

Wales passes Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill

The Welsh Government's aim to transform the additional learning needs system so it provides better support to those children and young people who need it most has achieved a key milestone tonight [12/12/17] after the National Assembly for Wales passed the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill.

Welcoming the news, Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams, said:

"Today is an historic day for education in Wales. Nearly a quarter of learners in Wales will experience some form of additional learning need (ALN) during their early years or education and this Bill places them at the very heart of our system. It focusses on identifying their needs as early as possible and working with them and their families to plan the right support.

"Once the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill receives Royal Assent, expected in January 2018, it will pave the way for a radical new approach; driving improvements in standards to ensure all learners are supported to meet their full potential."

The Bill will be backed up by an ambitious wider programme of reforms, which the Education Secretary provided more details on yesterday [11/12/17] by outlining her proposals for how the new additional learning needs system would be implemented in Wales.

The new Bill, which affects nearly every education setting in Wales and focusses on the needs of children and young people aged 0 to 25, means:

- The replacement of the terms 'special educational needs' and 'learning difficulties / disabilities' with the new term, 'additional learning needs';
- The creation of a single statutory plan, the Individual Development Plan (IDP) for learners;
- Increased participation of children and young people, ensuring they are at the centre of the planning and decision making process;
- Prioritising high aspirations and improving outcomes, focusing on the child or young person's achievement of their full potential;
- Providing a simpler and less adversarial process, ensuring learners' needs are at the centre and are continually met;
- Creating new statutory roles within health and education to ensure collaboration and integration so that learners' needs are met;
- Focussing on earlier disagreement resolution, with disagreements resolved at the most local level possible;

- The introduction of clear and consistent rights of appeal where disagreements can not be resolved at a local level;
- The introduction of a strengthened Code, which will sit alongside the Bill, with mandatory requirements and statutory guidance to support the primary legislation.
- The Bill also supports the Welsh Government's wider vision of achieving one million Welsh speakers by 2050 by including a series of strategic duties aimed at driving progress towards a truly bilingual additional learning needs system.

Further information about the proposed implementation plan for the [new additional learning needs system in Wales can be found here](#).