



Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Children and young people with **Additional Learning Needs** may need more support to learn than the majority of children and young people of the same age; some may have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided for learners. About one in five children and young people may have Additional Learning Needs at some time.

All children and young people learn at different rates and have different events going on in their lives that can affect their rate of learning.

Schools, Colleges and Local Authorities can help most children overcome these difficulties. For some, these difficulties are short-term; for other children, however, they will have Additional Learning Needs throughout their school or college life.

Some will have **Additional Learning Needs** in particular areas of their education, whilst others may need help with all or most aspects of their education.

A child or young person has Additional Learning Needs if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;
- has a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in schools, colleges or settings.

Disability

There is not a direct correlation between having a disability and having an Additional Learning Need. However, there will be some forms of disability where a child or young person is more likely to have an ALN. The critical factor is whether the disability prevents or hinders the learner from making use of education or training that is generally provided.

There is a wide spectrum of Additional Learning Needs that your child or young person may have, and these may change and develop over time. Often the areas of need overlap, or in some instances your child's needs relate directly to one particular area of learning. Generally, children and young people will have needs which may fall into at least one of four areas, many children will have inter-related needs. The following section describes the types of Additional Learning Needs:



Communication and interaction

Children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Cognition and learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation*. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), affect one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

*Not all children develop at the same rate. Some find learning easy and develop quicker; whilst others struggle with certain tasks or skills and develop at a slower rate. Therefore, each child is set work that is directed at his or her own level or ability. This is called '*Differentiated*' Learning.

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Sensory and / or physical needs

Some children and young people require additional educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with Vision Impairment (VI), Hearing Impairment (HI) or a Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support*. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties.

* Some children and young people with a Physical Disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

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