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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-(P)-KW/0660/18

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18 April 2018

Dear Lynne

This letter is the third quarterly update on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation programme.

1. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

In my previous quarterly update I noted that the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill had been passed by the Assembly. I am now pleased to say that the Bill gained Royal Assent on 24 January 2018 and is now the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 ('the Act').

This is a key milestone on this journey of transformation, creating the legislative framework needed to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, but now the real challenge of implementation begins.

There is now a huge programme of work to be taken forward by my officials to develop the draft subordinate legislation to give effect to the more than thirty regulation-making powers in the Act, as well as extensive work to review, revise and in some areas draft entirely new sections of the ALN Code. As you are aware, during the scrutiny of the Bill we made a number of commitments to use the Code to provide detailed guidance on a range of aspects of the new system. This will be the manual for practitioners and services responsible for delivering the new legislative framework, and it is vital that we get it right.

To that end, I have asked my officials to ensure that we engage with stakeholders from across sectors to ensure their views, expertise and experiences help shape the new system. The Code will be subject to a full public consultation in due course, but my officials

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

will also be undertaking targeted engagement, including through relevant expert groups, to inform the development of the draft Code over the coming months.

This kind of targeted stakeholder engagement has already begun in relation to refining our thinking on the detailed implementation guidance we intend to publish to support services to plan and manage their transition to the new system. My officials have been working with the Education Reform Strategic Stakeholder Group, as well as with sector-specific groups such as the association of special school headteachers and Cwllwm, an umbrella body for non-maintained early years providers, to test our thinking at an early stage.

2. Implementation/ transition support

2.1. ALN transformation leads

Today I issued a written statement announcing details of the five ALN transformation leads following an open, competitive recruitment process. Four of the transformation leads will operate regionally, on the education consortia footprint, and one of the leads will work as a further education lead on a national basis. The five leads are:

- Margaret Davies, formerly an Estyn inspector will be working in the North Wales region;
- Huw Davies another former Estyn inspector will be working in the West Wales region;
- Liz Jones, a former Principal Educational Psychologist from Blaenau Gwent, will remain working in Central South;
- Tracey Pead will stay in South East Wales after formerly heading up Pupil Support for Torfaen County Borough Council; and
- Chris Denham will take on the role as the further education transformation lead having previously worked for Coleg Gwent leading on ALN.

I had the pleasure of recently meeting our transformation leads and am confident that the wealth of experience and expertise that they will bring to the roles will be a valuable asset to driving forward this crucial agenda.

Each of the regional transformation leads have been tasked with developing an implementation plan for their region, and the further education transformation lead will develop an implementation plan for the further education sector. These plans will set out the agreed actions required to ensure the necessary practices and processes are in place prior to roll-out of the Act.

They will be developed in collaboration with the key statutory bodies in the region who have duties under the Act. It will be based on an analysis of the evidence of their level of readiness for implementation of key aspects of the new system, to be developed through readiness self-assessments and discussions facilitated by the transformation leads.

The work of the transformation leads will be supported by ALN Transformation Grants, which will be allocated to each of the regional transformation leads on a formula basis; this will allow each of the regions to target the money as identified in their regional implementation plan. This is in line with the Committee's fourth recommendation in its Stage 1 report on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill:

Recommendation 4: The Committee recommends that the process for distributing grants should be well considered with a view to minimising bureaucracy, whilst ensuring value for money.

2.2. ALN Innovation Grants and Expert Groups

Regional, multi-agency projects funded through the two-year pre-legislative ALN Innovation Grant drew to a close at the end of March. The relevant expert groups will soon review the innovation projects to evaluate good practice and share any lessons learnt across Wales.

The ALN Health Expert Group continues to support the development of guidance on the statutory requirements on health boards under the Act. The group is currently redrafting the job description for the role of the Designated Educational Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) which will be informed by both the group's membership and from a project initiated in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to explore how the role may operate in practice.

2.3. ALN baseline assessment

As part of the evaluation of the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act 2018, the Welsh Government has commissioned research to establish a baseline assessment of the impact of the current SEN system. The research consists of a survey of organisations involved in the SEN system. In addition, four case studies are being undertaken to provide detailed data. The survey has been completed and a paper on interim findings is currently being prepared, prior to the full report being drafted. The case studies are progressing well with around a third of the interviews having been undertaken.

3. Workforce development

In December I allocated £352,000 over the next two financial years to support the postgraduate training of local authority-based specialist and advisory teachers of learners with visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) and multi-sensory impairment (MSI). This funding may also be used to facilitate training in Braille and British Sign Language for local authority-based specialist staff. Regional bids for this funding have now been received and are under consideration.

In order to ensure a continued supply of Educational Psychologists, we fund Cardiff University's Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy) professional training programme. Negotiations with the University about arrangements from 2019-20 are underway.

Suitably qualified Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCos) are critical to the effective operation of the new system. Engagement with key stakeholders has helped shape our policy regarding the skills and training requirements needed to deliver this role. I have agreed for a significant amount of the funding allocated for implementation of the ALN transformation programme to be invested into the delivery of training of this important sector of the education workforce.

4. Awareness raising

The ALN transformation leads will be my champions on the front-line, and have already begun meeting key stakeholders and developing networks. They will be reporting any issues or concerns out there that I need to be aware of, so that we can put in place the right support to ensure that services are equipped and ready to deliver the new system when the time comes. It's vital that we get this right, so that learners can access the benefits of the new system as seamlessly as possible.

4.1. ALN implementation training materials

Since January, Eliesha Cymru have been scoping the content of the ALN implementation training materials by engaging with the Welsh Government, our training expert group, the ALN transformation leads and third sector representatives. Using feedback from the various sessions they have now started to develop the on-line training programme.

4.2. Welsh Language resources

A group has been set up to support the development of ALN screening and assessment resources in the medium of Welsh. The group consists of a range of education practitioners who support children and young people with ALN. The group is currently in the process of determining what ALN screening and assessment resources are required in the medium of Welsh.

4.3. Rapid evidence assessments

Rapid evidence assessments and accessible guides on effective interventions to support children and young people with a range of ALN are being undertaken. The rapid evidence assessments of interventions to support children and young people with ADHD and ASD have been completed and are being prepared for publication. The guides on effective interventions to support children and young people with ASD and ADHD are nearing completion.

In addition, the rapid evidence assessments on effective interventions to support children and young people with hearing impairments, visual impairments and multi-sensory impairments are progressing well and draft reports are currently being prepared.

I am copying this letter to the Chairs of the Finance Committee and the Constitutional Affairs and Legislative Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Kirsty Williams AC/AM

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Cabinet Secretary for Education

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Additional Learning Needs Transformation Leads**

DATE **18 April 2018**

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

This Government is committed to delivering a fully inclusive education system, where children and young people are inspired, motivated and supported to reach their potential.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation is a key aspect of our overall programme of education reform, as set out in 'Education in Wales: Our National Mission'. On 12 December 2017 the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was unanimously passed by the National Assembly for Wales and went on to become an Act after gaining Royal Assent on 24 January 2018. This is a key milestone on this journey of transformation but now the real challenge of implementation begins.

I have given careful consideration to how best we support delivery partners to not only implement the new ALN system but also bring about the cultural change needed to fulfil the duties set out in the Act.

Today I am announcing details of five ALN transformation leads following an open, competitive recruitment process. Four of the transformation leads will operate regionally, on the education consortia footprint, and one of the leads will work as a further education transformation lead on a national basis. The details are as follows:

- Margaret Davies, formerly an Estyn inspector will be working in the North Wales region;
- Huw Davies another former Estyn inspector will be working in the West Wales region;
- Liz Jones, a former Principal Educational Psychologist from Blaenau Gwent, will remain working in Central South;
- Tracey Pead; will stay in South East Wales after formerly heading up Pupil Support for Torfaen County Borough Council; and
- Chris Denham will take on the role as the further education transformation lead having worked for Coleg Gwent leading on ALN.

These posts will play a critical role in our overall implementation strategy by ensuring services are supported and prepared to deliver the new ALN system.

They will provide support and challenge to local authorities, schools, early years settings and further education institutions, they will also play a coordinating role in the roll-out of implementation training on the Act, awareness-raising and facilitating improvements in multi-agency working.

I expect to see the transformation leads sharing that knowledge and working together as a team to ensure that services are equipped and ready to deliver the new system when the time comes. It's vital that we get this right, so that learners can access the benefits of the new system as seamlessly as possible.

Each of the regional transformation leads have been tasked with developing an implementation plan for their region, and the further education transformation lead will develop an implementation plan for the further education sector. These plans will set out the agreed actions required to ensure the necessary practices and processes are in place prior to roll-out of the Act.

They will be developed in collaboration with the key statutory bodies in the region who have duties under the Act. It will be based on an analysis of the evidence of their level of readiness for implementation of key aspects of the new system, to be developed through readiness self-assessments and discussions facilitated by the transformation leads.

The work of the transformation leads will be supported by ALN Transformation Grants, which will be allocated to each of the regional transformation leads on a formula basis; this will allow each of the regions to target the money as identified in their regional implementation plan.

To ensure that services and practitioners have clarity about how we expect them to move from one statutory system to another, we will be publishing a detailed implementation guide this summer to explain the timescales for the roll-out of individual development plans (IDPs) to each cohort of learners in the phased approach.

That said, until the Act comes into force, local authorities must ensure that they continue to comply with the duties placed upon them by the Education Act 1996 and the SEN Code of Practice for Wales.