

This response was submitted to the **Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into the general principles of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill**

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Ymateb gan: TSANA (Cynghrair y Trydydd Sector ar Anghenion Ychwanegol)

Response from: TSANA (Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance)

The Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance (TSANA) is a coalition of third sector organisations working with, supporting and representing a broad range of children and young people who have additional learning needs and disabilities.

TSANA works to improve the educational and training outcomes and opportunities for children and young people with additional learning needs and disabilities in Wales, ensuring they are valued, empowered, respected, and represented.

TSANA recognises that the Tertiary Education and Research (TER) reforms are far reaching in their scope to create a regulatory body responsible for funding, oversight and regulation of further and higher education. We believe that in considering the breadth of the new legislation, the interests of young people with additional learning needs must be considered and have been disappointed by the lack of reference in the legislation to young people with ALN.

TSANA urges the Children, Young People and Education Committee to consider:

- 1. how the needs of children and young people with ALN will be represented in the strategic framework for tertiary education and research.** There is an absence of detail on how the needs of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and neurodivergent people will be supported through the reforms. We draw the Committee's attention to a need to ensure young people with complex ALN who require a placement at a specialist further education college are not excluded from the protections offered by the Commission. For the legislation to not do so appears discriminatory. It also risks providers adherence to the ALN code and person-centred principles of the reforms. For example, where learners may need the expertise of different providers to meet their IDP outcomes.
- 2. how pathways for support between providers can be streamlined.** For example, currently, deaf students move from a SEN/ALN system to a Disabled Students' Allowance system and then onto an Access to Work system. The reforms offer the opportunity for information to be joined up.

3. **how the reforms can provide principles for apprenticeships.** TSANA believes that funding for supported internships and apprenticeships for young people with learning difficulties should be explicitly included in the Bill. This would provide consistency across tertiary education.
4. **how Welsh Government can use the reforms to ensure equitable access to post-school education and training for special school leavers whether their ALP is a FEI or a specialist further education college.** The Bill provides the opportunity for Welsh Government to clarify ambiguities resulting from ALN reforms that risks some young people in Wales being denied access to FE because of their ALN. This relates to different funding mechanisms meaning the route to a specialist FE college is far less certain than for young people who leave special school to go to an FEI. The Tertiary Education and Research Bill can also be clear about the expectations of post-school options for young people with ALN leaving special schools and what is 'proper' and 'reasonable' for these learners.
5. **how the Student Voice remit of the Bill should be inclusive of all learners.** TSANA believes that providers should be required evidence that they have engaged with a range of disabled student views, including deaf, visually impaired, and non-verbal learners including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
6. **how the Bill will require providers to be accountable for meeting the needs of students with ALN.** There appears very little alignment with ALN reforms. E.g. how or if the Commission would have any role in monitoring providers adherence to Individual Development Plans or Support Plans.
7. **how the subordinate legislation regulations** should include non-accredited learning accessed by ALN learners in FEIs specialist FE colleges.