

CYPE(6)-18-22 - Paper to note 12

Education reforms: Additional Learning Needs

September 2022

Dear Jayne Bryant MS,

We are writing to you regarding the publication of the *Key education reforms: summer 2022 check-in letter*. Thank you for raising this issue with the Welsh Government and drawing attention to these concerning matters.

We hope the below information assists in the Committee's inquiry into the Reforms and discussions with the Education Minister and the Welsh Government.

We are currently surveying parents/carers of deaf children and professionals who work with deaf children about their thoughts and understandings of the ALN Reforms. We want to highlight some early evidence from these surveys before the next Committee meeting. We will soon submit a full response to the Committee's inquiry on the ALN Reforms once our surveys are complete.

Priority issue areas:

- IDP eligibility
- The use of non-statutory one-page profiles for deaf learners in place of IDPs
- Deeply rooted misunderstandings of the ALN Reforms amongst professional staff across Wales as a result of misinformation

The early findings from our surveys have not alleviated our long-standing concerns around the implementation of the ALN Reforms. Of particular concern are the; the 'raising of the bar' for IDP eligibility, the use of one-page profiles in place of IDPs and misinformation amongst professionals.

IDP eligibility

As outlined in the [letter](#) dated January 12, 2022, we were worried about misinterpretations on IDP eligibility which could negatively affect deaf children. We were concerned that there would be an effective 'raising of the bar' in terms of who is eligible for the statutory support plan.

Sadly, our evidence currently suggests that IDP eligibility continues to be misinterpreted and that there has been a raising of the bar for IDP eligibility.

Non-statutory one-page profiles

As mentioned above, we are concerned that the threshold for eligibility is being raised as some deaf learners are receiving non-statutory one-page profiles as opposed to IDPs. This is effectively recreating the Individual Education Plan/Statement divide of statutory and non-statutory plans.

There is no established system set-up to challenge these one-page profiles and there is no pathway for legal recourse. We are concerned that the non-statutory nature of one-page profiles may not be being made clear to parents or deaf learners being given them.

The aim of the Reforms, as detailed by the ALN Code, does not envision a system where some children receive non-statutory plans by the back door. This is in effect raising the bar for IDP eligibility for learners with additional learning needs.

ALN Reforms misinformation

Early responses to our professionals survey tells us that there are concerns around how deeply rooted misinformation regarding the ALN Reforms are. Professionals are telling us that their workload is being taken up with correcting misinformation that is prevalent throughout their local authority areas.

We have received casework that have added to our concerns. In one example, a school said that it could not afford the support so decided not to provide an IDP, rather than seeing whether the IDP could be owned by a local authority. We have also received an example from a Teacher of the Deaf outlining that the information on assessments they had completed for a child and provided to the school was not considered by the ALNCO to be “evidence” for an IDP.

More information

Thank you for taking the time to consider the issue areas raised above. If you would like more information or to discuss this further then please contact george.baldwin@ndcs.org.uk.