



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Implementing the new additional learning needs system in Wales**

DATE **11 December 2017**

BY **Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education**

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill is at the heart of our programme to transform the education and support for children and young people with additional learning needs in Wales.

To make sure stakeholders are fully involved in developing and delivering our reforms, we have consulted widely about how we should implement the new additional learning needs system.

The consultation revealed strong support for mandating a phased approach towards implementing the new system. Most stakeholders agreed that specific timelines to transfer different cohorts of learners onto the new system was the most manageable and consistent approach. The feedback to the consultation was clear that allowing local authorities and further education settings to determine their own approach would create inconsistencies across Wales with significant complexities with regards to the Education Tribunal.

The response about how a phased approach should be grouped was mixed – two options emerged as the favourites for which group should be first to transfer onto new plans. After considering these options carefully with our partners and advisers, we have agreed an approach which combines both – focusing on learners at key points of progression and prioritising the transfer of learners with statements. Those with statements will transfer within the first two years, with a further year – so a three-year period in total – for learners with existing non-statutory plans.

This approach recognises the importance of effective transition planning for learners with additional learning needs. It will also mean workloads are more equally spread between local authorities, schools, further education institutions and early years settings. Full details about this approach will be set out in a transition guide to be published next year.

Expert groups have been set up and will develop the details of how the new system will operate in practice. We will hold a public consultation into the ALN Code, which sits alongside the Bill, and some of the draft regulations in autumn 2018. I hope the code and all

subordinate legislation will be in place by the end of 2019. Implementation training will be rolled out in early 2020 and the new system will be expected to go live from September 2020.

My intention is to allow an implementation period of three years, during which time I expect all existing plans to be converted to individual development plans. Children and young people newly identified as having an additional learning need and requiring an individual development plan during the implementation period will be supported directly via the new arrangements.

We will be investing £20m to support the implementation of the new additional learning needs system. Following analysis of the consultation responses, we have restructured our funding commitments to better align them with the needs of the sector. We will focus more resources on implementation training, planning and strategic support, through increased grant funding to the ALN transformation leads. These key posts will support services to put in place detailed implementation planning arrangements at a regional level and across the further education sector and roll-out training to all those who will support learners with additional learning needs to deliver the new system.

My officials will continue to work with partners and the new transformation leads to develop the implementation approach and I will keep Members informed as we move towards the introduction of the new additional learning needs system.

The consultation report can be found at

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/options-implementing-additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-bill>.