

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 49

Ymateb gan: Mudiad Meithrin

Response from: Mudiad Meithrin

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

The majority of Mudiad Meithrin settings have adopted the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings and cope well with the requirements of this curriculum. They are supported by Mudiad Meithrin Cylchoedd Support Co-ordinators, the Mudiad Meithrin's Foundation Learning Department and local authority advisory teachers where relevant.

Mudiad Meithrin has provided dedicated training for Cwlwm member practitioners on interpreting the curriculum, planning, and the role of adults, experiences and environments in the curriculum through the Mudiad Meithrin academy.

A number of relevant resources for practitioners, parents/carers and CWLWM members can be found on Mudiad Meithrin's website and Hwb. The Foundation Learning Department has three dedicated staff members who provide resources, training and support on implementing the curriculum. Mudiad Meithrin's Foundation Learning Department collaborates closely with Cwlwm members and with the Welsh Government's Foundation Learning department, working in partnership and sharing relevant messages with practitioners and settings.

The application of the definition of ALN and cases of 'raising the bar':

Anecdotal evidence points to a concern that fewer children are receiving an IDP before attending a maintained setting, so more research is needed to find out whether the Code is being implemented consistently across Wales. If there are cases in which the threshold for the ALN definition has been raised, we are concerned about its long-term side effects on children's rights.

Support for non-maintained settings in terms of the new ALN system:

Practitioners say that not enough specialist advice is available to equip them with the knowledge for how best to support a disabled or neurodivergent child. They say that experts are needed to visit the settings and provide advice, guidance, and ideas on suitable activities and resources. The picture across Wales is inconsistent.

One Cylch Meithrin reported that a child with a lack of development in speech, language and communication had been identified as having ALN by the local authority. Although he had an IDP listing the additional learning provision, the leader of the Cylch Meithrin said that no-one had visited the Cylch to offer guidance and suggestions regarding interventions to be trialled in the cylch. The practitioners have come to know the child and developed a relationship with him, but they feel that they have not been given more expert guidance to be able to support him in the most suitable way.

There is no expectation for the Cylch to have this expertise, and the practitioners understand professionals such as speech, language and communication therapists are busy and struggle to see every child. Considering the emphasis on early intervention in the Code as an important strategy for preventing the development of any needs or difficulties, action should therefore be taken to ensure that the practitioners who deal with the child from day to day are given the correct advice and guidance.

Factors that could affect the operation of the ALN system:

The principles of the Code are broadly welcomed, but funding systems put non-maintained settings in impossible situations and the effect of this is a lack of fair access for children with ALN.

Funding for additional assistance is more likely to be available for children who are eligible under the Childcare Offer. The problem here is that the Childcare Offer is based on the eligibility of the parents/carers, not the child. This will exclude disabled and neurodivergent children from fair access to childcare and education, despite the possibility that opportunities to play and interact with people and children are one of the interventions that would make a real difference to such children.

One practitioner described the tension of wanting to admit a disabled or neurodivergent child, but that the support was not available to the setting because the child was not eligible for the Childcare Scheme:

'If a child does not receive the childcare offer, unfortunately there is no help for the child in this regard. I understand that they perhaps do not have to attend, but if social services get in touch and ask us to take these children, or if parents ask us to take them so they can have a little bit of a break, it is our responsibility to ensure that all children are treated inclusively'.

This Cylch Leader added that she had paid for additional staff from the Cylch's coffers when their request for funding was rejected, and that the Cylch Meithrin had purchased special resources to meet the child's needs.

This shows a willingness to accept and support children with ALN; however, non-maintained settings often find themselves in a difficult situation due to a lack of funding for additional members of staff as well as trying to provide the best support to the individual child and other children in the setting.

Specific challenges and opportunities in terms of implementing the ALN system:

An attempt to address the mixed messages led to the creation of a blog on the Cwlwm website - a text that was approved by the Welsh Government. We no longer believe that this is sufficient, and that the Government should therefore provide clear examples of what is expected of providers under the duty set out in the ALN Code. More definitive guidelines would help providers to understand what is expected of them, provide consistency across Wales, and help to understand what is considered good practice for providers.

Welsh-medium ALN provision remains challenging; we believe the picture and the information about the current situation need to be better, as they can serve as a baseline for measuring progress over the next few years to remedy the situation of inequity facing children with ALN in Welsh-medium care and education.