium ALP

Section 3 of the ALN Act defines ALP for a person aged three or over as educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in:

- (a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales
- (b) mainstream institutions in the FE sector in Wales, or
- (c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided^[Footnote 1]

It also notes that ALP for a child aged under three means educational provision of any kind.

The [ALN Code](#) notes that “in some cases, ALP may need to be provided in Welsh for it to be effective, or as effective as possible. There are various duties in the ALN Act at both the individual level and the planning level, with a view to ensuring provision of ALP in Welsh wherever possible”. However, the ALN Code does not provide a specific definition of what constitutes Welsh-medium ALP. In practice, sections 2B.3 and 2C.3 in a child or young person's IDP confirm whether the ALP “should” be provided in Welsh. Responses recorded on IDPs are not collated or published at national level, therefore there is no data available that would allow

[1] The ALN Act notes that “Nursery education” in this context means education suitable for a child who has attained the age of three but is under compulsory school age.

analysis of how Welsh-medium ALP is specified or delivered. Furthermore, individual IDPs can include multiple items of ALP, with only some of these specified to be delivered in Welsh.

Quinquennial Review

Under Section 89 of the ALN Act, it is a statutory requirement that Welsh Ministers conduct a national review of the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP every five years. The phrase “sufficiency” is not explicitly defined in the ALN Act and, as such, is complex and difficult to measure. However, this review of Welsh-medium ALP aims to establish a baseline understanding of the current level of sufficiency in Welsh-Medium ALP by assessing how provisions in the ALN Act are being implemented in practice. It explores processes involved in understanding and applying these duties and the extent to which learners’ linguistic needs are appropriately identified and recorded. It also considers the availability and accessibility of Welsh-medium provision and whether the systems in place, including workforce and other resources, are able to deliver the support to which learners are entitled.

A series of detailed research questions were developed to gather information in relation to different aspects of these aims. These are included in Annex 1.

Assessing the quality of ALP delivered within settings and by LAs and NHS bodies has been outside the scope of this review. The evidence presented has therefore focused on the implications of Welsh-medium ALP not being available, in terms of its impact on learners’ and families’ experiences.

The findings of this review build on published insights, particularly from Estyn, and aim to guide long-term planning, highlight areas of inconsistency or unmet need and provide an evidence base to inform future policy decisions, including whether the legal duties around Welsh-medium ALP should be strengthened. This builds on previous evidence, including Estyn’s thematic reviews ([2023](#), [2024](#)), which highlighted possible gaps in Welsh-medium ALP and workforce challenges.

3. Methodology

This chapter provides detail on the research methodology.

Scoping Interviews

At the start of the review, scoping interviews were conducted with seven individuals, comprising a range of policy officials and stakeholders to ascertain current understanding and knowledge in relation to Welsh-medium ALP and the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh. These scoping interviews were conducted with the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language), Welsh Government ALN team (2 interviews), WESP leads (2 individuals), and the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office. The discussions assisted with the refinement of the review's research questions and identified stakeholders who should be engaged with as part of the research. Following the scoping interviews, a report was produced which outlined the main findings from the scoping interviews and confirmed the agreed work programme for the review.

Research tool design

Bilingual research tools were designed by Arad with input from Welsh Government.

Firstly, a proforma was designed for LAs to complete. This proforma asked for information and data related to several topic areas including:

- the current need for Welsh-medium ALP
- the current workforce for Welsh-medium ALP
- professional development and resources
- legislative duties of LAs under the ALN Act and ALN Code
- undertaking Welsh-medium ALP sufficiency reviews
- progress achieved to date

The proforma included closed and open questions. Findings from the scoping phase helped to ensure that the proforma questions were relevant, addressed gaps in data and knowledge, and did not duplicate existing sources (such as the WESP annual review reports).

Secondly, a set of interview topic guides were designed for qualitative interviews and discussions with representatives from LAs, schools, FEIs, Designated Education Clinical Lead Officers (DECLOs) and stakeholders as well as parents/carers and learners. The topic guides included a range of discussion areas including:

- processes to identify whether ALP is required in Welsh
- implementing the duty outlined in the ALN Act
- views on current and future sufficiency
- barriers and gaps in provision
- transitions between settings

Lastly, information sheets were prepared and sent to selected schools. These were designed for schools to distribute to parents/carers and learners to inform them about the study and provide an opportunity to express interest in taking part.

All research tools are included in Annex 3 of this report.

Sample, recruitment and fieldwork

Several strands of fieldwork were undertaken for the review. These were:

- distribution of the proforma to LAs
- interviews with LA representatives
- interviews with delivery partners and other professionals
- interviews/visits with schools
- interviews with stakeholders
- interviews with parents/carers
- group discussions with learners

Local Authorities (LAs)

The bilingual proforma was distributed by the Welsh Government to officials in all 22 LAs following an approach agreed between Welsh Government officials and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW). Recipients were invited to access and complete the proforma through a secure online platform (Objective Connect). The original deadline for submission was 9 January 2026.

LAs were encouraged to complete the form collaboratively and to draw upon the expertise of those working across a range of service areas such as data management, inclusion, the Welsh language and education. In most cases, several LA representatives contributed to the completion of the proforma including inclusion service managers, ALN leads, Educational Psychologists (EP), and Specialist Teachers (for speech, sensory).

Engagement with the proforma process varied across LAs. In some cases, the original contact details held for LA officials were not up to date, which delayed access to the proforma within LAs. As a result, additional follow-up activity was undertaken by both Welsh Government officials and the research team during January and February 2026 to confirm contacts and re-share access details. This included direct contact with Directors of Education and relevant officers where responses had not been received. The research team also offered flexible support, including completing sections of the proforma collaboratively via calls with officials, with several proformas finalised in this manner alongside follow-up interviews.

The proforma remained open beyond the original deadline and was open from December 2025 until mid-March 2026. Most responses were completed between mid-January and the end of February 2026. All 22 LAs completed a proforma^[Footnote 2].

The proforma asked those completing the form to provide their contact details if they were interested in further participation in the research. Where they did so, these officials were emailed invitations to an online meeting, with 12 eventually taking place. These meetings served two key purposes: for a small number of LAs who had not yet provided a proforma, the session focused on support in completing sections of the proforma itself. For others, the meeting functioned as an interview for them to expand on their responses to the proforma.

In some interviews, one representative attended on behalf of the LA, whereas in others, small groups attended, depending on their preference and availability. Those interviewed included education psychologists (EPs), ALN managers/leads and ALN officers. The LA interview guide, WESP annual review report, and submitted proforma were used as the basis for each interview and discussions were recorded to produce transcripts which aided the analysis.

Delivery partners and other professionals

Interviews were also conducted with 16 professionals from organisations involved in implementing the ALN system. This included:

- Four Designated Education Clinical Officers (DECLOs) covering all seven LHBs in Wales. Of these, two DECLOs participated in a group meeting and the other two were interviewed individually
- Five allied health practitioners from one LHB
- Four representatives of the Association of Schools for Welsh Education (CYDAG), and a group of ALNCos convened by CYDAG

[2] Cyngor Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Council collaborated and worked as one ALN service and as such submitted one proforma covering both LAs.

- Three Vision and Hearing Impairment Team representatives

Schools and FEIs

A sampling framework for schools was developed and approved by Welsh Government officials.

The framework outlined the selection criteria for identifying the 15 case study education settings that participated in the review. These were primarily drawn from four LA areas, which were selected to ensure representation in terms of geographic location, coverage across LHBs, numbers of pupils on roll, percentage of learners with ALN, and the proportion of the population who are able to speak Welsh.

One LA from each of the following regions was initially chosen from which our sample of education settings were selected:

- One LA from North Wales
- One LA from Mid and West Wales
- One from the LAs that included the main southern cities (Swansea, Cardiff and Newport)
- One LA from the Southern Valleys and non-city areas

Regarding the percentage of learners who had ALN / SEN (as defined by data available on PLASC relating to January 2025), across the chosen LAs at least one had:

- a higher than national average percentage of learners with ALN
- a similar percentage of learners with ALN to the national average
- a lower than national average percentage of learners with ALN

Regarding the percentage of Welsh-speakers, based on 2021 Census data, the research team selected at least one LA where:

- the percentage of Welsh-speakers is higher than the national average
- the percentage of Welsh-speakers is lower than the national average

The four participating LAs together accounted for at least 20% of all registered maintained school pupils in Wales.

The profile of the selected LAs were as follows:

LA	Number of settings	Percentage of learners in the LA with ALN	Percentage of Welsh speakers in the LA	Location of settings
LA1	4	Higher than National average	Higher than National average	North region
LA2	3	Below National average	Higher than National average	Mid and south west region
LA3	1	Near National average	Higher than National average	In southern cities
LA4	3	Higher than National average	Lower than National average	In southern valleys and non-city areas

The sampling framework was designed to include one primary and one secondary in each of the four LAs above, selected from a list of all schools in these areas.

Not all the selected schools and settings in LAs one to four were able to take part in the research. Where this was the case, replacement schools or settings of the same type were selected from the same LA, for example, in LA3 a secondary school from another southern city was selected instead. Where this was not possible, schools from other LAs with similar socio-demographic characteristics took part resulting in a further 5 settings from outside the original authorities.

The final sample consisted of 16 education settings which was made up of the following:

- five primary schools
 - four Welsh-medium and one dual language school^[Footnote 3]
- five secondary schools
 - four Welsh-medium and one English-medium with significant provision in Welsh
- two PRUs
- two Special schools
- two FEIs

[3] Schools formerly categorised as bilingual categories A, B and C / dual-stream / transitional are now categorised as either Dual-language, Welsh-medium or schools transitioning into these categories. Further detail on the categorise is set out in [School categories according to Welsh-medium provision](#)

The rationale for the approach to include Welsh-medium and dual language primary schools, Welsh-medium secondary schools and one English-medium school with significant Welsh-medium provision was that the need for Welsh-medium ALP was likely to be highest in these settings.

Two special schools were included in the sample. As special schools are not categorised according to language medium, the two schools selected were in LAs with a higher-than-average percentage of Welsh speakers. As approximately three-quarters of special schools in Wales, and all the ones in our selected LAs, have both primary and secondary learners, the research team ensured that the selected schools had learners across all age ranges.

Selected schools were contacted via email with information about the review and invited to participate via a case study visit from the research team. Flexibility was built into the timetable allowing time to replace non-responsive settings. The 44 practitioners engaged during the case study visits comprised:

- Thirteen senior leaders (e.g. headteachers or deputy headteachers)
- Twenty ALNCos, deputy ALNCos or heads of inclusion
- Eleven teachers or support staff

Two FEIs were selected in the sample, and both operate across more than one LA area. As with special schools, FEIs are not categorised according to language medium. To reflect differences in higher and lower average numbers of Welsh speakers, one FEI in the north was selected and one in the south. Discussions were held with four practitioners across two FEIs including a specialist teacher, a deputy head of inclusion and two IDP managers.

Interviews with all education practitioners were directed by discussion topic guides and were recorded to produce transcripts which would aid analysis.

Each interview provided the opportunity to explore topic areas relating to:

- the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh
- the duty to take all reasonable steps to provide ALP in Welsh
- the availability of resources to deliver Welsh-medium ALP
- workforce capacity to provide Welsh-medium ALP
- enablers of and barriers to delivering Welsh-medium ALP

Learners

A total of 48 learners from 8 of the participating schools took part in small group discussions at their setting. These comprised:

- 12 learners in years 4 to 6

- 16 learners in years 7 to 9
- 18 learners in years 10 to 11
- 2 learners in years 12 to 13

Learners were identified by ALNCo within their participating school. Most of the learners (32 out of 48) were in Welsh-medium schools, 10 were in special schools and 6 were in English-medium schools with significant Welsh provision.

Most of the learners who participated had an IDP, but in some instances, schools were in the process of considering if the learners had an ALN. Fieldwork with learners was carried out in small groups, with a teacher/ALNCo or TA present. Discussions with learners took place at the learners' education setting. These discussions were not recorded but notes were taken by the research team which aided the analysis process.

Parents/carers

The ALNCo within each participating case study school visited was asked to support the review by circulating a brief online screener questionnaire to parents/carers of children and young people with ALN, inviting them to participate in an interview. The screener asked parents/carers whether their child spoke Welsh at home (response options were Always / Usually; About half the time; Sometimes; Never), whether their child received all or part of their ALP in Welsh and, if not, whether they would have liked or preferred to have received Welsh-medium ALP. Parents returned the screener questionnaire directly to the research team.

Parents were then invited to attend a virtual interview at a time of their choosing, and a total of five parents took part in virtual interviews. The sample of parents included those with children in Welsh-medium/English-medium mainstream primary or secondary schools, dual-stream schools, and those in special schools. Interviews were recorded to produce transcripts to aid the analysis process.

Stakeholders

A total of seven stakeholder representatives took part in interviews or small group discussions.

Stakeholders who could provide wider perspectives on the ALN system and the broader Welsh-medium context were identified following discussions in the scoping phase with Welsh Government officials. Interviews were held with representatives from the following organisations during the fieldwork phase:

- Welsh Government Early Years Policy official
- A representative from Estyn

- A representative from RhAG - Parents for Welsh-medium Education
- A representative from ColegauCymru
- A representative from Adnodd^[Footnote 4]
- Two representatives from Mudiad Meithrin^[Footnote 5]

These interviews explored the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP within the wider context of ALN implementation. The stakeholder and DECLO interviews were recorded to produce transcripts which aided the analysis process.

Examination of data sources and gaps

The research team reviewed published and unpublished data relevant to Welsh-medium ALP, including the Pupil-level Annual School Census (PLASC), Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) Census, Schools Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) and WESPs (specifically relating to Outcome six which relates to increasing the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with ALN). Data on learners educated in independent schools and those who are electively home educated is not included in the report because there is no data currently available on these learners' needs in terms of Welsh-medium ALP.

Analysis

The fieldwork produced a large volume of quantitative and qualitative data from secondary sources, proformas, interview transcripts, and detailed notes.

Quantitative data from the PLASC and SWAC was reviewed and analysed to produce descriptive statistics on learners and the workforce which are included in various sections of this report. Data from the LA proformas was reviewed and, where possible, compiled to present aggregate data at national level, for example of the number of LAs holding data centrally on the number of learners requiring and receiving Welsh-medium ALP. In some cases, not all LAs were able to provide data, and therefore appropriate limitations have been highlighted in the report.

Thematic analysis, utilising Braun and Clarke's (2022) approach^[Footnote 6] was used in the analysis of all qualitative data gathered from interviews. This involved an iterative process of coding and analysis which comprised:

[4] Adnodd is a Welsh Government arm's length body that oversees and coordinates the provision of educational resources in both Welsh and English to support the teaching and learning of the Curriculum for Wales

[5] Mudiad Meithrin is a voluntary organisation that provides Welsh-medium early years care and education across Wales, giving young children opportunities to play, learn, and grow through the Welsh language

[6] Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Familiarisation with the data whereby all transcripts and notes were read to clarify understanding of the content and the key points raised
- Producing a summary overview of each discussion, organised according to the topics included in the interview discussion guides
- Generating initial codes from the summaries using a deductive process based on the research questions and topics set out in the interview discussion guides
- Identifying connections in the codes and grouping codes together to generate themes
- Identifying shared themes to establish those that were most prevalent across the data and provide a structure for the report

The research also explored differences by stakeholder group to ensure a nuanced account of the data could be presented.

Limitations to the methodology

It is important to note there were some limitations to the chosen methodology and that, where possible, mitigation measures were put in place to limit their impact.

A small sample of schools, parents/carers, and learners were engaged with during the review. It is therefore not possible to generalise the findings of the review to the population more widely, and the findings presented are representative of views gathered during a snapshot in time.

The scope of the review included children and young people aged 0 to 25 years. However, the engagement with early years and post-16 provision was relatively small, with most of the fieldwork focused on LAs and schools. To mitigate this, stakeholders representing the early years (Mudiad Meithrin) and post-16 sectors (ColegauCymru) were engaged to provide a strategic perspective.

The lack of availability of statistically robust and validated data on the need for Welsh-medium ALP was a limitation in the review. This is discussed further in chapter 4.1 and was mitigated by using proxy measures based on PLASC data for learners in maintained schools, along with qualitative evidence on current need. The main limitation of each of the proxy measures presented is that they do not directly assess whether learners require Welsh-medium ALP. Instead, an assumption is made that language of study, fluency in Welsh, or speaking Welsh at home mean that learners require Welsh-medium ALP, which may not be the case.

In the early years sector, data on the number of LA-maintained IDPs for learners in the Early Years ALN lead officer (ALNLO) cohort is not published. The review

sought to mitigate this by asking LAs whether this data was held centrally by them, as well as data on the language in which ALP was required. There is also limited data available on ALN and need for Welsh-medium ALP among learners who are EOTAS, electively home educated or in independent schools. This is a gap in the evidence base for which no mitigation measures could be put in place.

Finally, the lack of statistically robust and validated data relating to the Welsh language capacity of the LA and health workforce was another limitation in the review. This was mitigated by the research team collecting this data directly from LAs, supplemented by qualitative discussions with DECLOs and health practitioners.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the review. It begins by exploring the need for Welsh-medium ALP, followed by the duties and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP. Further attention is then given to workforce capacity and resources before considering the experiences of parents/carers and learners. The discussion culminates in an overview of the progress made and remaining challenges.

4.1. The need for Welsh-medium ALP

This section presents findings relating to assessing the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP based on data collected through the PLASC on all learners in maintained mainstream schools, data on post-16 learners collected through the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR), data on EOTAS learners collected through the EOTAS census and data collected directly from LAs during this review.

4.1.1. Data for learners in maintained schools collected through the PLASC

As noted in the *Scoping Study for a Review of Welsh-medium ALP*, the Welsh Government does not collect data regarding the language of ALP. This means that it is not known from data available through PLASC how many learners with ALN require Welsh-medium ALP and how many receive ALP through the medium of Welsh. As part of a [recent consultation on the ALN data to be collected through statutory data collections](#), the Welsh Government gathered views on collecting information relating to the need for, and receipt of, Welsh-medium ALP through the PLASC and EOTAS census. At the time of writing no Welsh Government response to the consultation had been published.

In the absence of this data, this section uses a proxy measure for whether learners would be likely to need ALP through the medium of Welsh. The most recent published data based on the [January 2025 PLASC](#) shows that 43,885 learners in maintained settings (including special schools) had SEN or ALN representing 9.5% of all learners in Wales. This data can be disaggregated according to:

- whether learners are taught Welsh as a first language or as a second language^[Footnote 7]
- whether learners are fluent Welsh speakers
- whether learners speak Welsh at home

[7] See definitions in [Pupil level annual school census \(PLASC\): technical completion notes](#). These fields are based on historical data collection through the PLASC. Welsh is a mandatory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and the statements of what matters for Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience (this Area) set out what must be included in the curriculum with regards to learning and teaching Welsh. See [Languages, Literacy and Communication](#).

The [PLASC technical completion notes](#) state that these fields are collected for primary, secondary and all-through (ages 3 to 16/18) schools, and therefore are not mandatory fields for nursery schools or special schools to complete. Therefore, the analysis in this section does not include learners in special and nursery schools. This means it is not possible to assess the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP among these learners using PLASC data.

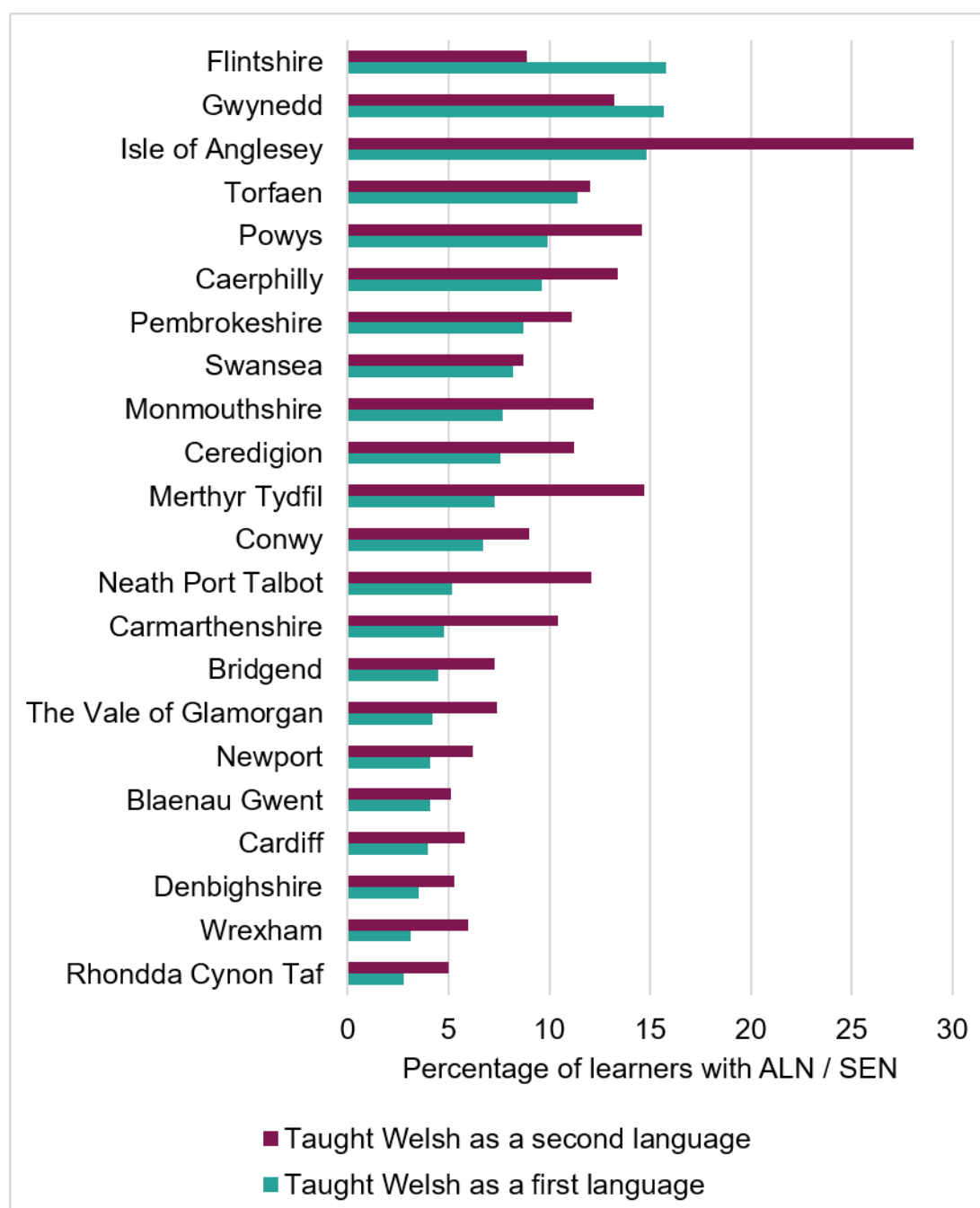
These measures relating to individual learners were considered preferable to the language medium of learners' schools for a number of reasons, specifically:

- there have been changes to the language categorisation of schools in recent years, which limit the extent to which time series data from the PLASC can be analysed
- the language of a school is not considered to be as good a proxy for the language of the pupil, because there are Welsh speakers in English-medium schools
- dual language schools include learners who are receiving both Welsh and English-medium education

PLASC data shows that the percentage of learners taught Welsh as a first language who had ALN / SEN has declined from 18.6% in 2021 to 8.1% in 2025. This follows a similar downward trend in the overall number of all learners with ALN / SEN over the same period. This downward trend is largely linked to the transition from the SEN system to the ALN system. There has also been a similar decline, from 20.9% to 8.7%, in the percentage of learners taught Welsh as a second language who had ALN / SEN from 2021 to 2025. In each of the five years between 2021 and 2025, the percentage of learners with ALN / SEN was similar among those taught Welsh as a first language (6,835 out of 84,040, or 8.1%) compared to those taught Welsh as a second language (26,370 out of 303,585, or 8.7%).

At LA level, there are some variations in the percentage of learners with ALN / SEN according to whether they are taught Welsh as a first or second language (Figure 1). For example, in 2025, 14.8% of those taught Welsh as a first language in the Isle of Anglesey had ALN compared to 28.1% of those taught Welsh as a second language. In contrast, 15.8% of those taught Welsh as a first language in Flintshire had ALN, compared with 8.9% of those taught Welsh as a second language. It is important to acknowledge that these differences may be driven by a number of local factors such as the geographic location and socio-demographic profile of schools in specific language categories.

Figure 1. Percentage of learners in maintained mainstream primary, secondary and all-through (ages 3 to 16/18) schools taught Welsh as a first or second language who had ALN/SEN, by LA 2025



Source: PLASC

The vast majority of learners with ALN who said they spoke Welsh fluently were also taught Welsh as a first language. PLASC data shows that, in 2025, 3,585 fluent Welsh speakers with ALN / SEN were taught Welsh as a first language (91% of all learners with ALN / SEN), with 340 fluent Welsh speakers with ALN / SEN (9% of all) taught Welsh as a second language. This shows that almost one in ten fluent Welsh speakers with ALN are being taught Welsh as a second language. While the

reasons for this are unclear, it may reflect learner preference in some cases, or the fact that these learners are attending English-medium provision where they are more likely to study Welsh as a second language.

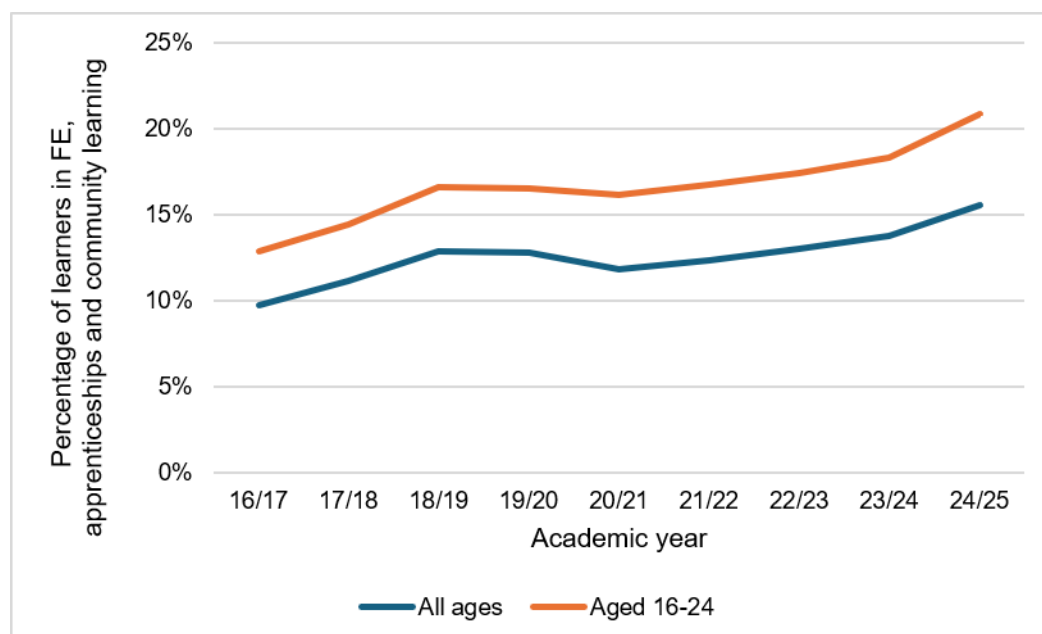
PLASC data outlines that of the 3,105 learners with ALN who spoke Welsh at home, the vast majority of these (86%), were taught Welsh as a first language with 14% taught Welsh as a second language. This indicates that around 1 in 7 learners with ALN who speak Welsh at home were being taught Welsh as a second language. The reasons for this are unclear but could be driven by learner or parental preferences or the availability of Welsh and English-medium education in their area.

Overall, publicly available data recorded by PLASC indicates that across Wales the proportion of learners with ALN among those who are taught Welsh as a first language is similar among those who are taught Welsh as a second language. However, the data also shows that many learners with ALN who speak Welsh at home are taught Welsh as a second language. While this is likely to reflect the availability of Welsh-medium provision in some areas, it may also reflect findings elsewhere in this report that indicate that some learners with ALN choose English-medium provision instead of Welsh-medium provision as they perceive their ALN will be better supported in an English-medium setting. However, this interpretation is speculative and cannot be confirmed using the available data.

4.1.2. Data on post-16 learners

As seen in Figure 2 below, data from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) finds that during the 2024/25 academic year, 16% of [learners of all ages in further education, apprenticeships or LA community learning](#) reported that they had a learning disability or difficulty, while for those aged 16 to 24, the corresponding figure was higher at 21%. The data shows that the percentage of learners reporting that they had learning disability or difficulty increased between 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025.

Figure 2. Percentage of learners with a learning disability or difficulty in FE, apprenticeship and community learning provision 2016/17 to 2024/25



Source: [LLWR](#)

The LLWR collects data on whether learners have an IDP maintained by a FEI or a LA, but this data is not yet published and no data is collected on whether ALP is required in Welsh or whether learners received their ALP in Welsh. However, accessible data is collected via LLWR on the extent to which learners receive any of their learning through the medium of Welsh. This includes data on learning activities where:

- learning is completed in a Welsh-medium context and all of the available assessments within the learning activity are completed through the medium of Welsh (category C1)
- learning is completed in a bilingual context and at least 50% of the available assessments within the learning activity are completed through the medium of Welsh (category B1)

Previously unpublished data based on the above fields was used to create a proxy measure of the potential demand for Welsh-medium ALP. For the purpose of this review, learners with an IDP (either FEI or LA-maintained) who belong to either of the above categories were considered those who may require Welsh-medium ALP.

Analysis of the LLWR data shows that, in 2024/25, 4,085 learners studied at least one activity in these categories, and that 145 of them (4%) had either a LA or FEI-maintained IDP^[Footnote 8]. There were a further 15 learners who had ALN but had

[8] The 145 comprised 30 learners with LA-maintained IDPs and 115 with an FEI-maintained IDP. All 145 learners were in FEIs rather than in other training providers; 110 were studying FE courses and 35 apprenticeships. All figures are rounded to the nearest 5, so total numbers and percentages are approximate.

declined an IDP, and 575 learners who reported that they had a learning difficulty or disability but did not have ALN.

4.1.3. Data on EOTAS learners

The EOTAS census collects data on pupils who are receiving or awaiting education provision funded by the LA other than in a maintained school setting and whose details may not be captured through other data collections. The [2024/25 data](#) showed that there were proportionately, significantly more pupils with SEN or ALN mainly educated outside school than in the general student population. In the overall pupil population, 5.8 of every 1,000 pupils were mainly educated outside school, while 47.8 of every 1,000 pupils with SEN / ALN were mainly educated outside school.

No data is published on the language needs of learners with ALN in EOTAS settings. The EOTAS pupil census does not collect data on languages spoken, fluency or home language in the same way as the PLASC, and therefore proxy indicators of the need for Welsh-medium ALP cannot be generated in the same way as for learners in schools and FEIs.

4.1.4. Data on the ALNLO cohort

Data on the number of children with ALN and the number of LA-maintained IDPs for children in the early years, which is the early years ALN lead officer (ALNLO) cohort, is not published. The review sought to mitigate this by asking LAs whether this data was held centrally by them, as well as data on the language in which ALP was required. This data is presented alongside other data collected from LAs in sections below.

4.1.5. Data on the need for Welsh-medium ALP from LAs

As seen, data on the language in which learners with LA-maintained IDPs require ALP and the number who receive ALP in Welsh and English is not routinely collated or published at national level. The availability of this data was explored with LAs in the LA proforma. LA representatives were asked to note whether data relating to the number of IDPs that include a requirement for the ALP to be delivered in Welsh was held centrally within their LA information management systems. They were also asked to note whether this data was available for learners within various settings, as well as whether this data included details relating to whether learners who require Welsh-medium ALP are receiving it. The responses are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that fewer than half of the LAs reported that they centrally recorded data on school-maintained IDPs that specified a requirement for Welsh-medium ALP (9 out of 21 LAs who responded). The same pattern was evident in relation to centrally held data on whether these learners actually received any ALP in Welsh (8 out of 21 LAs who responded).

Almost all LAs reported that they held data on the need for Welsh-medium ALP in relation to LA-maintained IDPs for learners under compulsory school age who were not attending a maintained school (19 out of 20 LAs who responded) as well as for compulsory school-age learners (18 out of 21 who responded). Most LAs reported that they held data on whether learners receive Welsh-medium ALP in relation to LA-maintained IDPs for learners under compulsory school age who are not attending a maintained school (14 out of 19 LAs who responded) as well as for compulsory school-age learners (16 out of 21 who responded.)

Fewer LAs indicated that they held equivalent data in relation to LA-maintained IDPs for post-16 learners. A total of 15 out of 20 said that they held data on the number of these learners who required Welsh-medium ALP and 12 out of 20 said that they held data on the number of these learners who were receiving Welsh-medium ALP. The latter point reflects what appears to be a broader pattern identified through the research in that data relating to the need for and provision of Welsh-medium ALP to post-16 learners is generally less complete and less consistently recorded across Wales.

Table 1. Number of LAs who centrally hold data relating to the need for and receipt of Welsh-medium ALP

Please indicate whether this information is currently held centrally within your LA	Number of LAs reporting that data is held centrally on whether learners require ALP in Welsh	Number of LAs reporting that data is held centrally on whether learners receive ALP in Welsh
IDPs maintained by mainstream schools	9 out of 21	8 out of 21
IDPs maintained by LAs: children under compulsory school age not attending a maintained school, the "ALNLO cohort"	19 out of 20	14 out of 19
IDPs maintained by LAs: compulsory school age	18 out of 21	16 out of 21
IDPs maintained by LA: post-16 learners	15 out of 20	12 out of 20

Source: LA proforma

[Note 1]: The total number of LAs responding to each question varied. Gwynedd and Môn included as one LA response. LAs were also asked about data relating to the IDPs of learners in SRBs, but this data was not considered reliable enough to include in this table. LAs were not asked whether they held data on FEI maintained IDPs.

LAs were also asked to provide available data on how many IDPs maintained by the LA specified the need for the ALP to be delivered in Welsh. Only 13 of the 22 LAs provided data on this, despite most noting that they do gather it. Across those that did respond, calculations indicate that around 7% of the LA-maintained IDPs in these areas included a requirement for ALP to be delivered in Welsh though there is

considerable variation across LAs (0% to 23%).^[Footnote 9] It is important to note that since several LAs with higher proportions of Welsh speakers did not provide data for this question in the proforma, this figure is likely to underestimate the overall need for Welsh-medium ALP.

Some LAs noted that although this information was available, it was not data that was routinely reviewed, and therefore not something that they could easily report on as part of this review. Some noted that this data was simply not recorded while others reported that all ALP delivered in their LA was delivered in Welsh and therefore recording this was not a requirement.

The range of data provided appears to reflect differences in the way the request for this was interpreted. Some LAs provided data relating to the number of all IDPs (i.e. both school-maintained and LA-maintained IDPs) maintained across all educational settings that require the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, while others provided data on LA-maintained IDPs only. Overall, the responses provided reflected the different systems in place to gather this data. It is, therefore, difficult to gain a consistent picture of the recorded need for Welsh-medium ALP based on data held centrally within LAs. Interviews with LAs, schools and stakeholders during this review reinforced the proforma evidence, illustrating that LAs have developed a variety of systems for recording information held in IDPs, with some adopting centralised systems, where information held at school level is automatically shared with the LAs. In other LAs data held by schools is not routinely shared with the LA.

Several LAs explained that it is generally assumed that within their areas, ALP delivered by schools is provided in the language of the school i.e. Welsh in Welsh-medium settings and English in English-medium settings. Schools echoed this view. Consequently, many schools and LAs do not see a need to separately record the language of ALP as this is assumed to be inherent in the language medium of the school.

While ALP is generally assumed to be delivered in the language of the school, this assumption becomes more complex when LAs and NHS bodies are involved and as learner needs become more complex. Practitioners and stakeholders described instances where individual elements of ALP within an IDP are delivered in different languages, even when the education setting is Welsh-medium. This is particularly the case where provision is delivered by LAs and NHS bodies or where decisions are influenced by a learner's home language. At present, no systematic data is collected at either local or national level on the extent to which different components of ALP within IDPs are delivered in Welsh or English.

[9] This is based on the proforma responses showing that a total of 214 LA-maintained IDPs required ALP through the medium of Welsh. PLASC data shows that there were 3070 LA-maintained IDPs in these 13 LAs in January 2025. While acknowledging that the data in this review was gathered a year later in January 2026, this suggests 7% of the IDPs in these areas included a requirement for Welsh-medium ALP.

Overall, data held by LAs relating to the need for Welsh-medium ALP and the extent to which this provision is delivered appears to be limited. Moreover, the processes and systems in place to gather this information are inconsistent across LAs.

4.1.6. Patterns in the need reported by schools

In contrast to the downward trend in the number of all learners with ALN observed in PLASC data, a general point that emerged from the evidence gathered from schools is that, in their view, the number of learners requiring additional support has risen in recent years. Schools across different LAs reported a notable rise in the number of children presenting with a variety of needs, including those with and without ALN. Schools highlighted particular increases in the number of learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Some attributed this trend partly to the social and emotional impact of COVID-19 and the associated periods of isolation, and some felt it reflected improvements in diagnostic processes and greater awareness of these conditions among professionals and families.

School practitioners felt that this rising level of need, combined with the duty stipulated within the ALN Act that learners with ALN should be educated within mainstream provision where possible, has placed additional pressure on schools. These pressures are discussed in greater depth in subsequent sections of the report, particularly in relation to delivering Welsh-medium ALP, workforce capacity, access to specialist services, and the availability of Welsh-medium ALP resources.

4.1.7. Summary: The need for Welsh-medium ALP

This section explored what is currently known about the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP based on nationally gathered data available on PLASC and LLWR, as well as data that is collected and managed at a LA level.

The findings show that national-level data relating to the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP is limited. Proxy indicators derived from PLASC based on whether learners are taught Welsh as a first or second language provides the most reliable overview of learners with ALN in mainstream schools but does not record whether ALP is required or delivered in Welsh.

Data on learners in EOTAS provision and the ALNLO cohort lack information on language needs. For post-16 learners, 2024/25 LLWR data suggests that a small proportion of FE learners with ALN were studying courses that included substantial Welsh-medium content, indicating potential unmet need, as evidence from FEI representatives indicated that none had Welsh-medium ALP specified in IDPs.

At local level, data collection is inconsistent with LAs varying in how they recorded whether IDPs specified Welsh-medium ALP, largely due to differing data systems.

Overall, the availability of data outlining the national level of need for Welsh-medium ALP across all learners is limited which may, in turn, have implications in terms of determining and monitoring the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP.

4.2. Duties and the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP

This section explores how the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh is understood and how education settings are applying it in practice. Evidence is drawn from qualitative case study schools and discussions with LAs and stakeholders (including a group of ALNCos assembled by CYDAG).

4.2.1. The duty to deliver Welsh-medium ALP

Under Section 12 of the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, and Chapter 23 of the ALN Code (2021), there are statutory duties on LAs and the governing bodies of schools and FEIs when preparing or maintaining an IDP. These bodies must:

- consider whether a child or young person should receive ALP in Welsh, and
- specify in the IDP which elements of ALP should be delivered in Welsh, where they decide that Welsh-medium provision is required

Where ALP is specified in the IDP as needing to be delivered in Welsh, the body responsible for maintaining the IDP must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the ALP is provided in Welsh, as required by the ALN Act.

In addition, NHS bodies must decide whether any ALP-related treatment or service should be provided in Welsh and, if so, take all reasonable steps to secure this.

LAs noted that the statutory duties placed upon them and on governing bodies were both well understood and, in their view, acted upon. All LAs in the review noted that where Welsh-medium ALP is identified as a need within IDPs, they make every effort to ensure that they apply the duty and support the delivery of that provision.

Evidence gathered through this review indicates a widespread understanding that Welsh-medium ALP means support or interventions delivered in Welsh within an education setting or by specialist teachers or teams, health professionals or any other relevant professional identified in the IDP. Where relevant, most interpreted Welsh-medium ALP to also refer to the availability and use of learning resources and materials such as assessments and physical or digital resources-that enable or support the delivery of ALP through the medium of Welsh.

Most ALP is delivered within schools and other education settings and therefore the assumption is that Welsh-medium schools are predominantly responsible for delivering Welsh-medium ALP. LAs noted that they understood their responsibility as that of supporting these schools to deliver Welsh-medium ALP and where required to provide additional support and resources including specialist teachers and EPs.

Schools and LAs reported that no specific guidance or tools are provided to schools on how the duty should be applied, beyond referencing the ALN Code. Schools did not, however, note that this was something that they felt was necessarily required.

4.2.2. Decision making and applying the duty for Welsh-medium ALP

Decisions relating to the ALP needed by each individual learner and the language in which the provision is to be delivered, sits within wider person-centred IDP processes. Schools typically identify the ALP required through teacher observations, pupil progress meetings and early discussions with parents.

These processes also focus on whether the support required constitutes ALP or whether other forms of support can be provided. For example, the ALNCo in one Welsh-medium primary school reported that before deciding on the type and language of support required by a learner, they first assess whether any learning difficulties experienced by the learner are mainly linguistic or developmental. If the difficulties relate to language acquisition, then they would typically use classroom strategies, targeted language support or, in some cases, language immersion to support that rather than specifying ALP in an IDP. Where the difficulties experienced by the learner are developmental, then the ALNCos will identify a need for ALP which will be noted in an IDP. These discussions begin early with families and are revisited at key transition points.

Stakeholders noted that some Welsh-medium schools find it challenging to determine whether a learner's difficulties stem from language acquisition or underlying developmental needs. In some cases, learners are referred to LA-provided language immersion programmes when what they require is ALP.

Each element of the required ALP identified within these processes must be detailed within the IDP. The IDP must also outline which organisation is responsible for delivering each element. Some IDPs require multiple elements of ALP, while others may require only one. The IDP must also specify whether any part of the ALP needs to be delivered through the medium of Welsh.^[Footnote 10] This may apply to all the provision or only certain elements.

As noted above, the language delivery of ALP is generally guided by the language of the school, with Welsh-medium ALP assumed where the learner attends a Welsh-medium setting unless there is a clear reason to do otherwise. An example of one such reason to do otherwise was outlined by a Welsh-medium primary school, where learners in year 6 with ALN who were known to be moving to an English-medium secondary school received ALP delivered in English to help them transition to their secondary school. However, examples such as these are the exception rather than the norm. Learners with ALN who continue their studies into

[10] Section 2B and 2C of IDPs requires practitioners to answer the question "Should the ALP be provided in Welsh?" and notes "If yes, the school must make all reasonable efforts to provide it".

sixth form receive the same level of support as they did in previous years. For learners in Welsh-medium schools this support would continue to be delivered in Welsh.

Within dual-stream schools the language delivery of ALP noted in an IDP can be more complex as it is possible for learners to move from one language stream to another. ALNCos noted that staff collaborate across Welsh-medium and English-medium pathways to determine the most appropriate language of ALP for individual learners. Dual-stream school practitioners indicated that the school's stated default position, based on strong parental expectations, is usually to keep learners in the language stream chosen by families on entry to the school. It then follows that the language of the ALP noted within the IDP and delivered aligns with that language medium.

However, dual-stream school practitioners included in our case study sample noted that occasionally ALN learners move from the Welsh-medium stream to the English-medium stream and therefore the ALP they receive changes from being delivered in Welsh to being delivered in English. Practitioners within these schools noted that families who move their child from one language stream to another often do so because they assume that specialist ALP (e.g. SLT), would be more widely available in the English stream.

It is less clear how decisions are made about whether Welsh-medium ALP is required for learners in education settings where the language of the setting is not defined, such as FEIs, PRUs and special schools.

FEI representatives noted that they are aware of their duty to provide Welsh-medium ALP where required and strive to offer this where it is identified as a need. However, they also noted that their ability to provide this is often limited by the relatively low number of Welsh-speaking staff available to deliver this provision. FEI representatives also noted that none of the learners within their institution currently had an IDP that included a requirement for Welsh-medium ALP even though they take an active approach to outline to learners that Welsh-language provision can be provided if required.

An example of this was reported by representatives from one FEI who noted that they actively engaged with year 10 and 11 learners in local Welsh-medium schools during transition planning meetings to inform them of Welsh-medium course options and the accompanying support available to those with ALN. However, they also noted that, on entering FE, learners from these schools usually opted for English-medium courses and did not have an IDP that specified a requirement for Welsh-medium ALP. They were uncertain as to why this may be but suggested that one key reason may be that learners generally associated FEIs as predominantly English-medium institutions and therefore expect any support including ALP to be delivered in English. Indeed, it was reported that, in some instances, learners

actively choose to enrol onto FEI courses because they anticipate that most of the provision will be delivered in English, even if they previously attended a Welsh-medium school.

In PRU settings, the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP was also reported to be very low. One of the case-study PRUs, noted that if a learner with an IDP specifying that ALP was required in Welsh enrolled with them, staff arranged for a Welsh-speaking tutor to be available to provide this. However, staff noted that, following discussions with learners and parents during the transition from schools to the PRU, the need for Welsh-language ALP was rarely identified as being required, and often not the preferred option of learners themselves. They noted this was also the case for most learners transferring from Welsh-medium schools. It is uncertain why this may occur, but it was suggested that there is an assumption amongst learners that PRUs, as with FEIs, are English-medium institutions and therefore that is the language in which they expect all support and provision to be delivered.

ALNCos in the CYDAG group highlighted that it can be difficult for learners to return to Welsh-medium education following a sustained period of support and learning through English at PRUs. They noted that, in some areas of Wales, alternative models have recently been trialled to address this, including one Welsh-medium secondary school that has developed an in-house behaviour support unit. It is too early at this stage to identify what the outcomes of these trials are.

In the context of special schools, decisions about the language of ALP are often considered alongside decisions about other general communication modes, particularly for learners with complex or profound needs. In cases where learners use signing, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), eye-gaze or body-sign systems, establishing consistent communication through these modes takes precedence over English or Welsh. Staff in one special school reported that most of their provision was English-medium, but that staff used Welsh informally with pupils from Welsh-speaking homes, though no IDPs in the setting specified Welsh-medium ALP. Another special school described aligning the language of the IDP with parental preferences expressed during Person-centred Practice (PCP) meetings, transition meetings and wider discussions with parents, producing IDPs in Welsh for Welsh-speaking families and in English for others, while delivering ALP in both English and Welsh in the school.

4.2.3. Welsh-medium ALP delivered by NHS bodies

The ALN Code states that some children and young people will require the support of NHS bodies to help meet their needs. For these children and young people, Section 2c of IDPs should include a description and delivery of ALP to be secured by an NHS body. The ALN Code notes that NHS bodies can help meet the needs of children and young people in a range of ways including providing advice and training on the ALP to be secured, modification of the environment within which the

child or young person receives their education, meeting particular needs for a child or young person with ALN, and monitoring and reporting on the child's progress.

DECLOs explained that LHBs understand and recognise that they have a duty to secure Welsh-medium provision where required, and review this on a case-by-case basis. When a referral is received by the LHB, the language of the ALP required is outlined in the documentation and efforts are always made to ensure that the provision is delivered in the language needed. ^[Footnote 11] However, they also noted that as they do not routinely hold data on the language delivery of ALP secured by health and therefore it is not possible to confirm how much of the provision is delivered in Welsh.

In practice, stakeholders indicated that ALP secured by an NHS body can include SLT, physiotherapy interventions to support access to the classroom, occupational therapy (OT) input for fine-motor and equipment needs, CAMHS interventions where emotional regulation affects learning, and occasional specialist nursing input. Schools confirmed that they also engaged regularly with health professionals across these roles, to get advice and information, with varying levels of Welsh-language capacity across these services (see section 4.3 for more detail on workforce capacity).

LHBs consider and secure ALP in response to Section 20 referrals submitted by LAs. DECLO interviews suggest that LHBs receive increasing numbers of Section 20 referrals, although the number varies widely between areas and is not yet systematically recorded in a way that allows analysis by language medium. As such, there are no records of whether the ALP is delivered in Welsh. However, during interviews, DECLOs reported that only a very small proportion of cases are known as requiring Welsh-medium delivery, described variously as “almost none”, “a handful” or “around 3-5%”.

DECLOs observed that while referrals requiring Welsh-medium ALP to be delivered by NHS bodies were very low, particularly when compared with the proportion of learners in Welsh-medium education, no issues or concerns with gaps in Welsh-medium ALP had been brought to their attention by LHB colleagues. The reasons for this low number of referrals are unclear and may include assumptions by parents or schools about the availability of Welsh-medium services or a perception that clinical services are predominantly English-medium.

DECLOs explained that where Welsh-medium ALP is requested, the LHBs review the request and make decisions as to how to deliver that provision on a case-by-case basis after discussions with schools and families. As a result, where

[11] A Section 20 referral allows a LA or IDP-maintaining body to ask a LHB to consider whether any treatment or service would benefit a child or young person's ALN.

Welsh-medium ALP is not specified within Section 20 referrals, it would not be identified or recorded as required by NHS bodies.

The low number of referrals specifying Welsh-medium ALP raises a wider question as to the extent to which services managed by NHS bodies actively offer services in Welsh. The Active Offer of services in Welsh is the principal requirement outlined in [More than just words](#) to ensure that the Welsh language is treated as a core component of quality, person-centred care within the health and social care sector. The low number of referrals specifying Welsh-medium ALP raises questions about how the Active Offer is understood and put into practice.

4.2.4. Limitations on the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP

Although most schools reported that they can deliver ALP in the language medium of the school itself or in other cases (e.g. some special schools) the preferred language of the learner and family, practitioners also identified some limitations on their ability to do this due to the availability of TAs and HLTAs, these staff members play an important role in supporting the delivery of ALP in schools. However, as is discussed further in later in the report, many Welsh-medium schools reported challenges in recruiting and retaining these staff members. Practitioners supporting the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP also reported challenges in accessing sufficient Welsh-medium assessment and learning resources to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP as well as Welsh-medium professional learning and training opportunities relating to ALN (see sections 4.3 to 4.4).

However, not all ALP is delivered by school practitioners. Some specialist support and provision such as SLT and specialist peripatetic ALN teacher support, are often delivered by the LA or LHB. Evidence from case study visits to schools and interviews with practitioners, outline that provision delivered by these services is not always available in Welsh. Schools further noted that the availability of Welsh-speaking EPs who can support schools in their delivery of ALP are also in short supply – see section 4.3.1. These gaps in the availability of Welsh-medium provision and support delivered by bodies outside of schools can therefore further limit the extent to which schools can meet all the Welsh-medium ALP needs of learners in their setting.

In relation to LA provision, gaps become even more apparent when considering the needs of learners with more complex needs, including those requiring specialist interventions or access to special school placements. Although efforts are made to accommodate the needs of these learners within mainstream schools, this is not always possible. Specialist LA provision required by these learners is not consistently available locally through the medium of Welsh. As a result, families are often forced to choose between accessing the specialist support their child needs and accessing their preference for Welsh-medium education. Practitioners provided examples where learners from Welsh-speaking households were placed in

English-medium, out-of-county specialist settings because no equivalent Welsh-medium provision was available within their LA.

School and LA practitioners also highlighted cases where specialist provision was available locally or within reasonable travelling distance for primary-age learners, but not for those at secondary level. This lack of continuity creates challenges, as learners who are well supported in primary settings may face disruption or reduced access to appropriate provision when they transition to secondary education. One example of this, outlined by practitioners, related to a Year 5 learner from a Welsh-speaking home who required a specialist placement for secondary. The only option available was in an English-medium setting, forcing the family to choose between a Welsh-medium secondary school without appropriate specialist support, or moving to a special school with English-medium provision.

Despite these gaps in specialist provision, several LAs and schools reported recent progress. A few LAs reported that new SRBs have recently opened, or are in development, which are expected to improve the availability of Welsh-medium pathways for learners with complex needs. These developments are intended to reduce the number of cases in which families feel that they have to compromise their language preference in order to secure suitable ALP (see section 4.4 on resources). However, no LA currently collects or holds systematic data on the number of families who would have chosen Welsh-medium specialist ALP in an SRB had it been available. Therefore, it is not possible to fully assess whether the Welsh-medium specialist provision available through these SRBs fully meets all needs and is therefore not possible to conclude whether current levels of provision are sufficient.

Evidence gathered from LAs, schools and wider stakeholders, also highlights some challenges in accessing Welsh-medium ALP when that provision is to be secured by NHS bodies via Section 20 referrals. Across Wales, including areas with higher proportions of Welsh speakers, clinical interventions, both ALP and more generally, tend to be delivered in English or are only available in English. As a result, learners in Welsh-medium settings who require support delivered by health care professionals often receive this ALP in English only.

Those interviewed described some pragmatic, case-specific workarounds that have been used when Welsh-medium specialists are not available. These include pairing Welsh-speaking and non-Welsh-speaking clinicians for joint visits, gaining the support of Welsh-speaking TAs as language partners during school visits, or clinicians using their limited or beginner level Welsh skills to support the interactions. These approaches were described as ad hoc responses in a very small number of cases, rather than planned or routine Welsh-medium ALP.

School practitioners explained that in some cases health provision is in place prior to a Section 20 referral and separate to the development of an IDP. As a result, this

support, such as SLT, is viewed as a continuation of existing clinical intervention rather than ALP linked to the IDP. In these cases, that provision may have started in English and therefore may continue to be delivered in English, even if the learner is in a Welsh-medium education setting. This distinction has implications for how provision is aligned with educational needs as well as how it is recorded as part of the ALP delivered.

Schools also highlighted that, where learners receive SLT or other therapies in English, it follows that the 'speech patterns and strategies developed are also in English and do not always transfer effectively' into Welsh-medium learning. School practitioners reported that this can create inconsistency between SLT support and the language of the classroom, with a potential impact on the continuity of learning through the medium of Welsh for individual learners. School teachers noted that they have to adjust their classroom practices to accommodate for this which places additional pressures on their workload.

Some LAs reported that the lack of alignment between support secured by NHS bodies and that delivered in education settings has become increasingly evident. This issue has been compounded in areas where SLT services, previously coordinated jointly with the LA, have moved back under the responsibility of the LHB, making it more difficult for ALN teams to understand what provision is available and how well it aligns with learners' educational needs.

4.2.5. Reviewing the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP

Section 63 of the ALN Act requires LAs to keep their ALN arrangements under review, including the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP. The [Welsh in Education Strategic Plans \(WESPs\) regulations](#) also require LAs to report the steps they are taking to review the sufficiency of Welsh-medium provision.

Most LAs noted that their approach to reviewing the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP involves working directly with education settings to consider whether they have the capacity to support learners with ALN. This includes reviewing their access to specialist support, and the availability of Welsh-medium resources. Some LAs noted that aspects of this work also fall within the remit of their WESPs, particularly where the focus relates to the growth and sustainability of Welsh-medium provision.

Across Wales, LAs generally assess the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP based on a largely reactive approach where if schools or other education providers report that they require support to deliver ALP in Welsh, efforts are made to provide it. Conversely, if schools and parents do not report any apparent gaps in specific support relating to Welsh-medium ALP, then it is assumed that the current provision is sufficient. While this demand-led approach ensures that support is directed where it is explicitly requested, it also raises questions about whether unmet need is always visible and taken into consideration.

Across education settings, practitioners noted uncertainty about whether the required delivery language specified in IDPs for all elements of ALP consistently reflects the learner's linguistic needs, or whether it sometimes reflects what is practically deliverable. As noted above, not all ALP is delivered by school practitioners, and services delivered by specialist staff employed outside of the school are not always available in Welsh. It was suggested that parents or guardians of children in Welsh-medium schools are often content for these elements of ALP to be delivered in English if they believe that they will be able to access more provision or within a shorter timescale.

Examples of this, noted by ALNCoS, included access to SLT services and mental health services. For example, it was noted that Welsh-medium referral pathways for services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) can sometimes lead to longer waiting times, which may discourage families from requesting Welsh-medium support. As one school practitioner noted, families often prioritise accessing the provision they need over the language in which that provision is delivered, and this can reflect how this need is noted within IDPs.

Welsh-medium schools also noted that they do not always specify the need for Welsh-medium support from EPs or other ALN support staff employed by the LA if they know that this specialist support is not available in Welsh or if accessing it will create delivery delays. As such reviewing the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP based on the needs noted within IDPs may underestimate the actual level of demand for Welsh-medium ALP.

LAs explained that they also review the Welsh-language skills of their workforce using annual data from the SWAC. This provides an indication of the linguistic capacity available to deliver ALP in Welsh and informs decisions relating to the recruitment and retention of staff (further discussed in section 4.3).

A small number of LAs reported that they have recently undertaken, or are currently undertaking, a review of specialist provision within their area. These reviews assess the extent to which specialist settings-such as special schools and SRBs located on mainstream school sites can offer provision through the medium of Welsh. Much of this work focuses on the geographical reach of specialist provision and whether learners with more complex ALN, who require more intensive ALP, can access Welsh-medium support within their local catchment area. The aim is to ensure that learners do not have to travel long distances to access appropriate Welsh-medium specialist provision.

No examples were provided by LAs of parents or learners being consulted or surveyed to gather their views on whether the level of Welsh-medium ALP available to them is sufficient to meet their needs. Collecting feedback of this nature is an approach that LAs may wish to consider when reviewing the future sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP.

WESPs and their annual reports provide a source of evidence on how LAs fulfil their duty to review the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP. Within this framework, LAs are required to reflect annually on progress against each WESP outcome, including Outcome 6, on increasing Welsh-medium provision for learners with ALN. Evidence from the WESP annual reports indicates that almost all LAs self-assess their progress against Outcome 6 positively as either green or amber. These self-assessments typically reflect progress in establishing new provision, strengthening workforce capacity, or on planning and review processes, often alongside acknowledgement of ongoing challenges, particularly in relation to specialist workforce availability and the geographical reach of provision. In several LAs, positive self-assessments are linked to planned future provision, indicating that RAG ratings often reflect confidence in the future direction of provision rather than confirmation that sufficiency is already being achieved.

The WESP evidence therefore suggests that LAs assess sufficiency largely based on current demand, planned developments and system-level capacity. While this sets out existing provision and planned improvements, the process does not usually consider whether current levels of demand may change or be shaped by the availability of Welsh-medium ALP, nor whether provision would remain sufficient if the level of need increased.

4.2.6. Wider evidence relating to the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP

The findings outlined above reinforce those from the wider evidence base, gathered as part of the Evaluation of the ALN system.

In a [survey of practitioners and professionals \(2025\)](#), mixed views were expressed about planning and delivering Welsh-medium ALP. A majority of respondents from schools, FEIs and LAs, compared with around half of those in LHBs agreed that, in preparing IDPs, appropriate consideration was given by those involved to whether learners require ALP in Welsh. In terms of the availability of Welsh-medium ALP, a majority of respondents from Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, over half from FEIs and LAs and around half from LHBs agreed that ALP was available in Welsh where needed.

The [local area studies report](#) (2026) found that most Welsh-medium schools and settings in areas with relatively high numbers of Welsh-speaking families reported having sufficient capacity to deliver ALP in Welsh or bilingually, including in special schools. However, they also identified ongoing challenges. These included limited availability of Welsh-language resources, particularly for literacy and dyslexia support, with some resources described as outdated. Schools also highlighted workforce constraints, including shortages of Welsh-speaking SLTs and difficulties recruiting staff with Welsh-language skills.

The Welsh Government's [legislative framework review](#) noted strong stakeholder commitment to the principle of a bilingual ALN system and clear support for learners

accessing Welsh-medium provision. It also noted that stakeholders highlighted challenges in implementation, including workforce and resource considerations, which affected the consistency with which bilingual provision could be delivered.

Estyn's thematic reports ([2023](#) and [2024](#)) recognise the statutory commitment to a bilingual ALN system and identify examples of effective Welsh-medium practice, particularly in areas and settings with established Welsh-language capacity. However, the reports also highlight ongoing challenges in developing and sustaining Welsh-medium ALP consistently across Wales. These include limitations in workforce capacity, availability of specialist support and learning resources in Welsh and variability in strategic planning for Welsh-medium ALP, particularly in more specialist and post-16 contexts.

4.2.7. Summary: Duties and the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP

The section above reviews the extent to which statutory duties relating to Welsh-medium ALP are understood and how this provision is delivered and supported in practice. It also explored LA approaches to review the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP.

Key points emerging from the findings indicate that, while the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh is understood by all bodies, decisions about whether ALP should be delivered in Welsh are often dependent on a number of factors. The needs of the learner are central to the process, however, the language of provision within the learner's education setting is also a key determinant. The availability of provision, including, the known availability of staff and resources to deliver ALP in Welsh, as well as perceptions as to whether ALP will be available in Welsh, also influence whether items of ALP included in an IDP should be delivered in Welsh.

Welsh-medium ALP delivered by NHS bodies remains low and is not routinely monitored. Workforce availability, limited Welsh-medium clinical tools, variation in referral patterns and mainly English-medium clinical pathways play a role in constraining Welsh-medium ALP. Schools also reported a range of practical mismatches between health and Welsh-medium educational contexts.

The availability of specialist Welsh-medium provision is increasing. However, this provision is not available in all areas across Wales. Even in areas where the provision is available, issues such as travel distances often create access barriers.

Finally, the evidence presented in this section suggests that, while LAs are committed to supporting Welsh-medium ALP, current approaches to review sufficiency rely heavily on a demand-led reactive approach that may not always capture the full picture of need. This is particularly the case where families or schools may assume that Welsh-medium ALP is unavailable and therefore do not make any attempts to identify it as a need.

4.3. Workforce and Welsh-medium ALP

The previous sections presented an overview of the duties relating to, and the delivery of, Welsh-medium ALP, highlighting issues and gaps, including some associated with workforce that have implications for level of sufficiency within the system. Since it is a key aspect of implementing the ALN system, this section presents further data on the ALN workforce in schools, LAs and LHBs.

Data on the school workforce is available through the Schools Workforce Annual Census (SWAC). Data for 2024/25 (collected November 2024) shows that there were 390 ALNCos in 405 Welsh-medium schools which consist of 335 in primary schools, 15 in all-through (ages 3 to 16/18) schools and 35 in secondary schools.

The [Welsh Government have stated](#) that the ALNCo role is most effective where these individuals are part of the senior leadership team and are able to influence the strategic direction and decision-making of the school.

Table 2 below shows a breakdown of the number of ALNCos according to 'staff category' (i.e. their main role as noted in the SWAC). The data shows that the main role of around half of ALNCos in Welsh-medium (51.3%) and English-medium (48.8%) schools was 'qualified teacher', while 38.5% in Welsh-medium and 30.4% in English-medium schools noted their main role was either headteacher, executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, acting headteacher or assistant headteacher. A higher percentage of ALNCos in Welsh-medium schools (15.4%) were headteachers, compared with English-medium schools (5.3%).

Table 2. ALNCos in Welsh-medium and English-medium schools by staff category 2024/25

Staff category	Number of ALNCos - Welsh-medium schools	Percentage of ALNCos Welsh-medium schools	Number of ALNCos - English-medium schools	Percentage of ALNCos - English-medium schools
Executive headteacher	*	.	5	0.5%
Headteachers	60	15.4%	55	5.3%
Acting headteachers	10	2.6%	10	1.0%
Deputy headteachers	45	11.5%	150	14.5%
Assistant head teachers	35	9.0%	95	9.2%
Leading practitioner	*	.	*	.
Qualified teachers	200	51.3%	505	48.8%
Teaching assistants	5	1.3%	*	.
HLTAs	.	.	5	0.5%
ALN co-ordinator (1)	30	7.7%	190	18.4%
ALN support staff	*	.	5	0.5%

Source: SWAC.

[Note 1]: Numbers are rounded to nearest 5. “*” denotes a number between 1-4. “.” Denotes data not available. Breakdowns for the following staff categories not shown because data was not available: Unqualified teacher, Teachers of the Deaf, School business manager, Pastoral support staff, Other support staff, Higher level teaching assistant, Foreign language assistants, Other teachers including not QTS status but not 'unqualified'. ALN co-ordinator (1) Includes individuals where ALN co-ordinator is their main role only.

This data does not enable an assessment of how many ALNCos are members of their school's senior leadership team but provides an indication of the main roles occupied by ALNCos, showing a higher percentage of ALNCos in Welsh-medium schools hold more senior roles compared with English-medium schools. [Welsh Government is currently considering](#) whether to collect individual level data on whether an ALNCo in a setting is on the senior leadership team or not.

Data on the Welsh language ability of ALNCos (those listed as having ALNCo as their main role) and ALN support staff is shown in Table 3 below. It shows that 16.9% of staff with ALNCo noted as their main role had proficient Welsh skills, compared with 11.4% of ALN support staff.

Table 3. Welsh language ability of ALNCoS in all schools

Welsh language ability	Number of staff with ALNCo as their main role	Percentage of staff with ALNCo as their main role	Number of ALN support staff	Percentage of ALN support staff
No skills	45	15.3%	1295	38.7%
Entry Level	85	28.8%	1070	32.0%
Foundation Level	70	23.7%	295	8.8%
Intermediate Level	25	8.5%	140	4.2%
Advanced Level	15	5.1%	155	4.6%
Proficient Level	50	16.9%	380	11.4%
Information not obtained	.	.	*	*
Unknown	.	.	.	.
Total	295	100.0%	3345	100.0%

Source: SWAC.

[Note 1]: “*” denotes numbers between 1 and 4 which are not shown due to potentially being disclosive. Numbers are rounded to nearest 5 and therefore totals may not equate to the sum of rows.

When the data is further analysed by school type, it indicates that all ALNCoS in Welsh-medium schools had either proficient or advanced Welsh language ability. In English-medium schools, most ALNCoS (84.4%) had either no Welsh language ability or entry level ability or foundation level ability, while 15.6% had intermediate, advanced or proficient level ability.

Table 4 below presents data on the language ability of ALN support staff as a whole and by school language medium. It shows that most ALN support staff in Welsh-medium schools had advanced or proficient level ability (79.3%), while most in English-medium schools had either no skills or entry level Welsh language skills (84.0%).

Table 4. Welsh language ability of ALN support staff

Welsh language ability	Number of ALN support staff - all schools	Percentage of ALN support staff - all schools	Number of ALN support staff - English-medium schools	Percentage of ALN support staff - English-medium schools	Number of ALN support staff - Welsh-medium schools	Percentage of ALN support staff - Welsh-medium schools
No skills	1295	38.7%	660	41.5%	*	*
Entry Level	1070	32.0%	675	42.5%	20	4.3%
Foundation Level	295	8.8%	165	10.4%	25	5.4%
Intermediate Level	140	4.2%	45	2.8%	50	10.9%
Advanced Level	155	4.6%	20	1.3%	110	23.9%
Proficient Level	380	11.4%	25	1.6%	255	55.4%
Information not obtained	*	*	*	*	.	.
Unknown	.	.	.	.	.	.
Total	3345	100.0%	1,590	100.0%	460	100.0%

Source: SWAC.

[Note]: “*” denotes numbers between 1 and 4 not shown due to potentially being disclosive. Numbers are rounded to nearest 5 and therefore totals may not equate to the sum of rows.

The Education Workforce Council also publishes [Annual Education Workforce Statistics for Wales](#). These show that, in each year between 2015 and 2021, 0.1% of registered secondary school teachers had trained in ALN/SEN as part of their ITE. The data also shows that in 2025, 1.6% of secondary teachers and ‘all-through (ages 3 to 16/18)’ teachers were registered as teaching ‘Additional Educational Needs’.

4.3.1. Current sufficiency of the workforce

As part of this review, LAs were asked to indicate whether they had a sufficient number of specialist ALN staff able to support the delivery of ALP in schools through the medium of Welsh. The question focused specifically on staff directly employed or managed by the LA, rather than those employed by individual schools.

A summary of responses is provided in Table 5 below. Almost half of the LAs that responded (9 out of 19) to the question reported that they did not have sufficient numbers of Welsh-speaking specialist teachers to support learners with visual impairment, hearing impairment or autism across their schools. This finding aligns with the concerns highlighted in the annual report of the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) (unpublished).

While the proforma responses tended to be brief with few details on the specific causes of reported insufficiency, the evidence suggests that this reflects a combination of factors rather than a single issue. These include overall shortages of specialist teachers, difficulties recruiting staff with both specialist qualifications and Welsh language skills, and the limited resilience of very small teams. Evidence from practitioners and stakeholders further indicates that provision is vulnerable due to reliance on small numbers of individual staff, travel distances and the need to plan for low-incidence but high-need cases.

In relation to EPs, most LAs (13 out of 20) reported that they had sufficient Welsh-speaking EP capacity to meet their needs. However, six LAs indicated that they did not have enough EPs with Welsh-language skills, and three of these reported having no Welsh-speaking EPs at all. These LAs were predominantly located in the south and southeast of Wales, where the proportion of Welsh speakers is lower than the national average.

These findings contrast with the views expressed by many of the case study schools who participated in the review, most of which reported a shortage of Welsh-speaking EP provision in their area. However, it should be noted that five of the 15 education settings visited were located in LAs that themselves reported shortages in Welsh-speaking EP capacity. This divergence may also reflect differing perspectives on what constitutes “sufficiency”. LAs typically assess sufficiency as having enough Welsh-speaking capacity overall, whereas schools judge sufficiency based on their own direct interactions, for example receiving EP input through the medium of English in a Welsh-medium setting. The fragility of workforce capacity, which may be reliant on one or two Welsh-speaking staff in some roles, means that there may be instances (e.g. staff absences) where capacity appears insufficient from schools’ perspectives. Even among LAs that considered their Welsh-speaking EP provision to be sufficient, the actual numbers employed are small, typically between one and four EPs. Several LAs explained that they assess sufficiency by comparing the ratio of Welsh-speaking to non-Welsh-speaking staff with the ratio of Welsh-medium to English-medium schools in their area. However, geographically large LAs noted that although staffing levels may appear sufficient on paper, the small number of Welsh-speaking specialists they employ often need to travel long distances to deliver support where needed. As a result, while overall staffing levels may be reported as adequate, the availability of Welsh-speaking EP input at the point of need can be more constrained in practice.

Many LAs also highlighted the fragility of small specialist teams. Where only one or two Welsh-speaking EPs or specialist teachers are employed, the departure of a single staff member can quickly change the LA from a position of sufficiency to insufficiency. Combined with the recruitment challenges outlined later in this report (section 4.3.3), this can result in prolonged gaps in the availability of Welsh-medium specialist support.

In many cases, LAs reported that they were uncertain whether there were sufficient numbers of staff employed as SLTs, OTs, and other physical health staff because in most cases these were employed by the LHB.

Table 5. Sufficiency of specialist ALN staff who can work through the medium of Welsh: responses to the question “Is the number of ALN staff who can work through the medium of Welsh sufficient to meet learners’ needs in your LA”?

Field of work/area of specialism of specialist ALN staff	Yes - number of LAs	No - number of LAs	Don't know/Not applicable - number of LAs	Total - number of LAs responding to the question
Specialist teacher with specialist ALN qualifications (e.g. specialising in visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism)	9	9	1	19
Educational psychologist (EPs)	13	6	1	20
Early Years ALNLO	10	6	2	18
Inclusion officer/lead	7	5	3	15
Support officer (ALN specific)	8	4	2	14
ALN manager/team leader/coordinator	10	4	3	17
Other staff e.g. Teacher / learner advisors	2	4	6	12
Speech and language therapists (SLTs)	2	4	8	14
Transition worker	2	3	4	9
Family liaison officer (ALN specific)	3	3	5	11
Self-employed individuals (please specify)	0	2	9	11
Occupational therapists (OTs)	0	2	11	13
Other physical-health staff (please specify)	3	1	8	12
Other advisory or specialist teachers (please specify)	12	1	4	17

Source: LA proforma

Although many LAs reported that they have sufficient Welsh-speaking specialist ALN staff, most schools consulted felt that support from these roles was often limited in practice. Schools particularly highlighted shortages in access to

Welsh-speaking specialist teachers for hearing and visual impairment and EPs. In many cases, schools described adapting to these constraints by implementing practices in Welsh, based on advice provided in English. Schools also generally agreed that receiving specialist support, regardless of language, was preferable to receiving no support or experiencing delays, particularly where direct intervention with learners was short-term. Evidence from schools suggests that these constraints primarily impact on staff time and workload, requiring additional effort to interpret or adapt guidance provided in English.

This again raises the question of whether LAs' assessment that they have enough Welsh-speaking specialist staff reflects the actual level of need. It may instead reflect the level of demand from schools, which could be lower because schools assume that Welsh-medium support is not readily available.

In addition to considering their ability to deliver services in Welsh, LAs were asked whether specialist ALN staff within their employment actively used their Welsh-language skills when providing support. Fifteen of the twenty LAs who responded said they were aware of specialist ALN practitioners who could deliver ALP in Welsh but were not doing so. Two LAs, however, noted that they were aware of instances of this and the remaining three were unsure.

During interviews a few LAs noted that confidence to use the Welsh language skills they had was a barrier for some practitioners, although most noted that the extent to which specialist practitioners used their Welsh language skills in their work was not something that they routinely monitored.

Evidence from Welsh in Education Strategic Plans

Evidence from LAs' WESPs, including annual progress reports, provides additional insight into the capacity of the Welsh-medium ALN workforce. While WESPs vary in the level of detail they provide, they consistently highlighted issues regarding the small scale of Welsh-speaking specialist teams across many authorities.

One LA's WESP and annual report illustrated how Welsh-medium workforce capacity can vary substantially by role. The LA reported that while Welsh language capacity was strong within some specialist services, such as advisory teachers for speech, language and communication needs, capacity was limited or absent in others, including visual impairment, autism--related roles and specialist post-16 provision. The LA notes that this variation can lead to inconsistencies in provision, particularly in smaller or rural settings, and highlights the need for sufficiency to be kept under regular review through ALN steering groups and workforce planning processes.

Overall, the evidence suggests that while some LAs consider their Welsh-speaking specialist workforce to be sufficient, gaps in the availability of specialist teachers and EPs are evident in most areas. The small size of teams and geographical

pressures also create vulnerabilities that can further significantly affect the availability and consistency of staff that can support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP.

4.3.2. Recruitment and retention opportunities and challenges

Although evidence provided in the discussion above shows that around half of the LAs reported that they currently have sufficient numbers of specialist staff across a range of roles able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh, the majority noted challenges in recruiting and retaining these workers.

Table 6 below, presents data on these challenges. It shows that all LAs that expressed a view reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining Welsh-speaking EPs. Evidence from interviews suggests that these challenges most commonly take the form of repeated unsuccessful attempts to fill posts, reliance on very small numbers of Welsh-speaking EPs, and the need to use temporary, part-time or short-term arrangements to maintain capacity. LAs described particular vulnerability where provision depends on one or two individuals, with maternity leave, staff movement or promotion quickly reducing capacity. Several LAs also noted that appointing Welsh-speaking EPs often involves drawing from a very small national pool, with implications for capacity in other LAs.

The annual report produced by the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) (unpublished) also identifies the challenges LAs face in recruiting Welsh-speaking EPs. The report notes that the Welsh Government has commissioned Cardiff University to deliver 10 places on their Doctorate in Educational Psychology programme and that a minimum of three funded places in each new cohort must be allocated to Welsh-speakers or students with the aptitude and commitment to allow them to work as EPs through the medium of Welsh by the time they graduate. There is also a stipulation within this commission that these EPs must remain employed in Wales for at least 2 years after completing the course.

In this review, some LAs noted, in both proforma responses and interviews, that as the current training provision is based in Cardiff, it may be less accessible for candidates from North Wales, although similar provision is also being explored at Bangor University. Some stakeholders also emphasised that, while these measures are welcome, their impact will take time to be realised, due to the small number of places available and requirement that candidates have completed prior degree-level study and relevant professional experience.

Most LAs also identified similar challenges in relation to specialist and advisory teachers (17 out of 20), as well as TAs and HLTAs (14 out of 18) able to deliver ALP in Welsh. Across every occupational group, more LAs reported recruitment and retention difficulties than those who did not.

Every LA noted at least some recruitment or retention challenges within parts of their specialist workforce. These challenges did not vary significantly by geography. LAs in both predominantly Welsh-speaking and English-speaking areas, as well as in rural and urban authorities, reported similar issues. However, two LAs in largely rural areas did note that rurality and the ability to attract specialist ALN workers to work in these areas contributed to the recruitment challenges they faced.

LAs noted that challenges in recruiting specialist staff can lead to situations where gaps in the availability of Welsh-medium ALP can remain for some time until the posts are filled. Some noted that a lack of Welsh-speaking candidates for some specialist roles can lead to the appointment of non-Welsh-speaking staff which reduces their capacity to deliver services in Welsh.

Table 6. Challenges recruiting and retaining specialist ALN staff who can work through the medium of Welsh. Responses to the question: “Is it particularly challenging to recruit and/or retain staff that can work through the medium of Welsh”?

Field of work/area of specialism of specialist ALN staff	Yes - (number of LAs)	No - (number of LAs)	Don't know / Not applicable - (number of LAs)	Total - number of LAs who responded to the question
Educational psychologist	18	0	0	18
Specialist teacher with specialist ALN qualifications (e.g. specialising in visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism)	17	3	0	20
Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs)	14	2	2	18
Other advisory or specialist teachers (please specify)	12	5	1	18
Inclusion officer/lead	9	2	5	16
Early Years ALNLO	9	4	7	20
Support officer (ALN specific)	8	2	9	19
ALN manager/team leader/coordinator	8	4	6	18
Speech and language therapists (SLTs)	7	1	10	18
ALNCo	6	6	5	17
Family liaison officer (ALN specific)	6	3	7	16
Transition worker	6	1	8	15
Occupational therapists	6	0	11	17
Other physical-health staff (please specify)	5	0	12	17
Self-employed individuals (please specify)	2	0	12	14
Other (please specify)	3	0	8	11

Source: LA proforma

Schools were also asked about recruitment and retention challenges during the fieldwork, with many echoing the views of LAs presented above. Many schools reported ongoing challenges in maintaining sufficient numbers of TAs and HLTAs able to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP. Schools reported that funding constraints limited their ability to employ additional staff and also highlighted challenges in attracting suitable candidates, noting that the relatively low pay

associated with TA roles made recruitment difficult. This also echoes findings reported by the annual report (unpublished) produced by the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) in 2025.

Retaining Welsh-speaking TAs was described as an equally significant challenge. School representatives did not believe that this had an impact on learners' experiences but instead created additional workload pressures for senior leaders and teachers in seeking to overcome these shortages. Schools pointed to a range of factors contributing to lower retention, including more competitive pay available in other sectors and the demanding nature of the role. In particular, schools reported that TAs were often required to support learners with ALN who may also present with challenging behaviours.

Other schools reported more positive experiences including cases where TAs supporting the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP had been in post for several years and were considered as an integral part of the school's delivery of Welsh-medium ALP. One Welsh-medium school located in a predominantly English-speaking area, noted that, in the past, recruiting Welsh-speaking TAs from the local area had been challenging. However, in recent years, as more local learners had progressed through the Welsh-medium education system, the number of Welsh speakers in the community had increased. As a result, the school reported that they now often recruited former pupils with the Welsh language skills needed into jobs such as TAs to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP.

FEIs reported that the availability of staff able to deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh was limited, largely due to a shortage of Welsh-speaking staff, which they described as a general workforce issue, but one that was particularly the case when recruiting support-staff roles. However, they also noted that the need for Welsh-medium ALP within their settings was low and therefore the need to deliver support in Welsh was often not required. However, where Welsh-medium support was required, FEIs reported that they often relied on informal workarounds, such as reallocating Welsh-speaking staff to provide support even if it was outside their usual roles. One FEI explained that its overall ALP capacity was already stretched, with Welsh-medium provision dependent on just two Welsh-speaking staff members, which restricted the consistency and availability of support.

4.3.3. Monitoring and management of workforce skills

This review has sought to gain an understanding of how LAs engage with data relating to the capacity within the workforce to deliver ALP. The findings indicate that there is some inconsistency in how LAs monitor the Welsh-language skills of their workforce. Some record staff language skills only at the point of recruitment, while others review the Welsh-language proficiency of all staff annually typically as part of wider HR processes. Those who regularly review the Welsh language of their workforce often offer training to those wishing to improve their skills. In these

cases, language monitoring and training apply to the wider LA workforce, not only to ALN-related roles.

A small number of LAs reported that they require all the staff they employ to speak Welsh, although they acknowledged that meeting this expectation can be challenging within some specialist roles. Some LAs noted that they review and monitor the Welsh language skills of their staff based on the SWAC to inform decisions on recruitment and retention. Although Welsh-language skills are recorded through SWAC, the data does not specifically track Welsh-medium capability in a way that supports detailed workforce planning since these approaches generally do not distinguish between general Welsh language ability and the specific skills or workforce needs required to deliver ALP.

One LA reported monitoring demand for Welsh-medium ALN support from schools and, where increases are identified, designating certain posts within the ALN team as Welsh-essential. It is not yet known the extent to which this approach will address the recruitment challenges experienced and this may be an area to be explored further in future reviews. A small number of LAs also referred to engagement with initiatives such as Cymraeg Gwaith (Work Welsh), delivered by the National Centre for Learning Welsh, to support the development of Welsh language skills among staff, both within ALN services and more widely across the workforce. Examples included the development of tailored learning offers and access to short, workplace-focused training sessions to support the use of Welsh in the workplace.

Overall, monitoring practices to review workforce capacity across LAs is inconsistent, and the workforce data currently available does not fully support planning for Welsh-medium ALP delivery and, in turn, achieving sufficiency.

4.3.4. Welsh-medium professional development training

In addition to examining how LAs address Welsh-medium workforce gaps through recruitment and retention, the review also considered the actions taken to strengthen capacity through professional development and training for ALN practitioners.

Schools and LAs reported that there was very limited professional development or accredited specialist ALN training available through the medium of Welsh. Two LAs noted in their proforma responses for this review that where non-Welsh-speaking staff were recruited into roles where Welsh had been noted as a requirement, that they provided Welsh language training support for these individuals and / or place a requirement on these staff members to learn the language within a defined period of time. However, this review did not explore the extent to which these approaches result in staff being able to deliver Welsh-medium ALP in practice.

While some LAs provide their own Welsh-medium or bilingual ALN training for school practitioners, many external or specialist courses are delivered in English only, including those provided by UK-wide organisations and charities. As a result, Welsh-medium ALN practitioners often attend English-language training and then use or relay the content of the training in Welsh to colleagues within their school, often placing additional demands on staff time. This was said to be particularly challenging where specialist terminology or frameworks do not translate easily. Furthermore, practitioners noted that, in some areas such as SLT, dyslexia, cognition and learning, and aspects of neurodiversity and bilingualism, the issue extends beyond the language of delivery to the content of training itself. In these cases, English-language courses may not adequately reflect the methods or context of Welsh-medium education, leading practitioners to rely on their own informal adaptation or peer support. Practitioners noted a need for more training that takes explicit account of use in Welsh-medium settings.

LA representatives also noted that they were not aware of any Wales-based specialist training routes for mandatory qualifications required to teach children and young people who are vision-impaired or deaf. Although this training can be accessed in England, its content and delivery does not reflect the Curriculum for Wales, the Welsh language, or the ALN system.

LAs in north Wales highlighted the limited availability of EP training in the region as a significant factor contributing to ongoing challenges in recruiting and developing Welsh-speaking EPs.

4.3.5. Workforce capacity in LHBs to deliver Welsh-medium ALP

Alongside assessing workforce sufficiency within LAs, the review also examined the extent to which workforce capacity was available across LHBs to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP.

Evidence from interviews with DECLOs and health practitioners indicated that workforce and capacity challenges within NHS bodies can shape the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, albeit within a context of very low recorded demand. They highlighted that the distribution of health professionals with Welsh language skills was uneven across Wales, both geographically and by clinical specialism. While some regions were reported to have relatively high proportions of Welsh-speaking clinicians, others had very limited capacity. Even where Welsh-speaking clinicians were available, DECLOs and health practitioners noted that Welsh-speaking specialists in areas such as SLT, developmental language disorder (DLD), complex needs or specialist nursing may be unavailable, creating potential fragility within provision. Schools reported examples of being unable to access Welsh-medium ALP from LHBs which may indicate workforce pressures or capacity constraints in some specialist areas.

DECLOs reported that only a small proportion of ALP to be secured by NHS bodies was identified as requiring delivery through the medium of Welsh, estimating this to be no more than 3-5% of cases where ALP was secured by NHS bodies. However, not all LHBs were able to provide data on the proportion of health-secured ALP delivered in Welsh. Where Welsh-medium ALP had been identified as required, stakeholders were not aware of cases in which provision had failed to be delivered,

Some workforce challenges reported by DECLOs related to short-term absences, such as maternity leave or sickness, particularly within small or highly specialised services. In such cases, DECLOs reported that interim arrangements could involve English-speaking clinicians delivering interventions within Welsh-medium school settings, supported by reasonable steps such as joint visits, or use of Welsh-speaking school staff. Stakeholders emphasised that these arrangements could increase pressure on staff and systems but noted that they were not aware of evidence of adverse impacts on learners.

DECLOs also highlighted limitations in workforce and monitoring data within the NHS and although some local information existed and could be available for some teams, there was no consistent dataset distinguishing health staff who can deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh or those who routinely do so in practice.

Overall, DECLOs recognised there could be shortages of staff in some areas of the workforce. However, they also reported that this had not prevented them from securing ALP for learners based on current levels of recorded need. Evidence from schools indicates that this may not fully reflect the level of learners' needs. As noted earlier in the report, some schools may not request Welsh-medium support because they assume it will not be available, although the extent to which this influences referral patterns is unclear. As a result of this and limitations on data, DECLOs noted that it was difficult to assess the sufficiency of current workforce capacity, particularly within specialist services, should requirements for Welsh-medium ALP change.

4.3.6. Wider evidence relating to the workforce

The review findings set out above reinforce wider evidence from LAs, schools and FEIs collected as part of the evaluation of the ALN system as well as Estyn thematic reports ([2023](#) and [2024](#)). These sources show that workforce capacity is one of the most significant constraints on delivering Welsh-medium ALP, confirming that schools report difficulties recruiting staff with sufficient Welsh-language skills and in accessing support from staff in specialist roles. [Audit Wales](#) highlights that public bodies lack a complete picture of workforce skills and language capability, limiting effective planning and long-term sustainability. The Audit Wales report findings indicate a strong professional commitment to a bilingual ALN system, but shortages in specialist staff and uneven Welsh-language expertise across regions continue to affect the consistency and quality of provision.

4.3.7. Summary: Workforce and Welsh-medium ALP

This section explored the role of the workforce in implementing and delivering Welsh-medium ALP. It demonstrates that views on workforce sufficiency vary with some LAs reporting having adequate capacity within their workforce and others highlighting that significant gaps stem from a combination of factors, including overall shortages of specialist teachers, difficulties recruiting staff with both the ALN expertise and Welsh-language skills required, and the fragility of small teams.

Even where they reported that they currently had sufficient Welsh-speaking specialist ALN staff, almost all LAs outlined that recruiting individuals into these roles can be challenging due to low numbers of professionals available and complications associated with travel in large rural areas. Limited Welsh-medium specialist ALN training opportunities were also reported, requiring practitioners to translate or adapt English content. Moreover, some forms of specialist training were reported to be unavailable in Wales or not aligned with Welsh-medium education.

The findings indicate that across LHBs, Welsh-speaking clinicians are unevenly distributed, with limited availability in specialist areas such as SLT, DLD and complex needs. However, the recorded demand for Welsh-medium ALP to be delivered by the LHBs is very low and limitations in workforce and monitoring data makes it difficult to assess the actual capacity across the LHBs to deliver Welsh-medium ALP and whether it is sufficient to meet learners need.

To address gaps, the Welsh Government has introduced measures to increase the supply of Welsh-speaking providers through additional funded training places and Welsh-language tuition to non-Welsh-speaking recruits, but the effectiveness of this in enabling delivery and improving sufficiency remains unclear at this stage.

4.4. Resources and Welsh-medium ALP

Learning resources, including physical and digital materials and physical spaces are an important enabler of delivering Welsh-medium ALP and meeting the needs of children and young people. This chapter presents findings relating to this review's assessment of the extent to which diagnostic tools and learning resources for supporting learners with ALN, are available in Welsh. It also presents findings on the provision of dedicated physical spaces in Welsh-medium schools, specifically SRBs and school-designated special classes in mainstream settings.

4.4.1. General learning resources

Almost all schools reported that the availability of Welsh-medium resources to support learners with ALN is not yet comparable to the range of materials available in English. This disparity is partly due to the fact that many specialist resources, particularly digital tools and commercial products, are developed outside Wales and are therefore produced in English only.

As a result, and as noted earlier in the report, ALNCos working in Welsh-medium settings often have to translate English-language materials into Welsh to make them usable within their schools. This additional translation work increases the workload of Welsh-medium ALNCos compared with their counterparts in English-medium schools.

Translating resources from English to Welsh is not only labour intensive and time consuming, it also raises concerns about the consistency and standardisation of the translated materials produced. This review did not assess whether the materials produced are compromised as part of the translation process, nor whether using them in practice affects the support provided to learners. Nevertheless, further support to reduce the need to translate resource is likely to be welcomed by ALNCos in Welsh-medium settings.

Schools also reported examples of English-medium resources that cannot be easily translated into Welsh. These include materials containing terminology that do not translate directly, as well as language-development resources based on English phonics and pronunciation, which do not relate to the Welsh language. In such cases, practitioners are left with a choice of either using English-medium resources that may not be fit for purpose or having no suitable resource at all. While the impact of this on learner outcomes is unclear, these limitations restrict practitioners' ability to access appropriate materials to help their delivery of support.

Progress is beginning to be made in this area through the work of Adnodd and others, who are developing new Welsh-medium and bilingual resources to address gaps in resources identified by their own research and engagement with the education sector. Further detail on these developments is provided in the following sections.

Schools reported that Welsh-medium learning resources are sometimes released several months after the publication of the equivalent English versions, leaving schools to translate materials themselves in the interim. Braille resources take even longer, creating a double delay for visually impaired Welsh-medium learners, who wait first for Welsh resources and then again for braille versions of these resources. Some schools argued that Welsh, English and braille resources should be commissioned simultaneously to ensure fair access. Adnodd now commissions Welsh and English resources in parallel and is working with Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) to expand braille provision and these improvements should therefore soon be available to learners.

4.4.2. Technology and digital resources

Translation of resources alone does not ensure that the same resources are available in Welsh and English. While some resources can be translated, technology-based tools such as online platforms cannot be easily translated or replicated in Welsh. This is also a point outlined by the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) in his annual report 2025 (unpublished) which includes a recommendation for further collaboration with technology developers to ensure that language support technologies are integrated into Welsh-medium ALP.

School practitioners engaged in this review noted that many digital intervention programmes designed for specific areas of need, such as autism, ADHD or DLD, originate from international or commercial providers and are often only available in English, and licences can restrict translation. In addition, UK charities and specialist organisations in these areas also typically offer their training and accompanying resources solely in English.

Practitioners in special school contexts also noted that digital materials for severe or profound needs are almost exclusively English-medium, limiting the extent to which Welsh-medium ALP can be offered even when staff have the Welsh language skills. This affects the continuity of Welsh-medium provision for these learners, and potentially their progress in Welsh as well as potentially having an effect on their overall learning experience.

However, although this review has identified a number of examples of challenges and limitations relating to the availability of Welsh-medium digital resources, the evidence also outlines areas where progress in the availability of these resources has been achieved. One example of this is a current project, led by specialists from the RNIB and Welsh practitioners, which aims to strengthen bilingual accessibility for visually impaired learners by modernising and standardising Welsh braille across both educational resources and digital technology. The project focuses on two complementary strands: firstly, developing structured Welsh braille “learning tables” and an updated Welsh formatting template, enabling age-appropriate teaching and

consistent production of Welsh braille materials, and secondly, creating full Welsh braille tables for use by screen readers and braille displays.

4.4.3. Current sufficiency of resources

LAs were asked directly whether they have sufficient appropriate learning resources, and findings for this are presented in Table 7 below. Over half of the 20 LAs who expressed a view on this noted they did not feel they had access to the resources they needed to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP. This was true for all resources but particularly so for ALN diagnostics and assessment tools.

Some LAs that reported having sufficient Welsh-medium learning resources explained that this conclusion was based on the fact that schools rarely requested additional materials, as they “tended to develop their own.” This may reflect a wider pattern in which resources are not requested because schools assume they do not exist and, in turn, resources are not developed because no requests are made. As one school said it: “We don’t ask for it because it doesn’t exist.”

Table 7. LA responses to the question “Please note in the table whether you have access to sufficient appropriate learning resources (digital or non-digital) in Welsh in your LA to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP”.

Type of resource	‘Yes’ - number of LAs	‘No’ - number of LAs	‘Don’t know’ - number of LAs	Total - number of LAs who responded to the question
Access to all the Welsh language ALN diagnostic and assessment tools to support Welsh-medium ALP requirements	3	12	4	19
Welsh language resources to support <u>numeracy</u>	4	11	5	20
Welsh language resources to support <u>emotional wellbeing</u>	5	11	4	20
Welsh language resources to support <u>literacy</u>	6	10	4	20

Source: LA proforma

Diagnostic / assessment resources

LAs and schools highlighted that no fully standardised Welsh-medium diagnostic assessments were available. This included assessment tools for receptive and expressive language, word finding, dyslexia, and DLD. Gaps were also noted in early years language assessments and in literacy tools, some of which were described as outdated or inaccessible. One of the three LAs that noted that they had access to Welsh-medium assessments also noted that these assessment tools were often limited in scope and did not meet the full range of ALN diagnostic needs.

LAs and schools reported that most diagnostic assessments were only available in English. In cases where it was not possible to translate these resources, assessments were typically conducted in English even for learners educated through the medium of Welsh. Where practitioners could translate English-language tools, LAs and schools reported that these could not be used to generate standardised scores, undermining the reliability and comparability of results. It was unclear from the evidence available whether or to what extent this affected individual learner outcomes and this may be an area that requires further investigation.

Some progress has however been made in this area, including recent developments in literacy assessments and work underway at Cardiff Metropolitan University to expand the number of standardised Welsh-medium tools. In 2024, the Welsh Government funded Cardiff Metropolitan University [to develop new Welsh-medium tests to identify literacy difficulties in secondary school pupils](#). These new tests will address some of the gaps identified as part of this review by providing assessments specifically designed for the Welsh language.

Literacy resources

Almost all ALNCos from Welsh-medium schools referred to a shortage in Welsh-medium literacy resources to support learners with ALN. A key gap identified was the availability of age and stage appropriate reading materials. One school noted that social stories were a key resource used to encourage learners with ALN to engage with literacy materials. However, while school practitioners reported that there were plenty of age and stage appropriate resources for social stories available in English, the same is not true for Welsh.

Some school practitioners noted that a lack of these resources meant they had to use Welsh reading books aimed at younger children (e.g. Years 2-4) when supporting older learners (e.g. Year 6) whose reading skills are still developing. While the structure and reading level of these books may be appropriate for the reading stage of these older learners, the content or subject matter often did not appeal to them making engagement with the materials more challenging.

[Adnodd](#) is already addressing some of these identified shortages and is currently supporting the development of a range of new Welsh-medium and bilingual resources to better support learners with ALN. Working with the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language), Adnodd has commissioned a new Welsh-medium reading series through the Books Council of Wales. The series will eventually include 24 age-appropriate books structured across four literacy stages, allowing teachers to match learners to materials that reflect their assessed reading level and regional language variation. The first stage has been commissioned and is due for publication in February 2027, with further stages to be commissioned following evaluation.

Adnodd is also collaborating with the RNIB to improve access to curriculum materials for learners who are blind or visually impaired. This includes a two-year programme to produce large print and braille versions of curriculum texts, as well as new age-appropriate materials to support teenagers learning braille-building on earlier resources developed for younger learners.

Additional resources have also been commissioned to support British Sign Language (BSL), complementing existing materials already available on Hwb. A key shift in Adnodd's approach is the move from simply filling gaps in the availability of Welsh-medium resources that are already available in English to developing new resources simultaneously in both Welsh and English in order to reduce disparities in availability of resources in the two languages.

The Annual Report produced by National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) (unpublished) also refers to other developments currently underway to develop new technology such as computerised readers for exams. The report also recommended the development of digital literacy programs.

Numeracy resources

Similar points were raised by schools and LAs with regard to the availability of Welsh-medium numeracy resources as those raised for other resources. School practitioners indicated that they faced a choice between using English-medium resources, or creating their own Welsh-language versions, which could be less engaging or appealing to learners, as a result.

An example highlighted by one school illustrates how this disparity becomes even more apparent when Welsh-medium resources are required to support learners with vision impairment. The school referred to a year 10 vision impaired learner undertaking their GCSE maths through the medium of Welsh. The learner has faced many challenges along the way, many of which result from the lack of suitable Welsh-medium resources that have been adapted to meet the needs of vision impaired learners. The school noted that they were surprised by the lack of suitable resources and questioned how this situation had arisen. They surmised that the

likely reason for this was that vision impaired learners probably do not pursue GCSE maths in Welsh and undertake it in English instead, as there are likely to be more resources available to support learners in English. There is no evidence currently available to determine whether this is actually the case. However, the situation remains that there is currently a gap in the availability of Welsh-medium resources to support vision-impaired GCSE maths students.

4.4.4. Wider evidence relating to learning resources

The review findings set out above reinforce wider evidence from LAs, schools and FEIs. For example, the evaluation of the ALN system [local area studies report](#) found that Welsh-medium schools frequently lacked appropriate Welsh-language materials, particularly for literacy and dyslexia support, with some resources described as outdated and insufficient for current needs.

Practitioners responding to the evaluation of the ALN system [survey of practitioners and professionals](#) similarly highlighted shortages of Welsh-medium resources, noting that they were not always available in the same range or quality as English-medium materials, which limited their ability to provide equitable support. The survey report also noted that this issue is more pronounced for specialist interventions, where Welsh-medium versions of tools, assessments, or structured programmes are either limited or not available. Practitioners emphasised that this gap affects both day-to-day teaching and more targeted ALP, and that it contributes to inconsistency in how bilingual provision is implemented across settings.

The Estyn thematic reports ([2023](#) and [2024](#)) reinforce this picture, identifying gaps in specialist Welsh-medium resources as a constraint on delivering ALP, especially in more specialist or post-16 contexts where fewer materials are available.

4.4.5. Summary: Resources and Welsh-medium ALP

This section explored the role of learning resources in delivering Welsh-medium ALP. The findings indicate that current levels of resource sufficiency is perceived to be lacking. The availability of Welsh-medium learning and diagnostic resources to support ALP are more limited than English-medium equivalents. Digital and technology-based tools present additional challenges, with many being English-only, with licensing restrictions often preventing translation. These findings are supported by wider evidence from Estyn, Audit Wales and the ALN system evaluation.

Although there is a recognised shortage in the current availability of Welsh-medium resources, progress is being made and further resources to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP should be available in the near future. Progress in this area should therefore be a key feature of the next quinquennial review in 2031.

4.5. School-designated special classes and Specialist Resource Bases

Recent years have seen the development of special provisions located in mainstream school sites that are aimed at encouraging more learners with ALN to remain in Welsh-medium education whilst receiving the support that they need. This section reports findings on how they are being implemented.

4.5.1. School-designated special classes in mainstream settings

There is no official definition of school-designated special classes in mainstream settings, however, these were described by stakeholders who participated in this review as dedicated spaces within schools, providing interventions funded through delegated school budgets. These settings enable schools to provide targeted support for learners with ALN, which is typically described by schools as provision intended to support learners to remain engaged in mainstream education, for example dedicated physical space for delivering interventions for learners with ALN.

Many primary and secondary schools, as well as LAs highlighted the recent establishment of a number of school-designated special classes in mainstream Welsh-medium school settings.

The growth of these school-designated special classes in mainstream settings has been driven both by an increasing number of learners requiring additional support and by a stronger policy emphasis on maintaining learners with ALN within mainstream education wherever possible. One secondary school, for example, reported that its school-designated special class was created primarily to support Year 7 learners with ALN who were finding the transition to secondary school particularly challenging.

Some schools noted that prior to the introduction of these school-designated special classes some non-Welsh-speaking families perceived the possible challenge of learning through the medium of Welsh as an additional barrier for children with ALN and often considered moving their child to an English-medium setting in order to remove this perceived barrier. These schools noted that the presence of a school-designated special classes in mainstream settings had helped reassure many of these families that their child will receive appropriate support within the Welsh-medium environment and that has led to more learners with ALN remaining in Welsh-medium education. This may be a contributing factor in the narrowing of the gap between the proportion of ALN learners taught Welsh as a first language (predominantly learners in Welsh-medium schools) and those taught Welsh as a second language (see section 4.1).

4.5.2. Specialist Resource Bases

LAs referred to the establishment of more Welsh-medium specialist resource bases (SRBs) which are placement-based provisions centrally funded by LAs and designed to support learners with significant or more complex ALN. These are typically co-located on mainstream school sites and operate with dedicated specialist staffing offering structured, ongoing support for learners. Placements in SRBs are typically subject to approval by LA panels.

References were also made by LAs to plans to expand SRB provision. These developments have increased opportunities for learners with higher levels of need to access Welsh-medium education. Previously, many of these learners would have attended special schools where Welsh-medium provision was limited or unavailable.

Some of these SRBs serve learners from a wide geographical area. This broadens the geographical reach of provision but in doing so can create some access challenges. Long travel distances mean that some learners are unable to remain at school later in the day, limiting their ability to participate in extracurricular activities such as after-school clubs. This can, in turn, restrict opportunities for language development, inclusion, and community engagement.

Several LAs acknowledged this issue and reported that they are reviewing the distribution and accessibility of their school-designated special classes in mainstream setting facilities both English-medium and Welsh-medium to ensure that learners across all areas can access appropriate provision.

These findings add to those of the Estyn thematic reports ([2023](#) and [2024](#)) which found that SRBs were being widely used across the ALN system as whole and were of variable quality, with inconsistencies in how they are planned by LAs.

4.5.3. Summary

The evidence from this review therefore indicates that the increase in the availability of Welsh-medium school-designated special classes in mainstream settings and SRBs has enabled a larger number of learners with more complex ALN to access provision in Welsh. The increase in school-designated special classes in mainstream Welsh-medium settings also appears to have encouraged more learners with ALN to remain in Welsh-medium education than would otherwise have been the case. However, it remains unclear whether the availability and ability of staff to deliver the level of ALP required by learners within these SRBs is sufficient or provides support equivalent to that available in English-medium settings.

4.6. Parent/carers and learner experiences of Welsh-medium ALP

This chapter draws on qualitative evidence on the experiences of a small number of parents/carers of compulsory school aged children, learners with ALN, and several relevant stakeholders. Attempts were made to conduct interviews with post-16 learners with ALN, however, these could not be arranged within the review's timeframes. The views presented are not intended to be representative of the experiences of all learners with ALN or their families across Wales. Instead, they provide insight into how Welsh-medium ALP is experienced by some learners and parents.

4.6.1. Experiences of being offered and receiving Welsh-medium ALP

Parents' views

Evidence from the parents engaged suggests that the way Welsh-medium ALP is offered varies considerably between settings, depending on the requirements of learners and families.

A parent in a Welsh-medium primary explained that Welsh-medium support was simply part of the school's normal practice. They did not need to request it and described consistent Welsh-medium communication and meetings. They were aware of their rights in relation to Welsh-medium ALP and felt the school provided this without question. The parent reported that their child received support in Welsh, in line with their preference, and that the ALNCo had been "brilliant" in identifying needs and putting practical measures in place (e.g. calm spaces, movement breaks).

Another parent whose child had recently moved from a Welsh-medium primary to a special school explained that Welsh-medium ALP had not been relevant to their circumstances. Their child was from an English-speaking home and preferred to communicate in English and therefore did not need Welsh-medium ALP. However, the parent reported that they valued having staff who could speak Welsh in the special school as their child understood Welsh words and songs and responded positively to them. For this family, the key issue was not the language of the ALP but access to appropriate specialist support, which they felt had improved after transferring to the special school.

A parent of a child in another special school described an environment where staff used Welsh informally with learners who understood it, while their ALP was delivered in English. They reported being asked about their child's preferred language during transition from a Welsh-medium primary to the special school and felt the school took their views seriously. The preferred language of the child was English, but the parents wanted their child to be able to access support from some Welsh-speaking staff, which the school were able to offer. Setting staff used Welsh

informally, but English was the predominant language for ALP. The parents were satisfied with this arrangement, as their child responded most confidently in English.

A parent of a child in a special school offering Welsh-medium ALP described being asked about their linguistic preferences and being offered Welsh-medium provision in a setting where all classes had staff who could teach through the medium of Welsh. This parent was satisfied with the provision noting that Welsh-medium ALP, including IDP processes, was readily available. The parent also perceived that this level of access to Welsh-medium ALP might not be available in other parts of Wales.

Learners' views

Learners interviewed in Welsh-medium primary settings did not differentiate between Welsh-medium and English-medium support. They described receiving help naturally in Welsh or in a mix of Welsh and English, depending on the activity, and tended to focus more on the fact that they were getting help or support than on the language used, noting that some types of help such as one-to-one explanations were sometimes provided in English alongside Welsh.

Learners in a secondary English-medium setting explained that they could speak to many staff in Welsh if they wished, but that the ALP was delivered in English. They described being able to choose the language for some learning activities and other tasks, such as completing forms, and were satisfied with this arrangement.

Learners interviewed at one Welsh-medium secondary school reported that support in the school's 'quiet room' or 'wellbeing space' helped them break their work into smaller, more manageable steps and reduced stress. They also described receiving ad hoc support and informal check-ins in this space, in either Welsh or English, depending on the language they initiated.

Learners provided relatively limited detail on support they would like but had not been able to access, but some themes emerged. Learners in the secondary English-medium setting generally felt they received the help they needed. They described positive experiences of one-to-one support in English and valued having bilingual staff available to speak Welsh when they wished. However, one learner who spoke Welsh at home said they wanted "more conversations with teachers in Welsh" during informal interactions.

4.6.2. Barriers to Welsh-medium ALP

Stakeholders working with parents reported that families often feel pressured to make pragmatic decisions between access to specialist support and choosing or continuing Welsh-medium education, particularly at key transition points such as the move from nursery to primary school and from primary to secondary school. They reported that families must balance access to specialist support with maintaining

Welsh-medium education, particularly where Welsh-medium ALP is perceived to be limited or is, unavailable, especially for learners with more complex needs.

The small sample of parents interviewed as part of the review generally reported positive experiences of Welsh-medium support and ALP in schools. Where parents referred to challenges, they related to waiting times for NHS diagnosis rather than any difficulties accessing Welsh-medium ALP in schools or from NHS bodies. Where parents described that delays had occurred such as in obtaining diagnostic assessments and other provision, they attributed these to NHS waiting times and capacity pressures rather than to language choice.

One parent of a child in a Welsh-medium primary school described being happy with the level of support and contact received from their child's school, which was all provided through the medium of Welsh, but described being on a two-and-a-half-year NHS waiting list for assessment (ADHD/autism) and acknowledged not fully understanding the referral process. The parent did not feel this delay had a significant impact on their child because of the support and ALP provided by their child's school.

A parent of a child who attended a special school reported that their child received ALP fully through the medium of Welsh including SLT but perceived that Welsh-medium specialist availability varied across Wales. Although they considered that provision was strong in parts of the north-west region, they were aware that families elsewhere may have needed to compromise on language preference because Welsh-speaking specialist provision is not always available.

Parents did not typically identify any barriers within schools themselves. In all of the interviews, they reported that schools were able to provide the ALP their children needed and, where relevant, deliver it through the medium of Welsh. However, in line with findings discussed above, a few parents noted that they believed that the schools' staff often need to translate or create Welsh-medium materials themselves due to gaps in existing resources. These parents felt this added to the workload of staff at their child's school and that, without the additional efforts of staff, that could be a barrier to children receiving support in Welsh.

Stakeholders working with parents also reported that some families experienced uncertainty about their rights in relation to Welsh-medium ALP. Inconsistent information across different areas of Wales and limited clarity about what support should reasonably be available through the medium of Welsh were described as contributing to confusion for families. In some cases, parents were reported to have to rely on informal advice or seek private assessments to help navigate the ALN system. The Welsh Government has published the [ALN: parent and carers toolkit](#) to try and help parents understand the ALN system and the support available for children and young people.

4.6.3. Wider evidence in relation to learner and parent experiences

The findings above show variability in the availability of Welsh-medium ALP which is consistent with the results of the wider evidence. In the Evaluation of the ALN system [survey of parents and carers](#), around a fifth of parents who felt their child's ALP should be provided in Welsh noted that their child was not receiving Welsh-medium ALP. Some parents referred to a lack of specialist provision through the medium of Welsh and provided examples of disagreements in relation to the availability of ALP in Welsh for their child.

The evaluation of the ALN system [local area studies report](#) adds further evidence, noting that while many Welsh-medium schools can meet learners' needs bilingually, there are cases where learners have transferred to English-medium settings to access specialist support, particularly autism-related provision.

The Estyn thematic reports ([2023](#) and [2024](#)) echo these findings, noting that learners' experiences of Welsh-medium ALP vary considerably depending on local capacity and strategic planning. In areas where schools and LAs have well-established Welsh-medium staffing, specialist support and appropriate learning resources, learners are more likely to receive consistent and effective ALP through the medium of Welsh. In other parts of Wales, shortages of Welsh-speaking specialist staff, limited availability of Welsh-medium resources and inconsistent planning for Welsh-medium ALN contribute to uneven implementation. Importantly, Estyn emphasises that these inconsistencies arise from practical constraints, rather than a lack of commitment to bilingualism.

4.6.4. Summary: Parent/carers and learner experiences of Welsh-medium ALP

This section explored parents' and learners' experiences of Welsh-medium ALP, including views on being offered and receiving Welsh-medium ALP and the barriers they had faced. The findings indicate that there is variability in the availability of Welsh-medium ALP. They show that while many learners do access suitable Welsh-medium ALP, others encounter gaps that affect both the support they receive and their families' confidence in the ALN system. The accounts help to illustrate how this is attributable to differences in local capacity, access to specialist support.

Barriers reported relate less to provision within schools and more to systemic and external factors. While parents generally felt schools could meet their child's needs, stakeholders highlighted that families may face difficult choices between accessing specialist support and maintaining Welsh-medium education. Challenges include limited availability of Welsh-medium specialist services in some areas, long NHS waiting times, and the need for school staff to adapt or translate resources. There is also some evidence of confusion among families about their rights to Welsh-medium ALP and what provision can reasonably be expected.

Overall, the findings align with wider research and indicate uneven availability of Welsh-medium ALP, and limits to current system sufficiency across Wales.

4.7. Progress made and remaining challenges

This final findings section gives further consideration to progress made in strengthening Welsh-medium ALP during the first five years of ALN reform, and some of the key remaining challenges that continue to affect sufficiency. It first summarises areas where provision, awareness and resources have developed, before considering the factors that continue to limit access to Welsh-medium ALP. The section concludes by examining LA views on the feasibility of any future change from a duty to take all reasonable steps to provide Welsh-medium ALP to an absolute duty to provide it where required.

4.7.1. Progress achieved during the first five years of ALN reform

Although the evidence presented earlier in the report suggests that sufficiency has not yet been achieved consistently across Wales, evidence gathered identified several developments that have strengthened the delivery and visibility of Welsh-medium ALP.

At a national level, there has been progress in the availability of Welsh-medium training courses for some specialist ALN workers - e.g. EP training currently delivered by Cardiff University and similar training being explored within Bangor University. Although viewed as a positive step, these developments will take time to affect workforce capacity in practice (see section 4.3).

There has been progress in the commissioning of Welsh-medium learning and assessment resources to support the delivery of ALP. This includes new learning materials, work to improve age-appropriate literacy resources and the development of digital resources such as the Duxbury and Liblouis project which aims to strengthen bilingual accessibility for visually impaired learners, by modernising and standardising Welsh braille across both educational resources and digital technology (see section 4.4).

Progress has been evident in the expansion of some forms of specialist Welsh-medium provision. Several LAs and schools reported the development of school-designated special classes within Welsh-medium schools. These developments have increased the opportunities for some learners with ALN, including those with more complex needs, to remain in Welsh-medium education rather than transferring to English-medium settings to access specialist support (see section 4.5).

LAs and schools described a general increase in the level of awareness amongst LA and school practitioners of the need to provide ALP through the medium of Welsh. They noted that there was a stronger recognition that ALN support, including Welsh-medium ALP, was a shared responsibility across all practitioners and was now understood as an integral part of all teaching, rather than a separate or specialist activity operating outside everyday classroom practice.

Collaboration and Professional Networks

Collaboration between Welsh-medium schools has increased, particularly in the sharing of resources, expertise, and emerging practice. However, schools and LAs noted that this collaboration remained uneven and would benefit from more formal coordination, especially in the short term where sharing specialist staff remained a challenge.

Examples of strengthened collaboration included:

- Funding for ALNCo networks: Some LAs had provided financial support to enable ALNCoS from Welsh-medium schools to meet regularly to share good practice and resources
- Welsh-medium ALN practitioner networks: One LA had established a termly network dedicated to Welsh-medium ALN practitioners, providing a forum to discuss ALN issues specific to the Welsh-medium context and to explore effective ALP strategies
- Specialist secondments: One LA reported that an ALNCo from a Welsh-medium school had been seconded for two days per week as a Teacher Advisor, providing bespoke support to all Welsh-medium schools in the area
- National support: The ALN National Implementation Lead (Welsh Language) has facilitated events and supported practitioners to develop Welsh-medium resources and strengthen Welsh-medium ALP. This was complemented by the wider work of National Implementation Leads in facilitating collaboration, developing the evidence base, disseminating good practice and supporting the development of resources.

Sharing and developing Welsh-medium Resources

Schools provided examples of Welsh-medium ALN resources, often translated or adapted locally, being shared across clusters of Welsh-medium schools. While this informal sharing is welcomed, those interviewed felt that it would benefit from greater coordination at regional or national level.

One example of a more coordinated approach to resource development, highlighted by an LA was the development of an Autism in Schools and Settings programme, created in partnership with the National Autistic Society and the Autism Education Trust. This programme included training packages, standards, and competency frameworks designed to support autistic learners across early years settings and schools. These materials had been made available to LAs and schools across Wales, in Welsh and as well as English, offering a potentially valuable resource for Welsh-medium ALP.

Data and information on the Welsh-medium needs of learners with ALN

Some stakeholders noted that Welsh-medium ALP had become more visible within LA systems and discussions than it was at the start of implementation. Some reported that it previously received limited attention, and learners with more profound needs were often placed in English-medium special schools regardless of their home or preferred language. Since then, LA systems and data collection processes relating to Welsh-medium ALP were reported to have improved, although, as discussed, the picture has remained inconsistent across Wales.

4.7.2. Remaining challenges to accessing Welsh-medium ALP

Despite progress in expanding the availability of Welsh-medium ALP, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access and uptake. Many of the challenges to accessing Welsh-medium ALP have been outlined in earlier sections. Generally these related not to a lack of commitment but practical considerations.

These challenges which have implications for system sufficiency include incomplete data on need and delivery, variation in how duties are interpreted and applied, workforce shortages, and uneven access to specialist provision, including provision secured through LAs and LHBs. In some areas, access to Welsh-medium specialist provision is also affected by geography, travel distances and the limited resilience of small specialist teams. Wider evidence from Estyn, the ALN system evaluation and Audit Wales similarly identified workforce, constraints in workforce capacity, access to specialist staff and the availability of Welsh-medium resources as key system-wide challenges. There are also reported gaps in different Welsh-medium resources and diagnostic tools which have also been in evidence from existing reports.

A key ongoing challenge in accessing Welsh-medium ALP that has been highlighted during this review is that some learners with ALN appear to move from Welsh-medium to English-medium education, resulting in their ALP being delivered in English.

Evidence gathered from schools, LAs and stakeholders, as well as interviews with parents indicate that there are a range of factors that could influence some parents and carers to make the decision to transfer their child from Welsh medium to English medium provision, including perceptions about overall school quality and about the availability of suitable ALP. A recurring theme, however, is the perception held by some parents and professional practitioners that learning through the medium of Welsh presents an additional challenge for some learners with ALN for whom Welsh is not the language spoken at home. In these cases, families often feel that unless this perceived linguistic challenge is removed by moving the learner from a Welsh-medium to an English-medium education setting, the educational progress of these learners could be compromised.

Transitions between language-medium settings were reported to occur most frequently at key educational stages. These include the move from early years to primary school, the transition between Years 2 and 3 when ALN needs often become more apparent, and the transition from primary to secondary school. Evidence from Mudiad Meithrin's internal records, which rely on parents' self-reporting, suggest that a smaller proportion of children identified by their parents as receiving additional support or whose parents receive additional support on their behalf (such as 1:1 support, transport, resources, or monitoring by agencies) progress to Welsh-medium primary schools compared with the overall pattern of transfers from Cylchoedd Meithrin in the same year.^[Footnote 12]

Some schools and LAs reported that occasionally, learners with ALN struggle to develop the level of Welsh skills needed to thrive in a Welsh-medium setting. In these cases, the decision to transfer to an English-medium school may be the best option for the learner. However, those consulted noted that this is not necessarily true in all cases. Some families decide to move their child to an English-medium setting because they perceive or assume that Welsh-medium education and ALP could be detrimental to the learner's education outcomes.

However, wider evidence does not support a general assumption that bilingualism is challenging for learners with ALN. The '[Agweddau ar Ddwyieithrwydd](#)' report by Thomas and Webb-Davies (2017) found that studies involving children with a range of ALN profiles generally showed that bilingual learners performed at levels comparable to monolingual learners in similar circumstances and that there was no evidence that exposure to two languages caused additional delay.

Families' decisions as to which education language setting to choose for their child if they have ALN are also shaped by the information and advice they receive from professionals. Some stakeholders referred to examples of parents being advised, particularly before compulsory school age, that their child would achieve better outcomes in an English-medium setting than they would in a Welsh-medium setting. Schools noted that this can reinforce parental perceptions that ALN support is more effectively delivered in English.

One LA representative referred to examples of activities they have undertaken to address this misinformation through communication and 'myth busting' campaigns aimed at challenging misconceptions that Welsh-medium settings are less suited to meet the needs of learners with ALN. The aim is to proactively encourage families and learners with ALN to choose and/or remain in Welsh-medium education where possible.

The findings suggest that further awareness-raising may be needed to help parents and some ALN practitioners understand the potential benefits of bilingual learning

[12] Cylchoedd Meithrin are Welsh-medium playgroups or preschool that provide care, education, and play experiences for young children, typically aged 2 to 4 years old.

for children and young people with ALN. They also indicate a need for clearer information outlining that learners with ALN do not necessarily have to move from Welsh-medium to English-medium schools to access the ALP they require, provided that the relevant ALP is available in both languages.

Moving from Welsh-medium provision to English-medium provision also has a potential impact on individual schools as well as learners. This was outlined by representatives from one LA who noted that some English-medium schools in their area perceive that they carry a disproportionate responsibility for supporting learners with ALN and believed that Welsh-medium schools often encourage learners with ALN to transfer to English-medium settings. While this was not explored in depth, it highlights the need to better understand patterns of movement between schools and the additional pressures on the resources for both Welsh-medium and English-medium provision.

Overall, the reasons why some learners with ALN transfer from Welsh-medium to English-medium education are complex and multifaceted. However, the evidence suggests that perceptions around sufficiency of ALP such as whether it is available, accessible and of a high quality, may play a significant role. This is an area that warrants further investigation to better understand the decision-making processes of families, and an issue to be addressed through clearer information for families and more consistent approaches and pathways across the system.

4.7.3. Feasibility of providing Welsh-medium ALP as an absolute duty

Currently, LAs, schools, FEIs and NHS bodies are required to take all reasonable steps to secure ALP in Welsh where it has been determined that this is needed. However, the [ALN Act \(section 90\)](#) provides Welsh Ministers with the power to strengthen this requirement in future by removing the “reasonable steps” qualification and introducing an absolute duty to secure ALP in Welsh.

LAs were therefore asked to consider how feasible it would be for them to provide Welsh-medium ALP as an absolute duty if that requirement was introduced over the medium term. Their responses are provided in Table 8 below.

Of the 20 LAs that expressed a view, only two noted that it would already be feasible with no changes required. These LAs were located in areas with higher proportions of Welsh speakers. A further eight noted that this would be feasible with the introduction of some changes and improvements to the system. However, almost half (9 out of 20) noted that meeting this requirement would likely be very challenging.

Interviews with LAs indicated that the main barrier to providing Welsh-medium ALP as an absolute duty was the availability of sufficient numbers of staff with the requisite Welsh language skills to deliver all aspects of Welsh-medium ALP. LAs highlighted the challenges relating to recruitment and retention of Welsh-speaking

staff and the risks this would pose to their ability to plan the workforce to deliver the Welsh-medium ALP offer.

These findings indicate that although progress has been made in the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, most LAs do not regard it as sufficient to deliver this as an absolute duty. A shift to an absolute duty would represent significant system change, and further discussions between Welsh Government and LAs would be required to explore what support would be required to strengthen the workforce, resources and planning to move towards providing Welsh-medium ALP as an absolute duty.

Table 8: Feasibility of providing Welsh-medium ALP as an absolute duty (LA views)

	Number of LAs (20 LAs responded to this question)
Feasible now, with no changes required	2
Likely to be feasible with some changes (e.g. staffing, resources, or new settings)	8
Likely to be very challenging without major changes	9
Don't know	1

Source: LA proforma

4.7.4. Summary

This section considered the progress made during the last five years in expanding Welsh-medium ALP, and the challenges that remain in ensuring equitable access and uptake.

The findings outline several areas in which progress has been made, including improvements in the availability of Welsh-medium learning and assessment resources and an expansion of Welsh-medium SRBs. Collaboration between Welsh-medium ALN practitioners has also improved through ALNCo networks and practitioner forums.

Despite this progress, challenges remain. Alongside workforce and resource constraints, perceptions about the suitability and availability of Welsh-medium support continue to influence some learners and families to choose English-medium provision over Welsh medium provision.

This illustrates the importance of providing clear information to families about the provision and support that is available, as well as challenging some of the myths about bilingualism being detrimental to learners with ALN.

5. Conclusions

This first quinquennial review provides a baseline understanding of the current level of sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP. It assesses how provisions and requirements of the ALN Act are being implemented in practice by exploring the processes involved in understanding and applying statutory duties and the overall availability and accessibility of Welsh-medium-ALP.

Assessing the need for Welsh-medium ALP

National Pupil-level Annual School Census (PLASC) data shows a decline in the proportion of learners identified with ALN/ Special Educational Needs (SEN) between 2021 and 2025 across both Welsh first-language and Welsh second-language learners. This reduction is largely linked to the transition from the SEN system to the ALN system.

Despite this national downward trend, schools participating in this review reported that the overall level of need for ALN support, whether in English or Welsh, appears to be increasing, particularly for learners with ADHD and ASD. Settings also expect demand for ALP, including Welsh-medium ALP, to rise in the immediate short term.

The review's ability to accurately assess the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP has been constrained by gaps in available data. Current PLASC datasets do not record the number of learners who require or receive Welsh-medium ALP. However, proxy indicators based on PLASC data relating to the number of learners with ALN / SEN who were taught Welsh as a first language and the number taught Welsh as a second language from 2021 to 2025 offers a reasonable measure of the likely level of need for Welsh-medium ALP on an all-Wales level.

Our analysis of PLASC data indicates that there is a similar level of ALN amongst those who are taught Welsh as a second language compared to those taught Welsh as a first language. However, the qualitative evidence from the review indicates that a higher proportion of learners with ALN choose English-medium compared to the proportion of learners with ALN who choose Welsh-medium provision and are therefore taught Welsh as a second language. Qualitative evidence gathered during the review suggests that some parents and learners who make this choice are likely to be influenced by perceptions that ALN provision is more accessible in English-medium settings or that Welsh-medium pathways involve longer waits for support and provision.

Most LAs reported that they collect information on whether IDPs specify a requirement for ALP to be delivered in Welsh. However, the extent to which this information is centrally collated varies between LAs, and the use of different data-management systems makes it difficult to build a reliable national picture from this local level data.

National data does not enable a reliable assessment of how many learners in post-16 provision require Welsh-medium ALP or how many receive their ALP in Welsh. LLWR data provides a potential proxy measure, showing that around 4% of FEI learners studying at least one activity where 50% or more of the available assessments are undertaken through the medium of Welsh have ALN. Practitioners from the two FEIs that contributed to this review noted that none of their learners had an IDP that specified a requirement for Welsh-medium ALP. However, the LLWR data suggests that some learners in FEIs could potentially require Welsh-medium ALP, even though very few, if any currently have Welsh-medium support specified in their IDPs.

The findings show that there is a lack of data in relation to the outcomes for children and young people who require and receive Welsh-medium ALP. This is consistent with the wider evidence, such as the findings of the Evaluation of the ALN system Scoping Report which found that a lack of data in relation to the long-term outcomes of the ALN system was the main gap in the evidence base.

Duties and decisions over whether ALP should be provided in Welsh

The ALN Act and the ALN Code require LAs, schools, FEIs and NHS bodies to actively consider whether ALP should be delivered in Welsh, to record this in the IDP, and to take all reasonable steps to secure Welsh-medium ALP where specified. The findings indicate that LAs and other governing bodies have a clear understanding of the duty placed upon them and make efforts to adhere to the responsibilities associated with this.

Across Wales decisions relating to whether Welsh-medium ALP is required by an individual learner are considered within routine person-centred IDP processes. However, for learners already in mainstream education the decision is mainly shaped by the language medium of the school attended by the learner. It is assumed that Welsh-medium ALP is generally required and delivered to learners in Welsh-medium schools unless there is a clear reason not to and that English is required for learners attending English-medium schools.

Individual IDPs may include one or several items of ALP, the delivery of which may extend beyond what schools can deliver and need to be secured by the LA or LHB. As a result, decisions relating to the IDP content and the language delivery of ALP are sometimes influenced by factors wider than the language medium of the learner's school. Learners' needs and the views of parents are taken into consideration during the process of confirming these items of provision within an IDP. The findings indicate that some families whose children go to a Welsh-language school, may express a preference during these initial stages of developing an IDP or during reviews of IDPs, to access specialist ALN services via English referral routes if these are more accessible or available within shorter timeframes. This highlights uncertainty about whether IDPs always reflect learners' linguistic needs rather than what is practically deliverable. It also highlights remaining gaps in

the availability and therefore sufficiency of ALP available across some LAs and LHBs.

Across other settings such as special schools, PRUs and FEIs, it is less clear how Welsh-medium ALP is specified and delivered. Unlike mainstream schools, these settings are not categorised according to the language of provision.

While Welsh-medium or bilingual ALP is sometimes delivered in a small number of PRUs located in predominantly Welsh-speaking areas, outside these areas, ALP is delivered predominantly through English, regardless of the learner's home language. PRUs reported that the level of need for and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP to be very low within their institutions. However, the findings indicate that learners from Welsh-medium schools who receive sustained levels of English-medium support at a PRU often find it difficult to then return to Welsh-medium education.

Relatively little is currently known about the level of need and the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP within FEIs, and this is likely to be an area for further investigation. FEI representatives interviewed during this review noted that none of the learners currently studying within their institutions had an IDP that specified a requirement for Welsh-medium ALP. FEIs reported that they offered Welsh-medium support where required, however, their ability to deliver this is often constrained by the availability of resources and Welsh-speaking staff with the requisite skills.

Delivery of Welsh-medium ALP

The review's findings indicate that most education settings reported being able to deliver Welsh-medium ALP when needed. Settings reported that decisions relating to the language of ALP for individual learners were informed by person-centred IDP processes. Schools described identifying the ALP required through teacher observations, pupil progress meetings and early discussions with parents.

The ALN Code states that some children and young people will require the support of NHS bodies to help meet their needs. The review evidence indicates that ALP delivered by NHS bodies does not always align with the provision offered in Welsh-medium schools, reflecting clinical guidance, parental preference or workforce availability. This is particularly evident in SLT, where support is often provided in English if this is the main language spoken at home, even if the learner attends a Welsh-medium school, which can create challenges for continuity between therapy and the classroom.

LHBs deliver ALP in response to Section 20 referrals submitted by LAs. The number of these referrals has increased in recent years. Despite this overall increase, only a very small proportion of cases are identified as requiring Welsh-medium provision (estimated by DECLOs at less than 3-5% of all ALP delivered by LHBs).

These figures may underestimate actual need, as they may reflect limited awareness of Welsh-medium options and/or assumptions among some families and education settings that Welsh-medium ALP is not available within the health sector and therefore not specified as a need in an IDP. They may also reflect a preference to access English-medium support if it can be provided more quickly. As a result, some children and young people who could benefit from Welsh-medium ALP may not have this specified in their IDPs.

The findings indicate a need to improve coordination between health and education and strengthen data collection processes relating to Welsh-medium ALP delivered by the health sector in order to support more coherent, language-appropriate provision.

Approaches undertaken by LAs to review the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP

A key challenge in the process of assessing sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP, is that there is no agreed definition as to what 'sufficiency' means in practice. As such, interpretation as to what is considered sufficient availability of provision varies across LAs.

LAs adopt a range of approaches to assessing the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP. In most cases, elements of this work are also embedded within Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), particularly where it relates to the growth and sustainability of Welsh-medium provision.

However, evidence gathered for this review indicates that while LAs are committed to reviewing the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP across their areas as a whole, these reviews are mostly based on demand-led, reactive approaches that rely largely on education settings, parents and learners outlining or self-reporting areas of additional support that may be required.

If schools outline to LAs a need for additional or specialist Welsh-medium ALP or specialist support to deliver Welsh-medium ALP e.g. support from specialist teachers or the need for additional Welsh-medium resources, LAs make efforts to provide it. However, if schools do not outline the need for any additional Welsh-medium ALP and / or specialist support to deliver ALP in Welsh, it is typically assumed that the level of provision available is sufficient.

While this approach ensures responsiveness to identified need, it may not fully capture unmet or unexpressed need, particularly in areas where families or schools may assume that Welsh-medium ALP is unavailable and therefore do not make any attempts to request it. Future sufficiency reviews undertaken by LAs could therefore benefit from more proactive approaches including wider consultation with parents and learners.

Similar demand-led approaches appear to be used when reviewing the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP across FEIs and NHS bodies. Where an individual learner's

IDP specifies a need for Welsh-medium ALP, providers make efforts to deliver it. However, both FEIs and NHS bodies reported very few instances in which such a need was identified within learners' IDPs. This again suggests a reactive approach to assessing sufficiency of provision as opposed to a proactive approach to ensuring sufficient provision which may not fully capture unexpressed need.

Workforce capacity to deliver Welsh-medium ALP

The review findings indicate that gaps and shortages in the availability of Welsh-speaking specialist ALN staff exist across most LAs in Wales.

Almost half of LAs identified shortages of Welsh-speaking specialist teachers for visual impairment, hearing impairment and autism, and several also reported limited or no Welsh-speaking EPs. Challenges in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified individuals for these roles were cited as the main reason for these shortages.

The findings highlight the fragility of small specialist teams within LAs for whom losing a single Welsh-speaking ALN practitioner could quickly result in insufficient capacity to deliver Welsh-medium ALP. Recruitment challenges within these roles create further difficulties to fill these gaps when they occur. Some Welsh-speaking specialist practitioners operate across multiple LA areas, but the travel demands associated with this model can introduce further pressures and limit availability at the point of need.

The availability of Welsh-medium ALP within FEIs is less clear than in compulsory-age education settings. Whilst FEI representatives reported low levels of need for Welsh-medium ALP within their institutions, staff capacity constraints to deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh were also noted. In some cases, FEIs reported that there was a reliance on informal workarounds such as reallocating Welsh-speaking staff to provide support even if it is outside their usual roles.

Assessing the sufficiency of Welsh-speaking ALN practitioners employed within NHS bodies is challenging because of a lack of consistent data. DECLOs highlighted that the distribution of health professionals with Welsh language skills was uneven across Wales, both geographically and by clinical specialism. DECLOs and health practitioners also reported workforce capacity challenges in some areas and specialisms, which they felt could create fragility within provision. The review evidence indicates that there are limited Welsh-medium specialist ALN training opportunities, with practitioners often translating or adapting content from English-medium courses. The content and language of some specialist training may not adequately reflect the context of Welsh-medium education.

Overall, the evidence indicates that while some LAs believe they have sufficient Welsh-speaking specialist staff, the small size of teams, geographical pressures and persistent recruitment difficulties create significant vulnerabilities. These factors limit the consistency and reliability of Welsh-medium ALP often leading to delays in

provision, gaps in services, and Welsh-speaking learners having to receive specialist services in English where Welsh-medium services are not available.

Resources

The availability of Welsh-medium resources to support learners with ALN is not yet comparable to the range of materials available in English and this is particularly the case for diagnostic resources as well as digital and online services. Over half of the LAs responding to the review did not feel they had sufficient levels of access to the resources they needed to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP. ALNCoS and other practitioners in Welsh-medium schools reported spending considerable time translating English-medium resources into Welsh. This process is often repeated across individual schools and LAs, duplicating work. This raises concerns about the consistency of these approaches and therefore the standardisation of the translated resources produced. The technical complexity of digital materials further limits the extent to which such resources can be translated.

The disparity in the availability of Welsh and English-medium ALN resources means that learners with ALN in Welsh-medium settings have limited access to the resources available to support their needs. In some cases this results in learners having to access resources that may not be age or stage appropriate or having to use English-medium resources. It is not yet clear whether these limitations impact on the learning outcomes achieved by these learners and this may warrant further investigation. The most immediate impact, however, is the significant additional time and effort required across Welsh-medium schools to translate resources.

Progress is however being made in developing further Welsh-medium assessment tools and resources, including new standardised Welsh-medium literacy tests, funded by Welsh Government, being developed by Cardiff Metropolitan University. Adnodd and partners are also developing new Welsh-medium and bilingual literacy materials, braille and large-print resources, and BSL support. There is also increased focus on creating Welsh and English ALN resources simultaneously to reduce disparities. Further technological developments, such as computerised readers, are also underway.

Progress during the first five years of ALN reform

Although this review has identified several inconsistencies in the availability of and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, which has an impact on the sufficiency of provision available within some areas, it has also identified notable areas of progress that have been made in strengthening Welsh-medium ALP during the first five years of ALN reform.

Key developments include the commissioning of new Welsh-medium learning and assessment resources, increased availability of Welsh-medium specialist training,

particularly for EPs and an increase in SRBs and school-designated special classes in mainstream Welsh-medium schools.

Examples have also been identified in relation to increased collaboration between Welsh-medium schools, supported by ALNCo networks, practitioner forums and cross-service groups. Much of this has also been supported by the National ALN Implementation Lead (Welsh-language).

Schools and LAs reported greater awareness of the need to deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh, a growing recognition that ALP is a shared, mainstream responsibility, and examples of resource sharing between practitioners within school clusters. It would also appear that Welsh-medium ALP now receives greater attention, with improved systems and data, although consistency across Wales remains variable.

Some challenges do remain, however. Increasing families' awareness of the availability and quality of Welsh-medium ALP, as well as challenging perceptions that bilingualism can be detrimental to learners with ALN, are notable ongoing challenges identified during this review. Some examples of attempts to challenge these perceptions by providing clear and accessible information to families have been identified, but further work is needed to support practitioners, schools and LAs in supporting learners with ALN to choose and remain in Welsh-medium education.

The review concludes that over the last five years progress has been made towards achieving a 'bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh'. However, the findings also outline continued disparity in the availability and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP compared to English-medium ALP, and areas of recording and delivery where system sufficiency is yet to be achieved.

Further progress is therefore required in understanding the level of need for Welsh-medium ALP at an LA and national level, strengthening the Welsh-speaking ALN workforce pipeline, continued development and sharing of Welsh-medium resources and better alignment of the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP between the education and health sector.

Recommendations

Data

1. The Welsh Government should continue to assess the availability of data at both local and national levels relating to the need for Welsh-medium ALP.

- The proxy data derived from PLASC and LLWR, outlined in Chapter 4 of this report is the most reliable sources currently available relating to the potential level of need for Welsh-medium ALP among those of compulsory school age and in FEIs. In the short term, the Welsh Government should consider using this data to undertake regular assessments of the need for Welsh-medium ALP across Wales, while acknowledging the limitations of this data as a proxy measure
- The Welsh Government should also undertake a more detailed assessment of the systems and methods used by LAs to collect data from IDPs regarding the identified need for Welsh-medium ALP. This assessment should examine the extent to which such data is gathered, the consistency of collection practices, and the practical opportunities and constraints associated with this process. This assessment should also explore data on children and young people not captured in the proxy data, specifically the ALNLO cohort, learners in EOTAS and other post-16 learners
- A clearer understanding of local data-gathering practices could help determine whether IDP-derived data could feasibly be used in future to produce a more robust and detailed measure of the number of learners requiring Welsh-medium ALP

2. The Welsh Government should continue to assess the availability of data relating to the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP.

- The Welsh Government should assess in greater depth-beyond what was possible within this quinquennial review-the extent to which ALP elements identified within individual learner IDPs as requiring Welsh-medium delivery are, in practice, being delivered through the medium of Welsh
- An assessment of data that outlines whether Welsh-medium ALP is being delivered should consider what data is gathered by schools, FEIs, LAs and LHBs, how consistently it is collated and the practical opportunities and constraints associated with this process
- Findings from this detailed assessment should inform whether LAs and LHBs require further support and guidance to ensure consistent approaches to gathering data relating to the amount of Welsh-medium ALP delivered

- Gaining a clearer understanding of local data-gathering practices relating to the extent to which Welsh-medium ALP is being delivered could help inform future decisions as to whether this could feasibly be aggregated to provide national data
- 3. There is a need to address a lack of data in relation to the outcomes for children and young people who require and receive Welsh-medium ALP.**
- The Welsh Government should consider developing a set of indicators relating to the outcomes of children and young people with ALN. This is supported by the findings of the Evaluation of the ALN system: Scoping Report (Welsh Government, 2023) which found that a lack of data in relation to the long-term outcomes of the ALN system was the main gap in the evidence base

Delivery of Welsh-medium ALP

- 4. Schools and LAs need to be encouraged and supported to ensure that the basis upon which decisions relating to the language of ALP delivered to learners are clearly recorded and reviewed.**
- Increased focus is required to ensure that decisions relating to the language of ALP required are learner-centred and not based on the availability of provision
- 5. There is a need to strengthen the alignment between the Welsh-medium ALP delivered by all education sectors and that delivered by NHS bodies.**
- LAs and LHBs need to work more closely together to improve communication and data sharing between health care and education practitioners delivering Welsh-medium ALP
 - LAs, schools and LHBs need to work more closely together to ensure that the delivery of ALP is better aligned to the language needs of the learner
 - LAs and LHBs need to work more closely together to ensure consistent Section 20 referral pathways that recognise the Welsh language needs of the learner
 - LHBs should collate data relating to the number of requests they receive for Welsh-medium NHS ALP and the number of children and young people receiving Welsh-medium NHS ALP delivered by healthcare professionals. This data should be used by LAs and LHBs to jointly plan provision

Undertaking future sufficiency reviews

6. There is a need to strengthen local Welsh-medium ALP sufficiency assessments to enable LAs to fulfil the duties set out under Section 63 of the ALN Act.

- The Welsh Government should consider working with ALN practitioners and families to produce an agreed and consistent definition of what the term ‘sufficient’ should mean in practice in relation to Welsh-medium ALP. This definition should then be used to guide future sufficiency reviews
- The Welsh Government should support LAs to move from reactive, demand-led approaches to reviewing Welsh-medium ALP sufficiency to a more proactive planning approach. This would include consulting with schools, families and learners to understand what their needs are, rather than waiting for these needs to be brought to their attention
- LAs should also consider gathering the views of parents and learners with ALN on whether Welsh-medium ALP is sufficient
- LAs should continue to ensure that future sufficiency reviews are transparent and accessible by using clear terminology presented in accessible formats

Workforce

7. There is a need to strengthen the Welsh-speaking ALN workforce by supporting more Welsh speakers into specialist ALN roles across LAs and LHBs

- The Welsh Government should work with LAs and LHBs to strengthen the evidence base on the Welsh-medium ALN workforce, to gain a clearer understanding of the current distribution of roles, Welsh language capacity, and existing skills and specialisms
- The Welsh Government should continue to support and possibly expand the places for Welsh-speakers on the course for educational psychologists
- The Welsh Government should consider expanding professional learning opportunities for other Welsh-speaking specialist staff who support learners with ALN.
- Opportunities should be explored to support specialist staff who support learners with ALN who can speak some Welsh to improve their Welsh language skills and to use these skills to deliver the services they provide
- Further opportunities need to be explored to enable the services of Welsh-medium specialist staff who support learners with ALN to be shared more widely across regions, possibly by expanding the delivery of services online where possible or appropriate

Resources

8. Current activities to develop additional Welsh-medium ALN resources need to be continued and where possible accelerated.

- The Welsh Government should consider supporting LAs to map the Welsh-medium resources currently available (as well as those in development) to gain a more detailed understanding of the gap in available resources
- Although progress is being made in relation to developing new and additional Welsh language ALN resources, the resource gaps referred to within this review suggest that even more focus is required to develop new resources, particularly digital and online resources that align to those already available in English, as well as materials for learners with more complex or profound needs in special-schools
- The Welsh Government should consider supporting LAs and established ALN practitioner networks to review, standardise and share ALN resources that have been translated from English to Welsh

Information and awareness

9. There is a need to raise awareness amongst parents, learners and some ALN practitioners that learners with ALN do not necessarily need to move from Welsh-medium to English-medium education provision in order to receive the ALP they need.

- The Welsh Government and LAs should consider providing further information disproving myths that Welsh-medium ALP can be detrimental to learners with ALN

Annex 1: Research questions

Research Questions relating to availability and delivery of WM ALP

1. To what extent are diagnostic tools, assessments and learning resources for supporting learners with ALN, and professional learning and training for practitioners on ALN, available in Welsh (and bilingually)?
 - What gaps (if any) have been identified? How do practitioners seek to work around these gaps? How does this affect the provision of WM ALP?
2. To what extent are other resources, including financial resources and physical spaces, available for the provision of WM ALP?
3. To what extent is the workforce available to provide WM ALP sufficient? (this should include consideration of the size, capacity and capability of the workforce available)
 - Does this vary across different groups of professionals/practitioners? What effect does this have on the provision of WM ALP?
4. To what extent are schools able to recruit and retain appropriately trained and experienced staff to provide WM ALP?
5. What are the views of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the ALN system (i.e. LAs) on the efficacy of making the requirement an absolute duty (including the benefits and disbenefits). Importantly, this question would be revisited in subsequent reviews.

Research questions relating to the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh

6. How is the duty to decide whether ALP should be provided in Welsh understood by relevant bodies and practitioners? Does interpretation of this duty vary between these bodies and practitioners?
7. How is the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh being implemented? Is it being applied consistently across schools (including schools with different language categories)/LAs/FEIs/LHBs?

- a. What factors are taken into consideration to inform this decision as to whether ALP should be provided in Welsh?
- b. How does this differ according to the type of ALP required and/or stage of education?

Research questions relating to the requirement on LAs to consider the sufficiency of ALP in Welsh in their respective areas and to take action if deficiencies are identified

8. What mechanisms, processes and information gathering do LAs have in place to review the sufficiency of provision and its effectiveness?
 - How often are these reviews undertaken?
 - Is there consistency in how reviews are undertaken and how often?
 - What factors are considered by LAs to define sufficiency and effectiveness?
9. Have LAs experienced any barriers to implementing these reviews? What steps have been taken to overcome these barriers? Are these reviews helping to improve LAs' understanding of the degree to which the needs of learners who require WM ALP are being met? What challenges or deficiencies/shortfalls have been identified by LAs in relation to the provision of WM ALP through these reviews?
10. To what extent do these reviews feed into plans for strengthening Welsh-medium ALP (e.g. through the WESPs or wider ALN strategic plans and workforce planning)?
11. What actions have been taken by LAs to address any identified deficiencies? What is known about how successful these actions have been?
12. What barriers and facilitators have been experienced by LAs when seeking to take action to address any deficiencies?
13. What data do LAs and LHBs hold about the capacity within the workforce to deliver ALP? What steps could be taken to address any key gaps?
14. What data sources do LAs draw upon in order to inform their understanding of the extent to which the needs of Welsh-medium learners are being met and the sufficiency of provision in their area?

Research questions relating to the duty to take all reasonable steps to provide ALP in Welsh

15. How and to what extent is this duty being fulfilled by the bodies subject to it (school and FEI governing bodies, LAs and NHS bodies)?
16. How does the approach to fulfilling this duty vary between the bodies subject to it? To what extent is there variation across LAs?
17. What is considered “reasonable”? Does this vary across LAs and settings?

Research questions for learners and families

18. For learners who require ALP, what is their (and/or their families) experience of being offered Welsh language ALP?
 - To what extent do learners and their parents/carers feel that their wishes were taken into consideration by relevant bodies when deciding whether ALP should be provided in Welsh?
19. How do learners (and/or their families) feel about the provision they are receiving?
20. Are learners able to access support in the language in which they are most comfortable?
21. How important is it to learners requiring ALP (and/or their families) that the support they receive is in Welsh?
22. To what extent are families aware of the duties on relevant bodies and understand what this means for them?
 - To what extent are parents aware of their rights (e.g. to challenge a decision about whether additional learning provision (ALP) should be provided in Welsh)
23. How is the offer of WM ALP presented or framed to learners and families (e.g. during the IDP process)?

Annex 2: Additional data tables

This Annex includes some of the data tables that underpin the analysis in Chapter 4 of this report.

PLASC data on learners with ALN / SEN is published according to the type of need with the numbers of learners reporting needs in the following categories published: Moderate learning difficulties, Severe learning difficulties, Profound & multiple learning difficulties, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, ASD, Physical and medical difficulties, Hearing impairment, Visual impairment, Multi-sensory impairment, Speech, language and communication difficulties, Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A breakdown of this data according to the medium and sector of school is shown below.

Table A1. Reports of additional learning or special educational needs in primary, all-through (ages 3 to 16/18) and secondary schools by sector, Welsh/English-medium, and type of need, January 2024

Type of need	Welsh-medium primary schools	Welsh-medium all-through (ages 3 to 16/18) schools	Welsh-medium secondary schools	Welsh-medium total	English-medium primary schools	English-medium all-through (ages 3 to 16/18) schools	English-medium secondary schools	English-medium total
Moderate learning difficulties	1,505	150	1,035	2,690	4,325	310	3,835	8465
Severe learning difficulties	160	15	90	265	690	40	335	1,065
Profound & multiple learning difficulties	75	10	30	110	190	10	55	250
Dyslexia	365	105	515	985	705	90	1,705	2,495
Dyscalculia	35	15	40	85	50	[c]	120	170
Dyspraxia	40	10	80	130	95	15	195	310
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	175	50	205	430	565	75	1,210	1,850
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	625	80	455	1,160	3,530	320	2,890	6,740
Physical and medical difficulties	375	65	280	720	1,470	115	1,160	2,745
Hearing impairment	155	25	90	265	465	50	480	995
Visual impairment	75	10	80	165	255	20	260	535
Multi-sensory impairment	35	[c]	5	4,5	125	5	65	195
Speech, language and communication difficulties	2,510	235	950	3,695	8,865	440	3,130	12,435
Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties	1,890	290	1,155	3,335	6,310	540	5,125	11,980

Source: PLASC

[c] = Numbers greater than zero but less than five. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Note: The numbers in this table do not necessarily reflect the number of learners, because more than one type of ALN or SEN can be reported for each learner.

Annex 3: Research Tools

Annex 3.1 LA proforma

Welsh-medium Additional Learning Provision (ALP) - Local Authority (LA) Input

Background: One of the key principles of the additional learning needs (ALN) system is to create a bilingual system. The ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act) s89 sets out the statutory obligation on Welsh Ministers to review and report on the sufficiency of ALP in Welsh every five years. The sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP refers to the provision of resources and services in Welsh to meet learners' needs. This review will constitute the first of these quinquennial reviews into the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP and must be undertaken and published by 1 September 2026. This document is designed to collect information from staff in each LA to feed into the first review.

Purpose: The aim is to gather initial information and views from LAs about Welsh-medium ALP to build upon in a follow-up conversation in the new year. One person may lead on completing this document, but please consult with other colleagues where needed (e.g. Early Years ALNLOs, Welsh in Education Strategic Plan leads). The Privacy Notice provides further detail on how personal information will be used.

How to Use:

This document is on Objective Connect and can be completed by downloading it locally, answering the questions and then uploading the final version to Objective Connect. Please email (email address removed) to let us know once your submission is complete.

We recognise that not all LAs will not hold all the relevant information. If the information is not held or cannot be provided within the timeframe available, please note this.

Contact and support: If you have any queries, require clarification or need assistance completing the document, please contact (email address removed).

Next steps: Please submit the completed form, if possible, by Friday **9 January 2026**. However, if this presents an issue, please contact Arad at (email address removed). Arad will be in touch to arrange a follow up meeting in the new year.

Please use the table below to indicate who has contributed. This helps us to know who to follow up with any additional queries we may have.

Contributors to this response:

Name	Job title	E-mail address	LA	Date

Section 1: Current need for Welsh-medium ALP

1. Please note, if known, the current number **of IDPs maintained by the LA** for children and young people in the following groups and the number of these that specify Welsh-medium ALP. Please note 'not available' if is not known at this stage.

IDP Type	Total number of IDPs maintained by LA	Number of IDPs that specify ALP through the medium of Welsh
Children under compulsory school age not attending a maintained school (the "ALNLO cohort")		
Learners of compulsory school age and post-16 learners with other LA-maintained IDPs (e.g. dual registered, looked after children)		

2. Please indicate in the table below whether you record or hold the following information for learners with IDPs within various settings across your LA.

Please Note - At this stage we only want to know whether this information is held centrally on a LA level. We do not expect you to provide this data.

Please indicate whether this information is currently held centrally within your LA	Whether learners require any ALP in Welsh	Whether learners are receiving any ALP in Welsh
For IDPs maintained by mainstream schools	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
For IDPs maintained by Specialist Resource Bases (SRB)	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
For special schools	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
For IDPs maintained by LAs: children under compulsory school age not attending a maintained school, the "ALNLO cohort"	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
For IDPs maintained by LAs: compulsory school age (e.g. dual registered, looked after children)	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
For IDPs maintained by LAs: post-16 learners	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Current workforce for Welsh-medium ALP

3. We would like to understand the number of specialist ALN central staff who can work through the medium of Welsh as a proportion of the total number of staff who are employed and/or managed directly by your LA who support the delivery of ALP (excluding staff who are managed directly by individual schools). Please note this information in the table below, if known, and please note 'not available' if is not known at this stage.

Field of work/area of specialism of specialist ALN staff	Total number of ALN staff employed and / or managed directly by the LA	Total number of ALN staff who can work through the medium of Welsh	Is the number of ALN staff who can work through the medium of Welsh sufficient to meet learners' needs?
Educational psychologist			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Speech and language therapists (SLTs)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Occupational therapists (OTs)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Other physical-health staff (please specify)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Specialist teacher with specialist ALN qualifications (e.g. specialising in visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Other advisory or specialist teachers (please specify)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
ALN manager/team leader/coordinator			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Inclusion officer/lead			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Early Years ALNLO			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Family liaison officer (ALN specific)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Support officer (ALN specific)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Transition worker			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Self-employed individuals (please specify)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Other (please specify)			☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

4. How do you monitor, if at all, how many ALN practitioners employed and/or managed directly by your LA have the skills to deliver Welsh-medium ALP? Please note any data you gather, and how often this data is updated.

5. How do you monitor, if at all, how many ALN practitioners employed and/or managed directly by your LA are delivering Welsh-medium ALP?

6. Are you aware of any specialist ALN practitioners with the Welsh language skills required to deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh, who currently do not do so?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

7. Which ALN specialist staff (if any) that can work through the medium of Welsh are particularly challenging to recruit and/or retain? Please select all that apply.

Field of work/area of specialism of specialist ALN staff	Is it particularly challenging to recruit and/or retain staff that can work through the medium of Welsh?
Educational psychologist	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Speech and language therapists (SLTs)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Occupational therapists (OTs)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Other physical-health staff (please specify)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Specialist teacher with specialist ALN qualifications (e.g. specialising in visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Other advisory or specialist teachers (please specify)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
ALN manager/team leader/coordinator	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Inclusion officer/lead	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Early Years ALNLO	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Family liaison officer (ALN specific)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Support officer (ALN specific)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Transition worker	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Self-employed individuals (please specify)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Other (please specify)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
ALNCo	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Teaching Assistants and Higher-level Teaching Assistants	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Section 3: Professional development and resources

8. What gaps, if any, in training available for specialist ALN staff, affect your ability to provide sufficient Welsh-medium ALP in your area. Please consider mandatory / qualification-based training and non-mandatory, CPD training.

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9. Please note in the table below whether you have access to sufficient appropriate learning resources (digital or non-digital) in Welsh in your LA support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP.

Type of resource	Sufficient appropriate resources in Welsh
Welsh language resources to support <u>literacy</u>	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Welsh language resources to support <u>numeracy</u>	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
Welsh language resources to support <u>emotional wellbeing</u>	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

10. In your LA, do you have access to all the Welsh language ALN diagnostic and assessment tools you need for your Welsh-medium ALP requirements?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Please briefly explain your response.

11. What other kinds of resources, if any, are noteworthy in enabling or limiting the ability in your LA to help learners access the Welsh-medium ALP they need? (e.g. facilities, designated physical spaces, transport services, specialist classes)

Section 4: Legislative duties of LAs under the ALN Act and ALN Code

12. How are decisions made in relation to whether Welsh-medium ALP is required by a learner? What factors are considered when making these decisions in relation to LA-maintained IDPs? How, if at all, do parents and learners' views feed in to the decisions?

13. What guidance or advice, if any, is provided to schools on deciding whether Welsh-medium ALP should be provided in school-maintained IDPs?

14. Under the current legislation, if it is specified in an IDP that a child or young person should be provided with ALP in Welsh, LAs are required to take all reasonable steps to provide this.

What type of internal guidance or criteria, if any, is used to determine what are 'reasonable steps'?

- ☐ Formal LA guidance or policy documents
- ☐ Informal understanding
- ☐ No formal or informal guidance currently in place
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- ☐ Don't know

15. If providing Welsh-medium ALP became an absolute duty (i.e. a requirement to provide Welsh-medium ALP, rather than to take reasonable steps to provide Welsh-medium ALP), how feasible do you feel this would be for your LA over the medium term.

- ☐ Feasible now, with no changes required
- ☐ Likely to be feasible with some changes (e.g. staffing, resources, or new settings)
- ☐ Likely to be very challenging without major changes
- ☐ Don't know

Undertaking Welsh-medium ALP sufficiency reviews

16. Please outline how you currently assess the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP in your LA, if at all.

	Outline
What data and information sources do you draw upon, if any? Please note where this refers to a specific sector (early years, primary, secondary, post-16 / FE.)	
How, if at all, do you incorporate the voices of parents/carers and/or learners?	
How often do you undertake these reviews, if at all?	
Do you have any reports or outputs from your sufficiency reviews which can be shared with the Quinquennial Review team?	
Are there any gaps in the data available to you that limits your ability to review the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP in your LA?	

17. If possible, please provide one or two examples of how conducting Welsh-medium ALP sufficiency reviews has informed specific policy or practice decisions in your LA.

Section 5: Progress achieved to date

18. If possible, please note one or two examples of ways in which you feel the provision of Welsh-medium ALP in your LA has increased or improved since the implementation of the ALN Act.

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Thank you for your support

Annex 3.2 Topic Guide for interviews with LAs

Introduction

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to conduct a review into the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP in Wales.

A key aim of this review will be to establish a baseline understanding of the availability and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, and to understand how the provisions outlined in the ALN Act 2018, designed to drive progress towards a bilingual system are being implemented in practice. Exploring the practical application of these duties and barriers is of direct relevance to the understanding of the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP.

We are very grateful to you for taking part in the research. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the research at any time. A privacy notice was provided when you were invited to take part, and we would be happy to share this with you again if required. None of the information you provide will be attributed to you or your organisation, and you will not be named in any publications or reports.

Thank you for completing the proforma/*please complete the proforma*. We're speaking to all those invited to complete the proforma to understand more about the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP in the different LAs. We will be covering a range of topic areas in this interview related to your LA, such as:

- The level of need for Welsh-medium ALP and how this is assessed/determined
- The data you record to monitor levels of need and levels of provision
- The capacity to meet the need (workforce and resources)
- Progress to date in supporting the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP
- How you use this information to plan Welsh-medium ALP in your LA/area

Current need for Welsh-medium ALP: Proforma follow-up

[Facilitator to refer to the answers to questions 1 -2 of the proforma]

- Is there anything you'd like to add or clarify?
- Are there any gaps or challenges with providing the data?

Current need for Welsh-medium ALP: further questions

1. Are you able to share data with us on the number and percentage of IDPs that specify Welsh-medium ALP is required? Can this be provided for different types of setting/sector? (Pre-school, Mainstream primary, Mainstream secondary, SRBs, Special schools, Post-16)
2. Are you able to share data with us on whether learners receive Welsh-medium ALP? What does this data show (i.e. does provision match need, or not)? As above, can this be provided by setting/sector?
3. If you don't hold data on whether these learners actually receive Welsh-medium ALP, do you feel that provision available meets the need for Welsh-medium ALP specified in learners' IDPs? On what do you base this assessment?
4. [If relevant based on responses to previous questions] Are you aware of any need for Welsh-medium ALP that isn't currently being met?
 - Prompts: parent preference not met, feedback from schools on challenges, lack of Welsh-medium settings/specialist, long(er) waits, only partial delivery of ALP
5. Are you aware of any cases where children move from Welsh-medium settings to English-medium in order to access Welsh-medium ALP? (Prompt: at transition between early years to primary and primary or secondary, or during primary/secondary)
 - Examples (anonymised)
 - Are these cases recorded? How are they recorded / how is that information used?
6. How are parents made aware of the Welsh-medium ALP available to their child under the ALN system?
 - Do you actively promote or raise awareness? (Prompt: how are parents made aware at different stages/ages)
 - Examples if yes / Reasons if not.
 - Are barriers recorded?
7. **Facilitators and barriers: Are you aware of any factors that help or hinder access to Welsh-medium ALP for learners and families in your area?**
(Prompt: e.g., barriers such as location of provision, transport, lack of Welsh-speaking specialists; facilitators such as strong local networks, proactive promotion, or flexible staffing.)
 - If yes, please provide some examples / further information.

Planning / Decision making

Clarification of answers to proforma Qs 12 & 13 [if needed]

8. Are there any differences in the way decisions are made according in Welsh language / bilingual / English-medium schools?

Workforce supply: further questions

9. Do you record how many specialist ALN practitioners have the Welsh Language skills to deliver Welsh-medium ALP but are not currently doing so

- If yes, or if you know anecdotally but not recorded - why do some specialist ALN practitioners who have the Welsh language skills required to deliver Welsh-medium ALP, not deliver support in Welsh?

[Follow-up on proforma Q3 'Is the number of ALN staff who can work through the medium of Welsh sufficient to meet learners' needs?'] If 'no':

- How do gaps in availability of specialist ALN practitioners impact the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP?
- If insufficient, is this due to a shortage of staff with Welsh language skills to deliver Welsh-medium ALP or are there other factors?
 - a. Prompts: staffing structures in LA, confidence, specialisms etc?
- Are you taking any steps to address any gaps in the workforce to deliver Welsh-medium ALP?

10. Based on your own experience, is the current number of LHB staff who are able to work through the medium of Welsh sufficient to meet the needs of learners?

Recruitment and retention: proforma follow-up

Further questions on the Staff employed directly by LA

[Follow-up questions on proforma Q7 in relation to fields in which respondents have identified recruitment and/or retention challenges]

11. Are there challenges in terms of recruitment or retention, or both? What are the challenges? How does this impact the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP?

Further questions on School Staff employed directly by LA

ALNCos

12. [If respondents identified challenges in recruiting ALNCos in proforma Q7] In relation to (i) appointing ALNCos (ii) retaining ALNCos in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools compared to English-medium schools: what works well? What are the challenges?

TAs/HLTAs

13. [If respondents identified challenges in recruiting TAs/HLTAs in proforma Q7] Are there enough TAs/HLTAs who are able to work through the medium of Welsh in your LA area to support learners who require Welsh-medium provision? If no, please provide some details. Do you think it is more challenging to appoint TAs/HLTAs in Welsh-medium or bilingual schools than in English-medium schools? If yes, why

14. Is it more challenging to appoint TAs/HLTAs who can work through the medium of Welsh than English? If so, why do you think this is?

15. [If applicable] What actions are being or have been taken to address any recruitment challenges related to ALNCos and TAs/HLTAs who can work through the medium of Welsh? What works well?

Professional development

[Note: clarify any issues with response to Q8 of proforma]

16. What are the facilitators and barriers to the take-up of mandatory and / or non-mandatory or CPD training amongst specialist ALN practitioners that you feel affects the ability to provide sufficient Welsh-medium-ALP in your area?

Learning resources: further questions

17. [If 'no' to Q9 of proforma] Can you provide further details on any gaps in the Welsh-medium educational resources available?
For example, are the Welsh language resources available suitable or appropriate for the learners they aim to support? Are they suitable for the needs and ages of learners which they are intended for
18. Where do you / educational settings access Welsh-medium learning resources? E.g. HWB / other platforms
- if yes please not how these gaps may impact on Welsh-medium ALP - are these gaps / impacts more prominent in specific areas of learning e.g. literacy, numeracy, emotional wellbeing

[If not clarified in proforma responses]

19. Do you have all the Welsh language ALN diagnostic and assessment tools you need for your Welsh-medium ALP?
- If not, what type of tools are not available and what impact does this have on Welsh-medium ALP in your area?

Financial resources

20. Do you think there is sufficient Welsh Government funding currently available to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP?
- If 'yes' please offer some examples as to how this funding has been used to help learner access Welsh-medium ALP
 - If 'no' please outline what impact this shortfall in funding is having on the delivery or availability of Welsh-medium ALP in your area
21. What, if any, capital expenditure has been made over the last 3 years to improve existing facilities and create new specialist provision for ALN learners (e.g. through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme)?
- If so, how much of this has been allocated to support Welsh-medium provision?
 - How is planning for the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP considered as part of decisions about how capital funding is allocated?

Legislative duties for the LA: proforma follow-up

22. [Refer to proforma Q14] If there are cases where Welsh-medium ALP was required but could not be provided, please provide further details? For example, why could it not be offered?
23. Referring to the proforma response relating to '*If providing Welsh-medium ALP became an absolute duty (i.e. a requirement to provide Welsh-medium ALP, rather than to take reasonable steps to provide Welsh-medium ALP)*', how feasible do you feel this would be

for your LA based on the current situation?’ - can you please add further information to support your answer. For example, what would be required for this to be feasible?

Collaboration and partnership working

- 24. Do you work in partnership or in collaboration with schools to enable or support the following to be shared (between the LA and schools as well as between schools)?**
- Knowledge and information about the need for Welsh-medium ALP
 - The support available to schools/settings to deliver Welsh-medium ALP (e.g. specialist staff, capacity to support the delivery, capacity to support the assessment of need)
 - Welsh-medium ALP learning/classroom materials
 - Examples of good practice
 - Specialist practitioners with the ability to deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh
 - Other partnership or collaborative working practices between the LA and schools as well as between schools.
- 25. In what ways do you work in partnership or in collaboration with LHBs and health professionals to:**
- For example, sharing knowledge and information relating to the need for Welsh-medium ALP? Any other ways?
- 26. Do you work in partnership or in collaboration with other LAs to:**
- Share Welsh-medium ALP resources?
 - Share specialist practitioners with the ability to deliver Welsh-medium ALP?
 - Deliver Welsh-medium ALP in neighbouring LAs and / or receive the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP in your LA with the support of neighbouring LAs?
 - Share information about learners who need Welsh-medium ALP who may have moved from one LA to another?
 - Are there other ways you work in partnership with other LAs?

Undertaking Welsh-medium ALP sufficiency reviews: further questions

- 27. Do the mechanisms, processes, and sources of information required to undertake these reviews differ according to sector (i.e. early years, primary, secondary, post-16 / FE)? If yes, how?**

Follow-up questions relating to proforma Q18:

- 28. How have the reviews helped to understanding need for Welsh-medium ALP?**
How have the reviews helped to understanding capacity to deliver Welsh-medium ALP?
What challenges, deficiencies or shortfalls have been identified? How have challenges, deficiencies or shortfalls been addressed?
- 29. How has undertaking these sufficiency reviews enabled your LA to gain a clear understanding of the need for Welsh-medium ALP? Please provide some examples**
- Are there any particular challenges for the LA related to collecting Welsh-medium ALP data? (e.g. local/centralised systems, varied record-keeping)

Planning for future Welsh-medium ALP

We'd now like to explore planning for the future delivery of Welsh-medium ALP in more depth.

30. How do you plan for the future delivery of Welsh-medium ALP? How does this vary according to different sectors and settings?

- Are there particular challenges or uncertainties you face when planning for future Welsh-medium ALP delivery, compared with English-medium ALP?

Progress achieved to date: further questions

31. How would you describe the extent of the progress that has been made in recent years to deliver Welsh-medium ALP?

- How has provision increased / improved?
- What have been the facilitators and barriers in making progress?

32. Having considered all the points discussed so far in this interview (i.e. the need for Welsh-medium ALP, the capacity to delivery Welsh-medium ALP the progress made to date) do you think that there is sufficient AM ALP currently being delivered in your LA to meet the identified need? Please outline the reason for your answer.

Any other comments?

Thank you for your time. Are there any other comments you wish to share on the sufficiency of Welsh ALP with the Quinquennial Review team?

Annex 3.3 Topic guide for interviews with school and FEI practitioners

Background

- 0.1. Can you briefly describe your role please?
- 0.2. Can you tell us a bit about ALN in your school/setting? (e.g. number of IDPs, trends over recent years).
- 0.3. Confirm language medium / what Welsh-medium learning is available.

Section 1: Current need for Welsh-medium ALP

- 1.1. Please summarise the current level of need for Welsh-medium ALP in your school, and the ALP you currently provide (e.g., as recorded on IDPs)

We'd like to look at what happens after the school is aware that the learner may have ALN - not just whether Welsh-medium ALP should be offered, but whether it can be provided. This helps us understand what 'reasonable steps' look like in practice.

- 1.2. How is the duty to consider whether ALP should be provided in Welsh understood and applied in your school?
 - What factors influence decisions (e.g., parent preference, staffing (internal/external) resources, language-medium of setting)?
 - Does the process vary according to the type of ALP provided or according to the stage of education?
 - What does "reasonable steps" mean in practice for your setting? Can you give examples of actions taken?
 - What type of internal guidance or criteria, if any, do you use to determine what counts as 'reasonable steps'?
- 1.3. How is Welsh-medium ALP presented or framed to learners and families (e.g., during the IDP process)?
 - Do you promote or raise awareness of Welsh-medium ALP? Please explain.
 - What feedback have you received from parents or learners about Welsh-medium ALP?
- 1.4. Are there any areas where you cannot provide Welsh-medium ALP or where learners' Welsh-medium ALP needs are not being met?
 - Are there particular challenges linked to supporting certain types of ALN or delivering areas of ALP through the medium of Welsh?
 - What happens if Welsh-medium ALP can't be provided? (e.g. is the provision offered in English; or do learners have to wait for a longer time to receive this provision)
- 1.5. Have you come across any cases where learners moved between Welsh-medium and English-medium education (including between streams in dual-stream schools) because of ALP availability or learning needs?
 - Any cases in your school/setting where learners have moved into or between Welsh-medium settings in order to access (more) Welsh-medium ALP? What were the reasons?
 - Any cases where parents moved their child from Welsh-medium to English-medium education because of learning needs and/or ALP availability? What were the reasons?

- 1.6. How do you record or monitor the need for Welsh-medium ALP in your school/setting and how is this information used?
- What takes place beyond Section 2B of IDPs, e.g. do you track parents' requests, track unmet need; refer to WESPs, work with other settings?)
- 1.7. Are there any cases where ALP is secured by an NHS body (as described in Section 2C of the IDP)?
- Is this ALP delivered in Welsh?
 - If not, why not? What factors affect whether NHS-delivered ALP can be provided in Welsh (e.g., availability of therapists, specialist staff)?
 - (If provision is not delivered in Welsh) If known, what impact does this have on learners?
- (Dual stream)
- 1.8. From what you know or have observed, how would you describe ALP available and provided in Welsh-medium settings compared to ALP in English-medium setting?

Section 2: Welsh-medium ALP learning resources

We're interested in any Welsh-medium ALP resources your setting uses (materials or tools in any format, including print, digital, and assistive technologies that support your work with learners who have ALN.)

Across the following areas

- a. literacy
- b. numeracy
- c. emotional wellbeing
- d. Other (please specify)? ...

- 2.1. In your experience, are there sufficient resources available in Welsh to support learners?
- Do you have access to enough Welsh-language resources to enable you to deliver the ALP that meets the needs of learners?)
- 2.2. If not sufficient, where do you see the main gaps/challenges (if any) in Welsh-medium ALP resources?
- Are these linked to particular types of ALN? (e.g., Braille for visually impaired learners)?
 - How do you seek to work around these gaps? How do you think this affects provision of Welsh-medium ALP or impact on learners?
 - Have you had to create your own, or adapt or translate English resources into Welsh to meet learners' needs?
- 2.3. Are the diagnostic tools and assessment resources you need available to you in Welsh?

[Questions for Teaching and Support Staff]

- 2.4. What resources do you use day-to-day for ALP in Welsh or bilingually?
- 2.5. How confident do you feel delivering ALP in Welsh?
- 2.6. What training or support would help you improve provision?
- 2.7. Are there any gaps in resources, training, guidance, or support?

[Dual stream]

- 2.8. How do the Welsh-medium ALP resources compare with English ALP resources in terms of quality, range and suitability?
- If not comparable, what differences have you found?
- 2.9. Have you worked collaboratively (with the LA, other schools/settings) to share knowledge, information and resources to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP?

Section 3: Other resources

- 3.1. Are the financial resources available to you sufficient to meet the needs of learners requiring ALP?
- Are there any funding-related challenges that affect your ability to deliver Welsh-medium ALP? (For example, extra or different costs for staffing, resources, training, or specialist support?)
- 3.2. Is the physical space you currently can use suitable and sufficient to meet the needs of learners requiring ALP? Why or why not?

Section 4: Workforce

- 4.1. Do you currently have sufficient capacity within your workforce to meet learners' needs / deliver sufficient Welsh-medium ALP?
- Does this vary across roles (teachers, TAs, ALNCos)?
- 4.2. Are there any challenges related to appointing, recruiting and retaining ALN specialist staff who can work through the medium of Welsh (ALNCos/TAs/HLTAs)?
- [If yes] How have any of these challenges impacted the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP?
 - [If yes] Are these challenges linked to the Welsh language skills of specialist staff, their ALN specialism, or both?
 - [If no] What do you consider works well in relation to appointing, recruiting and retaining ALN specialist staff?
 - [In Welsh-medium settings] Is any ALP delivered by staff who do not have Welsh skills? If so, how is this managed?
- 4.3. Do you receive support from external professionals (e.g. educational psychologists, therapists, health professionals, LA ALN team) who can deliver provision in Welsh?
- If not / If there are gaps, how does this affect provision of Welsh-medium ALP?
 - How have you worked around these gaps?
 - If support is available, how does it help your delivery of Welsh-medium ALP?

Section 5: Professional development

- 5.1. What kinds of Welsh-medium ALP-specific professional learning opportunities have staff taken part in?
- Are there any challenges in accessing these (e.g. availability, cost, relevance)? If so, what is the impact on learners?

Section 6: Progress to date and looking ahead

- 6.1. How would you describe progress in Welsh-medium ALP since ALN reform?
- What improvements, barriers and facilitators have there been?
- 6.2. If providing Welsh-medium ALP became an absolute duty (i.e. a requirement to provide Welsh-medium ALP, rather than to take reasonable steps to provide Welsh-medium ALP), how feasible do you feel this would be for your school/setting over the medium term.

Section 7: Wider system

- 7.1. What have been your experiences of transitions between settings for learners who require Welsh-medium ALP (primary to secondary, mainstream to EOTAS, secondary to FE) in terms of Welsh-medium ALP?
- How was continuity of support
 - Was appropriate Welsh-medium ALP available at previous / next setting?
- 7.2. Have you experienced any appeals, disputes, or challenges related to Welsh-medium ALP provision?

Section 8: Closing comments

- 8.1. Have you any examples of good practice; what impact did they have? (For example: ways of working, partnerships with others, good communication with families, sharing resources or staff, or anything else you think worked well.)
- 8.2. To finish, can we return to the central focus of this review - the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP. In your view is there sufficient Welsh-medium ALP (i) in your school and (ii) more broadly across different types of settings across Wales (e.g., through your previous experience, cluster links, or ALNCo networks)?

Thank you for your time and input. Do you have any other comments?

Annex 3.4 Topic guide for interviews with learners

Introduction

- Introduce self. Explain/Recap info sheet:
- We want to know what children and young people think about the support they get in school/college to help them learn.
- During this session we'd like to ask you some questions at your school/college about the support you get to learn.
 - This will take about [] minutes [adapt as appropriate].
 - There are no right or wrong answers, we just want your views.
 - If anything isn't clear, just say so
 - Explain that if anyone needs a break to say so at any time
- We'll write notes based on what you tell us, and we'll use these to help us write a report for the Welsh Government.
 - We won't say who said what and won't include any names.
 - We won't tell other people what you told us.
- Please ask us or your teacher/support worker if you have any questions.

Warm-up: Let's start by choosing a card that shows how you feel about school / college today. Pick one that shows how you feel and tell me why, if you want. I'll go first...(Facilitator chooses from the smiley faces cards.)

Start Discussion - Show / read cards with each of the following prompts

1. I get the help I need at school

[Yes/No]

Prompts:

What help do you get / why not.

Can you give an example, e.g. 'can you tell me about a time when you needed help ...'

2. I get to do my learning in Welsh

[Yes/No]

Prompts:

If not, why not.

Is learning in Welsh important to you? Why do you think that?

If you don't learn in Welsh, would you like to?

3. I like being able to learn in Welsh

[Yes/No]

Prompts:

Why/why not.

Does this make a difference to your learning? How?

Do you feel you learn best in Welsh, English, or both? Why?

4. Teachers/support workers speak to me in Welsh when they help me at school

[Yes/No]

Prompts:

[If Yes] Does this help with your learning? How?

Do some teachers support workers use their Welsh more than others to help you?

Can you ask for more Welsh support if you want it?

[If no] Would you like teachers to use Welsh more when helping you?

5. When your learning plan (IDP) was made, did anyone ask if you wanted support in Welsh?

[Yes/No]

Prompts:

When your learning plan (IDP) was made, did you go to a meeting about it? Did you get to say what you wanted?

Were you happy to be asked, is this important to you?

Did anyone explain your choices about getting support in Welsh and English ?”

Do you feel listened to when plans are made about your learning?

6. If you need other help (like speech therapy), is that in Welsh?

Facilitator to expand: Other help could be using a laptop or a special programme, time in a quiet room, extra lessons with another teacher, or [examples based on pre-interview conversation with ALNCO]

[Yes/No]

Prompts:

Does getting that help in Welsh make a difference to you? How?

If that help isn't in Welsh, would you like it to be?

Is there any other help you'd like to have in Welsh?

Closing & thank you

If you could change something about the help you get to learn, what would it be?

If you could change something about the help you get to learn - especially about the language used or what's available in Welsh - what would it be?

Annex 3.5 Topic guide for interviews with parents

Introduction

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to conduct a review into the sufficiency of Welsh-medium Additional Learning Provision (ALP).

One of the aims of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system is to make sure additional support is available in both Welsh and English for children and young people who need extra help to learn.

The law (called the ALN Act) says Welsh Government must check if there is enough ALP in Welsh.

We're asking parents and carers about their experiences of getting support for their children in Welsh. This will help the Welsh Government understand if the bilingual ALN system is working in practice.

We are very grateful to you for taking part in the research. Your participation in the evaluation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time. A privacy notice was provided when you were invited to take part and we would be happy to share this with you again if required. None of the information you provide to the review will be attributed to you, your child, or your child's school/setting, and you will not be named in any publications or reports.

Introduction and background

1. Could you please tell us about your child, their ALN and the ALP they currently receive? [**Note:** in bilingual/dual stream schools briefly check how much education is currently received in Welsh]

2. Do you know who is responsible for your child's IDP (i.e. school, LA)?

Processes to identify whether ALP is required in Welsh

3. Does your child require ALP in Welsh and if so, is this noted in their IDP?
 - What elements of ALP, if any, are to be delivered in Welsh?
 - What elements of ALP, if any, are to be delivered in English?
 - [**Note:** If relevant] Can you explain why some ALP is to be delivered in Welsh and some in English?
4. [**Note:** amend terminology/explain terms if needed after checking with interviewees] How was the Welsh-medium ALP in your child's IDP decided? e.g., were you involved in discussions with the school about this, perhaps in the IDP/PCP meeting?
 - Did you request ALP in Welsh? Or did school offer/include Welsh-medium ALP in the IDP automatically?
 - Did you request to participate in processes relating to your child's ALN through the medium of Welsh? (e.g. Welsh-language IDP, PCP meeting in Welsh). If yes, was this provided?
 - Did you feel that your wishes were taken into consideration?
5. Are you aware if your child is receiving additional support in Welsh that does not qualify as ALP and therefore is not included in their IDP?

- If so, how was this support identified as being needed? Were you asked about this support?

Views on Welsh-medium ALP received

6. **[Note:** refers to Q3] You told us before about the ALP on your child's IDP. Do you know if your child is receiving all of this ALP?
 - Are you aware whether this differs by language i.e. some of the Welsh ALP on the IDP is not being delivered, or is being delivered in English?
7. Are you satisfied with the ALP your child receives in Welsh? **[Note:** Probe in relation to the *amount* of ALP, the *quality* of the ALP, and whether learners are able to receive support in the language in which they are most comfortable]
 - **[If yes]** What have you been particularly satisfied with, could you give us some examples please?
 - **[If no/partly]** You said that you are not satisfied with the ALP they receive in Welsh. Could you explain a bit more about your reasons for this?
 - For example, Welsh-medium ALP not accessible/available, the quality of Welsh-medium ALP is unsatisfactory, there are not enough resources to support ALP in Welsh etc.
 - **[For all]** What impact do you think this has on your child and their learning? How important is this to you as a parent / carer?

Awareness

8. Are you aware you can ask for Welsh-medium ALP?
 - If yes, when were you informed about this, and by who? (e.g. school, LA, other parents)

Disagreements

9. Have you encountered any difficulties in accessing Welsh-medium ALP? If yes, please provide further details.
 - Have you disputed / challenged any decisions relating to the provision of Welsh-medium ALP? If yes, was the issue resolved and how?

Gaps

10. Are you aware of any gaps or delays in Welsh-medium ALP which have affected your child? If so, could you provide some examples?
 - For example, the availability of Welsh-medium ALP resources, a lack of skilled Welsh language teachers or support staff to deliver Welsh-medium ALP?
 - Are you aware of any issues with the timeliness of Welsh-medium ALP being provided, for instance a delay in provision compared to if the ALP had been delivered through English?
11. **[Note:** If yes to gaps] What impact do you feel these gaps have had on your child and their learning?

12. **[Note:** If yes to gaps] Have these gaps discouraged you from asking for ALP to be delivered in Welsh for your child?

13. Has it ever been suggested to you to request ALP in English, rather than Welsh-medium ALP? If yes, could you provide details about this?

Transitions

14. Has your child transitioned between settings? If yes, please give details (e.g. primary-secondary, mainstream-special, Welsh-medium to English-medium)

- Did the transition affect the availability (or continuity) of Welsh-medium ALP? If yes, please give details

Other

15. One of the intentions behind changes to the ALN system is for there to be parity between English-medium and Welsh-medium processes and support for learners with ALN. As a parent, how important do you think this is? Based on your experiences, to what extent do you feel there is parity?

Any other comments

16. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us, is there anything else you would like to add?

Annex 3.6 Topic guide for interviews with delivery partners - DECLOs

Introduction

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to conduct a review into the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP in Wales.

A key aim of this review will be to establish a baseline understanding of the availability and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, and to understand how the provisions outlined in the ALN Act 2018, designed to drive progress towards a bilingual system, are being implemented in practice. Exploring the practical application of these duties, including any facilitators or barriers to delivery, is of direct relevance to the understanding of the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP.

We are very grateful to you for taking part in the research. Your participation in the evaluation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time. A privacy notice was provided when you were invited to take part and we would be happy to share this with you again if required. None of the information you provide to the review will be attributed to you, and you will not be named in any publications or reports.

Background

1. Please confirm which LHBs you cover within your role.

ALP secured by LHBs (ask the following questions separately for each LHB covered by DECLO interviewed)

2. What ALP is delivered by your LHB (or LHBs if covering more than one)? Please provide some examples only and an idea of which departments are delivering ALP
3. Of the ALP that is secured by LHBs, what is delivered through the medium of Welsh?
4. How do you interpret/define Welsh-medium ALP secured by LHBs? Prompt: Is Welsh-medium ALP about the language used by staff delivering it - and if so, does it need to be fully in Welsh, or partly in Welsh? Or does it also include other factors, like the language of assessment, the language of resources used, or something else?)
5. To what extent is there a consistent interpretation of Welsh-medium ALP within LHBs and across the system more widely?

Referrals

6. Do you have any information on numbers of referrals for Welsh-medium ALP under section 20 of the ALN Act?
7. Do you have information on the number of referrals under section 20 of the ALN Act from Welsh-medium/bilingual/dual stream schools?
8. If no data is available, what are your observations of the need for, and provision of, Welsh-medium ALP secured by the LHB(s)?
9. Are there current / draft KPIs around ALP and Welsh-medium ALP? (Facilitator: refer to project around developing KPIs for ALP delivered by NHS bodies)

Implementation of Duties

10. How is the duty to take all reasonable steps to provide ALP in Welsh being implemented by the LHB?
11. Is there any internal guidance or criteria (i) within your LHB (ii) across LHBs used to determine what are 'reasonable steps'?
12. To what extent is there consistent interpretation of the definition of 'reasonable steps' across LHBs?

Delivering ALP

13. Do you have sufficient resources to meet the need for Welsh-medium ALP?
 - Prompt: Are there sufficient resources among the areas/specialisms you mentioned in question 2 (teams involved in delivering ALP). If no, in which areas/fields are there gaps in ALN specialist staff to support the delivery of Welsh-medium ALP? What is the impact on Welsh-medium ALP?
 - Prompt - In addition to staff who deliver ALP directly, do you have sufficient resources among teams who support the process (e.g., liaise with schools, advise on IDPs, or provide other input)?
14. In your LHB(s), do you have access to all the Welsh language ALN diagnostic and assessment tools you need for your Welsh-medium ALP requirements? If not, what is the impact on Welsh-medium ALP provision?
15. Do you collect data about your workforce and their Welsh language skills? (Please explain how, what data, how often it's collected and how it's used) Prompts:
 - a. Data on staff that have the skills to deliver Welsh-medium ALP?
 - b. Data on staff that are delivering Welsh-medium ALP?
16. Are you aware of any specialist ALN practitioners with the Welsh language skills required to deliver ALP through the medium of Welsh, who currently do not do so?
17. Which ALN specialist staff (if any) that can work through the medium of Welsh are particularly challenging to recruit and/or retain?

Challenges

18. Are there any specific challenges faced by your LHBs in securing ALP through the medium of Welsh for learners? (Prompts: e.g. availability of provision/Welsh language skills - lack of Welsh-speaking specialists and/or capacity issues; financial resources; gaps in training; appropriate learning resources - digital or non-digital; facilities; designated spaces; transport services; specialist classes.)
 - a. If yes, please provide some examples / further information.
19. Are you aware of any factors that help LHBs secure ALP through the medium of Welsh? (Prompts: e.g. flexible staffing, training, resources, facilities, designated spaces, transport services, specialist classes)
 - b. If yes, please provide some examples / further information.
20. Are there any additional costs to LHBs which are associated with securing ALP through the medium of Welsh.

21. Are you aware of any unmet need for Welsh-medium health ALP? (Prompts: parent preference not met, lack of Welsh-medium specialist, long(er) waits, only partial delivery of ALP.)

Annex 3.7 Topic guide for interviews with stakeholders

Introduction

The Welsh Government has commissioned Arad to conduct a review into the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP in Wales.

A key aim of this review will be to establish a baseline understanding of the availability and delivery of Welsh-medium ALP, and to understand how the provisions outlined in the ALN Act 2018, designed to drive progress towards a bilingual system, are being implemented in practice. Exploring the practical application of these duties and barriers is of direct relevance to the understanding of the sufficiency of Welsh-medium ALP.

We are very grateful to you for taking part in the research. Your participation in the evaluation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time. A privacy notice was provided when you were invited to take part and we would be happy to share this with you again if required. None of the information you provide to the review will be attributed to you or your organisation, and you will not be named in any publications or reports.

Background

Please provide an overview of your role and responsibilities.

1. Does your organisation engage with the ALN system and Welsh-medium ALP? (Prompts: advising, monitoring, supporting families etc). How?

Interpretation of Welsh-medium ALP

2. What's your understanding of what Welsh-medium ALP involves?
3. To what extent do you think there is consistent interpretation across bodies and practitioners of the definition of Welsh-medium ALP?

Sufficiency

4. What is your understanding of the current level of need for and provision of Welsh-medium ALP?
 - a. To what extent do you think there is sufficient Welsh-medium ALP? (Is your answer based on data, feedback from parents, anecdotal evidence etc?)
5. To what extent do you think there is capacity amongst the workforce in Wales (practitioners in education settings, LAs, LHBs) to provide sufficient Welsh-medium ALP?
6. Are there specific areas / resources / ways of working etc where Welsh-medium ALP is particularly strong?
 - a. Do you have any evidence/good practice examples of intervention to support Welsh-medium ALP?

Barriers/gaps

7. Are you aware of any barriers to accessing Welsh-medium ALP faced by learners and families?
 - a. If so, what are these barriers?
 - b. Do you have any evidence or examples?
8. Are you aware of any gaps in Welsh-medium ALP? (For example: shortage of resources, workforce capacity, specialist expertise)

Implementation of Duties

9. How well do you think the duty to take all reasonable steps to provide ALP in Welsh is being fulfilled by schools, LAs, FEIs and health bodies?
10. What do you think are the main challenges or barriers to fulfilling this duty?
11. In your view, what should be considered “reasonable” when it comes to providing ALP in Welsh?
12. Do you think current strategic plans (e.g. WESPs or other reviews) by LAs are adequately capturing / addressing current Welsh-medium ALP?
13. Thinking about the wider system, are there any issues or challenges in how Welsh-medium ALP is planned and designed for the future?

Engaging with families

(If interviewees have contact with parents /not already covered)

14. Based on your engagement with parents and/or and learners, how well is Welsh-medium ALP being communicated or offered?
 - a. Do you think families are aware of their rights regarding Welsh-medium ALP?
 - b. How are they made aware (Prompts - by professionals supporting parents of pre-school aged children; during IDP meetings?)
15. What feedback have you received from families or learners about their experiences with Welsh-medium ALP?