

Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 and guidance.



September 2019

Response by the National Deaf Children's Society Cymru

About Us

The National Deaf Children's Society is the national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

We support deaf children and young people with all levels of hearing loss from mild to profound, including those with a unilateral loss (hearing loss in one ear) and temporary hearing loss.

Our Response

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is aware that there are a number of issues surrounding the availability of Welsh medium specialist teaching support. As our 2017 CRIDE figures demonstrate, only 25% of Teachers of the Deaf in Wales were reported as being able to provide support through the medium of Welsh as required.¹

We are pleased to see ALN forming one of the seven key outcomes in the *Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans*:

An increase in Welsh-medium education provision for pupils with additional learning needs (in accordance with duties determined by the ALN Act).²

Whilst it is encouraging to see the needs of children with ALN emphasised, as our CRIDE figures highlight, Local Authorities have historically struggled to provide sufficient Welsh medium support to deaf children. The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru would like to remind Local Authorities (LAs) of the need to view each ALN individually and not as a blanket group. When planning and reviewing additional support requirements, it is vital that LAs address the specific needs of each ALN group separately to ensure that specialist and specific needs are catered for. We would strongly recommend that the *Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans* reflects this.

¹ The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru , CRIDE report on 2016/17 survey on educational provision for deaf children in Wales, available at: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/3494/cride-2017-wales-report-final-english.pdf>

² Welsh Government, *Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans*, available at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-05/guidance-on-welsh-in-education-strategic-plans.pdf> p.14

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru would like to draw attention to another of the seven key outcomes as highlighted in the *Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans*:

More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.³

Whilst we acknowledge the drive to ensure that opportunities to utilise and learn Welsh are provided for outside traditional classroom learning, we are keen to highlight that deaf children may have specific access needs in learning languages. Where languages is being taught cross-curricular or across school contexts, it is imperative that these access needs are met.

Our deaf young people regularly inform us that deaf awareness is a persistent barrier to their ability to fully participate in school life. LAs must be mindful that, when providing opportunities for outside of classroom activities, whether that is through schools directly or delivered through partnership agencies such as Urdd and Menter Iaith, the accessibility requirements for deaf children are taken into account and that the advice of specialists such as Teachers of the Deaf is observed. We have a wealth of resources on our website about how to communicate with deaf children.

- Communicating with deaf children and young people
<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/being-deaf-friendly/>
- Information for professionals
<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/being-deaf-friendly/information-for-professionals/>

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. If you would like to discuss any of the points raised in this briefing further, please contact Campaigns.Wales@ndcs.org.uk.

³ Welsh Government, *Guidance on Welsh in Education Strategic Plans*, available at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-05/guidance-on-welsh-in-education-strategic-plans.pdf> p.14