

Further Education Additional Learning Support Funding Guidance

Version 1

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Purpose of the funding

1. This guidance takes effect from the date of publication and replaces all previous guidance relating to Further Education Additional Learning Support (ALS) funding. ALS funding must only be used to support learners with identified additional support needs that create barriers to accessing, participating in, or achieving their learning programme. For the purposes of this guidance, learners eligible for ALS funding will be referred to as learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN). This includes learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) as defined under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, as well as learners who require Enabling Support (ES) to overcome identified barriers to accessing, participating in, or achieving their learning programme.
2. 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 identified additional support needs that create barriers to accessing, participating in, or achieving their learning programme. This includes learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010 and learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) as defined under the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 (the Code). For the purposes of this guidance, learners eligible for ALS funding will be referred to as learners with Additional Support Needs (ASN).
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. See [Funding for apprenticeships](#) for more information.

10. 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 11 to 17 below.

Learners on discrete programmes

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. The needs of most learners on ILS provision should be met by utilising the 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.
14. 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.
15. Where ALS funding is utilised, there must be clear supporting evidence (e.g. Individual Development Plan) 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.
16. 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 15 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.
17. A list of those discrete programmes which fall under the scope of subject areas 14 is set out at **Annex B**.

Eligible activity

18. 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 and learner centred.

19. The funding can also be used to provide Enabling Support (ES) to learners with identified additional support needs who do not require Additional Learning Provision (ALP). Learners eligible for this type of support may not have a diagnosis and may not have an IDP. Evidence must be available to demonstrate that, without this support, these learners would be unlikely to successfully access, participate in or achieve their education or training programme. As outlined below, this does not include Basic Skills Support, which should be available to all learners. ES should be available at the point of need and may be shared with others who have similar identified additional support needs.
20. For the purposes of this guidance both types of support detailed above will be referred to as Additional Learning Support (ALS).
21. ALS funding can be used to provide support in the broad categories as outlined in the table at paragraph 26 and paragraphs 27 to 32 below. This support can take place inside or outside the classroom or workshop.
22. 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 26 and paragraphs 27 to 32 below, please contact Medr for clarification.
23. ALS funding is intended to contribute to the costs of staff employed to meet the support needs of eligible learners.
24. Institutions are able to utilise up to 10% 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 the additional support needs of eligible learners or to co-ordinate and manage the provision of that support.
25. All support provided with ALS funding should further enable a learner to maximise self-efficacy and self-advocacy.

Human support

26.

Type of provision	Description
Specialist tutor/adviser	Such as a Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) tutor, behavioural support specialist or other specialist practitioner. Individuals undertaking this role would normally possess Level 7 qualifications and/or equivalent specialist knowledge and experience relevant to the learner's identified support needs.
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. While Level 3 BSL is identified as a minimum benchmark, institutions should ensure that the level of communication support provided is appropriate to the individual learner's needs, which may require higher-level qualifications (e.g. Level 6 or registered interpreters).
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. Where support assistants are deployed, institutions must ensure that support funded through ALS is clearly targeted at individual learners or defined groups with identified additional support needs. Support that is routinely available to all learners within a class or programme should be considered part of Universal Learning Provision (ULP) and is not eligible for ALS funding.
Individual Support 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

Type of provision	Description
	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)	Support funded through ALS for exam access arrangements must be based on an identified additional learning need, learning difficulty or disability and supported by appropriate assessment and/or evidence. Adjustments must reflect the learner's normal way of working and be required to ensure fair access to assessment. Institutions should implement arrangements in accordance with current JCQ requirements. ALS funding may be used where access arrangements result in additional support costs beyond standard examination provision. It must not be used for general examination administration, routine invigilation, or arrangements ordinarily available to all learners through core provision or awarding body funding. For further information, see the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance.
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	Enhanced transition activity funded through ALS must be clearly over and above standard recruitment, admissions, or transition processes. Institutions must be able to evidence that such activity is required specifically due to the learner's additional support needs and would not ordinarily be provided to all learners.
Wellbeing or Counselling	Counselling or wellbeing support funded through ALS must be directly linked to a learner's additional learning need or identified additional support need, it must demonstrate a clear impact on their ability to access or succeed in learning. General wellbeing or pastoral support available to all learners is not eligible for ALS funding.
Support to engage learners who have ASN with on-line delivery or	Support for online or blended learning is only eligible where it represents additional, directed intervention required due to a learner's identified

Type of provision	Description
blended learning approaches	additional support needs. Standard digital delivery, including general support provided to all learners, should be considered part of core provision and is not eligible for ALS funding.

Purchasing specialist equipment/software

27. 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.
28. 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.
29. Institutions may use ALS funding to lease specialist equipment if it is required for a short period of time.
30. 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.
31. It is recommended the institution include any items of equipment purchased with ALS funding in their insurance cover.
32. 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

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

34. 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.
35. 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.
36. 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.
37. 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

38. 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.
39. For learners receiving Enabling Support who do not have an IDP, institutions must retain evidence of the identified additional support need, the rationale for the support provided, and a record demonstrating how the support contributes to the learner's access, participation or achievement. This evidence may be electronic or paper-based and must be available for audit if requested by Medr.
40. Where appropriate, ALS funded learners should have a recorded diagnostic assessment¹ 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.

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

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

Monitoring requirements

47. Institutions should retain clear evidence demonstrating:
 - the identified support need;
 - why the support is additional to core provision; and
 - how the support contributes to improved learner access, participation, or outcomes.
48. 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**.
49. LLWR data on learning support will be monitored by Medr to ensure levels remain consistent. Supporting guidance for accurate recording via LLWR will be published through the Investment and Monitoring Newsletter.
50. 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.
51. From 2026/27, LS funding is one of five funding streams that form part of Medr's 'Support and Wellbeing Fund'. The Support and Wellbeing Fund allows providers flexibility to move funding between each of its components.
52. Following the return of the required monitoring expectations for each component funding stream, any underspend below 100% of a provider's total Support and Wellbeing Fund allocation will be reclaimed in full. There will be no option of carrying forward this allocation to future years.

53. Proceeds from sale of obsolete equipment must be included in the institution's reconciliation.

Contact details

54. For any queries relating to the content of this Guidance, please contact Medr at investmentandmonitoring@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	For the purposes of this guidance, ASN is the term used to describe learners eligible for Additional Learning Support (ALS) funding. This includes learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and learners who require Enabling Support (ES) because of identified barriers to accessing, participating in or achieving their learning programme.
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 (SSA) 14

For further information visit the Programmes Directory on the Medr website.

SSA	Programme Title	Level	Programme Code
14	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Level 1	01	1401C01B
14	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Level 2	02	1401C02B
14	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Level E1	E1	1401CE1B
14	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Level E2	E2	1401CE2B
14	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Level E3	E3	1401CE3B
14	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Pre-Entry	PE	1401CPEB
14	Foundation Learning Level E1	E1	1401AE1B
14	Foundation Learning Level E2	E2	1401AE2B
14	Foundation Learning Level E3	E3	1401AE3B
14	Foundation Studies Level 1	01	1401A01B
14	Foundation Studies Level 2	02	1401A02B
14	Independent Living Skills (Pathway 1)	N/A	1401AXXB
14	Independent Living Skills (Pathway 2)	N/A	1401BXXB
14	Independent Living Skills (Pathway 3)	N/A	1401CXXB
14	Independent Living Skills (Pathway 4)	N/A	1401DXXB
14	Preparation for Work Level 1	01	1402A01B
14	Preparation for Work Level 2	02	1402A02B
14	Preparation for Work Level E1	E1	1402AE1B
14	Preparation for Work Level E2	E2	1402AE2B
14	Preparation for Work Level E3	E3	1402AE3B

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 whether a learner has Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and whether Additional Learning Support (ALS) funding is utilised to support those needs. Accurate and complete LP76 data is important as it enables Medr to monitor demand for ALS funding and supports sector-wide funding, planning and monitoring activities. Although LP76 refers to ALN, it should be completed for all learners with identified additional support needs and should indicate whether ALS funding is being utilised.

Code 0 – Learner does not have ALN / ALS funding not required

A value of '0' should be used where a learner does not have Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This includes learners who do not have a learning difficulty and/or disability, learners accessing support that forms part of the institution's Universal Learning Provision (ULP), and learners with ALN who have declined support.

Code 5 – Learner has ALN, but ALS funding is not utilised

A value of '5' should be used where a learner has ALN, but ALS funding is not utilised. This may include learners on discrete programmes who do not meet the criteria for exceptional ALS funding, learners whose support needs are funded through another source such as a Local Authority, Local Health Board or Direct Payments, and learners whose support needs are met without the use of ALS funding.

Code 6 – Learner has ALN and ALS funding is utilised

A value of '6' should be used where ALS funding is utilised to provide support to meet a learner's identified needs. This includes learners receiving ALS-funded human support, technical support, Additional Learning Provision (ALP) or Enabling Support (ES), and learners on discrete programmes who meet the criteria for exceptional ALS funding.

Institutions should check their LP76 data for accuracy to ensure that it coincides with the information in their Certificates of Expenditure. There is no requirement for the two sets of data to match exactly, as minor discrepancies may occur due to learners leaving their programmes early. However, Medr would expect the number of learners reported as receiving ALS-funded support to broadly coincide with the number of learners recorded at LP76 = '6'.

Institutions should also ensure that LP30 (Disability Type) and LP90 (IDP Status) are completed where applicable. Further information on LLWR fields, completion requirements and validation rules 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 (ES) is for learners with identified additional support needs who may not require long-term or bespoke support provided through Additional Learning Provision (ALP). Learners eligible for this type of support may not have a diagnosis and may not have an Individual Development Plan (IDP). Evidence must be available to demonstrate that, without this support, the learner would be unlikely to successfully access, participate in or achieve their learning programme. Institutions should retain evidence of the identified additional support need, the rationale for providing support, and how the support contributes to learner access, participation or achievement.

ES 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 who have similar identified additional support needs. ES may be delivered on an individual or shared basis where this is the most appropriate and cost-effective method of meeting identified additional support needs. The fact that support is shared does not preclude it

from being funded through ALS, provided it is directed at learners with identified additional support needs.

Although ES may not require the same level of individualisation as ALP, it must be clearly linked to identified additional support needs and must be additional to the institution's standard provision. Support that is routinely available to all learners through Universal Learning Provision (ULP) or core programme delivery is not eligible for ALS funding.

Examples of Enabling Support may include:

- Shared support provided to a group of learners with identified additional support needs to enable participation in learning activities.
- Practical assistance to support a learner with a physical disability to access learning environments and college facilities.
- Directed support to develop independent learning, organisational or study skills where these difficulties create barriers to successful participation.
- The provision of, or training in the use of, accessibility software or technology identified as necessary to meet a learner's additional support needs.
- Directed support to enable learners with identified additional support needs to engage with online or blended learning.

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