

# Post-16 ALN reform

Cross-party group on learning disability 12 December 2023

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# Post -16 ALN reform - presentation overview



- Terms and definitions
- What do we think is wrong?
- What are we trying to do about it?
- What are we calling for?

# Glossary



## **ALN - additional learning need(s)**

- formerly known as special educational needs or SEN

## **ALP - additional learning provision**

- is the provision made available to meet learners ALN

## **IDP - individual development plan**

- comparable to and education, health and care plan [EHCP] in England or a learning and skills plan [LSP] in Wales under the former special educational needs [SEN] system

## **FEI - further education institution**

- mainstream FE college

## **ILS – independent living skills**

- programmes for learners with complex ALN in FEIs

## **ISPI – independent special post-16 institution**

- specialist FE college

# Independent Special Post-16 institutions



The ALNET Act uses the term Independent Special Post-16 Institution (ISPI) to define specialist FE colleges.

We believe that:

- this term is alienating and makes it difficult for anyone to understand
- in the twenty first century, using the word 'institution' to describe provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities is outdated and inappropriate.

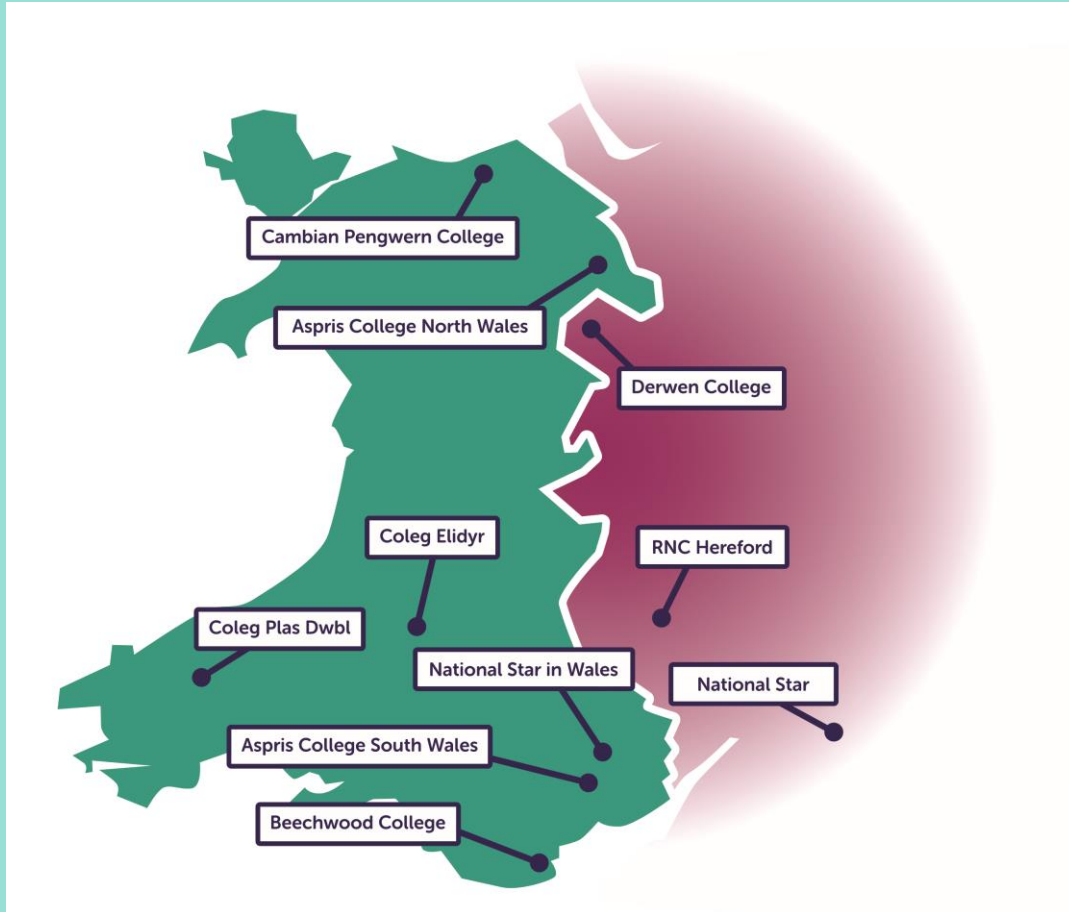
We use the term **specialist colleges** and Estyn use the term **independent specialist colleges**

This is welcomed, however the word independent is associated with private schools where fees are paid privately as a matter of choice, but all specialist FE colleges are entirely state funded and Welsh Government devolves responsibility for FE for these learners to the specialist sector.

# Specialist FE colleges in Wales and on the English border

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Wales has seven specialist FE colleges

# ALN post-16 reform What do we think is wrong?

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# We are concerned that...



- the ALN reforms will result in a drop in the number of learners with additional learning needs being able to access further education and training
- this is because learners whose ALP may be a specialist FE college have to navigate a complicated and compromised system before their FE programme can be agreed

# Existing SEN arrangements



- Welsh Government use 'discretionary powers' ensure all learners with complex ALN leaving special school aged 19 can progress to FE colleges
- It is expected that most learners will be offered places in their regional FEIs.
- Careers Wales Advisors create a Learning and Skills Plan (LSP) that is used to facilitate applications to specialist colleges when it is decided that is the right ALP.
- Placements at specialist colleges are commissioned and monitored by a post-16 ALN team within Welsh Government's Support for Learners Division
- No data is collected by Welsh Government on post-college destinations of learners on ILS courses in FEIs.



# ALN and Tertiary education reform

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- Decision making and funding for learners whose ALP may be a specialist college is being devolved to local authorities
- The lead commissioner role will no longer exist
- Careers Wales Advisors will have no statutory role
- If a learners ALN cannot be met an FEI then LA officials are required to assess a 'reasonable need' for education and training and take responsibility for maintaining that learners IDP
- IDP outcomes will be used to inform assessments of a reasonable need
- Entitlement to education and training is limited to 2 years
- It is not clear if this a post-school or a post-16 entitlement
- Because of the ambiguity, some LAs are already planning to move special school leavers straight in day services provision if they are unable to attend their 'local' FEI
- Specialist colleges will not come under the auspices of the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

# Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance (TSANA)



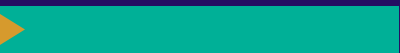
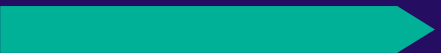
## [Position statement on post-16 ALN reform](#)

TSANA is calling for clarification statements from Welsh Government on LA duties in respect of post-16 education and training for Wales' young people with complex ALN.



What are we trying to do about it?

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# We want to be part of the solution

- In their [Thematic Review of the new ALN system](#), Estyn have identified that LAs don't know enough about the post-16 FE options for learners with complex ALN whose needs can't be met by their regional FEI. They said: *local authorities are not able to make informed decisions about the full range of additional learning provision across the post-16 sector, when they know so little about the sector and what it provides (Main findings para 11).*

We are facilitating a national programme of events for LA and Health Officials

# FE partnership project

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Jointly funded by Welsh Government, 5 FE partnerships have been established between mainstream and specialist FE colleges.



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan  
Lywodraeth Cymru  
Part Funded by  
Welsh Government

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**How partnership working across further education institutions and specialist further education colleges can benefit learners with additional learning needs**

**A Report on the Welsh Government and Natspec further education partnership project**

# Recognising and recording progress and achievement

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Wales-facing guidance on  
recognising and recording  
progress and achievement  
(RARPA)

linking the progress of  
learners with complex ALN  
to Estyn's inspection  
framework and the ALN  
Code

English

Cymraeg

## Recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA)

Guidance for learners with additional learning needs

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# An inclusive FE system

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Welsh Government do not define what they mean by inclusion in education.

A wholly-place-based definition means some people will be excluded from FE because of the complexities of ALN they face

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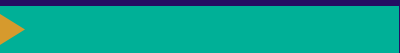
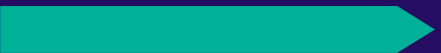


**Inclusion in Further  
Education**

Natspec's perspective

What do we want?

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# We are calling for..



## **Welsh Government to:**

- clarify ambiguities in the ALN Code on entitlement to further education and training, lengths of programmes, what they mean by inclusion in education and assessments of a 'reasonable need'
- protect funding for learners whose ALP is a specialist college
- encourage FE providers to work together to meet learners needs and aspirations
- monitor if IDPs are being ended because of the ALP learners need
- monitor the numbers of learners dropping out of FEIs because they are unable to cope
- not to exclude this group of learners from monitoring, evaluation and research

## **Wider stakeholders to:**

- adopt a national approach to post-16 information and guidance for learners with low incidence and complex ALN
- ensure pre-entry protocols are transparent and timely and understood

# Thank you for listening..



For further information visit  
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