



Primary School Funding and Children with ALN in Mainstream Schools:



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Background information for Schools to use with Parents and Carers

April 2016



## **Introduction**

All parents want their children to do well at school. Some children may need more support than others to achieve their potential. This may be because they have a disability, medical condition or other additional needs. These can mean your child has difficulties in learning or using school facilities. This guidance provides information about the different levels of support for children with special educational needs (SEN) sometimes referred to as additional learning needs (ALN), and information on how funding for SEN is distributed and managed.

## **School Action**

This is when your child receives support or interventions that are additional to, or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated Curriculum and strategies. In early years education this stage is called Early Years Action.

## **School Action Plus**

This is like School Action but has an additional element where there is a request for help from outside services or specialist help to meet your child's needs. This should be done after a meeting with you, the **SENCO** and other colleagues involved with your child. In early years education this is called Early Years Action Plus.

## **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**

Strategies used to enable your child to progress at School Action or School Action Plus should be recorded in an Individual Educational Plan (**IEP**). An **IEP** should contain:

- ✓ **Short term targets for your child**
- ✓ **Teaching strategies to be used**
- ✓ **Provision to be put in place**
- ✓ **When the plan is to be reviewed**
- ✓ **Success and/or exit criteria**
- ✓ **Outcomes.**

The IEP should be reviewed at least twice a year (or at least three times a year for (Early Years). You should be consulted as part of the review process.

If you feel that your child's needs are not being met by School Action or School Action Plus, you can request a statutory assessment.

**PLEASE NOTE** that additional information relating to the statutory code is available at the end of this document.

## **Statutory Assessments**

A statutory assessment is a multi-professional look at your child's special educational needs. You or the school can formally request a statutory assessment from the LA. Other agencies, such as Health and Social Services, can also make a request.

If you make a request, in your letter you should include the reasons why you want an assessment and any supporting information.

If you request a statutory assessment, the **LA** will consult your child's school for information about the support already in place for your child, your child's progress and the school's views of your child's special educational needs. For local authority information follow the [link](#).

### **School Responsibilities for Special Educational Provision**

Schools must do their best for children with **SEN** and they must 'have regard to' the **SEN** Code of Practice. In addition, **ESTYN** will check on how well children with **SEN** are learning and how much progress they are making.

Schools are responsible for identifying and making special educational provision for all children with **SEN** who do not have a statement. They discuss this with parents. Following a review, provision may need changing and there might be a number of reasons for this. It might be that: -

- i. The child's needs have changed;
- ii. The school has new information about the child's needs;
- iii. The child's needs have been met;
- iv. The child has reached the targets for their learning;
- v. The child is not reaching their targets;
- vi. There is new evidence about the child's progress;
- vii. The school has a better idea about how to meet the child's needs;
- viii. Discussion with the parents shows that a different approach might work better.

### **Local Authority Responsibilities and Statements**

For a child with a statement, changes to special educational provision can only be made by amendment to the child's statement. Parents have a right of appeal if they do not agree with the changes that the local authority wants to make.

Changes are usually made following an annual review meeting and a recommendation to the local authority. If the local authority wants to change the statement without an annual review, parents can request a meeting with the local authority to discuss the changes the local authority wants to make.

A statutory assessment can be requested by the parent or by the school. Funding for the provision specified in a statement comes from the delegated budget, along with funding from the school's notional **SEN** budget.

There are proposed changes to the way children and young people's special educational needs (SEN) will be identified, assessed and met in Wales.

The Welsh Government draft Additional Learning Needs Bill was published on **6 July 2015**. The draft Code of Practice, which is currently for information only is also on the WG site. The Bill will be formally introduced into the Assembly Welsh Legislative Programme in the next Assembly following the elections in May 2016.

For the time being, all the responsibilities and requirements connected with the existing legislative framework and **SEN** [Code of Practice](#) for special educational needs remain in place.

## **Funding for Additional Learning Needs**

The Local Authority (**LA**), has sought to implement an inclusive approach towards the education of pupils with special educational needs (**SEN**). Wherever possible, pupils are taught in their local mainstream schools with the LA supporting schools in helping to meet the needs of **SEN** pupils. Schools are responsible for drawing up and implementing individual education plans (**IEPS**) for their pupils with **SEN**. A range of services and provisions are made available to support these pupils and to complement the school based work provided by the school from their delegated monies.

Primary Schools have traditionally paid into a pooled scheme to fund ALN needs in their school. The principle of this scheme was that they paid into a pot which could be drawn on when needing additional support for a pupil. A moderation panel made up of School, LA and other Professional representatives was established to provide advice and make decisions in relation to how this money would be allocated in response to requests from schools. The reasons for reviewing this system and the rationale for the decision to close this scheme are well documented.

In November 2015 Denbighshire Schools Budget Forum following a detailed consultation with all Primary Schools decided to end this pooled scheme as of the 31st March 2016. They also decided to replace this arrangement with a new arrangement and revised formula for funding the needs of pupils with ALN.

Following a Pilot Project in Denbighshire Secondary Schools which was completed in 2014 it became apparent that the way in which funding was allocated to schools including the Primary Sector needed to be reviewed to ensure that funding for children with special educational needs was more fairly distributed.

This coincided with a consistent overspend over a number of years on the pooled scheme that all Primary schools participated with and which resulted in these schools needing to pay back money to the scheme at the end of each financial year.

Denbighshire County Council delegate the second highest funding to their schools in Wales.

There have been no cuts in the allocated ALN budget to Primary Schools. Schools have elected to manage this funding for themselves going forward. The Primary SEN Budget has notionally and consistently been overspent each year and this has risen again in 2015/2016. The School Budget forum discussed this in detail and decided that they would prefer to call upon all resources available to the school to meet the need of the pupil. Therefore monies schools will receive is based on a formula which has been agreed with schools and provides a notional SEN budget for pupils with High and Exceptional needs for schools to spend as they deem most appropriate as well as using all other resources available to the school.

## **Funding through the Age Weighted Pupil Unit**

Mainstream schools in Denbighshire receive the majority of their funding through the pupil driven funding element: the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (**AWPU**). This means that every pupil of the same age in a mainstream school receives an equivalent level of resource to fund a broad range of educational activities which all schools are reasonably expected to provide. This includes the school's response to the additional learning needs which children may have for some time in their school career. These activities will need to be undertaken to some degree in all schools though the size and scope of this provision may be varied. All children, including those with additional learning needs are full members of the school community. This means that schools have to be prepared to meet the needs of all their pupils when they plan the broad activities of school life.

## **Provision for SEN in AWPU**

The **AWPU** funding allocates an equal amount to all schools for each pupil of the same age and is the method by which schools receive the majority of their funding. The Local Authority generally expects that 5% of each **AWPU** is notionally intended to support **SEN**.

This funding is expected to cover the following activities:

- i. The curriculum activities for all pupils, including both organisation and delivery;
- ii. Specific arrangements to match teaching styles, content and assessment to pupil needs;
- iii. Planning that takes account of the needs of all pupils;
- iv. Modification /differentiation of some materials for an individual pupil;
- v. Preparing all students to live in a diverse society;
- vi. Support to modify pupil behaviour;
- vii. Access to school based resources;
- viii. Monitoring and review of progress;
- ix. Arrangements for communication between staff;
- x. Enhanced home/school contact;
- xi. Developing and implementing a clear whole school policy for ALN that: -
  - ✓ **Describes how needs are identified and met;**
  - ✓ **Makes it explicit how children's needs are recorded and communicated to all other staff as well as parents and students if appropriate;**
  - ✓ **Outlines arrangements for establishing and maintaining links with other agencies;**
  - ✓ **Explains how staff training needs in relation to ALN will be identified and met;**
  - ✓ **Makes it clear how complaints and disagreements are managed;**
  - ✓ **Ensures that reports are made by governors to parents annually on how ALN policies have been implemented;**
  - ✓ **Describes arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision for SEN.**

## **How the Additional ALN Budget Allocation is to be Used:**

The majority of the money has previously been spent on Teaching Assistant Salaries and these have been mainly short term positions. Sutton Trust research has concluded that in many instances the impact of TAs supporting pupils on a 1:1 basis is limited and this is further compounded as short term staff may not be able or suitably trained.

The current funding arrangements are based on the current SEN Code of Practice (Wales) and the imminent SEN reforms will bring a revised Code of Practice where the Stages of Code of Practice (SA, SA+, Statement) will be phased out.

The Principle of a graduated approach to support children with SEN using a range of interventions, strategies, and making full use of available classroom and school resources will continue to be the underlying principle applied to decisions relating to Pupils with SEN.



Funding drivers to be based on new definitions of low, high and exceptional needs that reflect the level and type of provision required to meet pupils' needs, rather than on SEN Code of Practice Stages. For more detailed information regarding these definitions please go to the website link.

Funding for all needs to be fully delegated to enable schools to choose the support model that best meets their pupils' needs.

The Local Authority will continue to work with Schools to develop a range of outside resources and access to more specialist expertise. This will include additional bilingual Behavioural Support Services and Provisions in the North and South of the County. Advice and support will still be available from the Local Authority Specialists.

A Key feature of this new formula is that funding must be based on accurate and consistent data about pupils' needs, provision and costs. This information is moderated on an annual basis to ensure that funding decisions are consistent and transparent.

## **Further Information and Advice**

For more Information on how your school support pupils with Special Education needs please request a copy of the relevant policies from them which are usually available on the school website. Alternatively you may speak directly with the Headteacher or Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator. For Local Authority information follow this [link](#).

**Useful Organisations:** - The following organisations can provide further advice for parents with children with special educational needs. As well as these, most of the large charities and national support groups that deal with specific disabilities have their own education advisers or produce guides about various aspects of education. Your local parent partnership service may also be able to advise and support you. For further details about these organisations and how to contact them, ring our free phone **helpline on 0808 808 3555**.

<p><b><u>Welsh Government</u></b></p> <p>Additional Learning Needs, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.</p> <p>Tel: (Welsh) 0845 010 4400 Tel: (English) 0845 010 3300 <a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk">www.wales.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Publishes statutory guidance on education.</p>	<p><b><u>SNAP Cymru</u></b></p> <p>3 Stryd Y Plas, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1RR.</p> <p>Tel: 01286 675547, <a href="mailto:gogled@snapcymru.org">gogled@snapcymru.org</a>.</p>
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**Useful Documents:** - There are a number of key documents produced by the Welsh Government that you may find useful. The majority of the documents listed here are aimed at LAs and education settings, but are still useful for parents as they outline the responsibilities of LAs and education settings.

The following documents are available, free of charge from the Welsh Government Publications Centre on 029 2082 3683 or email: [wag-en@mailuk.custhelp.com](mailto:wag-en@mailuk.custhelp.com) alternatively you can access them and find out more about them by clicking on the Subject headings below.

**Early Support Wales** - This program can help families to access support and services. It is designed to work through resources and training providers, and put parents at the heart of the process for accessing services.

**Access to Education and Support for Pupils with Medical Needs** - The Welsh Government has developed this guidance document primarily to provide advice to schools and LAs on meeting the educational needs of pupils with medical needs. It emphasises the need for continuity in education and the impact medical conditions can have on a pupil's education, health and well-being.

**Inclusion and Pupil Support** - This document contains guidance for schools, local authorities and their Partners relating to inclusion and pupil support. It aims to provide a framework for inclusion, including key documents to assist in developing LA's and school's approaches to planning, supporting and meeting the needs of all learners.

**Special Educational Needs: Information for parents and carers of children and young people who may have Special Educational Needs** - This guide provides information on the stages of assessment and the statementing process, as well as information about further sources of information.

**Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales** - The code of practice gives practical guidance to local authorities, maintained schools, early years' settings and others on carrying out their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children's special educational needs.

**Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units Circular 1/2012** - This guidance covers the exclusion of pupils from schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), the procedures for appealing against an exclusion, and steps to take to maintain the education of excluded pupils.