

Comments from Schools and Parents Made to SNAP Cymru about the current and future provision for children with Additional Learning Needs and the rise in discriminatory practices and loss of inclusive practices.

- Children in the early years will be adversely affected – Heads Teachers are already refusing to take children who are still in nappies and have made it quite clear to parents that if their child with ALN needs additional support, they will have to wait until that support is in place before starting school.
- Heads Teachers are not preparing for school entry of children with additional learning needs until compulsory school age when funding becomes available from the Local Authority.
- There is confusion in some schools and anxiety from parents, about when the Local Authority will become the responsible body for the assessment of additional learning needs and the IDP.
- Some schools tell parents that they do not have enough money to meet their child's Additional Learning Needs.
- Some professionals advise Welsh speaking families to choose English medium provision for their children with additional learning needs
- Parents are worried that their children will not get additional learning needs assessments at the right time as if schools cannot do the assessments themselves, they will have to access them and pay the costs.
- Many parents are now desperate to get placements for their children in specialist teaching facilities, including Special Schools, as they believe this is the only way to get their child's needs met. Many of these children's needs could be met in mainstream school with the right support but unless schools are welcoming and confident in meeting the child's needs, parents will move away from mainstream education. This is a backward step for inclusion.
- Families need independent advice and trusted unbiased support. This includes support listening, involving and engaging with their children in a range of planning and decision-making activities throughout their child's lives. Many families are unable to engage and fully participate in this themselves because of their emotional stress, previous issues with professionals, or their own experience in education. It is therefore hoped that Welsh Government and Local Authorities will promote and fund independent advice services which are easily accessible and free at the point of delivery for families and learners themselves.
- There has been chaos in England in relation to access to health provision and parental input and access via social media from Wales is fuelling anxieties here in Wales. We cannot ignore these pitfalls and need to be proactive to prevent the high levels of litigation currently happening in England.