

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL <u>Scrutiny Report Template</u>	
Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	12 February 2025
Subject:	ALN and Inclusion Report – A Summary of the Current ALN&I Situation
Purpose of Report:	To provide an update on: The progress made to ensure that Anglesey is ready for the new ALN and Inclusion Act. The current situation of the provision on Anglesey in terms of ALN&I
Scrutiny Chair:	Councillor Dylan Rees
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Dafydd Roberts
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Local Members:	No specific ward

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1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to:

R1 Offer comments on the ALN & Inclusion report and propose recommendations on the effectiveness of the offer for Anglesey schools.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Direct link with the Council Plan.

One of the council's main priorities is education. The Council Plan includes an ambition to ensure effective provision for today and future generations. One of the Plan's 3 aims is "creating the conditions for everyone to achieve their full potential", and the Learning Service and Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion partnership's work contributes to this aim.

The council's other main priority is Social Care and Wellbeing. The Council Plan includes an ambition to provide the right support at the right time. The Learning Service and Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion partnership's work contributes to this aim.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [focus on customer/citizen]

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [focus on value]

3.3 A look at any risks [focus on risk]

3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [focus on performance & quality]

3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]

3.6 The potential impacts the decision would have on:

- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
- opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

[focus on equality and the Welsh language]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

- i. To what extent does the ALN & Inclusion service provide value for money?
- ii. In what ways does the service improve the quality of the provision for Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion in schools?
- iii. How effectively does the service deliver to the needs of schools, and put learners at the centre of the process?
- iv. To what extent does the service contribute to the outcomes of individuals with ALN and Inclusion needs in terms of their skills, achievements and wellbeing?

5 – Background / Context

Context:

- The ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act came into force in September 2021.
- The ALN & Inclusion Service was established in September 2017 as a joint service between the Isle of Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council. The service has evolved over the years since to respond to changes in demand and the wider context. It was reviewed externally in 2020, and again in December 2023.
- Anglesey's authority underwent an Estyn inspection in 2022.
- All schools receive funding to accommodate learners with an Individual Development Plan. They create a provision map using this funding. Currently, additional funding is obtained by applying to the Moderation Panel. From March 2025, this will change to receiving formula-based funding.

This report provides a summary of the current situation, what is working, what are the challenges, and the strategic plan to develop in each area.

Please see Appendix 1 regarding the current team structure.

Additional Learning Needs

<p>What is working?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition to the new Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 has been successful in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborating with the schools to successfully transfer learners to Additional Learning Plans from the old Statement arrangements. - Creating fairly consistent provision maps (but with a more local feel) across the catchment areas and the schools. - Creating conflict resolution systems with parents, schools and the ALN quality officers. - Collaborating with the Headteacher ALN Forum to review the funding arrangement for primary schools, so that the funding method responds to the requirements of the new act. - There is a close working relationship between the schools and the ALN&I team, and there is good acknowledgement of the provision from the LA. Also, there is collaboration with Children and Family Services in terms of learners who are authority Looked After Children, and in out of county settings in terms of planning and implementing the provision noted in the Individual Development Plan. - It is a statutory requirement for schools and the LA to 'keep their provision under continuous review'. This includes coming to a judgement about how effective the provision is, and the interventions offered. We have established a process for this. The review process is a platform for the Quality Service to monitor provisions on the IDP, with key information available within the IDP. Specialist teams also monitor the progress of learners who receive their input on a termly basis, with the majority making good progress. - We have established an ALN Primary Headteachers Forum since 2022. The forum has a work programme, and progress against the action plan is good. - We have an online IDP system, and this development has been innovative. We will soon be establishing an IDP sub-group to develop the system further, to reduce workload for the ALN&I coordinators at our schools. - The role of the ALN Clinical Leading Officer within the act is statutory. We have a close relationship and clear communication systems with this officer, and this is a key part of our collaboration and conflict resolution processes with parents.
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Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ALN Act's statutory responsibility has expanded in terms of legal elements. Because of this, the workload for schools, especially for the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) has increased substantially. This is a challenge for schools, especially where budgets are shrinking and the ability to release the ALNCo to fulfil the role is challenging. - Resources are sparse and are getting sparser. With needs increasing and getting more complex, realising needs is getting increasingly challenging. This is true for schools, and the ALN team is facing an increase in referrals. Grants in this field are provided by Welsh Government, but they don't match the increase in demand and there is no certainty of repeating funds, therefore it is difficult to plan strategically (Appendix 2 – Data on ALN needs over time). - The demand for a specialist setting is increasing. We have severe and complex learners that require support in the mainstream, but the challenge of delivering this is increasing due to budget. This drives parents to apply for special school. - Tribunal numbers have increased significantly over the past two years (partly associated with the previous point), which is challenging in terms of officers and schools' time. - Lack of individuals looking for a job as an assistant within a school is a challenge, and places stress on schools' provision maps when there are vacant posts. - The process of training educational psychologists through Cardiff University impacts our ability to recruit educational psychologists who speak Welsh. It is a statutory role within the act, and a key role in terms of identifying the provision learners need.
Strategic plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In March 2025, the primary school funding method will change to a formula method to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide more financial stability to maintain staffing - Have a more consistent regime across schools – the formula is based on the number of learners with an IDP, in addition to the severity of learners' need areas. - Reduce bureaucracy that currently exists. - Continue to collaborate on the ALN&I Forum work programme, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addressing the role of the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo), reducing bureaucracy, and collaboration arrangements across catchment areas - Monitoring and evaluating the new funding regime - Ensuring that the ALN&I service adapts to respond to the demands of Anglesey schools.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue with the work of mapping the likely demand for different types of special provisions, and strategically planning around this and around the capacity of the special school and the type of ALN centres we have within the authority. - Continue to address the need for a training approach for educational psychologists. This includes discussions about a training pathway in north Wales (Bangor University).
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Inclusion

<p>What is working?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The support offered to Anglesey schools is extensive, e.g., training, modelling, resources and direct input. The close relationship with schools is essential for this. - The service offers a range of support for schools to support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs through special teams, i.e., Behaviour Support, Welfare, Elective Home Education and English as an Additional Language along with a specialist setting for a small number of pupils who require a bespoke support package to address their behavioural difficulties. - Since the end of 2021, in partnership with the schools and Children's Services, we have been able to establish education hubs within the five secondary schools to support mainly year 10 and 11 pupils who aren't coping in the mainstream. A review of this model was commissioned in December 2023, and strengths were identified especially with the integrated/multiagency work that supports the provision and also supports recommendations to strengthen further. There is also close collaboration, e.g., around learners who are hard to place due to complex emotional and behavioural needs. - A range of training and input is provided to support the schools' provision maps, including safety intervention and packages to support pupils' emotional wellbeing. - The Shared Prosperity Fund Grant has enabled us to support over 100 Anglesey pupils identified as at risk of becoming NEET on Anglesey (young people not in education, employment or training) by improving skills, welfare and meeting their full potential. - Attendance improvement has been a consistent focus for the Isle of Anglesey County Council. The link between good attendance and learning is clear. Substantial work has been done to improve attendance over the past year, allocating additional welfare officer hours through Welsh Government's Attendance Grant to target the attendance improvement of specific individuals in schools, especially those in year 11.
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- However, while there has been improvement over time, there is much work to be done to close the gap further and reinforce improvements in positive attendance trend, including particularly a reduction in continued absenteeism.
- Across Wales, school attendance has declined since returning to school following the pandemic and is slowly recovering. Anglesey's attendance data shows progress that aligns with that of other counties across Wales.

Anglesey average (Sept 23 - Dec 23)	Anglesey average (Sept 24 - Dec 24)	Wales average (Sept 23 - Dec 23)	Wales average (Sept 24 - Dec 24)
90.4%	90.7%	90.5%	91%

Ongoing training and re-defining the role of welfare officers has led to consistency in the service the schools receive, with increased targeting of specific groups and a focus on early intervention support.

- Behaviour/exclusions - There remain clear challenges in addressing pupils' significant social, emotional and behavioural needs in the post-pandemic period and as a result, exclusions have been on the rise compared to before the pandemic. Over the past two years, the numbers have been high.

Primary

	23/24 (Sept – Dec)	24/25 (Sept – Dec)
Number of schools	8	9
Number of periods	33	50
Number of days	78	78

Permanent

	23/24 (Sept – Dec)	24/25 (Sept – Dec)
Number of schools	0	1

Secondary

	23/24 (Sept – Dec)	24/25 (Sept – Dec)
Number of schools	5	5
Number of periods	223	158
Number of days	558	432

Permanent

			23/24 (Sept – Dec)	24/25 (Sept – Dec)	
		Number of schools	3	3	
		Number of pupils	9	9	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This has been improved over the last term with the number of days reduced. - Waiting time for counselling input has been reduced. 			
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catering for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is a challenge where resources are declining, but society's needs are increasing. - More complex needs are manifesting in the primary, specifically after the Covid-19 period. - The level of exclusions remains above the desired level and while attendance is seeing an increase, it remains as a high priority. The inclusion services continue to implement a range of wellbeing and behaviour initiatives supported by Welsh Government grant funding (which is in addition to the core budget). - Requests for counselling input, which again reflect the need, are increasing with younger children. This puts pressure on the capacity of the team. - Elective Home Education - There is an increase in the number of families deciding to educate their children at home. This is not unique to Anglesey and is a pattern nationally. The service has robust processes in place to monitor along with good relationships with a high number of the families. 				
Strategic plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to work closely with the ALN&I Forum, as an integrated team, to strengthen provision. This includes the creation of specialist provision for primary children in particular, the development of elements of secondary hub provision, and early intervention/school provision maps. - Further development on the integrated work. This relates to the close and strategic collaboration with Children's Services to develop our provisions by looking at the needs of learners and their families in a holistic, trauma-informed way. This will include elements of the work highlighted above. - Continue to collaborate with the ALN&I Forum on inclusion elements contained in the action plan. 				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue with the attendance campaign to target further increases in attendance practices, messaging to parents, and the role of welfare officers. - Continue to improve our processes for engaging with families who choose homeschooling (Elective Home Education), to strengthen engagement and collaboration with these families.
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6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service complies with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service offers a complete service through the medium of Welsh.

7 – Financial Implications

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service will offer a service within the agreed budget, and there are no signs of overspending.

8 – Appendices:

Appendix 1 – ALN&I Structure

Appendix 2 – ALN&I Data

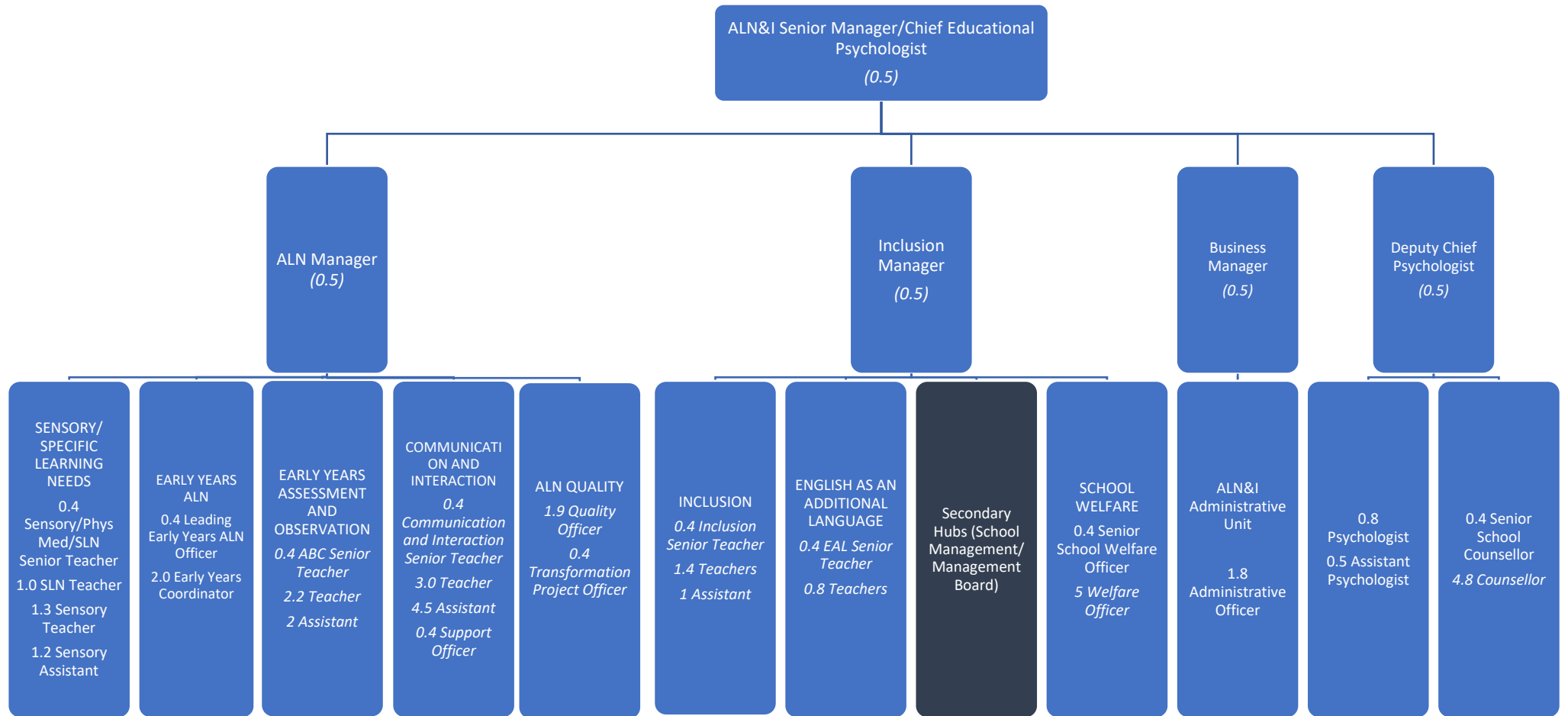
9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):

N/A

Appendix 1 – ALN&I Structure



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Appendix 2 – ALN&I Key Data, December 2024

Additional Learning Needs

Numbers on ALN&I stages:

Date	Authority IDP	Forum IDP	School IDP
25/01/2022	410	154	532
24/02/2023	506	171	481
02/01/2024	556	153	503
02/12/2024	617	183	586

Numbers of learners attending CAYB:

PLASC	Numbers attending CAYB
2020	103
2021	117
2022	126
2023	122
2024	118
December 2024	124

Inclusion

Secondary exclusions:

Year	Specific				Permanent
	Number of pupils	Number of periods	Total number of days	Number of schools excluding	
2021/2022	174	267	838.5	5	9
2022/2023	195	289	814.5	5	12
2023/2024	395	598	1615.5	5	17

Primary exclusions:

Year	Specific				Permanent
	Number of pupils	Number of periods	Total number of days	Number of schools excluding	
2021/2022	10	16	35.5	7	0
2022/2023	14	19	42.5	7	2
2023/2024	42	92	183	12	2