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Written Statement: Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 system

CABINET STATEMENT

Written Statement: Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 system

Kirsty Williams MS, Minister for Education

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This statement provides Members with an update on work to deliver ALN reforms and specifically the ALN code and operational regulations. In September last year, I announced that the statutory roles set out in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 were to commence in January 2021 and that the new ALN system will commence, on a phased basis, from September 2021. The statutory roles are:

- Additional Learning Needs Coordinators;
- Designated Education Clinical Lead Officers; and
- Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officers.

The impact of Covid-19 has made it necessary for all of us to reprioritise our business to reflect the unprecedented nature of the crisis. However, I can confirm that the ALN code and associated regulations remain a key priority and they will be laid before the Senedd in February 2021 to enable the commencement and phased roll out of the Act to start in September 2021.

Additionally, I can confirm that the statutory roles will commence in January 2021 as planned. To accompany that commencement, I intend to lay regulations on the ALN Co-ordinator role and to publish guidance on all three statutory roles under the ALN system. It will include text from the aspects of the revised Code related to these roles and will clarify their responsibilities. The guidance and regulations will be informed by the responses to the consultation on the draft ALN Code and the ALNCo role regulations. Furthermore to support the implementation of the Act from September 2021, information will also be provided around the implementation and transitional arrangements.

There has been significant progress in preparing for the launch of rolling out the new ALN system in September 2021. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, work has continued in the following areas:

- our regional ALN Transformation Leads have continued to operate, working with schools, LAs and health boards remotely to conduct the groundwork needed to ensure that Wales will be ready for the launch of the new system next year;
- we are collaborating with our universities to design and author a new professional learning offer to support the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator role;
- we are developing online training packages on the new ALN system, the first of which will be available on Hwb later this summer;
- we continue to work with Cardiff University to train new educational psychologists for Wales, and
- we continue to work closely with partner organisations in early years and the third sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also created some challenging scenarios for all our learners and especially those with ALN; their families; and those who work to support them. We continue to prioritise support for these learners.

The “check in, catch up and prepare” period provided us with an excellent opportunity to identify and remove any barriers to learning faced by children who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, including those with ALN. As a result of recent engagement with children, families, their representatives and education specialists; I have published supplementary guidance for the autumn term. This is specifically dedicated to the practical, emotional and learning needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including those with ALN.

Finally, today I am launching a [consultation on proposals to allow representatives to act on behalf of young people, and parents of children, who lack mental capacity, when exercising their rights under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#). To ensure the consultation reaches the people the proposals will most affect, we will be working with Children in Wales to ensure young people who lack capacity are targeted and supported to engage with the consultation. This forms a crucial part of the work on the ALN code and regulations.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep Members informed. Should Members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.

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