



Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales Act Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council ALN Transformation Project Communication Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

To outline the communication strategy for the implementation of the Central South ALN Transformation Implementation Plan 2021/22 across Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC).

The aims of the communication strategy are to:

- determine objectives and timescales (create timelines, events calendar and prioritise campaigns);
- determine key messages and delivery media;
- identify the ALN Transformation project stakeholders, how to reach them and ensure that the right messages are communicated to the right people at the right time;
- identify key materials to be produced and determine resources required for staff and materials, and assign individual tasks.

The communication plan is flexible and will be reviewed at key points to ensure that any changes to the delivery of actions in the implementation plan, changes in stakeholder perception and changes in partner organisations are reacted to appropriately.

1.2 Target Audience

Below is a list of audiences:

- Assembly members/politicians
- Early Years settings/other early support workers/Schools/ Further Education Institutions
- Broader education system (consortia, Education Workforce Council etc.)
- Unions – including teaching unions
- Local Government
- Third sector, including charities, lobby and special interest groups
- Social Services
- Health professionals
- Legal sector
- Partners organisation staff

- Young people aged 0-25 with ALN Needs in early years, schools and further education.
- Parents/carers of young people with ALN needs up to the age of 25
- Youth Offending Service
- Probation Service
- YEPS
- Independent Advocacy Services
- Careers Wales
- Independent schools and specialist colleges
- Governors of maintained schools and FE colleges

1.3 Background

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill (ALNET Bill) was introduced to the National Assembly for Wales on Monday 12 December 2016. On 12 December 2017, the Bill was passed and later received Royal Assent to become the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. The Act has created the legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision, through a person-centred approach to identifying need early, putting in place effective support and monitoring and adapting interventions to ensure they deliver desired outcomes.

To ensure successful and consistent implementation of the new system, Welsh Government are helping services to prepare for the changes ahead and to develop closer multi-agency and cross-sector working practices. This includes the ALN Transformation Grant to support delivery partners (including Local Authorities, Consortium, FEIs and Local Health Boards) to prepare for transition to the new system. Through this grant, funding has been allocated to the Central South Region to ensure and support the successful delivery of targets, as set by Welsh Government.

2. Aims and Objectives

The prime Welsh Government policy objective is to create a unified legislative framework to support children and young people aged 0-25 years with ALN in schools and FE through the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. It is part of a broader programme to transform support for learners with ALN in Wales.

The adopted communication objectives are therefore:

- To raise awareness of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act through clear, consistent and accurate messages and engagement activities with all stakeholders;
- To ensure stakeholders and the target audience within the Central South Region understand the purpose of the Act and the wider transformation programme through clear messages and targeted communications at key stages;
- To manage expectations, concerns and 'myths' around what the Act means for stakeholders and all those concerned with the new ALN system;

- To support Central South Local Authorities, Further Education Institutions, Health Boards and stakeholders to become ALN Act ready;
- To support stakeholders to take ownership of delivering the transformation by sharing consistent messages and materials with their relevant audiences and clearly explaining any duties or responsibilities that they have under the Act for delivering aspects of the transformed ALN system;
- To ensure stakeholders are aware of the professional development opportunities and raising awareness activities taking place in the region linked to the Central South Implementation Plan 19/20 specifically in relation to RCTCBC, MTCBC and BCBC.

3. Key Messages

- The Act will completely overhaul the system for supporting pupils with ALN, affecting nearly every classroom in Wales
- The Act will place the learner at the heart of that process and will make the system far simpler and less adversarial for those involved, a common complaint of the current system
- The Act is part of a wider programme aimed at transforming the current system to secure successful futures for all learners
- Nearly a quarter of learners in Wales will experience some form of additional learning need during their early years or education
- The current legislative framework for supporting them is based on a model introduced more than 30 years ago, which is widely recognised to no longer be fit for purpose
- Partners within the Central South Region are working regionally and undertaking professional development opportunities and raising awareness activities to support the implementation of the Act
- The Act will:
 - replace the terms ‘special educational needs’ (SEN) and ‘learning difficulties and/or disabilities’ (LDD) with the new term ‘additional learning needs’
 - create a single legislative system to support children and young people aged 0 to 25 who have ALN, instead of the two separate systems currently operating
 - do away with the system of statementing and create a single plan (the individual development plan (IDP) to replace the existing range of statutory and non-statutory SEN/LDD plans for learners, ensuring equity of rights regardless of the learner’s level of need or the education setting they attend.
 - If a child or young person needs additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh, this must be documented in the IDP and ‘all reasonable steps’ must be taken to secure the provision in Welsh.
 - ensure the views of learners and parents are always considered throughout the planning process to ensure all parties view it as something which is done with them rather than to them and that the child or young person is at the centre of everything,

- encourage better collaboration between agencies, so that needs are identified early and the right support is put in place.

4. Approach

As part of the objectives identified in the Central South ALN Transformation implementation plan 2021/22 all Local Authorities, Health Boards and Further Education Institutions have been tasked with producing communication plans specific to their organisations. The milestones and actions detailing in the regional implementation plan have been used to inform these plans. The plans will be used as a basis for providing proactive communications to stakeholders regarding the activity taking place in the region. All communication will be available in accessible formats for children, parents/carers, young people and others to support participation and engagement.

5. Communication Channels

This is not an exhaustive list, but main channels include:

Channel	Notes
Workshops and events	Presentations and workshops at existing and specific events/ forums will allow the dissemination of consistent messages. Organise specific ALN regional events and meetings with target audiences. Attendance at National and other external events. Cross directorate meetings/workshops.
Web	Local Authority and partner organisation websites
Social Media	To raise awareness within the region Local Authority and partner organisation Twitter and Facebook accounts can be used to provide messages regarding activity taking place within the Central South region and any success stories. Promotion of the hashtag #ALNACTREADY
Resources	Including videos, social media content, publications
Newsletters	Use established Welsh Government and stakeholder channels to communicate with schools, teachers and education practitioners.
Written and oral statements	Released at key milestones
Blogs	Use blogs aimed at education practitioners and health/ social services to raise awareness/ stimulate discussion
Reviews and consultations	Consultations using the range of channels above to promote key messages and information as well as ensure that the views, wishes, feelings and aspirations of all stakeholders especially children and young people and their families are considered.

6. Timescales

This communication strategy will be delivered in line with the Central South implementation plan for the financial year 2021/22 (01st April 2021 – 31st March 2022).

7. Budget and Resources

Welsh Government have awarded funding to the Central South Region in relation to Additional Learning Needs Transformation Grant 2021/22.

Local Authorities, Health Boards and Further Education Institutions are responsible for the delivery of their individual organisational communications plan. The successful delivery of these plans will be monitored by the Central South Additional Learning Needs Transformation Lead and the Central South ALN Project Officer.

8. Review of progress

This strategy and delivery of the detailed plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Regional ALN Transformation Board.