

Sharon Davies, Head of Education
Welsh Local Government Association

Cc. Pierre Bernhard-Grout, Liaison/Policy Officer
Association of Directors of Education in Wales

Cc. Jeremy Miles MS
Minister for Education and Welsh Language

17 July 2023

Implementation of education reforms (2nd check-in)

Dear Sharon,

You may be aware that the Children, Young People and Education Committee is carrying out a [Senedd-long inquiry](#) into the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system. We are doing this through a series of 'check-ins' to consider progress and any emerging and established issues associated with implementation.

As part of our second check-in we visited several schools, conducted focus groups with practitioners and held a scrutiny session with the Minister for Education and Welsh Language on [10 May 2023](#). We also received a range of [written evidence from stakeholders](#).

I will take this opportunity to remind you that you can submit your views to us as often as you like, at any time, and about any issue relating to either education reform.

The role of the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO)

The Committee is keen to learn more about collaboration under the new ALN system between local authorities, schools, and health boards. Improvements in such collaboration are an intended benefit of the new system. The new statutory Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) role that local health boards are required to designate is a key part of achieving this.

We have heard some anecdotal evidence about schools and local authorities struggling to gain the input of health services and sometimes having to write Individual Development Plans (IDPs) in the absence of such input and information from the NHS where this is much needed.

We would be grateful on your views on this and the extent to which the new ALN system has brought about the intended improvements to joint working between schools, local authorities and the NHS. For example, how much of a difference is the statutory DECLO role making on the ground?

The roles of schools and local authorities in relation to IDPs

Another point that has featured in our scrutiny is the balance between IDPs that are the responsibility of schools and those that are the responsibility of local authorities. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 states that a local authority should be responsible for preparing and maintaining an IDP where a school cannot adequately do this or it is not reasonable for them to do so.

The ALN Code sets out some criteria for how this could be interpreted and envisages that local authorities establish and publish a set of principles they will apply when determining whether it is reasonable for a school rather than the local authority to have responsibility. The Minister told us on 10 May that around half of local authorities had done this to date and he was anticipating the remainder would do by the end of the summer term.

We would appreciate your comments on how this aspect of the ALN reforms is working in practice, the frequency with which there are differing perspectives between schools and local authorities on where responsibility for IDPs should lie, and an update on the progress of local authorities in publishing the set of principles to guide how they will take such decisions.

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter no later than 31 August 2023.

We have copied in the Association of Directors of Education in Wales to this letter, should you wish to issue a joint response. We have also copied in the Minister for Education and Welsh Language.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.