

SUBJECT:	ALN Code Chapter 7: Statutory Review of Additional Learning Provision (ALP)
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Committee
DATE:	3rd June 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To report to members the development of the Local Authority Additional Learning Provision (ALP) review in line with the expectations of the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, the outcomes of the reviews to date and associated recommendations. This report will also provide a progress update on the recommendations of the initial Specialist Resource Base (SRB) ALP review in the report dated 14th May 2024.

Chapter 7 of the ALN Code indicates that local authorities **must** keep ALP under review, the arrangements made both by the authority, and by the governing bodies of the maintained schools in its area, for children and young people who have ALN. Keeping ALP and other arrangements under review, is a key part of local strategic planning and decision making. It will enable local authorities to assess current and likely future needs and secure sufficient provision and services to meet those needs.

The duty involves the local authority considering, at a strategic level, what provision there is to meet needs; whether that provision is sufficient and if insufficient in any respects, considering what to do to remedy the matter; and consulting as the authority considers appropriate during that process. As part of the review process the ALN Code indicates that a local authority **should** also review data and evidence on the effectiveness of current provision in meeting children and young people's needs and improving the outcomes they achieve.

This review process aligns with key priorities of the Community and Corporate Plan including:

- A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners starting points, strengths and educational needs.
- To ensure education provision meets the needs of a wide range of learners including vulnerable groups and those with additional learning needs (ALN).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following the report to this committee a year ago (14th May 2024) we would welcome members of this committee to note the content of this report, which outlines updates to the local authority's process around the statutory responsibility to keep additional learning provision under review and address any insufficiencies. Members are invited to comment accordingly.

Members to consider the adequacy of actions undertaken by the Inclusion Service to keep additional learning provision under review and the recommendations to address the identified insufficiencies in additional learning provision.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review – background and context

Nearly all Monmouthshire children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN) access their local mainstream school where their needs are met successfully. The ALN delegated budget is used by mainstream schools to develop ALP for those children with ALN, supporting our model of inclusive practice. The local authority have a duty to keep these arrangements under review and consider their sufficiency to meet the identified needs.

Monmouthshire does not have a discrete special school catering for learners with significant and complex additional learning needs (ALN) – *see background outlined in the report dated 14th May 2024*. An effective model of specialist provision has been developed through our specialist resource bases (SRBs), where the majority of our children and young people with complex additional learning needs are able to remain as close to their communities as possible and have meaningful inclusion opportunities with their mainstream peers, whilst also benefitting from specialist teaching and resources. There are two primary, two secondary and one all-through SRB. The ALP review of our SRBs was the focus on the paper dated 14th May 2024, a further review was completed during Spring Term 2025, as part of our bi-annual cycle.

Whilst nearly all children and young people with complex ALN have their needs met in Monmouthshire schools/ SRBs, there remains a requirement for the use of maintained and independent out of county special schools. This is for the few cases of children and young people with highly complex ALN, typically with neuro divergence and social, emotional and mental health needs. These children and young people require a specified environment and therapeutic input which is not possible in our SRBs.

As a response to the current presentation of our children and young people, we have increased our use of alternative providers during this academic year. This is specifically for children and young people with complex social, emotional and mental health needs, where it has not been possible to maintain a mainstream placement or secure a suitable special school placement.

As such, Monmouthshire has developed ALP review frameworks and processes around:

- Monmouthshire SRBs
- Monmouthshire clusters of mainstream primary schools
- Monmouthshire secondary schools
- Out of county special schools and alternative providers.

3.2 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review – Purpose

The purpose of the ALP Review and associated quality assurance cycle is to ensure that there is a consistent and equitable approach to meeting the needs of Monmouthshire children and young people with ALN. The review process has contributed to future planning and development of provision to ensure Monmouthshire children and young people are educated as close to their local communities as possible.

3.3 Development of the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead Role

The outcomes of the initial SRB ALP Review in Spring 2023, alongside other developments in ALN, led to securing a two-year seconded post – the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead

- this has now been extended by a further year. This continues to link to key focus areas for the Inclusion Service:

- SRB Development – Refining existing practice and provision to ensure highly effective ALP for children and young people placed in each SRB, alongside the development of provision aligned to projected needs.
- Quality assurance of ALN and ALP – Developing, implementing, refining and reviewing systems around the quality assurance of practice and provision across mainstream schools and other providers (alternative providers, out of county special schools and independent schools) in line with the ALNET Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021. This includes the identification of any insufficiencies and recommendations around future ALP requirements.
- Post 16 ALN Strategy – Development of a Post 16 Strategy for CYP with ALN, which ensures clear and robust processes and systems around transition and securing appropriate Post 16 placements.

For Monmouthshire schools, reports are constructed by the ALP and Partnership Lead following a supported self-evaluation review which provide specific feedback and recommendations of next steps.

3.4 ALP Review - Process

The model of ALP review has been developed and refined with school-based colleagues to ensure a robust evaluation of provision, alongside a clear opportunity to share best practice and strive for continuous improvement.

For Monmouthshire schools and provisions, we have developed a supported self-evaluation process. This allows for a collaborative approach to the ALP review, where local authority Officers join school colleagues to complete the review with a clear framework.

3.4.1 SRBs

A bi-annual ALP review takes place across the SRBs. All SRBs have engaged positively in the process and are enthusiastic in their drive for continuous improvement.

This review process is supported through the annual action plans which are developed each Autumn Term, with update/ monitoring points at least termly with SRB Lead Teachers, alongside the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead. These are further supported through robust quality assurance processes to evidence progress towards objectives.

We are able to evidence positive improvements and progress towards the identified priorities in nearly all cases. The development of the King Henry VIII 3-19 SRB has been grounded in the findings of the initial ALP Review. This process also supports in the development of any future SRBs or satellite classes within the SRB model, including the current development of Castle Park satellite class.

3.4.2 Mainstream primary clusters

Each of our clusters (both primary and secondary in each cluster) have an ALN Cluster Lead. Clusters meet half termly, with a clear calendar of quality assurance processes, as part of their meeting schedule.

Within a two-year cycle, each school will have an ALP Review through a supported self-evaluation visit. These are led by the Additional Learning Provision and Partnership Lead and supported by Additional Learning Need Co-ordinators (ALNCOs) from within the cluster.

3.4.3 Mainstream secondary schools

Secondary ALNCOs attend cluster-based meetings and quality assurance process, as in 3.3.2. Their involvement in primary cluster reviews ensures a clear knowledge and understanding of primary provision and how this can transfer effectively to secondary.

As the systems and processes and curriculum model and delivery at secondary are different to that at primary, there is a separate secondary ALP supported self-evaluation review. This follows the model above, but incorporates secondary ALNCOs, alongside local authority officers.

3.4.4 For providers outside of Monmouthshire, a framework has been developed which explores fundamental areas of provision and meeting need including Out of County special schools and alternative providers.

3.5 Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review

3.5.1 Specialist Resource Bases

- During the academic year 2022/23 all SRBs were reviewed by local authority officers.
- This was agreed as a bi-annual review process and therefore a further review took place in Spring Term 2024.

Update on Recommendations from ALP Review - Spring/ Summer 2023

The on-going monitoring and review of SRB Action Plans, minutes of SPOT (specialist provision and outreach team) Network and the most recent ALP review demonstrate clear progress towards recommendations from the 2023 review:

- There is an improving consistency across SRB settings in terms of an equal 'offer' across the county.
- Effective collaboration is in place between SRB Lead Teachers to identify and share good practice across the model, further supported through the SPOT Network meetings half termly.
- The SPOT Network has developed consistent documentation to sit across the SRB model, including admission processes and key policies.
- A task and finish group has developed agreed job descriptions, person specifications and model interview activities/ questions to support a robust and consistent recruitment process.
- A Partnership Agreement between the local authority and host schools has been developed and consulted on with SRB Lead Teachers, host school Headteacher and governing bodies.
- Processes around measuring impact of SRB provision, including pupil progress, are being developed with greater consistency.
- The Inclusion Service has worked with host schools and the Finance team to ensure a greater understanding of finances, through demarcation of SRB funding.

Supported Self Evaluation Review Overall Outcomes – Spring 2025:

- There is a clear vision for our SRBs in each host school, this links to inclusion, integration and pupil progress, where SRB pupils are part of the wider school community.
- All SRBs are part of whole school development, with clear lines of communication to the host school senior leadership team.

- Relevant shared documentation sits across our SRBs, including a developing Partnership Agreement. There is a strong collaborative approach across our SRB Lead Teachers, as part of and in addition to the SPOT Network.
- Staff working in our SRBs are enthusiastic and passionate about the provision, its development and their impact on pupil progress. They have a strong knowledge of pupil need and have secure and positive relationships.
- SRBs have a calm and welcoming environment with allocated and carefully designed spaces, including sensory and hygiene spaces, with access to suitable outdoor space within the facilities/ space available to them.
- Valuable inclusion and community engagement is in place across the SRBs, with access to learning, facilities and events, as well as successful mentoring/ buddy systems with mainstream peers and work placements within the locality.
- Most SRBs have a clear curriculum overview which is relevant to the cohort.
- Teaching and learning is responsive to pupil need, taking a multi-sensory approach with the use of total communication approaches.
- Post 16 provision is successful and supports the development of independence and functional skills in order to support next steps beyond school.
- All SRB Lead Teachers are aware of their priorities for improvement and the progress made towards these priorities and next steps required.

Recommendations:

Local Authority

- Continue the cycle of action plan development and review with local authority officers.
- Continue to provide projected figures for SRB placements to review available physical space within SRBs and consider the requirements to increase capacity accordingly.
- Continue the cycle of review for all policies and determine any remaining policies required.
- Review, with SRB Leads and host schools, the current funding arrangements for SRBs.

SRB Leads

- SRBs to ensure a reviewed and refined curriculum offer which provides skill development and ensures strong progress from the baseline, which is tracked and monitored, with effective evidence-based intervention where required.
- Develop approaches to skill development, particularly literacy, which sit across all SRBs.
- Develop approaches to support collaborative planning and moderation across the SRB model for wider SRB staff.
- Continued work with health-based therapies to ensure appropriate baseline materials and skill tracking are available to SRB staff.
- Embed good autism practice across the SRBs through the use of the Autism Education Trust (AET) standards and competencies frameworks.
- Consider the support for transitions at Post 16, 18 and 19 in line with the draft Post 16 Strategy.
- Review existing buddy/ mentoring systems which sit across mainstream and SRB to share best practice and refine approaches.
- Ensure all SRBs follow the agreed recruitment process and embed effective performance management processes for support staff.

3.5.2 Primary Clusters

- We are on track for all primary schools to have participated over the intended two-year period.
- Feedback from schools who have participated has been positive, both as the school being reviewed and where colleagues have engaged as part of the process. Key reflections have included:
 - Opportunities to focus on ALN and how it is part of wider school improvement
 - Sharing of best practice to embed across schools
 - Reassurance around systems and processes
 - Sharing of paperwork, templates and policies
 - Clear feedback on what is working and recommendations for development

Supported Self Evaluation Outcomes to Date:

- Many schools have worked appropriately to implement the new legislation within the implementation guidance.
- All schools have an ALNCo in post with a direct line of communication to the senior leadership team or as a member of the senior leadership team, however their release time is variable.
- Nearly all schools have clear systems and processes to track pupils on the graduated response and those with Individual Development Plans (IDPs).
- Most schools have a clear system around raising causes for concern or where pupils may have an ALN and track the statutory process to meet statutory timescales.
- Most schools have ALN as a key priority in School Development Plans and where this is not the case a robust action plan is developed and tracked around ALN.
- Most schools have effective provision maps which are regularly reviewed and are influenced by changing cohort needs.
- One Page Profiles are strong in the majority of schools and are used to support planning and delivery of learning.
- Individual Development Plans are appropriate, however variable in both threshold and quality of IDPs. Annual reviews are used valuably to review progress and work with other stakeholders, particularly successfully where high-quality approaches to person-centred practice are used.
- Despite challenges with the budget, the majority of schools have continued to provide targeted support/ interventions, for example the positive impact of ELSA support alongside the model of ELSA supervision and professional development.
- Staff have a strong knowledge of pupil need and provide reasonable adjustments in teaching and learning and within the school environment.

Recommendations:

Local Authority

- Continued work with Welsh Government around remuneration and remission time of the ALNCo role.
- Review of available and impactful provision for pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Training for schools around evidence-based intervention and measuring impact, linked to resource allocation.

- Ongoing moderation of IDPs to ensure clarity of threshold and appropriate content, including effective outcomes (particularly around SEMH and high anxiety needs).

Schools

- Embed ALN in school improvement quality assurance processes, tracking activities undertaken and key findings.
- Ensure ALN remains a priority area in whole staff meetings, with time given to teaching and support staff to review and refine approaches as part of the graduated response and for those children with ALN.
- Continued alignment of ALN and wellbeing approaches in schools, ensuring the graduated response for SEMH is followed effectively.
- Consideration around the use of support staff to secure positive progress, including the use of evidence-based intervention in numeracy and literacy.
- Update PLASC ALN entry to accurately reflect full implementation.
- Ensuring effective outcomes in school maintained IDPs to ensure these can be broken down into smaller short-term targets. Implementing robust processes around tracking of short-term targets to demonstrate small steps of progress and transfer of skills to be sustained in the classroom.
- Continued implementation of good autism practice and the use of the AET standards and competency frameworks to support this.

3.5.3 Secondary ALP Review

- During the Spring Term 2024, all secondary schools (including the 3-19/ through-school) took part in the supported self-evaluation review.

Supported Self Evaluation Outcomes:

- There is highly successful practice across most of our settings, with a clear understanding of processes and systems aligned with ALNET Act 2018 and the Code for Wales 2021.
- High quality IDPs are developed in most settings, however thresholds remain variable. The additional learning provision offer is clear in each school and linked with resource availability and an evidence-basis.
- There is variability in relation to the time release, space and line management of the ALNCo role.
- A focus is placed on high quality teaching and learning to support progress and class structure and deployment of support staff further supports this. High engagement and participation is evident in most lessons visited.
- Use of teaching assistants (TAs) to deliver high quality evidence-based intervention is impactful, with clear tracking systems to consider transfer of skills into the classroom evident in most settings.

Recommendations

- Best practice examples of paperwork to be shared and reviewed collectively.
- Schools to consider the ALNCo role – line management, space, administration support and professional learning opportunities.
- Schools to consider the time given to ALN as part of whole staff professional learning.
- ALNCos to share the provision pyramids and evidence basis utilised to support in their development, including resource allocation/ use of the ALN delegated budget to support

wider progress. This should support greater clarity and consistency around thresholds for IDPs.

- All schools to have allocated 'safe' / 'go to' spaces with adult oversight to support the most vulnerable pupils, with clear systems for measuring impact.

Summary of recommendations

In order to meet the priorities of the Community and Corporate Plan and address the insufficiencies identified in the ALP Review process:

- Extend the SRB primary provision in the south of the county to reflect the available spaces in the north and ensure suitable provision in each cluster to keep children as close to their local communities as possible. A satellite class for primary children will be developed in Castle Park Primary to open in the Autumn Term 2025, within the designation of the existing SRB model.
- Review the current funding arrangements for SRBs to ensure the staffing structures and resourcing are efficient and effective to meet need.
- Explore and refine all processes and systems sitting around Post 16, to ensure the extended statutory responsibility through the ALNET Act 2018 is met. This will likely include the extension of Post 16 provision within the existing SRB model.
- Continue to reduce the number of children and young people attending out of county specialist provision at significant cost and travel requirements. This requires the development of a suitable therapeutic environment to meet the identified needs, predominantly in the area of neuro divergence with differences in communication.
- Explore the development of suitable and effective provision for primary aged children with SEMH needs in order to reduce the use of alternative provision and requirements for out of county provision, maintaining Monmouthshire placements for these pupils.

3.6 Risks

Across the UK, the number of children and young people with complex ALN is increasing, resulting in greater demand on specialist placements. Regional South East Wales Special Schools are at full capacity. Alternative options are independent specialist provisions which are at high cost.

We have extended our SRB provision from September 2024, including the King Henry VIII 3-19 SRB with 55 places in secondary and further 8 places in primary and an additional class of up to 8 in Pembroke SRB. A further 8 places have been allocated to a satellite class in Castle Park Primary from September 2025. Current forecasting predicts the requirement for an increasing number of SRB places (forecast suggests 20 further places are required at primary in the next two to three years), in addition to places for children and young people with more profound ALN (currently secured through out of county special schools / independent special schools). Our focus is maintaining the vision to keep children and young people close to their local community. Therefore, further investment in existing SRBs and development of new SRBs will be required to meet these future needs. This includes consideration around the designation of future provision.

4. CONSULTEEs:

Inclusion Team 7th May 2025

Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate DMT 12th May 2025

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- [The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 \(gov.wales\)](#)
- Performance and Overview Scrutiny Paper – ‘Additional Learning Provision/ Specialist Resource Bases’ - 14th May 2024
- Members Seminar – ‘Additional Learning Needs & Specialist Resource Bases’ – 9th October 2024

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