



# Flintshire County Council

## EDUCATION AND YOUTH

# Accessibility Strategy (For schools)



Policy Owner for review	Chief Officer Education and Youth
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## 1.0 CHIEF OFFICER'S PREFACE

Flintshire County Council is committed to the principles of equal access to all its services for all people who live within its community. These rights extend to the accessibility of those services for people with disabilities: a commitment that is illustrated by the logo prominent on all its official communications -



I therefore welcome this Accessibility Strategy. It describes how, over time, the Local Authority (LA) will seek to achieve accessibility to its buildings where it is practicable to do so whilst also ensuring there is full access to:

- any information distributed by all its schools and services and
- the school curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities.

It is my intention that this strategy will inform the work of the LA in this vital area of service for the next three years. When fully implemented, any person with a disability - child or adult – using LA facilities, will be able to do so on an equal basis with all other users.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the “Planning to increase access to schools for Disabled Pupils – National Assembly for Wales Circular no: 15/2004”.

Finally I welcome any observations on this Strategy. If you wish to comment please contact me at this address

Claire Homard – Interim Director Lifelong Learning  
County Hall, Mold



## 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act came into force in 2010. Its effect was felt in several areas in schools, the employment of people with disabilities, the provision of goods and services, the publication (in the annual report to School Governors) of the current access arrangements for pupils with disabilities, transport and the production of a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

The Equality Act 2010, prevents all schools, including non-maintained schools and Further/Higher Education establishments, from discriminating against pupils with disabilities in their admission and exclusion arrangements. Regulations will define what is and is not allowed, but discrimination will occur if:

- For a reason relating to a disability, the school treats the pupil less favourably than it treats, or would treat, others to whom that reason does not, or would not, apply
- The school does not demonstrate due regard to a pupil's disability
- The school does not make reasonable adjustments.

Flintshire LA is committed to the principles of equality and inclusion. These principles are set out in its Inclusion Strategy. Within this strategy it states its commitment to the following principles

- An inclusive ethos, that means that everyone is valued
- Demonstrate inclusion by increasing participation for pupils in cultures, curricular opportunities and the local communities of schools and the wider society
- Everyone has the right to educational services and experiences of the highest quality
- All pupils and their parents are entitled to be treated with respect and should be actively encouraged to make their views known in order that they can be taken into account
- Schools will need to re-examine their cultures, policies and practices to make them fully inclusive
- There will be ongoing strategic planning at all educational establishments and at individual pupil level
- Maximise access to learning and participation
- Aim to meet the needs of all pupils in their local schools
- Educational systems that are designed to take into account the wide diversities between pupils.

This document explains how the LA intends to develop a strategic approach to planning for the increased access to its schools, to the curriculum and to information. The strategy links with other policies such as the Councils Improvement Plan, the School Modernisation Strategy and the primary and secondary phase Strategic Plans. It is also closely linked to the LA's Inclusion Service practice and key functions.

Flintshire County Council also has a Strategic Equality Plan. This was written and consulted on in 2012. Schools must ensure that their Strategic Equality Plan illustrates how they will promote equality. The Strategic Equality Plan complements this Accessibility Strategy. The plan describes how the Council plans to promote equality. Schools must ensure that the Strategic Equality Plans illustrate how they will also promote equality.

## **2. ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY**

From 2004, each LA in Wales has had to have in place an Accessibility Strategy to improve:

- the physical environment of its schools
- access to the curriculum
- access to information.

This revised strategy replaces the updated version in 2011.

A similar duty falls on all schools to provide an Accessibility Plan. Each school's Governor's annual report should contain up to date information about pupils with disabilities and the accessibility plan.

The revised Accessibility Strategy will cover the three year period from 2017 to 2020, and reviewed as required in future years. The responsibility for this lies with the Equality Act Steering Group (EASG). This is a multi-service group that oversees and monitors policy and practice for pupils with disabilities.

The strategy is rooted in an awareness that its successful implementation depends, to a very great extent, on attitudinal, perceptual and cultural changes. It is expected that all service providers and users will embrace this ethos. It is recognised that some attitudes and perceptions may need to be reviewed and

challenged. All school's governing bodies have a responsibility to ensure their staff are appropriately trained to meet the needs of their pupils.

Children and young people falling within the medical definition of "disability" will have a wide range of needs and requirements. These may include physical impairments that may restrict mobility, sensory impairment of sight or hearing, learning difficulties, Attention Deficit (and Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADHD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), mental health conditions, health problems such as epilepsy or asthma, and progressive degenerative condition such as Cystic Fibrosis. Pupils and young people with a disability should not automatically be considered to have a special education need.

The Equality Act 2010, defines disability in the following way:

*"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities".*

This definition needs to be read in conjunction with the definition of Special Education Needs (SEN) in the SEN Code of Practice for Wales 2002.

*"Children have special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:*

- (a) have significantly greater difficulty which calls for special education provision to be made for them*
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA.*
- (c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.*

*Special Education provision means:*

- (a) for children two or over, educational provision which is additional to or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the LA, other than special schools in the area.*

*(b) for children under two, education or provision of any kind.”*

It can be seen that the two definitions are not always mutually compatible and that, indeed, protection under one Act does not automatically include protection under the other. Therefore this Strategy needs to be read in tandem with the following LA documents.

- The SEN Policy Framework
- The Behaviour Support Plan
- The Inclusion Strategy.

### **3. LA RESPONSIBILITIES TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY**

Since September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LA's to discriminate against pupils and young people with disabilities in admissions arrangements to, and exclusions from, schools and in the provision of education and associated services. There are three main duties:

- Not to treat pupils with disabilities less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting pupils with disabilities at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare an Accessibility Strategy (LA) and Accessibility Plan (schools) for increasing over time, the accessibility of schools for pupils with disabilities (this is the “planning” duty).

It should be noted that these duties are all “anticipatory”. This means that schools need to consider the requirements of current and future pupils and young people with disabilities within their forward-planning duties. The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices at the school. It is vital that the LA and schools recognise that the “reasonable adjustments” duty is both general and anticipatory, rather than individual and reactionary. In deciding whether an action is “reasonable” schools may take into account the need to maintain academic standards, available resources, the practicalities of making a particular adjustment, the health and safety of the pupils and others with disabilities, and the interests of others. However, the views of the Welsh Government and

the Equality and Human Rights Commission is that where schools have already developed inclusive cultures and practices, these legal duties should inform projected needs and future planning.

### Criteria for reasonable adjustments

It is not possible to arrive at hard and fast criteria for what constitutes a “reasonable adjustment”. The individual circumstances of the pupil and school mean that a degree of professional judgement is always necessary to determine what is “reasonable”. The issues that may need to be considered would include:

- The strengths of the pupil
- The health of the pupil
- The costs of the adjustments
- Health and safety factors for the pupil and other pupils
- The nature of the alternative arrangements to be made.

A balance needs to be made between the benefits for the pupil and all of the other factors that relate to the impact of the adjustment being made.

The Accessibility Strategy is overseen by the EASG. The steering group consists of the following representatives:

- Disability Access Officer (FCC)
- Property & Design Consultancy Department (FCC)
- Occupational Therapists (BCUHB)
- School Place, Planning & Provision (FCC)
- Additional Learning Needs Service (FCC)
- Health and Safety Advisor (FCC)

Where a school is unable to determine what a “reasonable adjustment” in the case of a physical adaptation requirement the Headteacher may request a referral via School Nurse or Doctor to the Occupational Therapy Service (OTS) for an assessment of pupil needs. Recommendations from the OTS will be forwarded to the EASG. The EASG will then conduct any necessary feasibility studies. Referrals should be directed to the Disability Access Officer, Property & Design Consultancy Department, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire. CH7 6NB.



## The LA's Aims

The LA will therefore plan ahead to achieve accessibility to its schools for people with a disability. It will do so by ensuring

- That the School Admissions Policy for pupils with a disability is the same admissions policy as that for pupils without a disability
- That all new buildings are built to a standard that makes them accessible to users with a disability
- That existing buildings will be made accessible for individual pupils with a disability, if reasonable to do so, before they are admitted to a new school (as long as sufficient notice is given for this to be realistic)
- That pupils with a disability will be provided with appropriate equipment upon receipt of evidence provided by a qualified Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist and completion of a form countersigned by the service manager
- That pupils with a disability will be provided with an appropriate curriculum
- That pupils are enabled to communicate with others through having regard to the recommendations by North East Wales Sensory Support Service (NEWSSS) and Speech and Language Therapy Service (SALT) (NHS).

The LA will continue to work toward making school buildings accessible.

## **4. STANDARDS FOR NEW BUILDINGS AND ADAPTATIONS**

Work must comply with Building Regulations Approved Document Part M or British Standards BS8300

A Building Regulations' application to the LA may be required for certain works.

Planning approval may need to be obtained. Landlord approval will be obtained from LA for schools who are funding self-help schemes.

Some common requirements for consideration are as follows:

## Common Requirements

- Approach to School
- Ramps
- Entering the School
- Doors
- Fire Exits
- Lifts / wheelchair platform lifts
- Hall
- Dining Room / Canteen
- Classrooms
- Cloakrooms / Changing Areas
- Accessible WCs
- Library
- Sports Hall & Gymnasium
- Medical room
- Corridors
- Visual impairment considerations
- Hearing impairment considerations.

## Specialist Equipment for Pupils

The LA is responsible for the purchase of specialist equipment that is essential to avoid discrimination against a person's disability. These would include:

- Standing frames
- Hoists
- Tracked lifting devices
- Adapted seating
- Recommendations for specialist equipment costing £100 or more made by OT, SALT, Sensory Service, Physiotherapist or NEWSSS
- Several smaller pieces of equipment bought for the same child at the same time which together total over £100
- Where equipment costs up to £100 it is the responsibility of the school to fund it.
- If Specialist equipment is required a request should be submitted to the Inclusion Manager at Education and Youth Department at Flintshire County Council.

## Equipment removal / relocation

- In the event that equipment has been provided for a pupil and the pupil transfers to another school, the receiving school will be responsible for arranging and funding the appropriate transfer of that equipment
- In the event that equipment has been provided for a pupil, and that equipment is no longer needed for that pupil, the school is required to inform the Disability Access Officer on 01352 702131.

## **5. PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS (PHYSICAL AND/OR SENSORY)**

Please See attached Appendix 2

## **6. CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

Feasibility studies for physical adaptations will consider the suitability of access and egress for those with physical and/or sensory impairment, not least in the event of a need to evacuate the building in an emergency.

Where it is reasonable and practical to do so, adaptations will include consideration of use of ground floor accommodation and the permanent construction of ramps and disabled lifts to enable transfer between levels.

Any disabled lift provided will be suitably constructed and compliant. It will effect one descent from an upper floor, with or without support. This will be by virtue of an appropriately installed uninterrupted automatic alternative power override system in the event of electrical fault interruption.

Platform stair lifts will only be considered if staircases are suitably wide enough and constructed to enable a safe installation that provides a controlled and sufficiently speedy means of escape. Platform stair lifts can result in hampering or preventing a timely and unobstructed means of escape. Where it is considered feasible, an automatic alternative power override system must also be installed as above.

## 7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOLS

Head teachers of schools must ensure that for each pupil with a physical impairment or sensory impairment that hinders their ability to evacuate a building unaided, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is developed. Refer to guidance and proforma on <https://hwb.wales.gov.uk/>.

The plan must consider egress from all areas of the buildings, and always ensure an alternative escape route is equally identified (primary and secondary routes).

When assessing individual evacuation plan options to develop a PEEP, it will be necessary to include input from Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Head teachers, parents, and carers in the first instance so that sufficient medical information can be gathered as well as assessing the existing layout of the building.

Evacuation chairs should be seen as a 'contingency' to be used e.g. in the event of a breakdown of a mobility lift, rather than a primary means of transferring people down from an upper floor or level.

Some individuals may not be able to self-transfer to an evacuation chair. Any physical support required must be in accordance with the Manual Handling and Lifting Operations Regulations to ensure that individuals, including those providing any support, are not placed at risk in providing it (methods of transfer to avoid weight bearing etc.).

Where evacuation chairs are to be provided as part of an evacuation plan (a contingency), the school must ensure that an appropriate number of staff are designated and trained in the operation of the evacuation chairs and the safe method of transfer for individuals.

If there is more than one PEEP required (more than one person requiring an individual plan to evacuate to safety) they must be considered together to ensure one plan does not impact adversely on another, and that school has the required resources and trained staff to manage a safe and timely escape.

The Accessibility Plan does not need to cover access to the school for disabled staff. Therefore access to staff areas such as the Staff Room, do not need to be included. If a school employs a disabled

member of staff, the Access to Work scheme run by the Employment Service can help to make the workplace more accessible.

## **8. POLICIES AND REPORTS**

All school policies and procedures should be reviewed and, where necessary, modified to ensure that they are compliant with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales, Equality Act, Equality duties, Fire Regulation etc.

The school's annual Governors' Report to parents will comment on the application of the School's Accessibility Plan. It will indicate where the plan is located and the formats in which it can be delivered.

## **9. COMMUNICATION**

There will be a process in place in each school that will enable the pupil with disabilities and their parents to disclose the pupil's impairment(s) so that they can access the appropriate support available.

In its dealings with people with disabilities the LA will, on request, provide information in a variety of formats depending on user needs e.g.

- Braille text
- Large font text
- Audio tape recordings
- BSL DVD's
- Oral information.

The LA promote the use of a local company to have documents transferred into different formats. Admin Support Services should be contacted on 01352 702340.

All school staff need to be aware of the communication needs of pupils with disabilities and how to respond to them.

Communication includes all information provided to pupils during the course of their education. Staff therefore need to be trained to provide information in such formats or to know where to seek advice.

## **10. THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum should not discriminate against pupils with disabilities.

Schools should have a sympathetic approach to timetabling and geographical location of subjects so that those, for example with mobility impairments, are located in areas that involve less movement.

Pupils with a disability should have equal access to education and associated services such as school trips and visits, after-school clubs and catering arrangements.

Pupils with a disability should be provided where appropriate, with ICT support that enables them, or assists them, to access the curriculum.

Where appropriate the curriculum should be modified for pupils with disabilities in terms of input, tasks and output.

Examples of reasonable adjustments to curriculum delivery that the school might make are:

- Timetabling classrooms that are accessible to pupils with a mobility impairment
- Planning to site whole school facilities e.g. library, ICT suites, in accessible areas
- Providing activities that are appropriately differentiated and modified to meet the pupil's needs.
- Adapting resources into an appropriate format suitable for the child's needs

## **11. NOMINATED PERSONNEL**

Each school will nominate a teacher to be responsible for disability issues. This teacher should be a senior manager. They will keep abreast of disability issues via regular training sessions.

The Head of the Inclusion Service will assume overall responsibility for disability discrimination issues.

## **12. ACTION PLAN**

The Education and Youth Action Plan and the schools' Accessibility Plans need to be a three-stage document identifying short term, medium term, and long term actions and must ensure that:

- A Strategic Equality Plan is in place. (schools and LA)
- Accessibility Plans (schools) and Strategic Equality Plan are monitored annually (schools and LA)
- Schools report to their governing bodies each year on the implementation of their Accessibility Plans and Strategic Equality Plan
- Work continues to remove barriers for access for pupils to schools (schools and LA)

### 13. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Accessibility Strategy and School Accessibility Plans and Strategic Equality Plans will be subject to ESTYN inspections. The Welsh Government can intervene where an LA or school is not complying with the planning duty and can direct the LA or school to do so.

### 14. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FUNDING

The National assembly for Wales Circular 15/2004, "Planning to Increase Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils" indicates in paragraph 6.1, the LA should fund certain items to make a school more accessible for disabled pupils. These would include capital work,

*"such as rebuilding, the installation of lifts, electromagnetic doors, sound proofing, accessible toilets and the provision of more expensive, specialist equipment are funded by LA except for **voluntary aided schools** where 85% of such costs can be grant funded by the National Assembly".*

It further states, in paragraph 6.3, that

*"maintained schools need to look to their delegated budgets to fund the elements of their access plans, other than capital works".*

When a school is itemising elements in its Accessibility Plan, it would be appropriate for the school to try to build in to its regular programme of work and refurbishments, any items that would improve accessibility for disabled pupils. Many schools, for example, will need to consider

improvements such as colour contrast in classrooms or fitting lever/push taps to wash basins. These can be done over time and when required and should not entail any extra costs. Other items, such as chairs with arms or work areas/tables at a different height, could be included in the next round of supplies. The school would need to specify, for example, how many chairs with arms it would need.

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## 17. APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Glossary of Terms

SALT - Speech and Language Therapy

EALS – English as an Additional Language Service

EASG – Equality Act Steering Group

ESTYN – Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (HMCI)

#### Terminology

SEP – Strategic Equality Plan

ALN – Additional Learning Needs

ALNCo – Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator

EA – Equality Act 2010

**This strategy will be available in alternative formats on request. Contact Admin Support Services**

## Appendix 2

### **STANDARDS FOR NEW BUILDINGS AND ADAPTATIONS**

In regard to Building regulations approved document Part M and/or British Standards Document BS8300

#### **Common Requirements**

##### **Ramps**

- Ramp required, with a maximum gradient of 1in15, at least 1500mm wide with colour contrast handrails and tap rail
- Ramp should have a flat area at top of no less than 1.2m square ( intermediate landings of 1.5m)
- Handrails to be added both sides of ramp (open side to be filled in)
- Steps to have handrails to both sides
- Corduroy tactile paving to be provided to top and bottom of steps
- Colour contrasted edging to be provided on steps.

##### **Doors**

- Door have tubular pull handle at suitable height
- Tubular pull handle to be colour contrasted to door
- External doors have a 800mm (1m if new build) single leaf clear opening
- Doors to have vision panel (at 500mm to 800mm and 1150mm to 1500mm)
- Remove any lip on the threshold ensuring it is level
- Door release buttons to be highlighted
- Door release buttons to be situated at suitable height between 750 - 1000mm in height
- Internal doors are 750mm (or 775mm if not straight access) single leaf clear opening
- Internal doors to be 800mm to 825mm wide on new buildings
- Tubular lever handle to be colour contrasted to door
- Signage to be posted on door
- Ensure signs are posted at eye level (all signage posted between 900m and 1.2m)
- Ensure that signage is placed on a matt background to avoid glare
- Ensure that the first letter on sign is capital followed by all lower case, and that a version is available in Braille
- Sliding door will have a tubular handle
- Easy pull back on all doors fitted with closer including screens (no more than 20 Newtons).

##### **Fire Exits**

- Fire exit to be 800mm single leaf clear opening
- Level access from fire exit to assembly point
- Ramped access from fire exit to assembly point
- Fire exit ramp to have colour contrasted handrails to both sides

- Signage to show fire exit is wheelchair accessible
- Flashing fire alarm to be coupled with the existing audio signal throughout the school.

### **Visual impairment considerations**

- Lighting to be of a standard brightness (person can distinguish facial features clearly)
- Colour contrast is established between floor, walls and ceiling
- Dimmer switches to be added if required
- Curtains or blinds on windows
- Anti-glare blinds or window film to be provided.

### **Lifts / wheelchair platform lifts**

- Wheelchair platform lift to be added where required
- Access doorway to be 800mm clear opening
- Mirror to be placed on back wall
- Handrail positioned to one side or back wall of lift
- Buttons to be positioned at 900mm in height
- Tactile & Braille buttons to be installed
- Lighting to be bright (person can distinguish facial features clearly)
- Colour contrast to be established between floor walls and handrail.
- Audio and visual signal inside the lift
- Visual floor indicator on opposite wall when door open.
- 1.5m clear landing in front of lift
- Alarm button to be colour contrasted.
- Installation of lift (to comply with Part M Building Regulations).

### **Approach to School**

- Gate access is it 1m clear opening to allow access for prams & wheelchair users
- Gate to have colour contrast from wall
- Dropped kerbs with blister tactile crossing points to school gate
- Blue badge holder parking space provided with hatching and close to main entrance (to comply with Part M Building Regulations)
- Dropped hatched kerb for access from car park to school
- Walkway to main entrance ( min 1.5m wide, less than 1.8m to have passing places)
- Suitable directional Signage to Main Entrance.

### **Entering the School**

- Intercom or bell for access to be highlighted
- Intercom and/or bell to be situated at suitable height between 750mm – 1200mm in height
- Weather mat to be flush
- Reception desk to have a lowered section for wheelchair user no higher than 760mm must have knee recess at 740mm, 500mm deep and 1.5m wide
- Reception glass to be edged

- Signage to be added to reception desk, in accessible formats, including Braille
- Ensure signage is positioned at eye level
- Desktop Induction loop to be installed at the reception desk
- Waiting area to have raised chairs with arms
- Reception and waiting area to be colour contrasted
- Space to be allocated in waiting area for wheelchair users
- Direction Signage around the building
- Colour contrast required around reception hatch and waiting area.

### **Hall**

- Induction loop installed around the hall
- Chairs with arms provided.

### **Dining Room / Canteen**

- Moveable tables and chairs (1 or 2 tables)
- A supply of chairs with arms
- Counter situated at suitable height (850mm)
- Induction loop to be added around counter or serving hatch.
- Enough space between barrier and counter to allow easy wheelchair passage through cafeteria area.(900mm)
- Some edging to counter to be rounded and highlighted with yellow or another suitable colour
- Menus to be available in accessible formats.

### **Classrooms**

- Sockets and switches should be at an accessible height (900mm – 1.2m)
- Moveable chairs and desks
- Rise and Fall desks with equipment attached (where necessary)
- Chairs with arms (where necessary)
- Stools with backs (where necessary)
- Stools with arms (where necessary)
- Stools with backs and arms
- Carpet flooring not to be deep pile
- Induction loop installed around classroom (where necessary)
- One sink unit to be equipped with lever taps
- Access for disabled pupils to specialised rise & fall equipment e.g. cookers
- Rubbish bins should be placed to minimise obstruction and be clearly marked.

### **WCs Ordinary**

- Adequate space provided between two entrance doors leading to WC area
- Signage added to WC cubicle that can accommodate ambulant disabled user
- Ambulant disabled WC cubicle to have spatula flush
- Ambulant disabled WC cubicle to have grab rails to both side of WC at height of 800mm on a diagonal
- One wash hand basin to be equipped with lever taps.
- Hand dryer and towel dispenser to be fitted at suitable height 800mm – 1000mm for mobility impaired
- Ensure that no equipment or supplies are stored in the toilets
- Ambulant disabled cubicle door to open outwards.

### **Cloakrooms / Changing Areas**

- Section of coat pegs to be lowered (1050mm)
- All coat pegs to be colour contrasted
- Easy manoeuvrability for wheelchair uses.
- Signage posted for exit
- Level access to the shower area
- At least one moveable shower head in each communal or unit
- At least one shower seat in shower communal or unit to be fixed or moveable (fixed tip up action at 450mm)
- Non slip flooring to added to changing area
- Grab rails to be added to shower communal or unit standard height for wall fixed grabrails and drop down rail at 680mm.

### **Accessible WCs**

- Access doorway must over 925mm clear opening
- The door to open outwards
- A pull rail to be installed on the inside of the door at a suitable height
- Cubicle should be big enough to accommodate WC, changing bench and additional sink unit (it will most likely need to be bigger than the standard 2.2m x 1.5m)
- Light switch to be positioned at a suitable height for a wheelchair user (900m – 1.2m)
- Raised WC
- Drop down rail included (blue colour) 680mm to open side of WC
- Grab rail to the sidewall included (blue colour) at 680mm
- Grab rail fixed to the back wall included (blue colour) 800mm
- Spatula flush
- Emergency pull cord
- Non slip flooring
- Lever taps on wash hand basin
- Lateral access to WC achieved
- Frontal access to WC achieved
- Diagonal access to WC achieved
- Hand dryer or paper towel dispenser situated at an acceptable height ( 900mm – 1.2m)
- Wash hand basin can be reached from WC

- Signage on door displaying WC for disabled
- Unisex facility
- Mirror provided at acceptable height no lower than 600mm
- Coat hook provided at an acceptable height (1050mm)
- Completed new accessible WC to Part M requirements and an emergency pull cord as standard ( Doc M Pack with blue grabrails and toilet seat)
- Ensure that no equipment or supplies are stored in the toilet
- Rubbish bins should be placed to minimise obstruction and be clearly marked
- Alternative hand transfer if more than one facility provided.

### **Library**

- Counter height to be at acceptable height with dropped area (760mm)
- Desktop Induction loop at counter
- Chairs with arms to be available
- Carpet flooring not to be deep pile.

### **Sports Hall & Gymnasium**

- Induction loop to be installed.

### **Staff Room**

- Raised chairs with arms provided
- Counter height of worktop & sink unit should be 850mm in height
- Lever taps on sink unit
- A section of cloak pegs to be lowered (no higher than 760mm)
- All pegs to be colour contrasted.

### **Corridors**

- Directional Signage around the school
- Corridor cleared of all obstructions
- Rubbish bins should be placed to minimise obstruction and be clearly marked.

### **Head teacher's Office / General Office / Secretary's Office**

- Carpet flooring not to be deep pile
- Raised chairs with arms to be added
- Infrared system to be installed to assist people with hearing aids
- Communication for hearing impaired people.

### **Medical room**

- Adjustable bed
- Sink with lever taps
- Raised Chair with arms
- Emergency pull cord located near the bed
- Waterproof floor covering
- A suitably equipped and adapted medical/inspection room
- A suitably equipped and private room for washing/showering
- A storage facility for personal and medical items should be provided.

## Appendix 3

### **HOW TO DEVELOP A SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

The steps set out below are intended to guide schools in the development of accessibility plans that are responsive to the needs of the school and its pupils or potential pupils.

#### **Setting up a planning group**

The school should set up a planning group to lead the process. This does not need to be a large group, but should be able to reflect all aspects of school life. The working group could include the governor with designated responsibility for SEN, a parent of a disabled pupil, a representative from a local disability organisation and the Headteacher.

The planning group should make use of available expertise in developing, implementing and evaluating plans. Pupils with disabilities, their parents, specialist teachers, and local voluntary and disability organisations are likely to have experience in identifying barriers to access and could help the planning group identify practices and arrangements that act as a barrier to admitting, accommodating and children with disabilities. LAs are also likely to be able to provide helpful advice and information.

#### **Access audit and review of current activities**

A school should assess current accessibility and identify barriers to access or inclusion. A school should review the ways in which its current arrangements might prevent or hinder pupils with disabilities from accessing education and all other aspects of school life. The review of access should cover the physical environment, the provision of auxiliary aids and services, teaching and learning practices, the curriculum, staff training; the culture and ethos of the school, and the provision of written information.

#### **Setting up an Accessibility Planning Group**

- Assessing the accessibility within the school environment
- Identification of barriers to access
- Developing short, medium & long term plan to address barriers
- Finalise and publicise the plan
- Consult on the plan
- Set goals and targets
- Devise actions
- Implementation
- Review annually

Schools should consider all relevant existing information on the accessibility of the school and future need. The LA should have information on the physical accessibility of its schools. LAs may also be able to provide information on

forecasting future needs. Data on the current schools pupil population should enable the school to plan for the needs of pupils with disabilities already attending the school. For example, a school knowing of a pupil with disabilities in a reception class might plan to train particular staff to meet that child's needs later on in the school.

Appendix 4 provides guidance on undertaking an access audit and offers checklists for identifying physical barriers and barriers to the curriculum.

The Index for Inclusion provides helpful guidance on identifying barriers to access. The Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings and Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design, published by DfES, provide guidance on carrying out accessibility audits of schools and making schools accessible.

### **Devise actions to eliminate barriers**

Having identified barriers to access for pupils with disabilities, schools need to devise actions to eliminate those barriers. Schools should list all of the necessary adaptations (including realistic cost estimates). Those might be divided into categories such as staff training, teaching and learning practices, refurbishment and maintenance (e.g. use of colour when redecorating and replacing floor coverings or furniture), minor capital expenditure, and major capital expenditure. Schools should then draw up short, medium and long term priorities and devise strategies to address these priorities with clear implementation arrangements and a timeframe for the work. Where priorities involve capital works, LAs need to be advised of these so that they can be taken into account in the authority's Accessibility Strategy and its plans for capital works.

Schools need to resource their accessibility plans adequately. This means the costs of implementing the plan are incorporated into current and future budget commitments. Maintained schools should liaise with their LAs about resources to fund capital projects.

### **Set goals and targets**

Goals and targets should be specific enough to enable them to be measured (e.g. all staff to receive disability awareness training within two years; one science lab, ICT room, art room and drama studio to be wheelchair accessible within three years). They should include time frames and evaluation strategies to enable the school to judge how effective plans have been.

A short term strategy might include working within a local cluster of mainstream and special schools to share good practice in differentiating the curriculum. A medium term strategy might be to ensure that all staff received disability equality training within two years with an induction programme established for new staff. A longer term priority might be to plan to make the common areas of the school and selected classrooms physically accessible.

### **Consultation on the plan**

A plan is only likely to succeed if those responsible for its implementation have ownership of it. Schools should therefore consult their staff. They should



also ensure that all those that have been involved in producing the plan have a final chance to comment before it is signed off. The school might wish to consult more widely with parents, pupils and other bodies. The plan must be approved by the body legally responsible for it – in most cases the governing body.

### **Finalising and publicising the plan**

Schools should take account of consultation responses in finalising their plans. Publicising the plan serves to reinforce a sense of ownership and stake in the success of the plan amongst staff, governors, pupils and parents.

Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their governors' annual report to parents. This might be a summary of the full accessibility plan, making it clear where copies of the full plan can be obtained from. Schools are required to make a copy of their accessibility plan available for inspection to anyone who asks to see it. It is good practice for all schools to make their plans available on request. Schools may be asked to provide their strategies in alternative formats e.g. braille, audio tape, large print.

### **Implementation**

Once a school has produced an accessibility plan, the school has a statutory duty to implement the plan and to allocate adequate resources to it.

### **Review the plan**

Evaluation is needed to determine whether goals are being achieved and whether the implementation programme is producing value for money. Schools are required to keep the accessibility plan under review and revise it as necessary. Evaluation arrangements should be developed in connection with goals, targets and time frames set in the plan.

In addition to meeting goals and targets, the success of an accessibility plan might be illustrated by:

- observable changes in staff confidence in teaching and supporting pupils with a disability with a range of needs
- evidence of the greater involvement of pupils with a disability in the full life of the school (for example, participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school trips);
- greater satisfaction of pupils with a disability and their parents with the provision made for them and their participation in the life of the school;
- audits carried out on the main curriculum areas;
- progressive planned improvements to the physical environment of the school, and
- information for pupils available in a range of formats.

## **Ensure the future of the accessibility plan**

Incorporation of accessibility planning into wider policy will ensure that commitment to the plan extends beyond the planning group and inspire confidence that the commitment is real.

In the short term, the accessibility plan may be a separate component of the school's development plan. However, over time, the plan should become an integral component of forward planning - less an independent strategy and more a thread running through all the school's plans and policies, including plans related to premises management, the curriculum, information technology, support services and staff training.

## **Reference to National Assembly for Wales Circular 15/2004**

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## ACCESS AUDIT FOR SCHOOLS

### A checklist to Identify Barriers to Access

This checklist comprises three sections. In the first, you are asked to consider whether the school environment in which you work is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN and/or disability. The second and third sections should be used to identify how your school delivers its curriculum and provides written materials in alternative formats and to provide a clearer picture of the barriers to access that exist in the school culture. This list is not exhaustive.

#### Section 1

Question	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas: including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms allow access for all pupils?		
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		
Could any of the décor be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit? Do areas of storage prevent disabled pupils from accessing aids and equipment?		
Are steps made to prevent the exclusion of people with disabilities that affect their hearing and vision from arranged events? E.g. considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment and presentation of material. Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		
Could any signage be considered confusing or inadequate?		

#### Section 2

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?		
Do you make the best use of teaching assistants?		

Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Are there a variety of activities, including discussion, oral presentation, writing, drawing, problem solving, use of library, audio-visual materials, practical tasks and information technology?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school trips, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Do staff, governors and pupils receive training and education in disability equality issues?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		
Are there high expectations of all pupils?		
Is everyone made to feel welcome?		
Are pupils equally valued?		
Do staff, governors and pupils share a philosophy of inclusion?		

### Section 3

Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you have the facilities to produce written information in a variety of font sizes?		
Do you make use of RNIB guidelines on producing written information in accessible formats?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities which affect their vision e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		
Are the 'responsible body' aware of their duties and responsibilities under Equality Act 2010?		

Do school general plans take account of the duty to make reasonable adjustments?		
Does the school have an adequate internal complaints procedure?		

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