

Cardiff Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategic Priorities

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Summary of Cardiff ALN Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Context: Cardiff 2020, a renewed vision for education and learning in Cardiff

The **Cardiff Additional Learning Needs Strategic Priorities** are set within the vision, values and goals of '**Cardiff 2020; a renewed vision for education and learning in Cardiff**'.

The vision:

'All children and young people in Cardiff attend a great school and develop the knowledge, skills, and characteristics that lead them to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens.'

The ALN Strategy has been developed to identify the specific priorities and actions that will support implementation of this vision for learners with additional learning needs.

Values:

- Supporting the development of happy and resilient learners, with a focus on both academic achievement and personal well-being.
- Equality of opportunity and championing success and life chances of all children by narrowing the gap in education outcomes.
- Working openly and collaboratively with each other and sharing knowledge, practice and learning.
- Raising the aspirations of all children and young people and our expectations of what they can achieve, irrespective of their background or need.
- Embracing diversity, practising tolerance and respect for ourselves, our communities and our environment.
- Celebrating the success of pupils, practitioners and schools at every opportunity.

The five key goals of Cardiff 2020 apply equally to the ALN Strategy:

Excellent outcomes for all learners

We hold consistently high expectations for all learners. Every learner with an additional need benefits from high quality teaching to ensure they fulfil their potential, and experience positive well-being. The curriculum is flexible, engaging and differentiated to the needs of every learner. Specialist support, equipment and resources are used innovatively to address barriers to learning. Assessment is used to develop learning and to ensure open and clear accountability.

A high quality workforce

We attract the best people to lead and work in our schools and education settings. Staff at all levels, in both mainstream and specialist settings, are well supported to acquire the skills and knowledge to support additional learning needs effectively.

21st century learning environments

There are appropriate, high quality school places for children and young people which meet the needs of Cardiff's growing and changing population. Schools are well-designed to offer inclusive, accessible environments, and are equipped with flexible spaces, digital technologies and specialist resources to meet a wide range of additional learning needs.

A self-improving school system

Schools take shared responsibility with the local authority and Central South Consortium for securing the best outcomes for learners with additional needs and for supporting the development of inclusive practice across the city. Collaboration between special and mainstream schools ensures best practice is shared between and across both sectors, to build the capacity for collective improvement across the system.

Schools and Cardiff in partnership

Schools, early years settings and other education providers have strong links with the communities they serve and with business and enterprise in the city region. The contribution of parents as the child's first educator is recognised, and parents are fully involved in assessing and planning the additional learning provision for their child. Schools and the local authority work to foster positive collaboration with health services, children's and adult services and a range of third sector organisations, to provide effective multi-disciplinary support for learners and their families.

Why do we need refreshed ALN Strategic Priorities?

Background

There are two issues that will shape our approach to improving outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs:

- The Welsh Government's ALN Transformation Programme, which will transform how we work together to secure good outcomes for learners;
- The need to respond effectively to the growing ALN population of Cardiff, by ensuring there is capacity and provision to respond to additional learning needs.

The ALN Transformation Programme

On December 14th 2017, the Welsh Assembly passed the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act (ALNET). The legislation will transform the statutory framework for this area of responsibility, and introduce significant changes to how local authorities must work with learners, families and partners to support children and young people with additional learning needs.

Following Royal Assent, which is anticipated in January 2018, Welsh Ministers will consult on a mandatory Code. The new requirements will apply from September 2020, followed by a three year 'roll-out' period, by the end of which local authorities will be expected to be fully compliant with the Code.

Population growth and additional learning needs

There has been a significant growth in the numbers of young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) since 2012, and this trend is expected to continue over the next 5 to 10 years.

In part, the growth in additional learning needs reflects the general growth in the pupil population of Cardiff, but there are also other factors. There is a national trend for increased incidence and identification of some medical conditions such as autism spectrum conditions, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), mental health needs and of physical and medical needs.

Population growth will have implications for the resources, skills and facilities to support additional learning needs in mainstream schools, and for the number of special school and specialist resource base places that will be needed in Cardiff.

ALN Working Group 2016-17

To respond to these challenges, an ALN Working Group was established in 2016, with representatives from schools, officers, health, children and adult services, parents and Cardiff and the Vale College. The group met throughout the academic year 2016-17, to identify the strategic priorities to improve outcomes for learners with additional learning needs.

The working group identified three strategic priorities to improve outcomes for learners with additional learning needs:

Priority One: Successful implementation the ALN and Educational Tribunal Act

Priority Two: Strengthening our collective capacity to meet all needs

Priority Three: Ensuring sufficient, high quality additional learning provision

Priority One: Successful implementation the ALN and Educational Tribunal Act

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill, was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales in December 2016. It was passed by the Assembly in December 2017. Following Royal Assent, which is anticipated in January 2018, Welsh Ministers will consult on a mandatory Code. Implementation of the new requirements will begin in September 2020, with a three year roll-out period.

The new law will create the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, through a person-centred approach to identifying needs early, putting in place effective support and monitoring and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes.

What will change?

The introduction of the term Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

The Bill replaces the terms 'special educational needs' (SEN) and 'learning difficulties and/or disabilities' (LDD) with the new term ALN. This will help to avoid some of the stigma associated with the existing terms and will mark a clear break from the current systems that are no longer fit for purpose. Using ALN as a single term which encompasses children and young people aged 0-25 reflects the move to a fairer system for supporting learners with ALN across early years, schools and FE settings.

A 0-25 age range

There will be a single legislative system relating to the support given to children and young people aged between 0-25 years who have ALN. This is instead of the two separate systems currently operating to support children and young people of compulsory school age who have SEN; and young people in further education who have LDD. As a result, transition of learners between school and post-16 education will be improved to allow greater support and rights for this group of learners.

A unified plan

The Bill will create a single statutory plan (the individual development plan (IDP)) to replace the existing variety of statutory and non-statutory SEN or LDD plans for learners in schools and further education. This will ensure greater consistency and continuity and, unlike the current system, ensure that provision and rights are protected regardless of the severity or complexity of needs.

Increased participation of children and young people

The Bill requires that learners' views should always be considered as part of the planning process, along with those of their parents. It is imperative that children and young people see the planning process as something which is done with them rather than to them.

High aspirations and improved outcomes

The emphasis of IDPs will be on making provision that delivers tangible outcomes that contribute in a meaningful way to the child or young person's achievement of their full potential.

A simpler and less adversarial system

The process of producing and revising an IDP should be much simpler than is currently the case with statements of SEN and should avoid the adversarial nature of the existing approach.

Increased collaboration

The new system will support a strong focus on collaboration. Encouraging improved collaboration and information sharing between agencies, which are essential to ensuring that needs are identified early and the right support is put in place to enable children and young people to achieve positive outcomes. Three fundamental new roles are created by the Bill to facilitate increased collaboration – Additional Learning Needs Coordinators in education settings; Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officers in health board; and Early Years ALN Lead Officers in local authorities.

Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution

The new system will focus on ensuring that where disagreements occur about an IDP or the provision it contains, the matter is considered and resolved at the most local level possible.

Clear and consistent rights of appeal

Where disagreements about the contents of an IDP cannot be resolved at the local level, the Bill will ensure that children and young people entitled to an IDP or those who believe that they should have an IDP (and their parents in the case of those that are under 16 years) will have a right of appeal to the Education Tribunal for Wales.

A mandatory Code

The provisions included in the Bill will be supported by a new statutory ALN Code. The Code will ensure that the new ALN system has a set of clear, legally enforceable parameters within which local authorities and those other organisations responsible for the delivery of services for children and young people with ALN, must act.

It will, therefore, be a type of subordinate legislation, and confer duties and rights on those subject to it. The Code will also set out practical guidance on how the statutory duties will be carried out, which will be supported by best practice illustrations.

A bilingual system

Services will be required to consider whether the child or young person needs ALP in Welsh. If they do, this must be documented in the IDP and ‘all reasonable steps’ must be taken to secure the provision in Welsh. A series of strategic duties are also aimed at driving progress towards a truly bilingual ALN system and the Bill includes a mechanism so that the duties to provide ALP through the medium of Welsh become absolute over time. The terms ‘special educational needs’ and ‘special educational provision’ will be replaced by the more inclusive terms ‘additional learning needs’ and ‘additional learning provision’.

To successfully implement the ALNET, we will:

- i. Work with partners in Health, Children’s and Adult Services, Cardiff and the Vale College and other education providers to develop effective approaches to unified assessment and planning for ALN learners 0-25.
- ii. Support development of the ALNCo role and the introduction of Person Centred Planning (PCP) approaches in schools.
- iii. Work with parents/ carers, schools, early years settings and post-16 education providers to further improve support for transition at every stage of education: pre-school; primary to secondary; post-16; to adult life.

- iv. Further develop the quality of ALN specialist services, in both Welsh and English, to support schools and early years settings.
- v. Work with families and partners to further improving processes for avoiding and resolving conflict.

Priority Two: Strengthening our collective capacity to meet all needs

How many learners have additional learning needs?

The majority of learners with additional learning needs attend a mainstream school. In October 2017 there were 10,426 school-aged pupils with additional learning needs in Cardiff.

9,640, or 92%, were attending mainstream schools, while just under 800, or 8%, attended either a Cardiff special school or a setting other than a Cardiff school ('out of county'). This is summarised in the table below.

6,042 learners had needs at 'School Action'	Learners whose additional needs can be met with extra support provided by their school. Needs at this level are often short term, but some pupils may go on to have needs at 'School Action Plus'.
2,445 had needs at 'School Action Plus'	These are pupils whose needs can be met by their school, with the help of extra advice, support or training from a specialist service (this might be an NHS service, or educational psychology, or one of the specialist teacher teams). Many pupils make progress and their needs return to 'School Action', but a few will go on to require a statement.
800 had statements of SEN, with mainstream support.	Schools receive additional delegated funding and have access to a range of specialist services to support pupils with mainstream statements.
340 had statements of SEN, and attended specialist resource bases	A specialist resource base (SRB) is a small class in a mainstream school, taught by specialist staff. Although the SRBs are located in community schools, they admit pupils from across the authority, not just from their own local area. Pupils in a specialist resource base benefit from being taught in small classes with favorable pupil-staff ratios, taught by specialist staff. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to learn and play with their mainstream peers. Cardiff funds 24 specialist resource bases, across primary and secondary, in Welsh and English medium settings.
580 pupils attended Cardiff special schools	Special schools provide a highly specialized education for pupils with the most complex additional needs. Class sizes are small and the curriculum is highly differentiated, taught by specialist staff. Cardiff maintains seven special schools.
Approximately 220 pupils attended settings other than a Cardiff maintained school: 'out of county'.	This includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people who are looked after by Cardiff Council, have a statement of SEN and are fostered in other areas. Cardiff is responsible for funding the additional learning provision made by the relevant local authority, whether this is special school, specialist resource base or mainstream support. • Pupils funded to attend maintained special schools in other local authorities; for example in Ysgol y Deri in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Cardiff funds up to 40 places for Cardiff pupils. • 113 pupils were attending independent settings, including private schools and alternative education providers.

What are the challenges?

Over a three year period, from 2014-15, to 2016-17, the cost of mainstream statements (Complex Needs Enhancement) increased from £4.8M to £6.3M per annum; an increase of 63%. By April 2017 there were 724 pupils with CNE funded statements, mostly used to employ Grade 3 LSAs (Learning Support Assistants) to provide 'one-to-one support'.

Although a growing number of pupils do require individual or small group support throughout the day, over use of 'one-to-one support' is not always the most efficient use of resources, or the most effective way to support pupils.

The way in which mainstream statements (or IDPs) are written needs to be reviewed, to empower schools to use delegated ALN budgets more flexibly.

The increased costs are partly due to pressure on existing special school and specialist resource base places, resulting in some children remaining in mainstream while awaiting a more specialist placement. Increasing the number of specialist resource bases in our schools has the potential to reduce costs while ensuring learners continue to receive the high quality, comprehensive support they need.

The ALN Working Group reviewed the wide range of quality support and services that are provided in Cardiff schools and concluded that an up-to-date, parent-friendly directory is needed, to make it easier for parents, schools, health practitioners and social workers to have access to comprehensive information about available support, and to help them navigate the system.

The culture of school-to-school support is developing and embedded in many schools. However, school-to-school working in relation to inclusion is not yet structured or formalized. Systems for identifying and sharing best practice in relation to ALN needs to be established.

The number of children and young people with disabilities and healthcare needs in mainstream schools is also increasing, and it is essential that schools continue to develop as accessible learning environments.

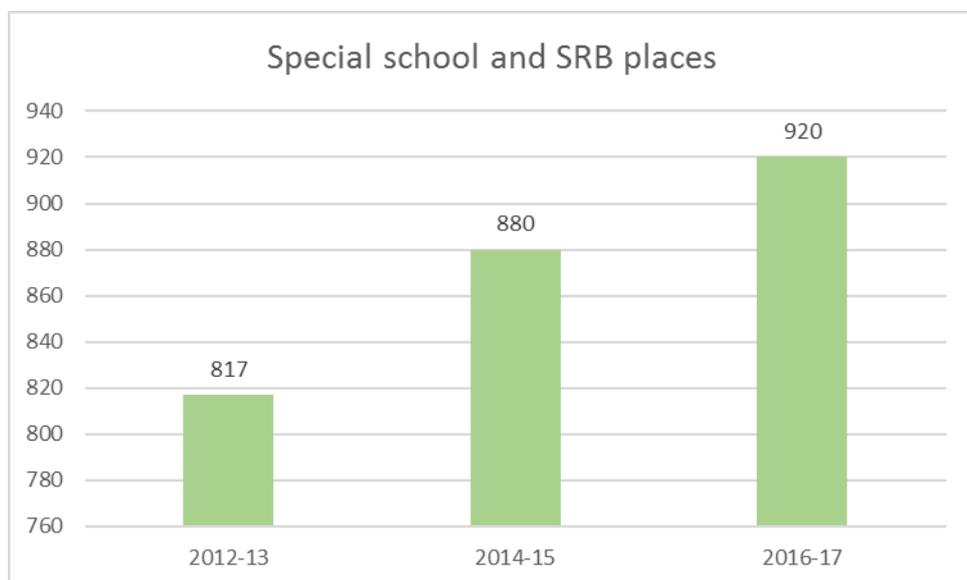
To strengthen our collective capacity to meet all needs, we will:

- vi. Work with Health, Children's and Adult Services, and other partners to further develop the capacity to meet needs, including effective approaches to early intervention.
- vii. Improve the quality and availability of information about additional learning provision.
- viii. Further develop the culture of school-to-school support to enable schools to access best ALN practice.
- ix. Empower schools to achieve best value through the more flexible use of delegated ALN budgets.
- x. Refresh the Cardiff Accessibility Strategy and guidance for schools to ensure children and young people with disabilities and healthcare needs are effectively included in learning.

Priority Three: Ensuring sufficient, high quality additional learning provision

Demand for special school and specialist resource base places

As illustrated in the graph below, the number of funded special school or specialist resource base places in Cardiff schools has increased by 103 places over a five year period. (The graph does not include places funded in other local authorities or the independent sector.)



Despite the growth in places, there is evidence to suggest this has not been sufficient to meet existing need. For example, the 63% rise in the cost of supporting mainstream statements, and increased reliance on places in the independent sector suggests there are pupils in our mainstream schools and in 'out of county' settings who would benefit from access to a Cardiff special school or specialist resource base place.

Over the next 5-10 years, revenue and capital investment will be needed to ensure sufficient and suitable specialist support for the growing population of learners with additional learner needs, and to reduce reliance on the independent sector. Increased demand is anticipated for learners with:

- Emotional health and wellbeing needs
- Complex learning disabilities
- Autism spectrum conditions

21st Century Schools Programme

The report '21st Century Schools- Cardiff Council's Band B priorities' identifies four capital schemes to re-shape Cardiff special school provision.

The schemes are proposed to enable the Council to reshape special school provision in Cardiff, to ensure sufficiency and suitability of provision over the medium to long term.

However, the Band B schemes will not be completed until 2021 at the earliest. The Council will therefore need to take steps outside the Band B Programme, to extend the number of SRB and special school places over the next 3 years.

To ensure sufficient, high quality additional learning provision, we will:

- xi. Develop additional SRB and special school places to meet current and projected need 2018-22 through an ALN Development Plan 2018-22
- xii. Consult with schools and other partners on 21st Century Schools Band B options for re-shaping specialist provision, to ensure suitability and sufficiency for projected needs 2022-27.

Summary of Cardiff ALN Strategic Priorities and Objectives

PRIORITY 1 – To improve outcomes for ALN learners through successful implementation of the ALN Transformation Programme

Objectives:

- i. To work with partners in Health, Children's and Adult Services, Cardiff and the Vale College and other education providers to develop effective approaches to unified assessment and planning for ALN learners 0-25.
- ii. To support development of the ALNCo role and the introduction of Person Centred Planning (PCP) approaches in schools.
- iii. To work with parents/ carers, schools, early years settings and post-16 education providers to further improve support for transition at every stage of education: pre-school; primary to secondary; post-16; to adult life.
- iv. To further develop the quality of ALN specialist services, in both Welsh and English, to support schools and early years settings.
- v. To work with families and partners to further improving processes for avoiding and resolving conflict.

PRIORITY 2 – To improve outcomes for ALN learners by strengthening our collective capacity to meet all needs.

Objectives:

- vi. To work with Health, Children's and Adult Services, and other partners to further develop the capacity to meet needs, including effective approaches to early intervention.
- vii. To improve the quality and availability of information about additional learning provision.
- viii. To further develop the culture of school-to-school support to enable schools to access best ALN practice.
- ix. To empower schools to achieve best value through the more flexible use of delegated ALN budgets.
- x. To refresh the Cardiff Accessibility Strategy and guidance for schools to ensure children and young people with disabilities and healthcare needs are effectively included in learning.

PRIORITY 3 – To improve outcomes for ALN learners through sufficiency and high quality provision

Objectives:

- xi. To develop additional SRB and special school places to meet current and projected need 2018-22 through an ALN Development Plan 2018-22

- xii. To consult with schools and other partners on 21st Century Schools Band B options for re-shaping specialist provision, to ensure suitability and sufficiency for projected needs 2022-27.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg