



INFORMATION REPORT EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20TH JUNE 2023

**SUBJECT: PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH
ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) INCLUDING THOSE
WITH DISABILITIES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide members with an overview of the provision of services in place to support children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) including those with disabilities, their carers/ parents and staff in pre-school and education settings and alternative with specific reference provision for children and young people in:

- Early Years
- Schools and education settings
- Links with post-16 providers.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Local Authority (LA) provides a wide range of support to Early Years, schools and alternative settings, to staff, parents and carers. This support is designed to provide guidance and support to enable staff and families to understand the statutory processes that steer the Council and partner agencies' work and enable them to access the support they need.

2.2 The Inclusion and ALN Team provides a wide and graduated range of training opportunities and a comprehensive professional learning offer to support professionals' understanding, practice and developing problem solving skills on the range of needs that children present with in settings.

2.3 The LA provides a wide range of individual focused assessment and direct work that supports learner outcomes, staff and families understanding of need and enables children and young people to get the support they need when they need it.

2.4 The LA Welsh In Education Strategic Plan (WESP) outlines the approach to increasing Welsh medium provision for learners with ALN (Outcome 6).

3. RECOMMENATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and
- a) consider the information contained in the report and to offer views and comments;
 - b) endorse the approach taken by the LA to providing high quality advice, training and assessment to staff working with pupils with Additional Learning Needs including those with disabilities.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are asked to endorse the approach the LA has adopted in its provision of universal, targeted and specific support to empower schools working with pupils with Additional Learning Needs including those with disabilities.

5. THE REPORT

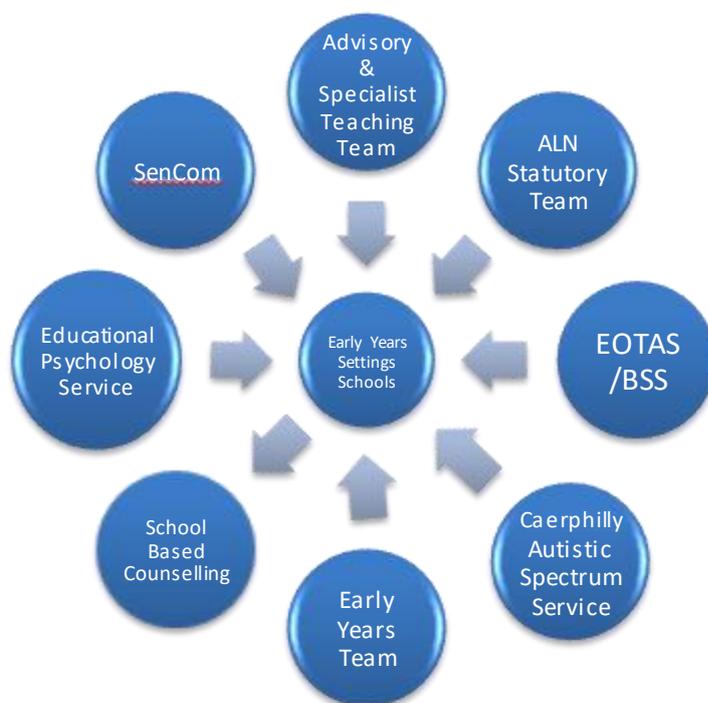
- 5.1 The Local Authority (LA) has a range of responsibilities outlined in legislation to ensure the effective education of all children, including those with ALN (see section 11). Ensuring compliance with the ALN Act and its associated Code, has been a priority for the Local Authority (LA) and schools.
- 5.2 The LA provides a comprehensive and aligned range of services to support children with ALN including those with disabilities, their families and staff who work with them in early years and schools. These services adhere to the principles and the aspirations of the Education Strategy for 2022-25 which is ambitious in its approach to transform the lives of all our children, young people and adults.
- 5.3 This report outlines how service areas are contributing directly to work with children and the adults around them, as well as supporting the development of improved knowledge base and professional skill sets across our settings to enable effective and adaptive responses to children and young people's needs. In doing so, services are ensuring that children's wellbeing is central to everything we do.
- 5.4 Inclusion and ALN teams' core aims are:
- identify needs early in the child's life and ensure appropriate intervention is in place;
 - intervene as early as possible when problems emerge (whenever a child or young person experiences a difficulty);
 - work in in collaboration with settings and through multi-agency working with other agencies, sharing information to support effective planning;
 - help develop the skills and understanding of the workforce to enable and empower colleagues to better meet the needs of learners, without the need for outside agency involvement when possible;
 - ensure effective communication with the children, young people and families that puts their voices at the heart of our planning and work together.
- 5.5 Inclusion and ALN has a number of constituent teams, each of which has a unique but complimentary role. Although teams are constituted with their own lead officers

and have their own specialisms, each teams works closely together in sharing information, planning support on an individual child, class and whole school level.

5.6 In addition to school-based functions, lead officers from each team also contribute to the LEI in meeting statutory functions. Examples of this include:

- being part of the ALN Statutory Panel – where requests for additional resource or specialist placements are considered;
- moderation of school based ALN activities supporting best practice and consistency across schools;
- contributing to Council policy developments around ALN and Well-being;
- Supporting the Local Authorities work around school improvement by participating in Wider Group meetings;
- Participating in national working groups through the Association of Education Directions in Wales (ADEW) and Welsh Government Working groups as required.

5.7 ALN Services provided to schools and settings



SenCom, the Sensory and Communication Support Service, is a regionally commissioned service based in Torfaen that delivers services across the five LAs in the region. The Caerphilly Autistic Spectrum Service (CASS) is funded by education and social services.

5.8 Each of these services provide early years settings and schools and provisions with:

- professional learning / training opportunities to ensure staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities, effective practice relevant to their setting and a variety of approaches to support the development of children's communication, interaction and learning. Settings have access to an extensive range of training that can be accessed without charge in most cases;
- guidance documents and learning resources created for Caerphilly settings aimed at supporting staff's ability to intervene quickly and effectively to support children's development, learning and placement stability;
- direct work with individual children that may involve observations, solution focused consultation with staff and carers/ parents, and where appropriate, direct assessment work with children;
- typically, teams will work collaboratively with other professionals who are already involved e.g. health and/or social care colleagues, to coordinate this work, with parents' permission. All teams are aware of the need for effective communication and joined up planning to support children and their families;
- advice and support to staff and parents/ carers on how children's needs can be addressed through early years/ school-based interventions through a graduated response;
- in cases where children or young people have more complex needs that are not being addressed by school-based supports and the child or young person requires Additional Learning Provision, support and guidance is provided to guide families and staff through the statutory process outlined in the ALN Code.

5.9 Specific Support to children and young people with ALN from Specific Teams

5.10 The Advisory and Specialist Teacher Team promote person centred practices and work closely with schools, ALNCOs and Head Teachers. The team offers advice, guidance and support for pupils with emerging and identified additional learning needs, as well as providing a package of support for pupils with an identified specific learning difficulty. The team supports schools to develop their Universal and Targeted provisions to meet the needs of all learners across our schools.

5.11 Additionally, the team:

- attend ALNCO termly cluster meetings to ensure consistency across settings and information sharing on pupils is comprehensive to aid the transition process and ensure suitable, timely support is available to ensure those pupils' transitions are successful;
- work collaboratively with LEI services and other agencies e.g., the Educational Psychology Service and Statutory Team to facilitate moderation events, the ALNCO forum and ALN panels;
- attend multi-agency meetings to support early intervention and aid transitions at all key points and between settings;
- work collaboratively with other agencies e.g., SenCom and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) In-Reach Service to support learners with a range of sensory and social, emotional needs;
- hold responsibility for partnership working with the Gwent Ethnic Minority Service (GEMS), SenCom and SSCE (Supporting Service Children in Education), as well as strategic oversight of pupils who are electively home educated (EHE);

- provide a wide training menu for schools e.g., the ALN Act, Precision Teaching, Literacy Junction, Writing and Development of One Page Profiles, NQT training termly, SPLD, Effective use of LSAs, Development of Universal Provision, Development of Vocabulary;
 - provide support at PCP meetings, IDP and Statement Reviews to ensure the voice of the learner is at the heart of all the decision making.
- 5.12 The ALN Statutory Team are responsible for ensuring the LA has appropriate processes and supports in place that enable the LA to be effective in meeting all its statutory duties in response to the ALN Act and its associated Code.
- 5.13 Critical to this work is the Teams work to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of the learner and parent(s) / carers are central to the planning and provision of support. In doing so the Team ensure that the learners, together with their parents, can participate as fully as possible in the decision-making process.
- 5.14 The LA has a clear and comprehensive Additional Learning Needs Policy which provides guidance to early years and schools which promotes a strong sense of teamwork and an ethos of pupil-centred planning.
- 5.15 The team provides a wide range of support to parents and settings including:
- streamlined versions of Welsh Government guidance for schools with guidance on implementation e.g., template resources;
 - support for person centred meetings in school – officers act as support for parents and staff in these meetings;
 - the development of an ALN online Case Management System (CMS) and effective training has supported a unified system for schools providing a single point of access for information / documentation relating to pupil assessments. This has contributed to greater efficiency in schools responding to the ALN Code, supporting parents and learners;
 - specific training on aspects of the ALN Act and Code to support schools' ability to meet their own needs and to better meet children and young people's needs;
 - close liaison with LA teams and other agencies, including independent advocacy support for parents/ carers and children;
 - close working relationships with post-16 providers including local Further Education colleges and independent specialist provision providers.
- 5.16 The Caerphilly Autistic Spectrum Service provides outreach support for mainstream schools and home support for families of children and young people with autism between the ages of 2 and 19 years. The service combines the more 'traditional' outreach teacher / learning support assistant with home and communication support for children, young people and their families.
- 5.17 The service provides a range of integrated support between the child, their parents'/ carers' home, and the young person's setting. This model focus' on developing a joined up, multiagency approach to support young people, families and school where there is a confirmed diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- 5.18 The Service aims to support all of the adults around a child with an ASD, to develop a rich understanding of the child's needs to enable them to provide an informed approach to creating consistency, understanding and stability for the child in all

aspects of their life. The service provides a range of training for staff and parents of children post diagnosis. Additionally, the Service is an accredited provider of specialist training from the National Autistic Society for example NAS Early Bird - Family support training for families of a child with a diagnosis aged 0-4 years and NAS Early Bird Plus - Family support training for families of a child with a diagnosis aged 4-8 years.

- 5.19 The Early Years and Childcare team in education works across the Borough in partnership with the Health Board, voluntary organisations and others as part of a broader Early Years team across the Borough. The team supports registered childcare providers, and commissions contracted childcare and education placements, as well as providing early intervention support for children and families with emerging needs.
- 5.20 The Early Years Team work with all early years settings to support their professional learning and in meeting the needs of children with additional needs in collaboration with a strong early years partnership with a very wide range of Health agencies and other professionals.
- 5.21 A wide range of training is provided to the sector e.g., promoting play, ALN and related topics, early language developments using a number of evidence-based approaches, assessment techniques, a wide range parenting training and supporting physical and mental wellbeing.
- 5.22 The Team leads on ALN support to settings and children in pre-school including supporting effective transitions for children into school setting and this includes:
- Writing Individual Development Plans (IDPs) in collaboration with settings;
 - Developing an early year's transition protocol;
 - Establishing an ALN lead in settings.
- 5.23 Educational psychologists (EPs) are concerned with children's learning and development and use their specialist skills in psychological and educational assessment techniques to help those having difficulties in learning, behaviour or social adjustment. Additionally, EPs have undertaken specialist training in how groups function, how people communicate and maintain relationships as well as assessment, problem solving, counselling, treatment, research and training others. The EPS works with children aged 0-19 years, in pre-school and all types of school and they work closely with settings when pupils transfer to specialist settings including post-16 settings. All educational psychologists must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and carry out continued professional development.
- 5.24 Educational psychologists work with schools using a consultation model which is a way of helping children by working through others who have direct contact with them and who most impact on their lives. Benefits of this approach include:
- development of strategies that are practical and can be implemented by teachers and parents;
 - action by teachers and parents which create environments that bring about positive change in children;
 - enhanced skills and deeper understanding for the adults involved;

- reduction in concern about individual children, as a result of sharing information and agreeing actions and priorities.

5.25 The Service has dedicated time to support Early Years settings and children requiring assessment before they start school and also has a lead EP for post - 16 work focused on supporting effective transitions for learners with more complex needs. Additionally, the team:

- oversees and is responsible for the delivery of the Schools' Counselling Service and the ASD Lead Officer;
- provides a wide range of training and professional learning opportunities to schools and settings on the promotion of Wellbeing including a number of therapeutic approaches that settings can use, in addition to support and training in understanding neurodivergence and trauma informed approaches;
- other professional learning opportunities are offered on speech and communication needs, emotionally based school avoidance and training for schools' Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, amongst other topics;
- work collaboratively with LEI services and other agencies e.g., the Advisory Team and Statutory Team to facilitate moderation events, the ALNCO forum and ALN panels;
- attend multi-agency meetings to support early intervention and aid transitions at all key points and between settings;
- work collaboratively with other agencies e.g., SenCom and CAMHS In-Reach Service to support learners with the full range of Additional Learning Needs;
- created a Pupil Voice Toolkit which has been shared with our schools to facilitate the views of learners of all learners, including those with more complex needs;
- Supports the LEI with specific initiatives such as the introduction of the B Squared assessment tool across specialist settings;
- The team provide support at PCP meetings, IDP and Statement Reviews to ensure the voice of the learner is at the heart of all the decision making;
- The team routinely link with post-16 providers including local Further Education colleges and independent specialist provision providers typically undertaking individual assessments and providing advice as part of transition planning for pupils moving between statutory and post 16 settings.

5.26 Hosted by Torfaen County Borough Council and working across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen, the Sensory and Communication Support Service (SenCom) provides specialist services for children with a hearing, visual and /or communication difficulty (or any combination thereof). The Service supports children and young people with:

- a non-clinical diagnosis and primary need of Speech, Language and Communication when that need is severely impacting on the child's learning;
- identified hearing loss and / or visual impairment, supporting them to achieve their potential, acquire the necessary skills for life and to support successful inclusion into local schools.

5.27 SenCom includes qualified specialist teachers, specialist teaching assistants, habitation officers, a seconded speech and language therapist and other support staff. The Service links closely with Caerphilly LEI teams, health professionals and other agencies across all age ranges from point of identification which sometimes means before children attend pre-school settings all the way through to linking closely with further education providers locally.

- 5.28 A wide variety of professional learning is provided to settings by SenCom. The Service also provides technical and logistical support for hearing, visual and communication aids to schools and settings across the region.
- 5.29 The LA also has a robust Welsh in education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 -2032 which outlines the approach to increasing Welsh medium provision for children with additional learning needs.

5.30 **Conclusion**

A key responsibility of the LA is the provision of services to support children with additional learning needs. The LA provides a wide range of support designed to provide guidance and to enable staff and families to understand the processes that steer the Council and partner agencies' work and enable them to access the support they need. Support also includes a wide range of professional learning, support to schools and direct intervention and support for children and young people.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 In considering the recommendations the following assumptions have been made:
- Meeting the ALN of children and young people 0 – 25 years is a key statutory duty of the Council and as such must be reported to scrutiny to ensure that members are kept informed.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This report provides information and therefore an integrated impact assessment has not been completed at this time.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Staff costs to deliver staff training and interventions have been funded through a mixture of funding for core services, augmented by access to the following WG funding provided in the LA Education Grant 2022/23:

Service	Core Funding	Additional Grant
Advisory & Specialist Teaching Team	679,748.26	
ALN Statutory Team	314,276.73	
Behaviour Support Service	183,406.72	
Educational Psychology Service	979,846.08	387,763.61
Caerphilly Autistic Support Service	253,659.23	
SENCOM	784,912.00	
Total	3,195,849.02	387,763.61

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 In order to ensure compliance with the Act and ALN Code, the existing statutory team has been developed to address potential capacity issues of managing both a new

and existing system over a period of implementation. The Advisory Team has recruited to a number of temporary seconded posts to augment the support to schools over the next year. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) has also successfully recruited to a number of vacant posts. The EPS has a significant number of Assistant Educational Psychologists which are nearly all funding through grants. Changes to grants or reduction of funding will impact provision of the currently extensive offer to schools, however, it is anticipated that WG funding is likely to continue for some time.

- 9.2 Within the Education Directorate there may be additional pressures linked to work within early years, responsibilities linked to CLA, responsibilities linked to EOTAS, elective home education and post 16 provision. This will have workforce development implications and an associated cost. Capacity pressures in this area are being monitored.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report reflects with views of the consultees.

11. STATUTORY POWERS

- 11.1 Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing (Wales) 2021
Education Act 1996
Equality Act 2010
Social Services and wellbeing Act (2014)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Armed Forces Covenant (Wales)

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