



**ADDYSG CYMRU
EDUCATION WALES**
cenhadaeth ein cenedl | our national mission



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Additional learning needs (ALN) system: parents' guide

A guide for parents and families about
how children will move to the additional
learning needs (ALN) system between
September 2021 and August 2022

Additional learning needs (ALN) system: parents' guide

Audience

This guide has been written for parents and families.

Overview

The guide sets out the arrangements for the first year of implementing the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (the ALN Act).

The guide explains how some groups of children will move from the special educational needs (SEN) system to the additional learning needs (ALN) system. It also explains what the new system means for children and their parents.

Further information

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

Additional Learning Needs Branch

Support for Learners Division

The Education Directorate

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

e-mail: ALNimplementation@gov.wales



[@WG_Education](https://twitter.com/WG_Education)



[Facebook/EducationWales](https://www.facebook.com/EducationWales)

Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act

Related documents

The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021

gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-code

Contents

1. What this guide is about	2
2. What is ALN and additional learning provision?	2
3. What is changing for children and young people with special educational needs?	3
4. What the ALN system is and what difference it makes for children, their parents, and young people	3
5. When and how children and young people will move to the new system	8
6. Frequently asked questions	16

1. What this guide is about

The ALN system is being put in place between September 2021 and August 2024.

This guide explains what the additional learning needs (ALN) system is and how some children will move to the ALN system between September 2021 and August 2022.

Section 5 of the guide talks about when and how children under compulsory age (early years), children of compulsory school age and young people will move to the new system.

Separate guidance will be published that explains how other children and young people will move to the ALN system between September 2022 and August 2024. This includes children with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and children who do not attend a local authority nursery or local authority school.

2. What is ALN and additional learning provision?

Children and young people with ALN need extra support to learn. This would be because they:

- find it harder to learn than other children of the same age, or
- have a disability that means they cannot use, or find it difficult to use, facilities for learning in the local nursery, school or college

Some children and young people who need extra help in nursery, school, pupil referral unit (PRU) or college do not have an ALN. This may be children or young people who just need some help catching up.

The extra support given to children with ALN to help them learn is called additional learning provision (sometimes called ALP). This must be written into a support plan called an individual development plan (IDP).

Additional learning provision for a child aged under 3 means educational provision of any kind.

Additional learning provision for a person aged 3 or over is education or training usually in a nursery, school, PRU or college that is additional to, or different from, what is made available to most children of the same age.

This means that additional learning provision is support that is made available usually in nursery, schools or colleges but most children or young people of the same age do not need to use this support to make progress.

Additional learning provision can be delivered by teachers, teaching assistants or tutors. It can also be delivered by specialist services like a speech and language therapist or teachers of the deaf. It can also mean using technology such as radio aids.

Sometimes a child may need to attend a particular nursery, school, PRU or college or a special school or special college to get the additional learning provision they need.

Additional learning provision can also be a resource such as a particular computer program, an app or even a pencil grip to aid writing. Additional learning provision is any education provision that is additional to, or different from, what is made available to most children of the same age.

Additional learning provision can also be any training provision for young people that is additional to, or different from, what is made available to most young people of the same age.

Section 4 sets out what to do if you think a child or young person has ALN.

3. What is changing for children and young people with special educational needs?

The Welsh Government is changing the way children and young people with SEN are supported. The support children with SEN receive is called special educational provision (sometimes called SEP).

We are replacing the old (SEN) system with the new ALN system.

When the ALN system is introduced you will notice the following changes to what things are called:

- special educational needs (SEN) becomes additional learning needs (ALN)
- special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) become additional learning needs co-ordinators (ALNCOs)
- special educational provision (SEP) becomes additional learning provision (ALP)
- plans such as individual education plans (IEPs), statements and learning and skills plans (LSPs) will be replaced with a new plan called an individual development plan (IDP).

Some things have not changed. Having ALN is the same as having SEN. This means that if a child or young person has SEN they are also very likely to have ALN. And it means the special education provision children and young people get to help them learn at nursery, school, PRU or college because they have SEN will continue, if it is still required, but it will now be called additional learning provision.

4. What the ALN system is and what difference it makes for children, their parents, and young people

New ways of working

We want to make sure that:

- children, their parents and young people's views, wishes and feelings are listened to when decisions are being made about how to help children and young people

- the right support is put in place quickly to help children and young people with ALN
- everyone works together to help children and young people with ALN, including education and health services
- most children and young people with ALN are able to go to their local nursery, school, PRU or college, if it is right for them
- children, and their families are able to access learning support even before they start school or nursery
- children, their parents, and young people understand the additional learning provision being offered
- children and young people with ALN get help in Welsh wherever possible if they need it

New rights for children, their parents and young people

A right for all children and young people with ALN to have a statutory plan

At the moment there are 2 systems for children who need support to learn. Some children and young people have a statement and some have a school, PRU or college plan.

Statements are statutory plans. This means there are laws about who should have a statement, how long it can take to make a statement for a child or young person and what should be put in the statement.

It also means that if children, their parents or young people are not happy with decisions about statements, there are rights in law to do something about it.

Individual education plans are not statutory plans. This means that if children, their parents or young people are not happy with decisions about their individual education plans, they do not have rights in law to do something about it.

The ALN system has one way of doing things. Children and young people who have ALN will have a new plan called an individual development plan (an IDP). All IDPs are statutory. This means that all children, their parents and young people will have rights in law to do something about decisions about ALN they are not happy with. The information under the next heading ('A right for all children, their parents and young people to challenge decisions about ALN they disagree with') says more about what children, their parents and young people can do if they disagree with decisions about ALN.

Except in rare circumstances, all children and young people with SEN will have moved to the ALN system by August 2024. This means that in the future children and young people will not have SEN plans like a statement, an individual education plan (IEP), a school action plan, a school action plus plan or a learning and skills plan. Instead they will have an IDP.

All children aged 0 to 16 with ALN will have an IDP. Young people aged 16 to 25 with ALN will be entitled to an IDP if they stay in education.

The IDP will say what support a child or young person needs to help them learn. And what will be done so they are properly supported in nursery, school, PRU or college.

The law says the support put in the plan must be provided for the child or young person. The law also says any that other provision that is needed, like a place at a particular school or board and lodging to attend a particular school, must be provided for the child or young person.

The plan must say:

- the sort of ALN the child or young person has (need)
- how the child or young person will be supported to learn, and who will support them (provision)
- what the child or young person will be able to achieve when the support is put in place (outcome)
- the name of any nursery, school or college the child or young person may need to go to
- if the support should be in Welsh
- information about the reasons for what is set out in the plan
- things that have happened that make a difference to the child or young persons' ALN

A right for all children, their parents and young people to challenge decisions about ALN they disagree with

Children, their parents and young people can challenge decisions made by a school, PRU, local authority or college about ALN if they disagree with them. This includes decisions about:

- if a child or young person has ALN
- the way a child or young person's ALN is described in an IDP
- the support described in the IDP
- who is responsible for maintaining an IDP – a school, PRU, college or local authority

New ways of resolving disagreements

Children, their parents and young people will be invited to take part in preparing IDPs. This could be meeting up with the ALNCo and discussing the ALN support required.

Working together will provide opportunities to discuss any problems and help them to be sorted out at an early stage.

Most of the time, disagreements about support can be sorted out by discussing the problem with the school, PRU, local authority or college.

A right to ask a local authority to reconsider a decision made by a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU

A child, parent or young person who is unhappy with a decision made by a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU can ask the local authority to reconsider the decision. The local authority must reconsider the decision made by the school or PRU. The local authority must do this in 7 weeks.

A right to an advocate to speak up for children and young people who disagree with a decision about ALN

We think it is important there is a person to advise and speak up for children and young people if there is a disagreement.

There are people whose job it is to help and speak up for children and young people. They are called advocates. Advocates can tell people how children and young people feel and what they need to help them in school, PRU or college.

Children and young people have a right to have an advocate help and speak up for them if there is a disagreement. An advocate will speak up for a child or young person when they are using dispute resolution services or if they want to make an appeal to the Education Tribunal.

Children and young people can ask the local authority for an advocate.

Also, local authorities must tell children, their parents and young people about advocates.

If a child or young person asks for an advocate to help them with a possible appeal, speak up for them at appeal or speak up for them when using dispute resolution services, the local authority must make an advocate available. There is no cost to children, young people or their families for services provided by a local authority advocate.

Local authorities must make sure that all advocates:

- understand all about ALN
- know how to talk to children and young people in different ways, like using sign language
- are safe to work with children and young people

Using dispute resolution services

Children, their parents and young people can ask for some decisions to be changed. This includes decisions made by local authorities when they reconsider decisions made by schools and PRUs. Asking for a decision to be changed is called making an appeal.

Making an appeal means a group of independent people, one with legal qualifications, will decide whether a decision should be changed or reconsidered. This is called the Educational Tribunal.

The child, their parent or the young person will be able to use the local authority dispute resolution service before making an appeal to the Tribunal.

All local authorities must make arrangements for independent dispute resolution services to help resolve disagreements between parents, local authorities and schools. The service does this by helping all involved to discuss the disagreement and work towards a solution.

Dispute resolution services reduce the need to take a disagreement to the Tribunal and can lead to disagreements being settled more quickly. This avoids unnecessary disruption to learning and can save significant time and money for all involved.

Using dispute resolution services is not compulsory. Children, their parents and young people can make an appeal to the Tribunal without using dispute resolution services.

And using the dispute resolution service does not stop a child, their parents or a young person from making an appeal. Even if where an appeal has been made children, their parents and young people can still continue to talk to the local authority to try to reach agreement.

Getting help from a case friend

Children have rights under the ALN system. These include rights to be given information, to request things such as a review of an IDP, and to challenge decisions.

Some children will not be able to understand these rights. If a child does not understand, a case friend can speak for the child, support the child and take decisions for the child.

In particular, case friends help children take a disagreement – a case – to the Tribunal. A case friend does this by acting on behalf of a child when making an appeal.

Children and their parents can ask the Tribunal for a case friend for the child.

Case friends can also help children to understand information given to them about the ALN system.

A Case friend can have an advocate in the same way that a child can have one.

Making an appeal to the Tribunal

Children, their parents and young people can appeal to the Tribunal where they disagree with a decision made by a local authority or college. A case friend can help a child do this. Appeals to the Tribunal cannot be made about decisions made by schools and PRUs. Children, their parents, and young people can ask the local authority to reconsider a decision made by a school or PRU. The local authority must do this and make a decision about what should happen.

If a child, their parent or a young person disagrees with the local authority decision about what should happen next, they can appeal to the Tribunal.

Children, their parents or young people can make an appeal to the Tribunal about:

- a decision by a college or local authority about whether a child or young person has ALN
- a decision by a local authority that it is not necessary to make an IDP for a young person
- the way a child or young person's ALN is described in their IDP

- the additional learning provision that has been included in an IDP
- the additional learning provision that has not been included in an IDP
- a decision about if additional learning provision should be in Welsh
- not including a particular nursery, school or college in an IDP
- not including other provision that is needed – like not including board and lodging to attend a particular nursery, school or college
- a local authority decision not to be responsible for an IDP instead of a nursery, school, PRU or college
- a local authority decision not to change an IDP that the school or PRU is responsible for
- a college or local authority refusing to decide if a child or young person has ALN because it has decided this before and does not think that anything has changed
- a decision to end an IDP

Getting help from organisations who know about ALN and the support children and young people should get

Children, their parents or young people can talk to their teacher, personal tutor or ALNCo if they think they have ALN.

If your child does not attend a maintained school you can talk to a professional like a health visitor or you can tell your local authority.

A lot of organisations can provide information and advice about ALN, including:

- your local authority
- [SNAP Cymru](#)
- [the National Deaf Children's Society](#)
- [National Autistic Society Cymru](#)
- [the Royal National Institute of Blind People \(RNIB\) Cymru](#)
- [the Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

You can also email the [Welsh Government](#).

5. When and how children and young people will move to the new system

When children and young people will move to the ALN system

Summary

Moving children and young people from the SEN system to the ALN system will take place over 3 school years. The move started in September 2021 and will finish in August 2024.

We are taking 3 years to make sure there is enough time for nurseries, schools, PRUs, colleges and local authorities to discuss the support needed and to prepare plans.

Children who do not have SEN

1 September 2021	The ALN system started for children (from birth up to, and including, Year 10) who did not have SEN on 1 September. This is because they were not receiving any special education provision before 1 September 2021.
1 January 2022	The ALN system starts for children who do not have special education provision on 1 January 2022 – even if they did have special education provision on 1 September 2021.

Children who have SEN

Children will move from the SEN system to the ALN system in groups. The first group moving from the SEN system to the ALN system are children who:

- go to a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU and have SEN with support through early years action, early years action plus, school action or school action plus; and
- do not have a SEN statement and are not involved in an SEN statement process (such as waiting for a decision about an SEN assessment or waiting for a decision about an SEN statement)

Timetable for when children in the first group must be moved to the ALN system

Spring and summer terms of the school year 2021 to 2022	Nursery Years 1 or 2, Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 or Year 10
School year 2022 to 2023	Nursery Years 1 and 2, Year 1, Year 5, Year 9 and Year 10
School year 2023 to 2024	Year 4 and Year 8 and any other pupils with SEN on 1 January 2022 who did not move to the ALN system during the first and second years of implementation

Children in the first group to move, and their parents, do not need to wait for a school, PRU or local authority to contact them about a child moving to the new system – they can ask to move to the new system at any time.

This means at any time from January 2022 children and their parents can ask to move to the new system. It does not matter whether or not this is when the school, PRU or local authority plans to move them.

Other groups of children and young people will move from the SEN system to the ALN system between September 2022 and August 2024. We will issue guidance about this later.

More detail about how children move to the ALN system comes after the section on what to do if you think your child has ALN.

If you think your child has ALN

If your child did not have SEN on 1 September 2021, the ALN system applies to your child. The ALN system will also apply if your child had SEN on 1 September 2021 but did not have SEN on 1 January 2022.

If you think your child has ALN then what action to take depends on the age of the child and if they go to a local authority nursery or school.

Children who attend a local authority nursery, a local authority school or a PRU, or their parents, can tell the ALNCo, the headteacher or the class teacher they think the child has ALN. The nursery, school or PRU must make a decision about if the child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP.

Parents of children from birth up to age 5 (under compulsory school age) who do not attend a local authority nursery or local authority school can tell the local authority early years additional learning needs lead officer (early years ALNLO) or the early years ALN team. Sometimes the team will be called the birth to 5 years inclusion team or the early years inclusion team.

You can tell the local authority you think your child has ALN at any time. The child does not need to be referred by a professional (such as a health visitor, childcare provider or nursery provider) and a child does not have to have any particular type or level of need for someone to tell a local authority that the child might have ALN.

When you tell the local authority you think your child has ALN, the local authority must make a decision about if your child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP.

Before contacting the local authority you might want to speak to a professional such as a health visitor to discuss your concerns.

Children of compulsory school age up to, and including, Year 10 who do not attend a local authority school or PRU, or their parents, can tell the local authority ALN team they think the child has ALN.

You can tell the local authority you think your child has ALN at any time. The child does not need to be referred by a professional (such as an educational psychologist, speech and language therapist or a medical professional) and a child does not have to have any particular type or level of need for someone to tell a local authority that the child might have ALN.

When you tell the local authority you think your child has ALN, the local authority must make a decision about if your child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP.

There are lots of ways of getting help and advice about ALN. There are also lots of things that can be done if a child or their parent is not happy with the support they/the child receives. These are set out in section 4.

Children who are new to the system

On 1 September 2021 the ALN system started for children (from birth up to, and including, Year 10) who did not have SEN on 1 September. These children are called being new to the system. This is because they were not receiving any special education provision before 1 September 2021.

Children who are new to the system also includes children who do not have special education provision on 1 January 2022 – even if they did have special education provision on 1 September 2021.

Children who are new to the system cannot be involved with the statement process. This means that they are not waiting for an assessment to be done or are not waiting for a statement to be made for them.

The ALN system starts for all children (from birth up to, and including, Year 10) who are newly identified as having, or newly thought to have, ALN. It does not matter where they have their education. Children who attend an independent nursery or school, a local authority nursery or school, a PRU, a college, or children who are electively home educated are all included.

This means that if a local authority nursery, a local authority school, a PRU or a local authority thinks a child has ALN or is told a child has ALN, they must make a decision about if a child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP. Children and parents can tell a local authority nursery, a local authority school, a PRU or a local authority a child could have ALN. It does not have to be a professional like a health visitor or a doctor (though it might be).

Children who are new to the system and attend a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU

If a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU thinks a child who is new to the system has ALN, or may have ALN, they must make a decision about whether they have ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP for the child. They will have 35 school days to do this.

A nursery, school or PRU could think a child may have ALN because they are not making good progress or because their parent or someone else (such as a doctor) has said they think the child may have ALN.

Sometimes it will be the local authority that must make the decision about a child who attends a nursery, school or PRU. This could be because a child who attends a nursery, school or PRU:

- has complex needs
- is looked after by the local authority
- is also registered at another education place (such as another school or a PRU); or
- is not registered at a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU

A local authority has 12 weeks to make a decision and, if required, prepare an IDP.

Children who are new to the system and do not attend a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU

Some children do not attend a local authority nursery, local authority school or a PRU. This includes children who are:

- under compulsory school age and are looked after by their family, go to an independent nursery or go to a childminder
- attend an independent school
- educated at home by their parents (electively home educated)
- are educated other than at school (EOTAS)

The ALN system makes sure all children with ALN have an IDP whether or not they attend a nursery, school or a PRU.

From 1 September 2021 a child who does not attend a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU, and their parents, can let the local authority know the child has or could have ALN. The local authority must make a decision about whether the child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP. The local authority must do this in 12 weeks.

The local authority must make a decision about all children they are told about if they do not attend a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU. Children do not need to have complex needs for the local authority to make a decision.

It does not matter who tells the LA that a child might have ALN. This might be done by the parents or by professionals including health visitors, doctors, private nursery school staff and childminders.

A child does not have to have any particular type or level of need for someone to tell a local authority that the child might have ALN

Children with SEN who attend a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU

Children will move from the SEN system to the ALN system in groups. The first group moving from the SEN system to the ALN system are children who:

- go to a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU and have SEN with support through early years action, early years action plus, school action or school action plus; and
- do not have a SEN statement and are not involved in an SEN statement process (such as waiting for a decision about an SEN assessment or waiting for a decision about an SEN statement)

Local authority nurseries, local authority schools, PRUs and local authorities must move these children from the SEN system to the ALN system between January 2022 and August 2024.

Timetable for when children in the first group must be moved to the ALN system

Spring and summer terms, school year 2021 to 2022	Nursery Years 1 or 2, Year 1, Year 3, Year 5, Year 7 or Year 10
School year 2022 to 2023	Nursery Years 1 and 2, Year 1, Year 5, Year 9 and Year 10
School year 2023 to 2024	Year 4 and Year 8 and any other pupils with SEN on 1 January 2022 who did not move to the ALN system during the first and second years of implementation

If a local authority nursery, local authority school, PRU or local authority does not move a child by 30 August in the year they are supposed to move them, the child will automatically move to the ALN system on 31 August.

This means that if a child is, for example, due to move to the ALN system during the spring and summer terms of the school year 2021 to 2022 and they have not had an IDP notice or a no IDP notice by 30 August they will move to the ALN system on 31 August 2022.

The local authority nursery, local authority school or the PRU must then make a decision about if the child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP within 35 school days from 31 August 2022. A local authority has 12 weeks from 31 August 2022 to make a decision and, if required, prepare an IDP.

How local authority nurseries, local authority schools, PRUs and local authorities move children to the ALN system

Most children will move from the SEN system to the ALN system when their local authority nursery, local authority school, PRU or local authority gives them an IDP notice.

Nurseries, schools and PRUs will give most of the IDP notices but sometimes a local authority will give an IDP notice.

Local authorities will give IDP notices to children who are looked after and children who are registered at more than one education place (such as a PRU and a school).

An IDP notice means a nursery, school, PRU or local authority has decided a child has ALN and an IDP will be made for the child.

It is most likely that children who had SEN with provision via early years action, early years action plus, school action or school action plus will have ALN.

On occasion, a child who had SEN will be given a notice called a no IDP notice. A no IDP notice means the nursery, school, PRU or local authority has decided the child does not have ALN and an IDP will not be made for the child.

Children may be given a no IDP notice because their needs have changed and they no longer need support to learn.

Section 4 sets out what children, and their parents, or young people can do if they do not agree with a decision made by the nursery, school, PRU or local authority to give a no IDP notice.

How children and their parents can ask for a child to move to the ALN system

Children in the first group moving from the SEN system to the ALN system, and their parents, can ask to move to the ALN system at any time after 1 January 2022.

Children and their parents can do this by asking the local authority nursery, local authority school, PRU or local authority to move them to the ALN system by issuing a notice. This can be done in writing (such as in an email or message) or verbally (such as in person or in a phone call).

The local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU must issue an IDP notice or a no IDP notice within 15 school days. A local authority must issue an IDP notice, or a no IDP notice within 15 working days.

Sometimes a local authority will issue an ALN notice to move a child to the ALN system. The local authority must do this in 10 working days.

Automatically moving from the SEN system to the ALN system

There are some changes of circumstances that mean a child will automatically move from the SEN system to the ALN system.

This means that a notice does not need to be given to a child and their parent for the child to move from the SEN system to the ALN system.

A child will automatically move if they were at a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU on 1 January 2022 and then:

- became a registered pupil or an enrolled student at another education place, such as another school or PRU (became registered at more than one education place)
- became looked after by a local authority in Wales; or
- stopped going to the school (this does not include if a child stopped going to the school at the end of nursery to move to primary or stopped going at the end of primary school to attend senior school).

If a child was looked after on 1 January 2022 and stopped being looked after, they will automatically move to the new system.

Also, if a child was going to 2 education places (such as 2 schools or a PRU and a school) on 1 January 2022, and then only went to one education place, the child will automatically move to ALN system.

Automatically moving means the local authority nursery, the local authority school, the PRU or the local authority must make a decision about if a child has ALN when it thinks a child might have ALN. If it decides the child has ALN, the local authority nursery, the local authority school, the PRU or the local authority must give the child an IDP.

Groups of children moving between September 2022 and August 2024

The following groups of children and young people will move to the ALN system between September 2022 and August 2024.

- Children who have SEN and do not go to a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU
- Children who are in Year 11
- Children who have a statement of SEN or an education and healthcare plan (EHCP)
- Children who are involved in an SEN statement process

A timetable for moving these children and young people from the SEN system to the ALN system will be published in 2022.

6. Frequently asked questions

My child has never had a support plan but could use some help – what do I do?

If your child did not have SEN on 1 September 2021, the ALN system applies to your child. The ALN system will also apply if your child had SEN on 1 September 2021 but did not have SEN on 1 January 2022.

If you think your child has ALN then what action to take depends on the age of the child and if they go to a local authority nursery or school.

Children who attend a local authority nursery, a local authority school or a PRU, or their parents, can tell the ALNCo, the headteacher or the class teacher they think the child has ALN. The nursery, school or PRU must make a decision about if the child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP.

Parents of children from birth up to age 5 (under compulsory school age) who do not attend a local authority nursery or local authority school can tell the local authority ALN lead officer (early years ALNLO) or the early years ALN team. Sometimes the team will be called the birth to 5 years inclusion team or the early years inclusion team.

You can tell the local authority you think your child has ALN at any time. The child does not need to be referred by a professional (such as a health visitor, childcare provider or nursery provider) and a child does not have to have any particular type or level of need for someone to tell a local authority that the child might have ALN.

When you tell the local authority you think your child has ALN, the local authority must make a decision about if your child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP.

Before contacting the local authority you might want to speak to a professional such as a health visitor to discuss your concerns.

Children of compulsory school age up to, and including, Year 10 who do not attend a local authority school or PRU, or their parents, can tell the local authority ALN team they think the child has ALN.

You can tell the local authority you think your child has ALN at any time. The child does not need to be referred by a professional (such as an educational psychologist, speech and language therapist or a medical professional) and a child does not have to have any particular type or level of need for someone to tell a local authority that the child might have ALN.

When you tell the local authority you think your child has ALN, the local authority must make a decision about if your child has ALN and, if required, prepare an IDP.

There are lots of ways of getting help and advice about ALN. There are also lots of things that can be done if a child, or their parent, is not happy with the support the child receives. These are set out in section 4.

My child has SEN and has support through school action/school action plus. Will my child have ALN and have an IDP?

The meaning of SEN and ALN are the same. It is most likely children with SEN will have ALN. All children who have ALN will have an IDP.

On occasion, a child who had SEN will not have ALN because their needs have changed and they no longer need additional support to help learn.

The child will be issued with a no IDP notice. If the child or their parent do not agree with the no IDP notice they can talk to the local authority nursery, local authority school, PRU or local authority about it.

Children, or their parents, can ask the local authority to reconsider a local authority nursery, local authority school or PRU decision. If they are unhappy with the local authority decision, they can appeal to the Tribunal for it to decide.

My child has SEN and has support through school action/school action plus. Will the support my child receives change under the ALN system?

When children move to the ALN system, it is most likely they will continue to receive the same support. This is because the law says local authority nurseries, local authority schools, PRUs and local authorities must think about the support a child is already getting when they make the IDP.

Sometimes a child's needs will have changed and the child may need less support or more support. Children and parents should be involved in discussions about support needs.

If all children with ALN have an IDP, will all children have the same type of provision?

The current system of school action, school action plus and statement is called a graduated approach. The idea of a graduated approach is to start off with a small amount of special education provision and if this does not help a child to make progress, then more support will be given. This means children can move from school action to school action plus and to statements depending on the amount of support they need.

School action, school action plus and statements are being replaced by the ALN system. But schools, PRUs and local authorities may still use a graduated approach when supporting children and young people with ALN.

The graduated response may, for example, be called school-based provision (additional learning provision is delivered by staff working in the school), targeted provision (additional learning provision is delivered by specialist staff such as speech and language therapists) and specific provision (such as a placement in a special school) for those children with ALN who have more complex needs.

A graduated approach under the ALN system is different to the graduated approach under the SEN system.

Under SEN system not all levels of the graduated approach were put in a statutory plan (a statement). Only high-level support needs or complex support needs were put in a statement. Low-level (school action) and medium-level (school action plus) support needs were put in an individual education plan. An individual education plan is not a statutory plan.

Under the ALN system, all levels of the graduated approach will be put in a statutory plan (an IDP). High-level, medium-level and low-level support needs will be put in an IDP.

The graduated approach relates to the level of support that is set out in an IDP.

This means all children who have ALN will have a statutory plan (an IDP) regardless of the level of additional learning provision they need. This is because IDPs are used for all levels of the graduated approach.

An IDP may start off by saying a small amount of additional learning provision will be provided by the school. If the child does not make progress then the IDP will be reviewed and will set out any more support a child may need. This might include provision delivered by teachers or by other services such as a speech and language therapist.

If a child continues not to make progress, they may need more support than the school can provide. The school will then refer the IDP to the local authority.