



The Future of Special Educational  
Needs/Additional Learning Needs in Powys

**Proposed Strategy**  
**September 2020**



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# Foreword

Over the last 8 months we have had significant engagement with parents, learners, school staff and others to help inform the re-shaping and transformation of the educational provision for children and young people in Powys.

This engagement has now focused our activity on 4 key work streams as we plan for the future:

- The provision of primary and secondary mainstream education, and the need for significant investment to make our facilities fit for delivering a broad 21st century curriculum for all of our learners
- The need to transform our provision for post-16 learners
- The provision needed to provide equity for learners studying in Welsh, improving progression and accessibility
- The need to transform our provision for learners who need additional support, usually defined as learners with special educational needs (SEN) or additional learning needs (ALN).

We hope to spend £350m on the Transformation programme in partnership with Welsh Government, and our intention is that we get it right.

In line with changes in legislation, the LA will be responsible for children and young people with additional learning needs from 0 to 25.

This document is an important development for the final workstream -provision for learners with SEN/ALN.

The current provision for these learners includes in-class support in a mainstream

setting, placement in a specialist facility

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attached to a mainstream school and highly specialist support in one of our special schools.

Through our engagement we know that there is much to be done to provide better alignment of services and greater equity across Powys, as well as a need for investment to enable our schools to be able to make stronger provision for learners with SEN/ALN.

This document is designed to take that dialogue to the next steps. We are setting out a draft vision for how we believe we can make stronger provision for our learners with SEN/ALN – from those who require short-term support to those who need residential care and respite care. We would urge you to read the document, and express your views to us, to help inform our way forward as we plan the most significant investment ever in Powys schools.

Your views will be greatly appreciated as we take matters forward to secure final investment plans.

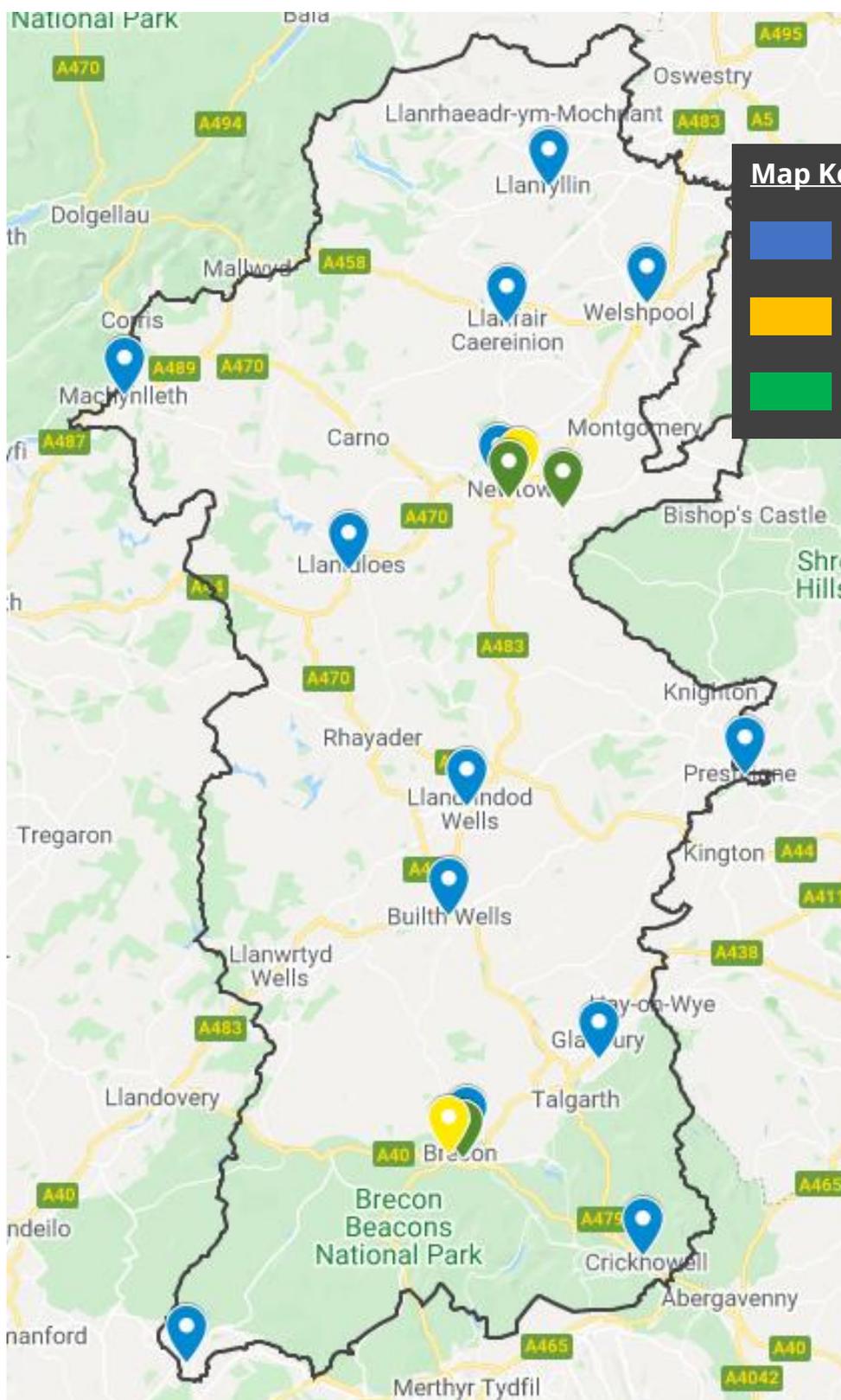
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**Portfolio Holder for Education and Property**

# Current situation in Powys

There are currently 3545 pupils with special educational needs (SEN)/additional learning needs (ALN) in Powys. Out of these, 2011 pupils are on School Action, 1119 are on School Action Plus and 415 pupils have statements of SEN. 279 pupils attend one of the special schools and 138 attend primary or secondary specialist centres. Powys currently has three special schools and two pupil referral unit (PRU) settings, as shown on the map below.



**Map Key**

- Secondary Schools
- Pupil Referral Units
- Special Schools

In addition, there are currently 23 specialist centres in Powys. 19 of these cater mainly for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), based in primary and secondary schools. Four of them are also pre-school assessment centres.

School	Key Stage	Need
Ysgol Cefnlllys	Pre-school	Children with emerging or identified needs
Llanfaes C.P. School	Pre-school	Children with emerging or identified needs
Maesyrhandir C.P. School	Pre-school	Children with emerging or identified needs
Ysgol Golwg y Cwm	Pre-school	Children with emerging or identified needs

School	Key Stage	Need
Builth Wells C.P. School	KS2	MLD
Knighton C.P. School	KS2 in morning FP in afternoon	MLD
Llanidloes C.P. School	KS2	MLD
Maesyrhandir C.P. School	KS2	MLD
Mount Street Infants	FP	MLD
Mount Street Juniors	KS2	MLD
Welshpool C. in W. School	FP and KS2	MLD
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	FP and KS2	MLD
Ysgol Bro Tawe	FP and KS2	ASD and diagnosed social communication difficulties
Ysgol Cefnlllys	FP and KS2	MLD
Ysgol Dyffryn y Glowyr	FP and KS2 Welsh medium	MLD
Ysgol Golwg y Cwm	FP and KS2	MLD

School	Key Stage	Need
Brecon High School	Secondary	ASD and diagnosed social communication difficulties
Llanidloes High School	Secondary	ASD
Ysgol Calon Cymru (Llandrindod Campus)	Secondary	ASD
Ysgol Maesydderwen	Secondary	MLD and ASD

# SEN/ALN Vision – Guiding Principles

The Draft ALN Code of Practice sets out its aim and principles as follows:

## Aim

To support the creation of a fully inclusive education system where all learners are given the opportunity to succeed and have access to an education that meets their needs and enables them to participate in, benefit from, and enjoy learning

## Principles

- a) **A rights-based approach** where the views, wishes and feelings of the child, child's parents/carers or young person are central to planning and provision of support.
- b) **Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning**
- c) **Collaboration** where all involved work together in the best interests of the child or young person
- d) **Inclusive education** supporting participation fully in mainstream education, wherever, feasible and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN.
- e) **A bilingual system** where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver additional learning provision (ALP) in Welsh for children and young people who require support through the medium of Welsh.

## The vision for SEN/ALN in Powys is that:

- All pupils across Powys will receive high quality provision that meets their needs, no matter where they live
- Most pupils with SEN/ALN will be taught in their local mainstream school
- All pupils with SEN/ALN will be placed in a provision that meets their needs, as near to home as is practicably possible, with the appropriate specialist teaching, support and facilities that enables every learner to meet their potential
- There will be a comprehensive range of specialist provision, including special schools, pupil referral unit (PRU), specialist centres, satellite centres and early assessment provision
- This will include both English and Welsh medium provision
- Special schools will cater for those pupils who have the most complex needs, for example severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and complex autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Schools within and across geographical areas will support each other and share effective practice

In the recent engagement exercise, **88%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the draft vision. **5%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **7%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

# Current Issues

The current issues facing Powys at the moment include:

- Until recently, the local authority (LA) has not had a clear enough vision for learners with SEN/ALN
- The purpose of some of the specialist provision has been unclear
- Depending on where pupils live, they have access to a different quality and type of provision
- Some pupils have to travel long distances to reach a provision that meets their needs
- Some pupils who are currently placed in specialist provision (special schools or specialist centres) could be educated in a mainstream school
- Access to provision through the medium of Welsh is inconsistent
- Mainstream schools do not all have the facilities or expertise required to support pupils with a wide range of learning needs

# What should SEN/ALN provision across Powys look like in the future?

It is proposed that all mainstream schools should be supported to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of learning needs. It will only be the pupils with the most complex needs who should be attending specialist provision.

Specialist provision will include:

- Special Schools
- Satellites of special schools
- Specialist centres
- Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
- Behaviour/nurture programmes

In addition, support for pupils will be provided by central staff and outreach services from the specialist provision listed above, as well as from the early years team.

It is proposed that for the purpose of specialist provision, Powys should be divided into a number of geographical areas.

In terms of Welsh medium provision, it may be necessary to develop one county-wide model.

The intention is that each area should have similar (though not identical provision). Differences may be where there is already an existing special school, or where the needs of the region are different. For example, one area may have a greater need for behaviour provision than another.

Pupils will continue to be placed in specialist provision through the relevant LA panel. However, more emphasis will be placed on involving headteachers and ALNCOs in deciding which is the most appropriate provision for an individual child within their area. The LA is very keen to work in partnership with schools to make sure that pupils are placed in the most appropriate setting.

## Areas in which transformation is required

In order to achieve this vision, wholesale transformation is going to be required. This will involve the refiguration of current provision and development of new provision as well as supporting mainstream schools to be able to meet the learners of a wider range of pupils with SEN/ALN.

Alongside the proposed transformation described in this document, there will be a restructure of central services. This will enable the LA to provide the support for schools that will be required to take this transformation forward. Information about the restructure will be provided in a separate paper at the appropriate time, in line with advice from HR.

Six areas of transformation were initially identified:

- Mainstream

- Early support/assessment
- Specialist provision for pupils of statutory school age with the most complex needs
- Specialist centres
- Specialist behaviour provision
- Provision for SEN/ALN learners up to the age of 25

In the recent engagement exercise, **92%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the 6 main areas identified for transformation. **2%** of respondents strongly disagreed, with the remaining **6%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Following the engagement exercise, a further area of transformation has been added: Welsh medium support and provision for pupils with SEN/ALN.

## **Important considerations**

- The aim of this transformation is to make sure that every child and young person with SEN/ALN in Powys receives the education they need to help them develop as happy, confident and independent individuals
- It is not the intention of the LA to close provision suddenly or to move pupils out of a provision if this is not in their best interest. Changes will take place over several years.
- The view of the child or young person will be fully considered in any decision that is made.
- The LA will work closely with parents and carers and other professionals to make sure that provision meets pupils' needs
- There will be a need to monitor and evaluate all aspects of provision on a regular basis to ensure that the system is working effectively.

# Area of Transformation 1: Mainstream

In the recent engagement exercise, **83%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ideas set out under Area of Transformation 1: Mainstream. **4%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **13%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

The **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018**<sup>1</sup> states that local authorities have a duty to favour education for children at mainstream, maintained schools:

## **51 Duty to favour education for children at mainstream, maintained schools**

- (1) A local authority exercising functions under this Part in relation to a child of compulsory school age with additional learning needs who should be educated in a school must secure that the child is educated in a mainstream maintained school unless any of the circumstances in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (2) apply.
- (2) The circumstances are—
  - (a) that educating the child in a mainstream maintained school is incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children
  - (b) that educating the child otherwise than in a mainstream maintained school is appropriate in the best interests of the child and compatible with the provision of efficient education for other children
  - (c) that the child's parent wishes the child to be educated otherwise than in a mainstream maintained school.

## Current Situation

The county has 73 primary schools, 2 infant schools and 2 junior schools – these are a combination of community primaries, Church in Wales voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools, and one foundation school. The county has 9 secondary schools across 11 sites, 2 all-age school, 3 special schools, 2 pupil referral units. 17 of these currently have one or more specialist centres on site.

## Important considerations

- In Powys, there are examples of effective practice in mainstream schools in relation to pupils with SEN/ALN
- However, there are some pupils in specialist provision who could attend mainstream classes. This includes pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and some pupils with ASD.
- All pupils should be educated in the setting that meets their needs best
- Although most pupils will be educated in mainstream schools, some of these may need to attend a specialist centre within a mainstream school. This may be on a short-term basis
- During this period of change, pupils should not be taken out of a specialist provision unless this is in their best interest

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents>

- The purpose of making any proposed changes should be to improve opportunities for children and young people
- Teachers and teaching assistants (Tas) in mainstream schools do not all have sufficient knowledge and expertise in order to meet the needs of pupils with SEN/ALN
- In order for more pupils to be educated in mainstream schools, staff must receive high-quality training – this includes SENCos/ALNCos and Tas as well as senior management and governing bodies
- Training is required in a wide range of areas, including ASD, specific learning difficulties (SpLD) and speech, language and communication difficulties
- Training will enable more pupils to stay in their local school with their friends and siblings.
- Having a sense of belonging and connection is important to pupils' wellbeing
- An audit of the skills of teachers and Tas needs to be carried out to identify any further training required
- Programmes such as ELSA and Incredible Years should be in every relevant setting
- All mainstream schools must be supported to develop a fully inclusive, mentally healthy, nurturing, trauma informed ethos
- Every school should have an emotional wellbeing and mental health policy as well as a designated member of staff to take responsibility for implementation of this policy
- One of the key challenges for schools at the moment is the increasing number of pupils who experience difficulties as a result of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- The wellbeing of all pupils, including those with SEN/ALN is essential in order for pupils to achieve – wellbeing is not always given enough emphasis in schools
- All staff working with pupils with SEN/ALN should understand the vulnerability of these pupils
- All schools should have 'wellbeing' facilities to support pupils who are anxious at an early stage, before their difficulties become more severe
- In order for mainstream schools to be able to address the needs of pupils with SEN/ALN effectively, there is a need to review the way in which funding is delegated to schools
- Some pupils will need additional support from a TA. However, it is crucial that Tas are deployed in a way that will help pupils to develop their learning skills and independence
- Where possible, additional support should be provided to a group of pupils, rather than individuals. This is to ensure that pupils benefit from learning alongside their peers, and that they do not become over-dependent on adult support
- Schools should use provision mapping to support the effective use of interventions and deployment of Tas and should measure the impact of interventions and support
- The impact of the ALN Act and this proposed transformation on the work of SENCOs/ALNCos needs to be recognised and support/training put in place
- School buildings do not always make it easy for schools to support pupils who need time out of the classroom, such as wellbeing centres
- Isolation booths should not be used, as they can be humiliating.
- Not all mainstream schools in Powys are fully accessible for pupils, staff and parents with disabilities, including changing and washing facilities, and adaptations for pupils with visual or hearing impairment

- The current stock of school buildings do not always have the facilities required for staff to carry out essential SEN/ALN work, such as meeting rooms for reviews of statements, rooms for specialists such as educational psychologists and therapists
- All schools should be fully accessible and adaptable to children and young people
- Some school buildings will need reorganising to accommodate the need for safe spaces.
- Support from quality external agencies should be available for all mainstream schools
- Some pupils who are learning English as an additional language (EAL) may also have an SEN/ALN. It is essential that both of these aspects are recognised and appropriate support put in place when required
- Refugees and asylum seekers are especially vulnerable to having significant mental health needs

## What we have already done

- ✓ The local authority is using grant funding in 2020 – 21 to place a clear focus on training for mainstream school staff
- ✓ The LA is funding 14 teachers in 2020 – 2022 to carry out 2-year post-graduate diplomas in ASD, Speech and Language, Behaviour, SPMLD and inclusion
- ✓ These staff will be used to provide support and advice to other schools across Powys
- ✓ We have carried out a review of SEN/ALN delegated funding for implementation in April 2021
- ✓ We have developed a proposed new structure for the central SEN/ALN team, with a clearer focus on support for pupils, families and schools
- ✓ Regular SENCo/ALNCo forum meetings have been planned for the coming year
- ✓ Monthly updates have been provided for schools and governors
- ✓ We have developed a single point of access for all referrals into the Schools Service through the Powys Inclusion Panel (PIP)

## What we plan to do

- A county-wide training programme will be developed, so that staff in all schools can be upskilled in relation to a wider range of SEN/ALN, including autistic spectrum disorder, speech, language and communication difficulties, specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia) and BESD
- The LA ALN service will be strengthened through a restructure, to ensure that central staff have a high level of expertise in specific aspects of SEN/ALN. This may include the secondment of specialist staff from schools
- LA officers will work in teams within specific geographical areas, so that they get to know their schools very well and are able to provide relevant and timely support to schools, pupils and families
- Training will be provided not only by centrally employed staff but also by the special schools, PRU and other specialist provision
- We will work with the special schools and PRU to develop their outreach services in order to provide co-ordinated, consistent advice, support and guidance to more schools

- School-to-school support will be an important part of upskilling schools. This will include identifying and sharing effective practice
- Where appropriate, staff in each area will be trained as trainers, so that they can train other staff within their area on a rolling programme
- We will work with schools to develop a shared understanding of school and LA responsibilities – the LA should only fund over and above what can reasonably be provided by the school
- We will review the deployment of teaching assistants (Tas) across Powys
- The LA will carry out an audit of all school buildings and Pupil Referral Units to identify where work is required
- Plans for new schools will include facilities for supporting pupils with SEN/ALN and for promoting the wellbeing of all pupils
- We will use grant funding to appoint a teacher to support pupils who have English as an Additional Language as well as their families. This teacher will work closely with SEN/ALN specialists to ensure that the needs of these pupils are fully met

# Area of Transformation 2: Early Support/Assessment

In the recent engagement exercise, **79%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ideas set out under Area of Transformation 2: Early Year Support/Assessment. **8%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **13%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

The **draft ALN Code of Practice**<sup>2</sup> states that:

*'Where multi-agency working is required to support children and young people making transitions, the agencies involved should work together to provide personalised, integrated support that delivers positive outcomes for children and young people, bringing together support across education, health, social care and other relevant agencies from early childhood through to adult life'*

and that:

*'The earlier action is taken, the more effective the action is likely to be. Identifying ALN at an early stage and delivering appropriate interventions can also prevent the need for future more costly and less effective interventions'*

## Current Situation

Currently there are four pre-school assessment centres in mainstream schools in Powys. However, most areas of Powys do not have a pre-school centre. Pupils in these areas attend non-specialist pre-school settings.

Numbers of pupils attending these provisions in March 2020 were as follows:

Setting	No of children attending (March 2020)
Cefnlllys	5
Golwg Y Cwm	4
Llanfaes	4
Maesyrrhandir	8

## Important considerations

- Early assessment is crucial, so that the needs of each individual child are identified and support, advice and/or guidance are put in place promptly. In some cases, intervention will be required from birth

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<sup>2</sup> [https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-12/draft-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-12/draft-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales_0.pdf)

- This should include intervention from a range of professionals, including education, health and social care (including CAMHS and Team around the Family)
- In many cases, intervention at an early stage will prevent the need for a higher level of intervention later on
- Support for families is a key element of this intervention
- The time taken from assessment/diagnosis to support is sometimes slow. However, it should be recognised that support does not necessarily mean additional adult support in a setting. It might mean training, advice and guidance for staff.
- Currently, the provision available depends on where a family live
- We need to ensure consistency across Powys, but do not want to lose any good practice
- We need to consider each geographical area, and identify the needs of the children in each area
- The current model of the pre-school specialist centre in some cases is not fit for purpose
- Children attending some of the pre-school specialist centres only attend for around 5 hours a week, alongside 5 hours at another early years setting
- Not all staff in the centres have a high enough level of expertise in SEN/ALN, and intervention is not always targeted enough
- Not all centres have sufficient access to multi-agency support
- Some young children are currently travelling long distances in taxis to reach a specialist centre
- Placing children together who have, for example, speech and language difficulties does not give them role models to copy
- Staff in non-specialist early years settings do not always have the skills they need to support children with SEN/ALN – there is a need to develop training for all staff working in these settings

## What we have already done

- ✓ We have appointed an Early Years Additional Learning Needs Officer (ALNLO). This is a statutory role under the ALN Act.
- ✓ An ALN group, including representatives from Children's Services and Health, meets regularly and reports to the ALN Workstream of the overall Transforming Education Programme
- ✓ An audit has been carried out of all the professionals currently working with pre-school children with SEN/ALN, and what their role consists of
- ✓ A multi-agency model is being developed, and pre-school children who are being identified as having a (possible) SEN/ALN are now referred to the team.

## What we plan to do

- We will develop the multi-agency model further, so that every pre-school child with a possible/identified SEN/ALN receives appropriate assessment and support, wherever they live. The role of the team will be to identify children with (emerging) SEN/ALN, assess their needs, provide advice and guidance to families and settings and monitor the progress made. A multi-

agency model with highly qualified staff should help children to make progress and reduce the need for intervention at a later stage

- We will develop clear criteria for access to the multi-agency model
- We will meet with the headteachers in the areas where there are pre-school specialist centres to discuss the future need and way forward. This **may** involve closing the pre-school centres or changing them into a different type of provision
- We will provide a robust programme of training for early years settings to enable them to identify and feel confident in addressing the needs of children with a range of needs. This is likely to include training and support for play therapy, mental health, Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) and Trauma Informed Schools UK (TISC UK) and Incredible Years.
- This will enable more children to be educated in their own communities alongside their siblings and friends, rather than having to travel long distances to access a specialist provision
- We will develop improved support for children on transition to primary, ensuring that there is a wealth of information which will enable schools to address the needs of pupils from the start
- We will provide support for pre-school settings in the development of individual development plans (IDPs)
- We will consider the need for satellites of the special schools, for children with very complex needs from the age of three

# Area of Transformation 3: Specialist provision for pupils of statutory school age with the most complex needs

In the recent engagement exercise, **83%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ideas set out under Area of Transformation 3: Specialist provision for pupils of statutory school age with the most complex needs. **5%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **12%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Current Situation

In Powys there are currently two special schools for pupils with a range of complex SEN:

- Ysgol Penmaes (Brecon) – for pupils aged 3 to 19
- Ysgol Cedewain (Newtown) - for pupils aged 3 to 19

Current numbers at these two special schools are as follows:

School	March 2020	September 2020
Ysgol Cedewain	120	117
Ysgol Penmaes	110	110

## Important considerations

- There will always be a need in Powys for special school provision for the pupils who have the most complex needs
- Pupil who attend special schools should be those whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream class or specialist centre
- We need to reduce the number of pupils travelling out of county to attend special schools, by ensuring that we can meet their educational needs in our special schools and by working with Children’s Services to develop provision for those who require long-term residential care or respite
- Out-of-county placements should be a last resort
- Parents are concerned about the distances their children sometimes have to travel to reach special school provision
- We need to ensure greater equity across Powys by ensuring that pupils with the most complex needs will be within reach of either one of the special schools or one of the satellite centres, including those who wish to be educated through the medium of Welsh
- Satellites should not be a second best. Pupils attending satellites should have access to the same resources for example a sensory room, audio equipment or modified playground equipment as well as the same level of staff expertise
- By creating satellites, it is hoped that there will be a reduction in home to school transport costs

- Schools hosting a satellite will benefit from the expertise of the specialist staff working in the satellite
- The expertise of special school and specialist centre staff needs to be used more effectively to support other schools, pupils and families

## What we have already done

- ✓ Officers and special school headteachers meet regularly to develop future provision
- ✓ We have developed new draft entry criteria for the special schools
- ✓ Funding for the building of new schools at Cedewain and Brynllwarch has been agreed by Welsh Government. This means that the two schools will have greatly improved facilities. The plans take into account that there will be smaller numbers of pupils in each class, as the needs of pupils in special schools are becoming increasingly complex
- ✓ Seven teachers in special schools are being funded this year to carry out post-graduate diplomas in ASD, severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities (SPMLD), visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) and multi-sensory impairment (MSI). The expertise of these staff will be used to benefit other schools, pupils and their families.
- ✓ Officers have visited satellite provisions in another local authority
- ✓ A model for satellites in Powys is currently being developed

## What we plan to do

- We will finalise and share special school entry and exit criteria
- We will ensure, through the panel, that only those pupils with the most complex needs are given a placement at one of the special schools
- We will develop proposals to open a small number of satellites of the Ysgol Penmaes and/or Ysgol Cedewain for pupils who require special school provision but who do not live near one of the special schools.
- We will carry out an audit to identify the potential need for Welsh medium special school or satellite provision in Powys
- We will work with headteachers and other stakeholders to establish what is best for pupils with significant anxiety and other mental health issues – some of these pupils currently attend the special schools although they are working at a high level
- We will develop closer links between the special schools and mainstream schools so that pupils, where appropriate, can access aspects of both special and mainstream provision and, where appropriate, return to mainstream
- We will work with the special schools to ensure that staff working in these schools have a high level of knowledge and expertise

## **Satellites**

*A satellite is, essentially, a special school class within or attached to a mainstream school. This is a model that works extremely effectively in other LAs.*

*Satellites of special schools in Powys will provide education mainly for pupils who meet the criteria for a special school, but who do not live within easy travelling distance of a special school. They will provide for pupils from the age of three, in line with the special schools, allowing more effective early intervention.*

*Satellites will normally consist of six to eight pupils, with one teacher, one higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) and one teaching assistant (TA) who will either have been seconded from one of the special schools or will be appointed to the role and will be part of the staff of the special school. Dependent on the number of pupils in the class and their level of need, it may be necessary to provide additional TA support.*

*Pupils will be on roll at the special school. If appropriate, they will attend the satellite four days a week and the special school one day a week.*

*Although on the roll of the special school, pupils will be part of the mainstream school. They will access activities such as assemblies, break and lunchtimes, as well as some lessons if appropriate.*

*When setting up satellites, we will need to identify schools with:*

- *Appropriate accommodation*
- *An inclusive ethos*
- *A senior leadership team committed to inclusion*

*A service level agreement between the LA, special school and mainstream school will be produced, to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear.*

# Area of Transformation 4: Specialist centres

In the recent engagement exercise, **78%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ideas set out under Area of Transformation 4: Specialist Centres. **6%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **16%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Current Situation:

There are currently 19 specialist centres for school-age pupils, in addition to the four pre-school centres. These centres cater mainly for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).

School	Key Stage	Need
Builth Wells C.P. School	KS2	MLD
Knighton C.P. School	KS2 in morning FP in afternoon	MLD
Llanidloes C.P. School	KS2	MLD
Maesyrhandir C.P. School	KS2	MLD
Mount Street Infants	FP	MLD
Mount Street Juniors	KS2	MLD
Welshpool C. in W. School	FP and KS2	MLD
Ysgol Bro Hyddgen	FP and KS2	MLD
Ysgol Bro Tawe	FP and KS2	ASD and diagnosed social communication difficulties
Ysgol Cefnlllys	FP and KS2	MLD
Ysgol Dyffryn y Glowyr	FP and KS2 Welsh medium	MLD
Ysgol Golwg y Cwm	FP and KS2	MLD

School	Key Stage	Need
Brecon High School	Secondary	ASD and diagnosed social communication difficulties
Llanidloes High School	Secondary	ASD
Ysgol Calon Cymru (Llandrindod Campus)	Secondary	ASD
Ysgol Maesydderwen	Secondary	MLD and ASD

It should be noted that, although some of the centres were originally designated as centres for pupils with MLD, in reality many of the pupils attending these centres by now have more complex needs.

## Important considerations

- We recognise the need for some specialist centres
- The specialist centre model can be a highly effective model, as pupils benefit from being in a mainstream school but also from receiving specialist input
- Schools that host specialist centres can benefit from the knowledge and expertise of specialist centre staff
- Specialist centres should be for those pupils who need highly specialised input from staff with specialist expertise and qualifications. This will include pupils who have speech and language difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and complex needs
- In some schools, especially secondary schools, pupils attending the specialist centres access mainstream lessons for most of the day and week. They mainly access the centre for emotional support. While this is crucial, schools should be providing this type of support themselves
- Placement at a specialist centre should not always be full-time and long-term. Where possible, part-time, short-term placements should be considered
- Many of the current centres have become too large, with around 12 pupils. This number needs to be reduced to around six to eight.
- Feedback from the engagement exercise suggested that some people feel that pupils are 'stuck in a unit.' There is a need to change this perception. Pupils in specialist centres should feel fully part of the school but receive specialist intervention in the centre.
- There will be a need to reorganise the specialist centre provision over the coming years. This will be in order to:
  - ensure more equitable access across the county
  - ensure progression from primary to secondary
  - ensure that pupils with a wide range of needs will receive high quality specialist intervention, as close to their homes as is possible
- The purpose of the specialist centres has not been made clear enough by the local authority
- While there is a need for greater equity across Powys, it should also be recognised that different geographical areas may have slightly different needs
- Before any changes are made, discussion will take place between officers, headteachers and governing bodies and a formal consultation process will take place
- Where pupils are currently attending specialist centres, we will consider each pupil on an individual basis, to assess whether they are in the right type of provision
- It is likely that any changes will need to be made in a number of phases over two or three years. This is in order to manage the statutory processes, make sure that schools and parents are on board, and make sure that individual pupils are not affected negatively by the changes.
- Where there are specialist centres, these should cater for children across the region, not only children within the school where the centre is based
- Placement at a specialist centre should always be considered and agreed at the relevant LA panel in order to ensure consistency across the county

## What we have already done

- ✓ We have carried out a review of the specialist centres, identifying strengths and areas for development
- ✓ We have collated data on where pupils with SEN/ALN live, as well as their type of need. This will inform planning
- ✓ We are funding five teachers in the specialist centres in 2020 to undertake post-graduate diplomas in autism, behaviour and inclusion. In September 2021 we will be offering the same opportunity to more teachers in the centres
- ✓ The views of headteachers have been taken into when producing the engagement document and this proposed strategy. This includes a meeting with the headteachers of schools with specialist centres and an email to all headteachers asking for their views
- ✓ Very helpful feedback was received as part of the engagement exercise, and this has been used to inform the proposed strategy

## What we plan to do

- Work with headteachers to identify four or five geographical areas, each one linked to two or three secondary schools
- Meet with the headteachers in each geographical area to consider the needs of pupils in that area, and to review whether each area has an appropriate range of provision. This may involve closing some of the centres or changing them into a different type of provision. The first meeting of this kind is taking place in September 2020
- Clarify the entry and exit criteria for each of the specialist centres
- Work with the Transformation team in the planning of new schools to determine whether some type of LA funded provision is needed in these schools
- Ensure that, in the future, all teachers working in specialist centres have achieved or are working towards a post-graduate diploma in an area of SEN/ALN

# Area of Transformation 5: Specialist provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)

In the recent engagement exercise, **78%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ideas set out under Area of Transformation 5: Specialist provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD), **5%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **17%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Current Situation:

In Powys, the current provision for pupils with BESD is as follows:

- Ysgol Brynllwarch (Kerry)
- PRU North (Newtown)
- PRU South (Brecon)

Ysgol Brynllwarch provides education for pupils at Key Stage 2 and above, who have significant BESD. They should have received regular input from behaviour specialists while they are attending mainstream schools. Despite this input, they will still struggle to regulate their behaviour, and will require more specialist provision. After a period of time at Ysgol Brynllwarch, they may be able to return to mainstream.

The PRU caters for pupils with a range of needs, including:

- Pupils with BESD
- Pupils who have been permanently excluded for a one-off incident and for whom an alternative school placement cannot be found
- Pupils with medical needs
- Pupils with anxiety
- Pregnant schoolgirls

The PRU caters mainly for pupils aged 11-16, but also for a few pupils at key stage 2 (KS2).

At KS2 and KS3, the intention is that pupils should return to a mainstream school after a period at the PRU. At KS4, pupils are more likely to move on to further education, work-based learning or employment.

## Important considerations

- There is currently a lack of support for pupils with behavioural difficulties and their families at an early stage. By this we mean both early in terms of age and also early in terms of the presentation of BESD, which might not happen until secondary school

- Although it is the responsibility of schools and other settings to address low level behaviours, in line with the graduated response, not all mainstream staff have the expertise to do this – this needs to be addressed by training and the provision of resources
- Many children and young people struggle in school or display challenging behaviour because of their adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including trauma
- Many mainstream teachers feel that BESD is the most difficult challenge that they face
- Early intervention for pupils with BESD is essential, in order to address pupils' needs at an early stage and to prevent further difficulties
- Some children have needs that are harder to manage in a large class because they are not emotionally/developmentally ready for learning. These pupils may benefit from access to a well-established nurture group
- Intervention should normally be short-term
- There is a need for all schools to build up expertise in relation to behaviour
- There should be a focus on the promotion of positive behaviour strategies at a younger age
- A coordinated approach across education, health and social services is key
- Early intervention should allow schools to support most pupils without the need for a specialist placement
- In line with the graduated response, schools should have accessed a level of training and tried and evaluated a range of strategies before applying for a pupil to attend specialist provision.
- The needs of the child or young person should be at the forefront of any decision made
- All staff involved with a particular pupil should be familiar with their one-page profile, especially at times of transition
- Pupils should be involved in making decisions about their current and future education
- Every effort should be made to enable pupils to attend their local school where this is appropriate
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties should have access to suitable provision and intervention wherever they live
- Pupils who attend Welsh-medium schools should have access to appropriate support through the medium of Welsh
- The special schools should only be attended by those pupils who have the greatest needs which cannot be met in a mainstream class or specialist centre
- Entry criteria for the special schools should be clear and shared with all
- Ysgol Brynllwarch currently consists of an old building that is not fit for purpose
- The two buildings currently used by the PRU lack space and facilities and therefore limit the range of learning experiences that can be offered
- Only those with the most significant difficulties should access specialist provision
- There should be more opportunities for pupils who attend specialist provision to access or return to mainstream schools
- Special schools and mainstream schools should work together to promote joint placements (e.g. a mainstream pupil accessing specialist intervention in a special school, or a special school pupil accessing specific subjects or activities in a mainstream school)

- Placement at a special school does not mean that the pupil has to stay at that school throughout their education
- Placement at a mainstream school does not mean that the pupil has to stay at that school throughout their education
- The length of placement at specialist provision, for example at the PRU or Brynllwarch should be flexible in line with the needs of the individual pupil
- Generally, pupils with anxiety should be supported to remain in mainstream schools.
- Ysgol Brynllwarch and the PRU already provide some outreach and training for mainstream schools, without additional funding. However, there is a need to ensure that this work is co-ordinated more effectively.

## **What we have already done**

- ✓ Funding has been granted by Welsh Government for the building of a new school for Brynllwarch
- ✓ We have drafted new entry criteria for the special schools
- ✓ Officers and special school headteachers have met regularly to develop this vision and to plan the way forward
- ✓ We have started to develop a pilot nurture programme for pupils in foundation phase/key stage 2
- ✓ We have developed an Emotional, Health and Wellbeing strategy in Powys
- ✓ A few schools already run nurture groups

## **What we plan to do**

- We will do a mapping exercise to establish what is currently available in Powys to support pupils with BESD and where there are gaps in provision
- We will implement the Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy in Powys
- We will roll out nurture programmes in other areas of Powys if the pilot is successful
- We will improve PRU facilities
- We will provide training for all early years settings and schools to support children and young people with BESD
- We will work with early years settings, schools and other professionals to identify the universal provision that all schools will provide for pupils
- We will work closely with other colleagues in children's services, youth services and health to provide support to children and young people with BESD and their families
- We will work closely with parents/carers and external agencies to ensure collaboration and access to parenting/family support

## ***Nurture programme***

*The nurture programme will be delivered by trained staff, in line with Nurture UK guidance. Pupils will initially receive a twelve-week programme of targeted intervention, after which time the expectation is that if possible they should return to their mainstream school. Where required, a further twelve-week programme may be offered. Pupils will remain on the roll of their local school.*

*Prior to the start of the programme, specialist teachers will:*

- *visit and observe pupils in their home schools*
- *talk to headteacher/ALNCo/class teacher about the individual pupil*
- *scrutinise documentation including statement/individual plans, reports from specialists etc.*

*During the programme, in line with individual needs, pupils will spend time at their own school.*

## ***Planned impact***

- *Targeted intervention will reduce the number of exclusions*
- *There will be a reduction in the number of pupils requiring full-time PRU or special school provision*
- *Schools will be more able to manage pupils who display BESD*
- *Short-term provision will mean that more pupils will be able to access specialist input*
- *Part-time placement will mean that pupils will continue to attend their mainstream school*
- *Mainstream staff will be able to benefit from the input of specialist staff and develop strategies to support other pupils at the school*

# Area of Transformation 6: Provision for SEN/ALN learners up to the age of 25

In the recent engagement exercise, **83%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ideas set out under Area of Transformation 6: Provision for SEN/ALN learners up to the age of 25, **3%** of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the remaining **14%** stating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Current Situation

Under the ALN Act, LAs will be responsible for providing education and training for learners with ALN potentially up to the age of 25. Most pupils attending special schools do so up until the age of 19. Many other pupils with SEN/ALN leave school at 16.

The post-16 workstream of the national ALN Transformation programme in Powys has started to plan for the future through developing links with a range of providers. However, at this point, it is not clear what new provision will be needed for these learners after they leave school.

## Important considerations

- One of the changes that will be required as a result of the ALN Act is that LAs will be responsible for SEN/ALN learners after they have left statutory education
- This is therefore a new area of responsibility for the LA and, as such, is not yet very well developed
- There will be a need for officers to develop knowledge and expertise in this area
- Nationally there is lack of suitable provision for learners with SEN/ALN once they have left school
- There is a need for a comprehensive suite of support and/or provision for learners from 0 to 25 – this is likely to include apprenticeships and supported employment
- The priority should be supporting learners to develop the skills they need in future life.
- For some, this will involve basic living skills - cooking, cleaning, managing their own budgets, being more independent in the community (learning how to catch a bus to various places on their own, going shopping and so on), leisure activities, or work.
- Welsh Government strategy needs to inform the work in Powys
- Under the ALN Act, some learners with ALN in the future will have individual development plans which will remain in place after they have left school. We will need to work with providers to develop these plans
- Some parents have concerns about the level of support available for learners at college, including small group and one to one support. Similarly, there are concerns about support for young people at university, including wellbeing support.

## What we have already done

- ✓ Officers are in the process of carrying out a review of post-16 provision for learners with SEN/ALN
- ✓ This review asks the questions:
- ✓ What is currently available for post-16 learners with SEN/ALN who live in Powys?
- ✓ What gaps are there in provision?
- ✓ What do we need to do to address these gaps?

## What we plan to do

- Ensure that learners with SEN/ALN are fully considered as part of Strategic Aim 2 of the Powys Transformation Strategy: Improving learner entitlement and experience for post-16 learners
- Work with college/s, work-based learning providers and schools to ensure that they provide a suitable range of appropriate provision for learners with SEN/ALN - this will include relevant courses and qualifications, as well as support for learners' wellbeing and SEN/ALN

# Area of Transformation 7: Welsh medium support for pupils with SEN/ALN

Welsh medium support and provision should be taken into consideration in relation to each of the areas of transformation above. However, following the engagement exercise and in order to make sure that issues relating to Welsh-medium support are given appropriate attention, this has been added as an area for transformation in its own right.

## Current situation

- There is currently very little LA funded provision or support through the medium of Welsh.
- There is one specialist centre in a Welsh medium school, namely Ysgol Dyffryn y Glowyr. This caters for pupils in foundation phase and key stage 2 with a range of needs. This wide age range and broad range of needs poses some challenges for the school.
- The specialist centre in Ysgol Bro Hyddgen, a dual streamed school, also provides for a few pupils through the medium of Welsh.
- Although there are a few centrally employed specialist teachers or educational psychologists who have some knowledge of Welsh, there are none who are able to work completely through the medium of Welsh.

## Important considerations

- Pupils with SEN/ALN who wish to be educated through the medium of Welsh should be able to do so.
- It has to be recognised that where numbers of pupils are very low, it is not always possible to provide exactly the same provision in Welsh as is available in English, without requiring pupils to travel very long distances
- When posts have been advertised for central staff, there have been very few or no Welsh speaking applicants

## What we have already done

- ✓ We are using grant funding to enable a Welsh-speaking teacher in one of our specialist centres to carry out a two-year post-graduate diploma in ASD
- ✓ We have used grant funding to purchase specialist resources in Welsh for two of the specialist centres

## What we plan to do

- We will make efforts to employ Welsh-speaking staff when there are vacancies in the central team – however, it is essential that anyone appointed has excellent knowledge and experience in SEN/ALN
- We will encourage central staff to improve their knowledge of Welsh, so that they are able to provide support to schools and pupils through the medium of Welsh
- We will explore options for training Welsh speaking staff who work in Powys schools to provide outreach for other schools
- We will carry out an audit of children and young people with SEN/ALN who require specialist provision through the medium of Welsh
- We will identify and address gaps in provision
- We will work with relevant officers to ensure that, where new Welsh-medium schools are being developed, this includes provision for pupils with SEN/ALN
- We will establish a group of Welsh medium school headteachers and/or ALNCoS, to consider the specific issues relating to Welsh medium SEN/ALN

# Conclusion

This report has identified a significant amount of work that is needed to ensure that all pupils across Powys will receive high quality provision that meets their needs, no matter where they live.

The local authority will work with headteachers and other stakeholders to develop proposals in relation to the seven areas identified. At the same time, as the LA moves forward with its Transforming Education programme, it is essential that the SEN/ALN needs of pupils are considered fully at every stage.