Medr

Y Comisiwn Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

Further Education Additional Learning Support Funding Guidance

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Purpose of the funding

1. Medr is committed to meeting the educational needs of young people in Wales enabling them to reach their full potential. By implementing the right support, significant barriers to achieving individual potential can be removed.

2. This Guidance takes effect from August 2025 and replaces existing guidance on Additional Learning Support (ALS) Funding. It sets the funding arrangements intended to assist further education (FE) providers to work flexibly and secure the additional learning support necessary to enable them to make their provision accessible to learners with additional support needs. ALS Funding also assists FE institutions (FEIs) with the costs of making reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010).

3. Medr may, at any time, revise, revoke or add to the arrangements set out in this Guidance.

4. ALS funding is intended to enhance funding allocated via the Post-16 Mainstream Funding Allocation and does not replace an institution's main source of funding, nor should a learner's admission status be determined by this.

5. Institutions should use ALS funding to respond to individual learner needs. Medr requests that, in doing so, institutions make reasonable economies, such as sharing support and negotiating competitive rates for both equipment and services to make the best use of Medr resources and to achieve a fair and equitable distribution of the funds available.

Learner eligibility

6. ALS funding must only be used to support learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability as defined under EA 2010 or Additional Learning Needs (ALN) as defined under the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (The Code). For the purposes of this document, learners who meet this eligibility will be referred to as learners with additional support needs (ASN). A person is considered to have ASN if they require additional learning support or provision.

7. Eligibility for ALS funding includes learners following programmes of study through third party arrangements.

8. Eligibility for ALS funding does **not** extend to higher education learners as separate funding is available for higher education learners via Student Finance Wales.

9. Eligibility for ALS funding does **not** extend to apprenticeships as separate funding is available for learners following apprenticeship programmes. Information can be found in the Apprenticeship Commissioning Programme Wales Framework.

10. A learner should not be considered to have ASN just because the language in which they are taught is different from a language which has at any time been spoken in their home.

11. ALS funding can be utilised for all learners with ASN, regardless of whether they are on discrete or mainstream programmes of learning or whether they are studying on a full or part-time basis. Further information on supporting learners on discrete programmes can be found in paragraphs 12 to 18 below.

Learners on discrete programmes

12. The Post-16 funding methodology recognises the additional costs of securing provision designed exclusively for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and provision for learners on Independent Living Skills (ILS) attracts the highest funding value. It is not, therefore, anticipated that there will be many learners on discrete programmes whose needs necessitate ALS funding.

13. The Post-16 funding methodology is an allocation method used by Medr to distribute its grant-in-aid across the FE sector rather than a mechanism for institutions to allocate funds internally. It is for each college to decide how it distributes its funding internally subject to the terms and conditions for the use of funding as set out in the Funding Agreement.

14. The needs of most learners on ILS provision should be met by utilising the weighted funding provided through the Post-16 Mainstream Funding Allocation. This should enable FEIs to provide support staff within each discrete group to ensure that students' additional learning needs are met.

15. FEIs should only utilise ALS funding in those rare instances where a learner is unlikely to be able to cope within their discrete programme without a high level of close support. For those learners whose high-level needs include 1:1 support and for whom attendance at college without this might pose a health and safety risk and/or make achieving progress unlikely, ALS funding may be utilised to fund essential additional costs.

16. Where ALS funding is utilised, there must be clear supporting evidence which demonstrates that learners have significant support needs, and for whom the institution would incur additional costs substantially in excess of what might reasonably be expected to be secured via the Post-16 Mainstream Funding Allocation.

17. Supporting evidence would normally include an IDP or other professional diagnostic assessment that confirms the type and extent of the learner's learning difficulty and/or disability and clearly identifies their support needs. There is no need to submit this evidence to Medr. However, as a condition of funding, all evidence which demonstrates the criterion at paragraph 16 above have been met and which confirms individual support requirements must be retained. This evidence may be subject to audit and Medr reserves the right to request this evidence at any time.

18. A list of those discrete programmes which fall under the scope of subject areas 14 is set out at **Annex B**.

Eligible activity

19. The funding can be used for Additional Learning Provision (ALP). This is defined as education or training provision that is additional to, or different from, provision generally made available for other learners at the institution (as defined in Chapter 2 of The Code). Learners requiring ALP must have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) unless the learner has declined an offered IDP. This decision must be documented.

20. The funding can also be used to provide Enabling Support (ES) to other learners with ASN who may not require the bespoke support provided with ALP. Learners eligible for this type of support may not have a diagnosis and may not have an IDP. Evidence is available to indicate that, if this type of support was not provided, these learners would likely not be able to successfully achieve in their chosen education or training. As outlined below, this does not include Basic Skills Support, which should be available to all learners. ES should be available to learners at the point of need and may be shared with others with similar needs. Some institutions may choose to include this type of support in their Universal Learning Provision (ULP) offer for ease of understanding and managing expectations of learners and parents/carers.

21. For the purposes of this guidance both types of support detailed above will be referred to as Additional Learning Support (ALS).

22. ALS funding can be used to provide support in the broad categories as outlined in the table at paragraph 27 and paragraphs 28 to 33 below. This support can take place inside or outside the classroom or workshop.

23. Institutions should note these categories are not exhaustive but are intended to indicate the broad range of support which falls under the scope of ALS funding. Where a particular type or category of support is not included in the table at paragraph 27 and paragraphs 28 to 33 below, please contact Medr for clarification.

24. ALS funding is intended to contribute to the costs of staff employed to meet the support needs of eligible learners.

25. Institutions are able to utilise up to 20% of their annual allocation to contribute towards the cost of staff to co-ordinate and manage the support for learners. Staff must be specifically or substantially employed to meet support needs of learners or co-ordinate and manage the support of eligible learners.

26. All support provided with ALS funding should further enable a learner to maximise self-efficacy and self-advocacy.

Human support

27.

Type of provision	Description of provision
Specialist tutor/adviser	Such as, specialist Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) support tutor or behavioural support.
Specialist Assistive Technology training from a tutor or IT adviser (including a technician)	This should be in addition to the tutorial support delivered under the core element of a full-time programme. Institutions are reminded ALS funding should be used to purchase additional resources and not to defray the cost of core full-time teaching staff.
Communication support worker	This can include British Sign Language (BSL) signers and interpreters or communication support workers for learners with other communication-related difficulties. Action on Hearing Loss recommends that Level 3 BSL should be the minimum standard for communication support.
Support Assistant	Such as shared or individual support from a learning support assistant (LSA), personal care support, support to and from transport, support from an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) trained support assistant, note-taker or recorder, or a sighted guide.
Assessments	Including one-off, external assessments e.g. by an Educational Psychologist, RNIB Cymru, Wales Council for the Blind, Action on Hearing Loss Cymru or Wales Council for Deaf People and assessments undertaken by the appropriate SpLD college staff. Please note the assessment must be in addition to the standard assessment and enrolment procedure funded via the Post-16 Mainstream Funding Allocation. Internal costs, where assessments are undertaken by a the FEI's staff, for exam access arrangements are eligible under this guidance. However, any external costs are not eligible.

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (Exam Access Arrangements)	To provide support learners require for exam access.
Travel Training/Support	Where this involves the provision of bespoke training/support which is in addition to training/support provided as part of the learner's main programme of study.
Enhanced/bespoke transition arrangements	This can include time spent attending multi-agency meetings, information sharing, risk assessments, arranging and facilitating taster sessions, and review meetings for learners who would be eligible for support under this funding once enrolled in the FE institution. It excludes transition and review activities undertaken by core teaching and support staff.
ALN Wellbeing or Counselling	Such as specialist behavioural counselling to help learners with ALN manage behaviours or anxieties in the learning environment. General well-being support or counselling which does not specifically relate to an ALN is not eligible.
Support to engage learners who have ASN with on-line delivery or blended learning approaches	It is anticipated this will take the form of additional human support, e.g. training learners in the use of technology or providing additional tutorials or a support assistant for learners who are finding it difficult to carry out work at home.

Purchasing specialist equipment/software

28. ALS funding can be used to purchase specialist software or equipment, however, this should not be regarded as the primary source of funding for equipment for learners with ASN. This equipment can include:
    - specialist visual impairment equipment;
    - overlays;
    - text to speech/speech to text software;
    - IT adaptations;
    - specialist software and related licences;
    - specialist IT hardware; and
    - specialist hearing equipment.

29. The funding cannot be used for general software upgrades or for purchasing software which is available on all laptops, tablets and PCs at the FEI. It also cannot be used for course specific software that all learners on the course would require regardless of an ASN. ALS funding should only be used for specialist software and equipment which has been identified as required for an individual learner.

30. Institutions may use ALS funding to lease specialist equipment if it is required for a short period of time.

31. Where equipment is bought solely from ALS funds, the item will be regarded as a national resource when the learner for whom it was purchased has left the institution. In these circumstances the item may be transferred to an alternative institution for the use of another learner.

32. It is recommended the institution include any items of equipment purchased with ALS funding in their insurance cover.

33. When equipment purchased with ALS funding becomes obsolete, the institution may dispose of the equipment in line with its usual procedures for disposal of obsolete equipment provided a clear audit trail is maintained. Any proceeds from the sale of these items should be used towards the purchase of new equipment eligible under the conditions of this guidance. Institutions must include these proceeds in their end of year reconciliation.

Ineligible activity

34. ALS funding cannot be used for Basic Skills Support.

35. ALS funding cannot be used for drop-in learning or out-of-class support which is available to all learners regardless of whether they have ASN.

36. ALS funding cannot be used to defray the salaries of core teaching or other key staff (such as technicians or instructor/demonstrators) involved in programme delivery. Neither should it be used to defray the salary costs of senior and middle managers who may have some responsibility for ASN as part of a wider job role.

37. ALS funding cannot be used to provide learners with financial support or support with purchasing course specific equipment. If learners require this type of support the Financial Contingency Fund should be considered.

38. ALS funding is provided in addition to the funding applied for full and part-time programme delivery in order to contribute to the additional costs of supporting learners with ASN. It cannot be used for the delivery of the Community Learning Industry Focus (CLIF) element of a programme. Neither should it be used to fund the tutorial or basic/essential skills support which is part of the core of a full-time programme.

Evidence requirements

39. For each learner in receipt of ALS funding, the Institution should agree the support with the learner and record the outcome in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP), retaining evidence of the assessment of needs, this can be electronic, or paper based. The institution should deliver support to meet the learner's identified needs and regularly review progress and continuing needs as appropriate.

40. Where appropriate, ALS funded learners should have a recorded diagnostic assessment[1] evidenced in their ILP, together with identification of individual support needs, and the learning programme.

41. Where appropriate, the learner, and/or the learner's advocate should confirm a diagnostic assessment has taken place and agree to the suggested provision. These features should be recorded in each learner's ILP.

42. Where Medr contributes to the costs of specific support, be it human or technical, or to creating an appropriate learning environment, this will be related to individual learners and should be recorded on the ILP. These aspects of the ILP will be subject to selective audit.

43. All learners who have a statutory right to an IDP requiring ALP must have one unless the learner has declined an offered IDP. This decision must be documented.

44. Learners on discrete programmes who are in receipt of ALS funding must have an IDP or other statutory document that confirms the type and extent of the learner's learning difficulty and/or disability and clearly identifies their support needs.

45. There is no need to submit this evidence to Medr. However, as a condition of funding, all evidence which confirms individual support requirements must be retained. This evidence may be subject to audit and Medr reserves the right to request this evidence at any time.

46. HMI Estyn already considers arrangements for additional learning support as part of their regular visits. Any significant problems in relation to provision of additional

[1] This is not a medical diagnostic assessment, rather one used by the FEI to determine the needs of learners and the appropriate ALP.

learning support will be reported in post inspection reports and action plans which will be monitored by Medr.

Monitoring requirements

47. Institutions must ensure they record all learners supported through ALS funding on the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). At the end of the year LLWR data will be reconciled with information from institutions' end of year report. Medr would not expect to see any major discrepancies in the number of learners supported and institutions are asked to pay particular attention to the quality of their data at LP76. Further information on recording learners at LP76 is set out at **Annex C**.

48. LLWR data on learning support will be monitored by Medr to ensure levels remain consistent.

49. Institutions in receipt of ALS funding must submit an end of year report by the last Friday in November after the end of the academic year. Report templates will be issued by Medr for completion ahead of the submission deadline.

50. Any unspent ALS funding identified in the end of year report will be reclaimed in full by Medr. Proceeds from sale of obsolete equipment must be included in the institution's reconciliation.

Contact details

51. For any queries relating to the content of this Guidance, please contact Medr at InvestmentandPerformance@medr.cymru.

Annexes

A. Glossary of Terms

ALN	A child or young person who has Additional Learning Needs is defined within the ALN Code as someone who has a learning difficulty and/or disability under the terms of the Equality Act and who require Additional Learning Provision in order to make reasonable progress with their education and training.
ALN Act	The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (2018) provides the legal framework for public bodies to meet the education and training needs of children and young people who have additional learning needs.
ALN Code	The Additional Learning Code (2021) contains statutory guidance for a number of public bodies including local authorities; governing bodies of maintained schools; FEIs and local health boards in Wales.
ALNCo	An Addition Learning Need Co-ordinator is defined within the ALN Code as someone within a school or FEI who has the strategic responsibility to co-ordinate all ALN provision.
ALP	Additional Learning Provision is defined within the ALN Code as provision which is in addition to that which is normally provided for children/young people of a similar age within mainstream school or college.
ALS	Additional Learning Support describes the range of Additional Learning Provision and Enabling Support for which the ALS grant can be used.
ASN	Additional Support Needs within this document describes learner needs that are beyond basic teaching, basic skills or everyday classroom provision. This includes both Additional Learning Provision and Enabling Support.
CLIF	The Community Learning Industry Focus is part of many learning pathways and is funded through programme delivery.
Enabling Support (ES)	Enabling Support is that which assists a learner to progress within their course but which is not as bespoke as Additional Learning Provision.
Equality Act 2010	The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people with a protected characteristic. One of the listed protected characteristics is disability.
Higher Education	Education and Training provision above level 3 within a college is described as higher education.
IDP	An Individual Development Plan is the statutory document used to detail the desired outcomes and support needs of a learner who has Additional Learning Needs. Under the ALN Act and Code, this document must be updated at least once a year following a person-centred review with the learner.
ILS	Independent Living Skills refers to discrete provision within FEIs specifically designed to meet the needs of young people who have moderate to profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
LDD	Learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a term used within the Equality Act 2010 to describe a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial long term affect on their day-to-day activities.

B. Discrete programmes which fall under the scope of Sector Subject Area 14

1401AXXB	ILS Pathway 1
1401BXXB	ILS Pathway 2
1401CXXB	ILS Pathway 3
1401DXXB	ILS Pathway 4
1401AE1B	Foundation Learning Level E1
1401AE2B	Foundation Learning Level E2
1401AE3B	Foundation Learning Level E3
1402AE1B	Preparation for Work Level E1
1402AE2B	Preparation for Work Level E2
1402AE3B	Preparation for Work Level E3

C. Recording Additional Learning Support on the LLWR (LP76)

This information should be read in conjunction with the LLWR User Support Manual for Learning Providers.

Institutions should use LLWR field LP76 to record those learners with ALS needs. Having accurate and complete LP76 data is important to us as it allows us to monitor and understand the demand for ALS funding year-on-year.

A value of '0' should be used where the learner does not have any additional learning needs (ALN). This includes those learners who do not have disability as well as those accessing support services which are part of the institution's universal learning provision (ULP) offer. It also includes learners with ALN who may have declined support.

Value '5' relates to those learners with ALN but ALS funding is not utilised. This can include learners on discrete programmes (see Annex B above) who do not fulfil the criteria at paragraph 16 above, and those learners on mainstream or discrete programmes whose support needs are funded from a different source, e.g. via a local authority or Local Health Board or through Direct Payments.

Value '6' should be used for learners on discrete programmes who fulfil one of the criteria at paragraph 16 (ie those learners in receipt of 'exceptional' funding). Value '6' should also be used for all mainstream learners receiving additional 'human' or 'technical' learning support, which falls under the scope of ALS funding.

Institutions should check their LP76 data for accuracy to ensure that it coincides with the information in your certificates of expenditure. There is no requirement for the two sets of data to match exactly, as we anticipate that there will be some minor discrepancies due to learners leaving their programmes early. However, we would expect the number of learners entered in cells 'f' (*Number of learners supported - discrete programmes*) and 'g' (*Number of learners supported - mainstream* programmes) on your Certificate of Expenditures to broadly coincide with the total number of learners entered at LP76 = '6'.

Institutions should also ensure LP30 and LP90 are completed. Further information on all LLWR fields can be found in the LLWR User Support Manual for Learning Providers.

D. Examples of Additional Learning Provision (ALP) and Enabling Support

Additional Learning Provision

Additional Learning Provision is defined within the ALN Code as follows:

> *3 Additional learning provision*
>
> *(1) "Additional learning provision" for a person aged three or over means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in*
>
> *(a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales,*
>
> *(b) mainstream institutions in the further education sector in Wales, or*
>
> *(c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided.*

In practice, any young person who has a learning difficulty and/or disability under the Equality Act and for whom ALP is required in order for them to make reasonable progress with their learning, will have an Individual Development plan.

For these learners, it is expected that colleges will put in place bespoke support within the classroom, workshop, or where appropriate, within separate sessions that assists each learner to achieve the outcomes identified within their IDP. This may include:

- Personal, allocated support provided within the lesson by a support assistant.
- Bespoke intervention sessions delivered by a specialist (such as a specific learning difficulties (SpLD) Tutor or Autism specialist)
- Specialist equipment purchased by the college that supports a single learner to achieve their qualification or to complete coursework
- A personally allocated BSL Signer to assist the learner to access and respond to information within the classroom

Enabling support

For the purposes of this guidance, enabling support is that which is provided to learners who have LDD but do not have additional learning needs (ALN). This is likely to include some aspects of a college's universal learning provision, such as:

- Generic support provided by a support assistant within entry level and level 1 courses where this is not bespoke but ensures anyone who have learning difficulties or disabilities can call upon help when they need it
- Practical assistance provided to a physically disabled learner that is not necessarily required to support learning, but is required in order for the learner to access provision
- The purchase of and training in the use of generic accessibility technology such as speech-to-text, text-to-speech software that enables learners who have specific learning difficulties to work more independently

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