

# **Cardiff Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy 2018-22**

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## **The ALN Working Group**

This strategy was developed by a working group representative of a wide range of stakeholders and partners:

- Headteachers
- Governors Association
- Achievement and Inclusion Service
- Schools Organisation and Access Planning
- Finance
- Performance Resources and Planning
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Health Board and
- Children's Services
- Adult Services
- Cardiff and the Vale College
- Parents

# Cardiff Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy 2018-2022

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

## The vision:

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*'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.'*

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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.

### 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **Principles of Cardiff ALN Strategy**

An inclusive education system is based on:

1. Effective partnership and collaboration between all stakeholders: schools and other education settings, local authority services, health and the voluntary sector, children and young people and their families.
2. Active participation of children and young people, and their families.
3. Clarity and accountability regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of schools, the local authority and other partners.
4. Early identification, assessment of additional learning needs, and a unified approach to planning and support.
5. Equitable access to additional learning provision across all sectors.
6. Comprehensive information, accessible to all, about services and provision to support additional learning needs.

## The need for a refreshed ALN Strategy

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

The Welsh Government is aiming to transform expectations, experiences and outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Bill (ALNET) will change the way schools, local authorities, health boards and other partners work together to support additional learning needs.

Cardiff Council welcomes the opportunity to change the way we work with children and young people and their families, to make sure learners and their families are at the heart of assessment, planning and support.

Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill
Factsheet 5



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**A unified plan**  
Individual development plans (IDPs) will replace the existing variety of statutory and non-statutory plans for learners of compulsory school age and below and those over compulsory school age in school or further education.  
This will ensure consistency and continuity and that provision and rights are protected regardless of the severity or complexity of needs.

**A 0–25 age range**  
There will be a single legislative system relating to the support given to children and young people aged 0 to 25 years who have additional learning needs (ALN) and are receiving education and/or training.

**A mandatory Code**  
The Code will ensure the new ALN system has a set of clear, legally enforceable parameters within which all services that are responsible for supporting children and young people with ALN must act.

**Clear and consistent rights of appeal**  
All children, their parents and young people up to the age of 25 years will have the right to appeal to the Education Tribunal against decisions made by a LA or FEI in relation to their ALN or their IDP.  
Children and young people must be provided with access to independent advocacy services.

**Increased participation of children and young people**  
Children, their parents and young people will be supported to understand and participate in the decisions which are taken that affect them, provided with appropriate reassurance, and offered opportunities to raise concerns and have their questions answered.

**Avoiding disagreements and earlier disagreement resolution**  
If a child, their parent or young person is not happy with decisions that have been made about their ALN or IDP by a school, they may request that a local authority (LA) reviews or reconsiders it.

**Increased collaboration**  
Where necessary, IDPs will include additional learning provision (ALP) agreed by health, social services and other services as well as education. IDPs will contain an action plan that is clear about which agency is responsible for delivering the individual elements.

**How will the Bill affect children, young people and parents?**

The Cardiff ALN Strategy 2018-22 sets out a framework for action, in partnership with learners, parents, schools, health, social services and voluntary organisations to ensure effective preparation and implementation of the new requirements.

### **The growing ALN population in Cardiff.**

The number of children and young people with additional learning needs in Cardiff is growing. This is largely due to a rising birth rate in Cardiff. The general school population is growing, and if there will naturally be more learners then there will also be more learners with additional learning needs.

But there are at least three other factors affecting the incidence of additional learning needs. The number of children and young people diagnosed with autism spectrum conditions or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD) has been growing for many years. We are also seeing an increase in mental health needs among children and young people.

but is also considered to be the result of improved survival rates for children with complex disabilities, and increased incidence/ identification of autism spectrum conditions. Inward migration is also a significant factor: the benefits of the Children's Hospital for Wales, and a wide range of special schools, can be a factor, both for families moving to Cardiff from other areas of Wales, and families newly arrived in the UK.

The growing ALN population is largely the result of the general population growth in Cardiff, but there are three additional factors.

Perinatal survival rates for children with complex disabilities have been improving over the last 10-20 years, leading to an increase in the number of children and young people who need specialist provision to ensure they are able to access education and fulfil their potential.

The incidence and identification of some conditions, including autism spectrum conditions and mental health difficulties has also increased substantially, and continues to grow. These two factors are international trends, not specific to Cardiff.

In Cardiff, inward migration is also thought to be a significant factor. The incidence of complex needs and disability can be significantly higher in the 'newly arrived' pupil population than in the general school population. The benefits of the Children's Hospital for Wales, and a wide range of special schools in the city, are thought to be key factors attracting families to Cardiff.

### **Implications for capacity to meet needs across the system**

The ALN working group identified a number of activities that are needed to improve the collective capacity of schools and their partners to meet ALN, and to make the most effective use of ALN resources to ensure good outcomes.

#### Collaboration with health and social services

There are good relationships between health, education and children's services in Cardiff, and many examples of effective collaboration to support additional learning needs, including:

- the neurodevelopmental pathway, carrying out multidisciplinary assessments
- the Early Years Forum, identifying pre-school children with complex needs, and planning in partnership to support access to nursery entitlement
- information sharing between audiology and ophthalmology services and specialist teachers for sensory impairments

- ‘The Handwriting Motorway’, providing guidance and resources to support the development of fine and gross motor skills, produced by specialist teachers and occupational therapists
- The Joint Speech and Language Pathway’- an innovative collaboration, to support early screening and support for speech and language needs, and a single point of referral to therapist and specialist teachers
- The Early Help Strategy, including Families First commissioned services
- Provision of training and advice to support children with medical needs
- A range of health service also work with special schools and specialist resource bases, depending on the range of needs

Continuing to build on these relationships and identifying further opportunities to work in collaboration will be key to improving outcomes for children and young people with additional learning needs, with particular emphasis on the need to further develop:

- Collaboration to support pre-school children with complex needs
- Partnerships to support successful transition to further education, employment and training post-16
- Multi agency support for children and young people with emotional health and wellbeing needs
- Early intervention
- Support for families

#### Information about ALN provision and services

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

#### School-to-school support for ALN practice

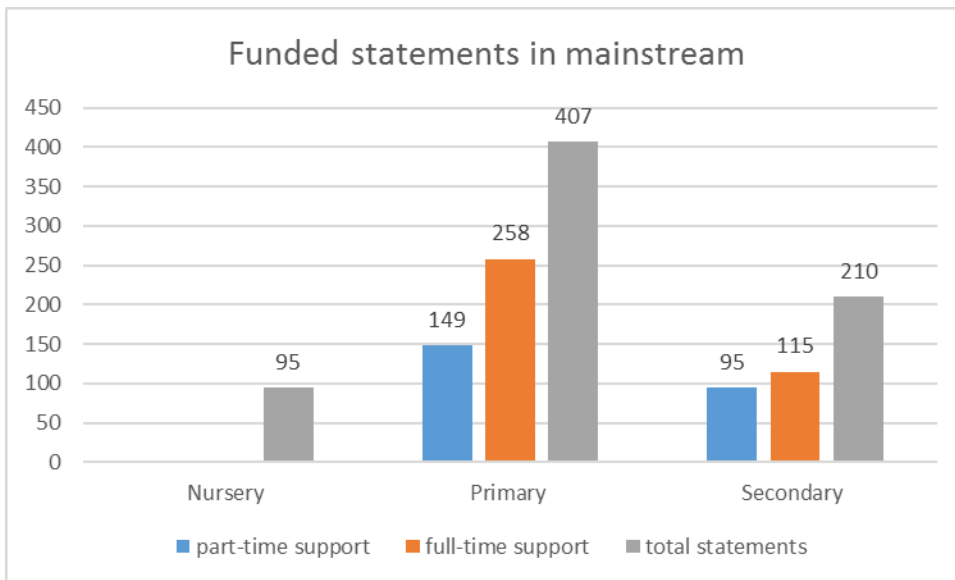
The culture of school-to-school support for leadership and raising standards is developing and embedded in many schools. However, school-to-school working in relation to inclusion is not yet structured or formalized. The group concluded that systems for identifying and sharing best practice needs to be established.

#### Efficient and effective use of resources to meet needs in mainstream schools

Over a three year period, from 2014-15, to 2016-17, the number and cost of mainstream statements (Complex Needs Enhancement) increased from £4.8M to £6.3M; an increase of 63%.

In April 2017 there were 724 pupils with CNE funded statements, mostly used to employ Grade 3 LSAs to provide ‘one-to-one support’. This included:

- 95 nursery funded pupils
- 258 primary pupils and 115 secondary pupils with full time support
- 149 primary pupils and 95 secondary pupils with some additional support



The group were concerned that the increase in mainstream statements is leading to over-reliance on 'one-to-one support'. While many pupils do need support throughout the day in order to access education and to make good progress in their learning, 'one-to-one support' is not always the most efficient use of resources, or the most effective way to support pupils. Headteachers reflected on the difficulties of securing appropriately skilled staff, and of managing high numbers of one-to-one LSAs. Research shows that children with designated 'one-to-ones' often have less contact with their teachers, can become over-reliant on one adult, and may have fewer opportunities to enjoy interact with their peers.

The group concluded that there is a need to reduce reliance on 'one-to-one support' both by increasing the number of SRB places available in Cardiff, by rethinking the way mainstream statements are written, and by increasing the opportunities to meet needs without the need for a statement. The ALNET, with the emphasis on less bureaucracy, and a more person centred approach to assessment and planning, will support these goals.

Priority two of the Cardiff Strategy focusses on actions to further strengthen capacity to meet needs across the system.

### Implications for specialist provision

Since 2012, the number of special school and specialist resource base places for pupils with autism spectrum conditions, or with complex learning disabilities has increased significantly. Demand for specialist places is expected to grow at a similar rate over the next 5-10 years. Increased need is anticipated in all areas of ALN:

- complex learning needs (CLN) (including severe learning difficulties (SLD), speech language and communication difficulties (SLCD), physical and medical needs (PMED), profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).
- autism spectrum conditions (ASC).
- behaviour emotional and social needs (BESN).

In the last 2 years, Cardiff has been obliged to increase reliance on the independent sector in order to comply with statutory duties. In 2017-18, Cardiff will be funding 113 pupils in independent special school places, at a total cost of £2.5M. The cost of these places ranges from £28K to £57k per annum, compared to costs for Cardiff special schools of £14k to £25k per annum, making over-reliance on independent school places a significant financial challenge for Cardiff. There is a need



to reduce placement in the independent sector wherever possible, by ensuring a sufficient range of high quality specialist provision within Cardiff.

The Strategy sets out a two phase approach to developing special school and SRB places, and to improving the quality of facilities and accommodation:

- the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, which will schemes to improve special school facilities and to extend specialist places
- an Interim ALN Development Plan to re-shape and extend specialist provision from 2018-22

## Priorities and objectives- summary

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

#### **Objectives:**

1. 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.
2. To support development of the ALNCo role and the introduction of Person Centred Planning (PCP) approaches in schools.
3. To work with schools, early years settings and post-16 education providers to further develop support for transition: pre-school; primary to secondary; post-16; to adult life.
4. To further develop the quality of ALN specialist services and outreach services to support schools and early years settings.
5. To further improve processes for avoiding and resolving conflict.

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

#### **Objectives:**

6. To improve clarity and visibility of ALN services and provision for all stakeholders.
7. To further develop the culture of school-to-school support to enable schools to access best ALN practice.
8. To empower schools to achieve best value through the more flexible use of delegated ALN budgets.

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

#### **Objectives:**

9. To develop additional SRB and special school places to meet current and projected need 2018-22.
10. Consult with schools and other partners on Band B options for developing specialist provision, to ensure suitability and sufficiency for projected needs 2022-27.
11. To refresh the Cardiff Accessibility Strategy to ensure children and young people with disabilities and health needs are effectively included in learning.
12. Reshape specialist provision and services for speech language and communication needs (SLCN) to ensure effective early support for specific language impairment and SLCN linked to other needs.