This article provides an overview of the additional support provided for children and learners who do not have additional learning needs [1] / special educational needs [2]. It covers the age range 0-19. See the ‘Introduction’ [3] to this chapter for the legal framework and policy objectives.

Definition of the target group(s)

Early childhood education and care settings, schools and colleges are expected to respond to the individual needs of all children and learners whatever their diverse needs. The Welsh Government guidance on inclusion and pupil support [4] states that ‘all children and young people should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential’ (page 2).

This expectation is given force by the inspection system. In accordance with Estyn’s inspection guidance [5], inspectors are required to pay particular attention to outcomes for specific groups, including for example:

- pupils with additional learning needs [1] / special educational needs [2]
- children and learners in specialist provision (e.g. who are regularly receiving part of their education off-site)
- pupils eligible for free school meals [6] (a proxy measure of disadvantage)
- pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- pupils from minority ethnic groups
- pupils with emotional, health and social needs
- more able and talented learners
- boys and girls
- pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement.

In addition, local authorities (LAs) [7] have a number of legal duties related to encouraging, enabling and assisting children and young people, including those with particular needs, to participate in education or training. These duties are set out in guidance which includes:

- Guidance on inclusion and pupil support [4], which highlights the local authority role in dealing with non-attendance at school, and its statutory duties with regard to alternative provision [8] (or education other than at school, EOTAS, see the subheading ‘Education other than at school’ below).
- Statutory guidance on children missing from education [9].* Some of the circumstances that local authorities should consider when establishing their policies and procedures for preventing children and young people from missing education include:
  - children at risk of harm / neglect
  - children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- missing children / runaways
- young carers
- children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- children and young people who have been excluded
- children of migrant families
- looked after children
- children of homeless families
- children and young people with long-term medical or emotional problems.

- Statutory guidance for school governing bodies (which is part of a local authority’s duty to provide education other than at school (EOTAS), see the subheading ‘Education other than at school’ below).
- Statutory guidance on the arrangement of suitable education for looked after children (children looked after by the local authority).
- Statutory guidance on providing independent counselling services to support the needs of children and young people (see the article on ‘Guidance and Counselling in Early Childhood and School Education’ for more information).

* In January 2018, the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced that she intended to consult on requiring local authorities to establish a database to assist them in identifying children not on a school register, not in education otherwise than at school and not receiving a suitable education.

### Specific support measures

A variety of measures are in place that aim to improve educational outcomes for particular groups of children and, in particular, for disadvantaged children and young people. The subheadings which follow summarise the key specific support measures in place.

The Welsh Government’s Learning Wales website also provides access to a wide range of guidance and information materials to support those working with learners with a variety of needs.

### Funding to support particular groups

Additional funding is provided to support particular groups of learners through the following arrangements:

- The funding formulae used by local authorities (LAs) to distribute funds to schools. These must, in accordance with Section 18 of The School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010, take into account a factor or factors based on the incidence of social deprivation among pupils. Funding formulae may also take into account a range of other factors, including, for example, the number of learners with special educational needs (SEN) and the number of learners for whom English or Welsh is not their first language. (See the article on ‘Early Childhood and School Education Funding’.

- The Pupil Development Grant (PDG) (introduced as the Pupil Deprivation Grant in 2012 but changed to the Pupil Development Grant in April 2017) and the Early Years Pupil Development Grant (EYPDG) (introduced as the Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant in 2015). These grants provide financial support to help tackle the effects of poverty on attainment. They are allocated to schools on the basis of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and the number of looked after children (LAC). Although schools do not have to spend the funding in exact proportion to individual children, the grants must only be used for interventions that support those pupils. Schools use the grants in a number of different ways, including for...
nurture groups for children who may be socially and emotionally vulnerable; out-of-hours school learning; on-site multi-agency support; and better tracking of pupils as they progress through school. In 2018/19, the PDG in primary and secondary schools and in education other than at school (EOTAS) (see the subheading ‘Education other than at school’ below) is £1150 (£1290)* per learner. The EYPDG is set at £700 (£785)* for each eligible child. From 2018/19, schools also have greater flexibility to support learners who have been eligible for free school meals in the previous two years. Further information on the grants is available from the Welsh Government ‘Education of disadvantaged children’ webpage, and from specific guidance on the use of the grants for looked after children.

- The Education Improvement Grant (EIG), which provides financial assistance to schools, local authorities and regional education consortia to improve educational outcomes for all learners. It supports activity focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning; improving inclusion; improving leadership in educational settings; and improving provision for, and the engagement of, learners. Introduced in April 2015, the grant subsumed previous grants such as the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) and the grant in support of the education of Gypsy and Traveller children. The EIG may still be targeted at such groups, depending on local priorities. Further information is available from the Welsh Government.

- The Supporting Service Children in Wales Fund. This new Welsh Government fund, introduced in September 2018, provides targeted support for the children of Armed Forces personnel in Wales. It is administered by the Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) project, hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Schools are invited to bid for funds to support the children of Service personnel to achieve their full potential. The fund replaces the Ministry of Defence Education Support Fund which was previously open to schools across the UK.

- The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Intended to encourage young people aged 16-19 from low-income families to continue in education after school leaving age, the EMA is an income-assessed weekly allowance of £30 (£34)*, which helps students with the cost of further education. Further information is available from the Student Finance Wales website.

*Exchange rate used: €1 = £0.89 =, ECB, 30 October 2018.

**Tackling poverty**

Reducing poverty by prioritising the needs of the poorest and protecting those most at risk of poverty and exclusion is a key focus of Welsh Government policy, as highlighted in its (2017) national strategy Prosperity for All. The strategy aims to create prosperity and promote well-being by breaking the cycle of poverty, raising aspiration and attainment, and reducing inequality. In support of this focus, the Welsh Government provides:

- the Families First programme, which aims to improve support to disadvantaged families, in particular, through preventative and early interventions
- the Flying Start programme for families with children under the age of 4.

Flying Start offers families living in disadvantaged areas of Wales:

- part-time, funded childcare for all eligible 2- to 3-year-olds for 2.5 hours a day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks
- at least 15 sessions of funded provision during the school holidays
- the services of a Flying Start health visitor
- access to parenting programmes / parenting support
• access to early language development support.

The programme is delivered by local authorities and targets areas according to measures of relative disadvantage, including the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation [31], free school meals (FSM) [6], and the proportion of children under the age of 4 in households receiving income-related benefits.

**Looked after children**

Local authorities (LAs) [32] have a statutory responsibility – under Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 [33] - to promote the educational achievement of looked after children (children in the care of the local authority). In addition, under Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 [34], the governing bodies [10] of all maintained [35] schools must designate a member of staff as having responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after children and young people, and ensuring their needs are met within the school. The Welsh Government’s statutory guidance [36] provides further information on the role of the designated person.

The Welsh Government has introduced a strategy [37] to improve the educational attainment of looked after children and young people, who are also eligible for the Pupil Development Grant (see the subheading ‘Funding to support particular groups’ above).

**Education other than at school (EOTAS)**

All local authorities (LAs) [7] have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people who are unable to attend school through illness, exclusion, or other reasons, are provided with access to ‘education other than at school’ (EOTAS) services, also known as ‘alternative provision’.

The majority of pupils educated outside school have behavioural problems and are likely to have been excluded for disciplinary reasons. Other pupils catered for through EOTAS services can include sick or injured children, habitual non-attenders, pregnant pupils and young mothers.

The arrangement of EOTAS services is a matter for local authorities to determine, but all must ensure that pupils who are unable to attend school are provided with access to EOTAS within 15 school days of their non-attendance. There is no statutory minimum number of hours per week for which EOTAS services should be provided.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) [38]) are the most frequently used education provision for pupils whose main education is other than at school. Legally a type of school, they are intended to provide short- or medium-term placements with a view to reintegrating pupils, as soon as practicable, in a primary, secondary or special school [39], or to preparing pupils for transition to further education [25], training or employment. In October 2018 [40], there were 24 PRUs in Wales.

Education other than at school can also include:

- provision in further education colleges [41] (for pupils in Years 10 and 11 of secondary education, ages 14–16)
- individual tuition and tuition in pupils’ homes or in hospital, including internet-based tuition
- work-related education
- provision offered by training providers
- provision offered by voluntary organisations
- tailor-made packages.

Pages 148-160 of the Welsh Government’s (March 2016) guidance [4] on inclusion and pupil support
provide detailed information on the provision of EOTAS services. Pages 171-178 of the same guidance provide information on the role and legal basis for PRUs.

In December 2017, the Welsh Government published a Framework for Action for EOTAS [42]. This long-term plan to improve outcomes for learners accessing EOTAS provision followed the publication by Estyn (the Inspectorate), in June 2015, of a good practice survey [43] on EOTAS, produced at the request of the Welsh Government. The 2015 report and recommendations sought to respond to concerns expressed following a 2013 review [44] of EOTAS services.

Strategies to support engagement and progression

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) [45] aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). It is based around six elements, aiming to:

- identify young people most at risk of disengagement
- provide better brokerage and coordination of support
- provide stronger tracking and transition of young people through the system
- ensure provision meets the needs of young people
- strengthen employability skills and opportunities for employment
- provide greater accountability for better outcomes for young people.

Local authorities (LAs) [7] are responsible for leading implementation of the framework, working closely with Careers Wales [46], youth services, schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and other partners. The YEPF supports the Youth Guarantee which is the provision of a suitable place in education or training for any young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16. Under the Youth Guarantee, a place in education or training can include:

- a part-time or full-time place in a school or college
- an apprenticeship opportunity
- a Welsh Government traineeship place
- a place on a re-engagement programme
- a volunteering opportunity
- a Level 2 [47] training programme during employment.

A suitable offer for a young person is one that is appropriate to their individual needs. This means that it must be at the right level for them; in the right geographical location; in an appropriate occupational sector; and offer them a learning method which engages them. The place must also help them progress towards sustainable employment.

Managed moves

The Welsh Government also supports the use of ‘managed moves’ (from one education provider to another) as an intervention to support vulnerable children and young people. Its 2011 guidance [48] suggests that managed moves can be beneficial when:

- a pupil is at risk of a permanent exclusion but might do well in a different environment
- there has been limited success in supporting a pupil with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- a pupil’s emotional welfare is affected by attending his / her current school.

In its June 2015 good practice survey [43] on education other than at school (EOTAS), Estyn (the
Inspectorate) identified a number of key features which make a managed move successful. These include:

- early identification, so that a pupil can be identified before a placement has broken down completely
- careful planning, to ensure that the move is appropriate and can meet the needs of the individual pupil in terms of curriculum, support and travelling distances
- effective sharing of information between the two schools
- involvement of the pupil and parents when deciding on a new school
- robust monitoring and review of the new placement.

In a further review [49] of the effective use of managed moves published in March 2018, Estyn made additional recommendations, including that:

- pupils and their families should be provided with more information on managed moves – in the form of impartial information, advice and guidance from local authorities [7] and schools - before and during the process
- school-to-school managed move protocols should be developed and used where possible.

In response [50], the Welsh Government is considering revising the information document in respect of managed moves. This is with a view to clarifying the expectations on local authorities (LAs), schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) [38], and the legal responsibilities of local authorities.

More able and talented learners

Early childhood education and care settings, schools and colleges are expected to respond appropriately to the diverse, individual needs of all children and learners. Some children and young people in Wales are identified as ‘more able and talented learners’, that is, those who are more able across the curriculum, as well as those who show talent in one or more specific areas. Estyn, the Inspectorate, in its inspection guidance for schools, sets out the expectation that teachers will make certain that ‘pupils with more developed skills achieve’, and that the ‘work they undertake stretches them fully to achieve as well as they could’ (page 16 of the Guidance Handbook for the Inspection of Primary Schools [51]).

The Welsh Government provides advice [52] to support schools and local authorities [7] in identifying, assessing and providing for more able and talented pupils, along with guidance [53] for the further education sector in Wales.

In 2018, the Welsh Government is developing a new national approach [54] for identifying and supporting more able learners, and will produce new guidance. This will include a new definition of more able learners. In addition, the Seren Network [55], which supports talented sixth-form [56] students to gain access to leading universities, will be expanded to target younger learners before they take GCSE [57] qualifications.

Pupils whose first language is not English or Welsh

Some children regularly speak a language other than English or Welsh at home. They are referred to as pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) or Welsh as an additional language (WAL). It is practice to provide for these pupils by integrating them into mainstream education, with additional language support if needed. Such pupils are considered to have additional needs, but are not defined in legislation as having special educational needs (SEN) [2]. The Education Act 1996 [58] (for learners of compulsory school age and younger) and the Learning and Skills Act 2000 [59] (for post-16 learners) –
and the revised legal framework set out in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 [60] (see the ‘Introduction’ to this Chapter) - set out that learners must not be regarded as having SEN or a learning difficulty solely because the language in which they are or will be taught is different from that spoken at home.

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils**

During September to December 2017, the Welsh Government consulted on proposals intended to develop and improve access to help, advice and services for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Communities across Wales. Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers [61] includes proposals to narrow the gap in educational outcomes for GRT children and young people by:

- improving the confidence of GRT pupils and parents to identify their ethnicity so that performance can be better understood and learning supported
- ensuring Gypsies, Roma and Travellers have their culture reflected in the school environment, and that the GRT Community is consulted as part of developing and realising the new Curriculum for Wales [62]
- Estyn (the Inspectorate) undertaking a review of progress, since 2011, in support for GRT learners
- exploring ways to increase take-up rates of early years education by GRT families
- promoting the learning of essential skills to improve employability prospects, social cohesion and school attainment
- supporting local authorities [7] and regional education consortia [22] to support schools in improving educational outcomes for GRT learners.

Following the consultation, the Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers [63] plan was published in June 2018.

**Use of data for monitoring progress of particular groups**

Schools are expected to use data to support them in monitoring the progress of particular groups. Data tools, such as Fischer Family Trust (FFT) Aspire [64], are available to help by providing interactive analyses of school and pupil performance data for individual schools. This data can be broken down by a number of characteristics including eligibility for free school meals [6], looked after [19] status, eligibility for the Pupil Development Grant (see the subheading ‘Funding to support particular groups’ above), gender, minority ethnic group, and first language other than English.

**Evidence of what works for disadvantaged pupils**

The Welsh Government expects schools to make use of evidence-based approaches when planning how to spend the Pupil Development Grant in particular (see the subheading ‘Funding to support particular groups’ above). It recommends [65] the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit [66] as a means to make effective choices between strategies based on a range of educational research. The EEF Toolkit summarises research from the UK and beyond and provides guidance to teachers and school leaders on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of pupils.

Article last reviewed October 2018.