

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) inquiry into [Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 40

Ymateb gan: 21 Plus

Response from: 21 Plus

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

4) Implementation of ALN system and transfer of pupils from SEN to ALN

- Has been very slow progress with little consistency – some LAs writing plans others not. Many ALNCoS still not familiar with what is expected of them, making the processes even slower.
- Parents are rarely given information about the process of gaining IDP or reviewing the IDP prior to meetings.
- Educational Psychologists are no longer expected to contribute, no expert guidance or independent advice.
- Huge gap for post 16 learners who fall between SEN and ALN with very little support for families to understand the process. Needs are described in relation to what can be provided locally rather than what best suits the need of the individual.
- Welsh Government is currently responsible for securing specialist post 16 provision for young people whose needs cannot be met locally. As this process transfers to LA's there is a great deal of concern about how this will be managed.
- There are disparities and confusion relating to responsibility and accountability; this is the case through the process of getting the IDP in place and especially if there are any concerns about how need is being met or needs that have changed.

5) Is there any 'raising the bar' on the the ground for determining eligibility for provision.

- All of the children we support have a known, easily identifiable disability. There is no decision to be made regarding diagnosis but, despite, large body of research relating to the leaning profile of learners with Down Syndrome and guidance on meeting the needs of learners with DS, there is still great inconsistencies in the

Need described and Provision allocated. This relates more to the skill set of the parent than the the need of the child.

- Most children are now starting school without the adult support they need to be successful. The needs of the majority of children with Down syndrome are best met in mainstream provision with fulltime adult support, but this is becoming increasingly difficult to secure. Children are being set up to fail.
- There certainly does not seem to be any raise in expectation of outcomes for learners with Down Syndrome. This is particularly the case with post 16 learners, there is no aspiration or expectation for learners to be gaining the skills needed to live and work.
- The voice of learner's is not given due consideration when looking at post 16 options and the school, who know the learner well, are not included in ongoing discussion and planning.
- All children with Down Syndrome benefit from Speech and language therapy and the majority benefit from physiotherapy and occupational therapy. However, with these services becoming more and more restricted and offered based on capacity rather than individual need, they are being missed from IDPs. Teachers do not have the skills to identify these needs and cannot write them into IDPs without input from the service. Just because the child isn't getting it, doesn't mean they don't need it.
- Some LAs have good systems in place to identify children prior to starting school, holding regular PCP meetings and ensuring a school entry plan is in place. Others are starting school with no planning other than what the parent has put in place.
- Most children are now starting school without an IDP in place and therefore little or no provision to meet their needs and no-one accountable for when things go wrong.

6) Professional learning and support in settings.

- This seems patchy. Many ALNCos admit to not understand the role well and do not understand the details of the Act well.
- Local authorities seem to have taken a step back and many ALNCos appear to be trying to navigate the system with little or no support. There are regular changes in staff and training does not keep pace with this.
- Many of the parents we support have been told "1-1 support doesn't exist in the new Act, if the child needs 1-1 they should go to the special school.". Also, "There is no funding beyond the school's ALN budget." – there is limited awareness of contingency funding and LAs seem reluctant to share this information; but also, reluctant to part with any extra money. We have been told by one authority that that there is no money in the contingency funding.

7) Other factors affecting implementation – ie. Funding

- There is a conflict of interest when asking schools to describe the provision that children need as they will not include provision that they are unfamiliar with or feel they do not have capacity or funding to provide.
- Schools with a high number of learners with ALN struggle to meet the needs of children within the class; there is often a 'shared-support' approach taken with a group of teaching assistants trying to meet the varied needs of a larger group of children with ALN.
- ALNCos are being told by LA's not to include anything specific in a transition IDP as the new school would then be expected to buy that resource/equipment.
- There is no consideration to value for money within Post 16 provision.
- The learner destination and long-term need for support are not considered, ie. It would be cheaper to give young people an equitable opportunity to improve their employment and independent living skills at an earlier age so that they are not dependent on being 'looked after' for the rest of their adult life.