# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Taking action to review and improve implementation of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform** |
| **DATE**  | **07 October 2024** |
| **BY** | **Lynne Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education** |

This term marks the start of the final year of the phased implementation of the Additional Learning Needs system. Over the last three years delivery partners have worked incredibly hard to set up systems of support for learners with ALN and create individual development plans. This will be the last year of the Special Education Needs system that we are working hard to replace, following many years of development and co-production.

I have heard about the challenges that remain and I am clear that we need to have a system that works for every learner. Now is the time to combine reflection with decisive action to embed necessary improvements.

We have already strengthened monitoring and support for implementation to understand delivery challenges, improve consistency of implementation and co-produce solutions with delivery partners and parents. This includes termly meetings with local authorities, as well as developing new national data sets and data collection mechanisms in education, local authorities, and health. Estyn’s second thematic review of the implementation of ALN reform will report during the winter and a comprehensive evaluation programme is already underway.

I want the legislative framework for ALN to be clear and consistently understood. Therefore, in response to evidence and concerns that some parts are complex and unclear we are now examining the legislative framework in detail and in discussion with delivery partners. The review is considering the clarity and accessibility of the legislative framework and gathering evidence of the practical challenges in implementing the ALN system. This will identify next steps to provide greater clarity to enable increased consistency of delivery. Meanwhile, work is underway with local authorities, schools, and settings to improve understanding and ensure roles, responsibilities and processes contained in the legislation are consistently applied.

We are also improving health and education multiagency working. Challenges to accessing health services for all learners are long-standing but we now have the structures in place to make real change. An ALN multiagency collaborative group is working together to improve collaboration between health, social care and education services to provide clarity over what constitutes NHS additional learning provision and develop key performance indicators to monitor statutory timelines and highlight areas of effective practice.

I am committed to investing in ALN reform. In addition to more than £107 million revenue investment to support ALN implementation since 2020, more than £170 million capital investment over the past five years has improved ALN facilities. Over the next nine years, we will invest over £750 million to improve existing facilities and create new specialist provision, through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

The statutory role of an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) is a fundamental lynchpin to the success of ALN Reform in education settings across Wales. I welcomed the [recommendations of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body](https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-report-and-recommendations-independent-welsh-pay-review-body-iwprb-3). We will be taking forward work to implement the recommendations related to ALNCO pay, including providing an extra £5million to invest in our ALNCo workforce.

I have witnessed incredible progress and commitment from the education workforce, with examples of schools putting the needs of every child first. We are sharing effective practice through case studies, national forums and will be holding a national ALN effective practice event in February. This will foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among key delivery partners, and highlight successful strategies being implemented by schools, settings and local authorities across Wales.

Crucially, we are also working with parent groups and the third sector to improve and provide clear and consistent communication, and review what information and signposting is available to parents, children and young people.

I am determined that meeting the needs of learners remains at the heart of our education reforms. I will keep the Senedd updated on progress.