

Lynne Neagle AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref LN/01428/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

14 January 2026

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition submitted by Danielle Jones about access to support for children with additional learning needs (ALN) in Wales.

I share the concern highlighted in the petition that some families experience difficulties in accessing support without a formal diagnosis of neurodivergent conditions. On this point the law is clear: support for children with ALN should always be based on need, and a diagnosis of a condition is not required for a decision on a learner's ALN and for additional learning provision (ALP). Equally, the presence of a formal medical diagnosis does not necessarily mean that a child or young person has ALN. Decisions about ALN must be based on whether a learner's needs call for ALP. This principle is central to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the ALN Code, which set out the legal framework for ensuring children and young people receive the right support to access education effectively.

The ALN system is founded on a person-centred and needs-led approach that puts the focus on meeting the learner's needs rather than on the type of disability or learning difficulty they have. Achieving excellence, equity and wellbeing for all children and young people is at the heart of our education system. We want to create an inclusive education system where learners' need are listened to and responded to, and where all learners are supported to participate fully in education.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

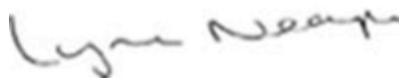
We are aware that some families experience difficulties in accessing support without a formal diagnosis. These issues can arise from local variations in practice or misunderstandings of the legal requirements. The Welsh Government continues to engage with local authorities, schools, and parents to improve awareness of the legal framework and support consistent implementation of the ALN system needs-based provision. Monitoring and feedback from families helps us identify and address barriers to access.

The petition also raises concerns about children being denied full-time education or placed on reduced or part-time timetables. The Welsh Government guidance is clear that part-time timetables should be used only in exceptional circumstances and as a short-term measure, with the aim of returning learners to full-time education where possible. We recognise concerns about their increased use and intend to publish further guidance on part-time timetables and other forms of hidden exclusion.

This, and other misconceptions are tackled head on in the new ALN parent and carer [toolkit](#), which is designed to help families understand how the ALN system works and what support is available if a child or young person is considered to have ALN. Alongside explaining the ALN system, it also provides clear, practical guidance on where families can go for help and support.

I take concerns raised by parents seriously, including the experiences highlighted in this petition. I remain committed to ensuring that all children with ALN receive the support they require to participate fully in education and have the opportunity to thrive.

Yours sincerely,



**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
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