

Accessibility Strategy

2024 - 2027

Accessibility starts with attitude.
Being Wanted
Being Present
Being Valued

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INTRODUCTION

As per the Equality Act 2010 definition included in Section 1, the term ‘disabled learner’ will be used throughout this document to refer to children and young people in Swansea schools who have an impairment and who are disabled by it.

This document sets out the Education Directorate’s strategy for progressively increasing the accessibility of the local authority’s schools to disabled learners. It will be reviewed annually and updated every three years. It is important to note that this strategy is specifically about improving access for disabled learners as defined under the Equality Act 2010. As such, a distinction needs to be made between disability and additional learning needs (ALN).

Swansea Council has adopted the **Social Model of Disability** which recognises that it is society that creates **attitudinal and physical barriers** which disable people, rather than their physical or mental impairments. The Social Model is a positive approach to disability, which focuses on removing barriers to equality. The Council is committed to the removal of all such barriers to its services.

The Education Directorate’s vision is for an inclusive, equitable and positive education experience for all disabled learners. This is underpinned by the belief that all children are different, learn differently, and should have full access to the same curriculum. Learners with disabilities are not expected to adjust to a fixed education structure. The structure should be adjusted to ensure everyone’s learning styles and needs are met. Barriers to learning are removed to allow each learner to participate fully in the curriculum and school life and to feel equally valued.

The Education Directorate recognises:

- that disabled learners face particular challenges which risk their **marginalisation** from education and their local community, from future employment opportunities and from enjoying a social life;
- that disparities remain between the attainment of disabled people and non-disabled people;
- the impact of **intersectionality** where people who share more than one protected characteristic are at risk of multiple disadvantage, inequity, discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- entrenched, systemic, **discriminatory attitudes** and behaviours can present the greatest challenge;
- the need for an **assets-based approach** that values the knowledge and lived experience of the child and family alongside the expertise of the school, where together positive change can be achieved;
- the connection between disability and **poverty**;
- that disabled children are more likely to be **victims of crime**.

(See **Appendix 1** for data relating to the above)

Our long-term aims:

Every disabled learner is wanted, present and valued.

Every school wants every child in their catchment area to be in their school and seeks to remove barriers by thinking 'outside of the box'.

Every headteacher and senior leader in Swansea schools 'gets it' and even if they are not there yet, they think about accessibility for disabled learners in every decision that they make.

Parent carers of disabled learners do not feel like a parent carer but just a parent and know that their child is viewed as valuable.

Parent Carer Focus Group

The overarching aim of this strategy is therefore to improve the levels of presence, participation and achievement of children and young people with disabilities in Swansea. This aligns with the Swansea Council Vision and the associated well-being objective for education ([The City and County of Swansea's Corporate Plan 2023-2028](#)):

Swansea Council's Vision:

In 2028 Swansea is a place that has a thriving mixed use city centre and local economy. It is a place where people can gain the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life, where everyone can achieve their potential and where communities are resilient and cohesive. Swansea is a place where human rights are respected, and people are safeguarded from harm and exploitation. It is a place where nature and biodiversity are maintained and enhanced, and carbon emissions are falling.

Well-being Objective:

Improving Education and Skills – so that everyone in Swansea gains the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life.

There is a close correlation between the Council's Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives and

the **Council's Strategic Equality Plan** and Equality Objectives. A new local authority Strategic Equality Plan will be published during 2024. In addition, when making strategic decisions on priorities or objectives, consideration is given to how decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage ([Socio-Economic Duty](#)).

The development of the Accessibility Strategy (the Strategy) is also based on a **human and children's rights approach** that embodies the key principles of:

- **Embedding Human Rights:** Human/children's rights should be at the core of planning and service delivery.
- **Equality and Non-discrimination:** Ensuring that disabled learners have an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and that they do not have to endure poor life chances because of discrimination. Equality involves treating all disabled learners fairly and providing them with opportunities and resources according to their needs, equal with others, and ensuring that they are able to develop and flourish to their fullest potential. Promoting equality means taking action to tackle discrimination.
- **Empowering people:** enhancing disabled learner's capabilities as individuals so they are better able to take advantage of rights.
- **Participation:** listening to disabled learners and their parents/carers and taking their views meaningfully into account.
- **Accountability:** Effective decision making needs to be transparent and reasons provided for decisions and actions.

The development of this strategy also pays due regard to the five ways of working under the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) 2015](#) and in particular, to the well-being goal: *A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).*

The Directorate acknowledges the recommendations in [Full Lives: Equal Access Making rights a reality for all children in Wales A follow up report on wheelchair accessibility in schools in Wales](#) (Children's Commissioner for Wales 2018) (see **Appendix 2**).

As such, this Strategy has been developed through a co-production approach. The views of learners and parents have been incorporated as well as the views of education and other local authority officers, groups who have a specific interest as well as the wider public. An initial scoping exercise was undertaken to inform the first draft of the Strategy. The draft Strategy is subject to wider, public consultation before final publication.

Section 1: DEFINITIONS

A learner may have:

- A disability only
- A disability and ALN
- ALN only
- Neither a disability nor ALN

This Strategy applies to the first two categories only. The definitions of disability and of ALN are explained below.

The meaning of Disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)

The term ‘pupil’ means a child or young person of any age for whom education is, or is required to be, provided. In accordance with section 6 of the Equality Act, a person (P) is disabled if:

*(a) P has a **physical or mental impairment**, and*

*(b) the impairment has a **substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities**.*

The definition of disability covers **physical impairments**, which includes **mobility and sensory impairments**. It also covers **mental impairments** which include **learning difficulties** and any impairment resulting from a **mental illness**. In the latter case, the mental illness need not be ‘clinically well-recognised’, but it must still have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Each of **cancer, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and multiple sclerosis** is deemed to be a disability, as is severe disfigurement (Equality Act, Schedule 1, paragraphs 3 and 6).

Disability also covers those with a **progressive condition**, such as muscular dystrophy, which leads to a person having an impairment which will in the future have a substantial adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (Equality Act, Schedule 1, paragraph 8).

The **effect of the impairment must be substantial** and it must have an adverse effect which is greater than having a minor impact. This is **because having an impairment does not in itself mean that a person is disabled by it**. An impairment is to be treated as having a substantial adverse effect on the ability of the person concerned if it would be likely to have a substantial adverse impact without measures being taken to overcome it.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) as defined by ALNET (2018)

*(1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a **learning difficulty or disability** (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) **which calls for additional learning provision.***

*(2) A child of compulsory school age or person over that age has a **learning difficulty or disability if he or she—***

*(a) has a **significantly greater difficulty in learning** than the majority of others of the same age, or*

*(b) has a **disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010** which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.*

*Section 3 of the ALNET Act (2018) defines the term ‘**additional learning provision**’ (ALP), as*

(1) educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in—

(a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales,

(b) mainstream institutions in the further education sector in Wales, or


(c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided.

Not all learners who have a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), will have ALN.

It is only where the learner’s disability prevents or hinders them from making use of educational or training facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools, and this calls for ALP, that they have ALN (unless they have ALN because they have a learning difficulty that calls for ALP).

To amount to ALN, a disability need not affect access to educational or training facilities in all areas of learning but might be, for example, a physical impairment that only affects access to physical education facilities and calls for ALP in relation to physical education only. A learner may be performing well across all areas of the curriculum but still have ALN because they have a disability that is preventing or hindering them from making full use of educational or training facilities unless ALP is made for them.

There are **some forms of disability where the nature of the disability means it is likely the learner will have ALN.** For instance, local authorities have to establish and maintain a register of those in their area who are **sight or hearing impaired**, or have a combination of both, such that it has a significant effect on their day-to-day lives. Learners on this register are more likely to have ALN by virtue of the fact the impairment is likely to prevent or hinder them from making use of educational or training facilities and is likely to call for ALP.



There are a wide range of learning difficulties or disabilities, but these can be broadly classified into the following four areas:

- Communication and interaction;
- Cognition and learning;
- Behaviour, emotional and social development;
- Sensory and/or physical.

Section 2: THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Equality Act 2010

The [Equality Act 2010](#) protects people from **discrimination, victimisation and harassment** on the basis of the following **protected characteristics**, of which disability is one:

- Age;
- **Disability**;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (protection against direct discrimination only);
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or (non-belief);
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) supersedes all previous disability discrimination legislation. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (“the DDA”) was repealed and replaced by the Act. The Local Authority is subject to both the general and specific duties set out in the 2010 Act. These cover all aspects of equality, including disability. Further details of the general and specific duties and how they apply to local authorities can be found on the [Equalities and Human Rights Commission website](#).

Discrimination

Discrimination can be **direct or indirect**.

- **Direct discrimination** of a disabled learner is where that disabled pupil is treated less favourably than another because of his or her impairment or disability.
- It is **not discrimination** to treat a disabled learner **more favourably** than one who is not disabled.
- Disabled learners may experience **indirect discrimination** where a particular policy, as applied, disadvantages them (or would, if it was applied, disadvantage them).
- Discrimination arises when a disabled pupil is **treated less favourably** not because of the disability itself, but for a **reason related to his/her disability** and that treatment cannot be justified.

Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the 2010 Act)

All local authorities and schools have a general duty under the 2010 Act to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Specifically, the local authority and schools must publish information in the form of a **Strategic Equality Plan** to demonstrate compliance with the general duty and this could contain information as to how the duty will be discharged in relation to disabled learners.

With respect to people with a disability, the 2010 Act reaffirms previous duties around **accessibility planning** and the need to make **reasonable adjustments**.

Schools and local authorities have had a duty to provide **reasonable adjustments** for disabled learners since 2002, originally under the DDA, and now under the 2010 Act.

These duties are set out below.

Reasonable Adjustments (schedule 13 of the 2010 Equality Act)

The 2010 Act sets out three requirements in relation to reasonable adjustments:

- The first requirement is a requirement, where a provision, criterion or practice of a school puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- The second requirement is a requirement, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- The third requirement is a requirement, where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.

Schools are subject to the first and third requirements. Compliance with the second requirement is through the development of accessibility plans (see below).

Accessibility Plans/Strategies (Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010)

Statutory Guidance for local authorities and schools on producing accessibility strategies and plans is set out in [Planning to Increase Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils, Welsh Government 2018](#)

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) **requires all schools to prepare an accessibility plan and all local authorities must prepare an accessibility strategy** in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body. Accessibility strategies and accessibility plans help ensure full inclusion of disabled children in a school environment.

Improving access to education for disabled children means considering the **three planning duties** which are also a statutory requirement of Schedule 10 of the 2010 Act:

- the curriculum and how it is taught;
- the accessibility of school buildings and their surroundings, school activities including school trips and transport; and
- information and activities provided by schools and how easy it is for disabled pupils and/or their disabled parents to understand.

Strategies and plans must cover a **three-year period** and be **reviewed and revised** as necessary, with new plans and strategies produced at three-yearly intervals. Plans should identify short, medium and long-term objectives. In preparing accessibility strategies and plans, **full and effective consultation** must be undertaken to identify appropriate improvements ensuring that the views of disabled pupils and their parents/carers and appropriate professionals are considered.

Reasonable adjustments to cater for future disabled pupils must be **embedded in accessibility strategies and plans** – there is a need to plan ahead and continuously improve irrespective of whether or not disabled pupils currently attend the schools concerned.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UN [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) is the international human rights treaty which sets out the human rights of disabled people. The treaty defines persons with disabilities as:

‘those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’

Both the UNCRC and UNCRPD explicitly address the need to protect the rights of children with disabilities.

Article 7 of the UNCRPD states:

1. *Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.*
2. *In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*
3. *Parties shall ensure that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right.*

Similarly, the UNCRC, in Article 23 states that children with a disability have the right to enjoy a 'full and decent life'. In addition, the UNCRC states that every child has a right to information, (article 13), an education (articles 28 and 29) and to express their views (article 12). These rights have been incorporated into Welsh Law through the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

The UNCRC also states that children have the right to use their own language. BSL (British Sign Language) is the first language of many deaf children and young people.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET)

As previously stipulated not all disabled learners will have ALN. For those disabled learners with ALN, ALNET will also apply.

The ALN Act sets out its aim and purpose through five underpinning principles:

- A rights-based approach where the views, wishes and feelings of the young person (and where appropriate, their parent) are central to planning and provision of support.
- Early identification, intervention and effective transition planning.
- Collaboration where all involved work together in the best interests of the young person.
- Inclusive education supporting participation fully in mainstream further education, wherever feasible and a whole setting approach to meeting the needs of learners with ALN.
- A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh where requested.

The ALNET Act 2018 aims to create:

- A unified legislative framework to support all children of compulsory school age or below with additional learning needs (ALN) and to support young people with ALN who are in school or Further Education (FE).
- An integrated, collaborative process of multiagency assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions.
- A fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

The transformed system will:

- Ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential;
- Improve the planning and delivery of support for learners from 0 to 25 with ALN, placing learners' needs, views, wishes and feelings at the heart of the process;
- Focus on the importance of identifying needs early and putting in place timely and effective interventions which are monitored and adapted to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes.

It should also be noted that:

*A person does not have a **learning difficulty or disability** solely because the **language** (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different **from a language (or form of language) which is or has been used at home.***

However, it is recognised that some disabled learners with ALN may be multilingual and may also have English/Welsh as an additional language (E/WAL) need. This can have implications for identification of learning difficulties as well as relevant strategies for teaching and learning and wider considerations in terms of communication with parents/carers and learners.

Section 3: THE SWANSEA CONTEXT

Swansea has a wide range of provision for children and young people with ALN and disabilities. The local authority works in partnership with schools to ensure provision is relevant and responsive to needs. The majority of children and young people with disabilities and additional learning needs will have their needs met in a mainstream school. For those who require additional support, mainstream specialist provision can help.

Specialist Teaching Facilities (STF)/Special Schools

A number of mainstream schools have facilities, resources and specially trained staff to cater for the needs of children with particular learning difficulties. An STF is typically an area within a school, where a small number of learners who have high or significant needs are taught separately. Most STFs provide learners with the opportunity to attend some mainstream classes, with appropriate support.

Swansea has 34 STFs across the primary and secondary phases covering a range of additional learning needs. There are 2 special schools one for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties and the other for learners with moderate to severe learning difficulties and for pupils with severe autism.

At the time of drafting this strategy, Swansea Council is undertaking a comprehensive review and reset of specialist teaching facilities to ensure access for learners within their own communities wherever possible. In, addition, the Council is consulting on a proposal to amalgamate the two special schools into one on 1 September 2025 on existing sites. Then to relocate to the new purpose-built school on 1 April 2028, which will also increase the number of planned places by 100.

Specialist Teams

The Additional Learning Needs Team has a number of teams of professionals that either work with disabled learners or advise and guide schools or both:

- Behaviour Support Team
- Physical and complex Needs Team
- Sensory Needs Team
- Complex Learning Difficulties Team
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs Team
- Educational Psychology Team

Data on Disabled Learners

The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) does not collect data on disabled learners per se, however, data on ALN need is available.

PLASC 2023 identified the following:

Need	Total
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	300
Autistic Spectrum Disorders	1202
Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties	1883
Dyscalculia	11
Dyslexia	335
Dyspraxia	45
Hearing Impairment	140
Moderate Learning Difficulties	2125
Multi-Sensory Impairment	28
Physical and Medical Difficulties	395
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	82
Severe Learning Difficulties	157
Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties	2215
Visual Impairment	80
Total	8998

Appendix 1 includes national data on disability. In 2021/2022 around 11% of children were recorded as disabled with this figure having nearly doubled over a decade. Half of disabled children report a social or behavioural impairment.

School Accessibility

Many of Swansea's 93 school buildings predate the requirement to be accessible. A planned programme for new builds and remodelling within the last decade has ensured that certain schools are either fully accessible or have only limited access issues where parts of buildings were not remodelled. 11 primary schools and 6 secondary schools fall into this category.

Regarding the remaining schools, the information that the local authority currently holds indicates that a further 35 schools are partly accessible with the remainder having greater access issues.

Section 4: SWANSEA'S ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

A core group of education officers was established to plan and develop the draft strategy which has been largely informed by the outcome of an initial scoping exercise. The purpose of the scoping exercise was to **identify views, issues and barriers** from a range of key stakeholders in order to identify areas for improvement. The views of disabled learners and parent carers have been central to shaping this strategy.

Information was gathered from:

- schools via submission of their current accessibility plan or completion of a questionnaire;
- disabled learners via completion of a Word or Microsoft Forms questionnaire either independently or with support, eg from an ALNCo;
- parents of disabled learners via the Parent Carers forum via a small focus group and completion of a Word or Microsoft Forms questionnaire;
- education Officers via completion of a Word or Microsoft Forms questionnaire and through more informal discussion.

Schools	43 respondents: 25 submitted accessibility plans, 18 completed questionnaires
Learners	63 respondents
Parents/Carers	28 respondents, and a focus group with the leads of the parents/carer forum
Local authority officers	Education Officers – strategy planning group Officers in the Learning Support Team

Findings specifically linked to the **three planning duties** are outlined in the relevant sections further below. However, there were also some general issues that were identified, mainly around **compliance**, including how **views of** relevant stakeholders inform decisions. It should be noted, that the focus of responses and the summaries that follow are issues/areas that need improving in order to inform priorities for the Strategy. The local authority Education Directorate acknowledges that schools have been developing Accessibility Plans in the absence of up-to-date guidance and that there will be examples of good practice in schools which we aim to gather as work on the Strategy progresses.

COMPLIANCE

Schools' accessibility plans need to be developed in accordance with the statutory guidance [Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils 2018](#).

What did our scoping exercise tell us?

Responses from **schools** indicate that schools need support/guidance in the following areas:

Understanding the legislative background for production of accessibility plans, e.g. the need for reference to the Equality Act 2010 rather than the DDA, and ensuring reference to the Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils, guidance document 2018;

- some schools including their accessibility plans as part of their Equalities Policy/Strategic Equality Plans (SEPs) which is permissible, however the Equality Policy/plans were generally not compliant with the legislation around the production of SEPs. In addition, SEPs must be reviewed every four years whereas accessibility plans must be reviewed every three years;
- understanding the breadth of disabilities covered under the definition. There was a preponderance in audits, plans and the questionnaires to focus on physical 'visible' disabilities as opposed to hidden disabilities, e.g. sensory and mental health;
- ensuring when 'listening to views' there is a specific focus on disability and accessibility
- participation and consultation with key stakeholders as part of developing accessibility plans and in identifying priorities
- developing plans specific to individual school/setting contexts
- improving the format and content of the accessibility plans, e.g.
 - completing an audit **and** developing an associated plan,
 - plans addressing all three planning duties e.g. as opposed to physical accessibility
 - including short, medium and long-term objectives and associated costings where relevant
 - ensuring proactive, long-term planning that considers the needs of current as well as potential future disabled learners
 - specifically focussing on disabled learners as opposed to those with ALN and/or EAL
 - publishing accessibility plans on school websites.

Responses from **learners** indicate:

- variable experiences, to some extent linked to the nature of their disability;
- whilst only in a small number of responses, there were examples where reasonable adjustments potentially had not been made: *I can't go on residential.... At home I have a camera in my room so my parents know when I need something like the toilet and at night I need certain stuff and we had to stay overnight.* (Could a reasonable adjustment have been made so that the learner could attend on a daily basis?);
- discrimination by other learners: *School students use ableist slurs either without knowing it is ableist or fully being aware that it is and finding it funny;*
- less of an understanding of the barriers and issues experienced by disabled learners with more hidden disabilities such as social and emotional needs as opposed to those with visible, physical disabilities;
- some learners wanted peers to understand their needs others wanted to not be singled out and wanted to fit in;
- their views were gathered and listened to, however this seemed to be on a general basis rather than with regard to their disabilities.

Responses from **parents/carers** indicate:

- varied experiences, there were some examples of good practice/positive experiences: *'schools have been amazing'. The school have been very proactive in suggesting support or getting things in motion when I've asked for help. We work together quite well.* However, generally, respondents were reporting more negative experiences. *I feel that my son has been failed by his school. My child was forced out of school by the lack of understanding.*
- concerns around negative attitudes and lack of inclusivity: *One of the biggest difficulties is inclusiveness. Schools are defensive not inquisitive. Accessibility starts most with attitude, the actual accessibility comes second. 'Outdated understandings', 'judgemental' 'patronising'*
- schools being *'very medical model'* with lack of understanding of the social model of disability with *'good, enthusiastic people making bad decisions'*
- the need for greater understanding of what disabled means and the *'wide umbrella'* it covers as well as concerns around language, *'a lot of teachers and parent carers don't like to use the word disabled unless there are physical issues, due to negative connotations'*
- *difference is normal.* However, the *'whole system is about conformity to the norm'*. If schools met the needs of the *'minority'* then they would *'meet the needs of all'*
- local authority placement decisions actually resulting in *'displacement'* from local communities which impacts on learners' abilities to form friendships and to socialise outside of schools. There is also a knock-on impact on parents feeling *'very alone'* and *'very isolated'*.
- schools not taking account of parent carer views and those of their children: *They are reluctant to listen to any views that contradict their own. They constantly refer to us as merely parents and themselves as professionals when in reality we have far more expertise in our own child's needs.*
It feels you are walking a tightrope and you need to keep your school onboard so you don't want to rock the boat too much.
My son's school have never shown any interest in his or our views.
The school is very good at listening to our ideas, however not all of these have been followed up.
- financial implications for parent carers whose children have significant needs as this can lead to parents having to give up careers and work. This can be *'very stressful'*
- *'segregation'* within schools. *This is for normal and this is for disabled.*
- issues over the names of quiet spaces and who can/cannot access these.
- the need for improved representation of disabled individuals on governing bodies.
- recognition of funding challenges and the need to strike the balance between improvements and financial constraints.

Responses from **education officers** include:

- schools tending to be reactive rather than proactive when planning for accessibility improvements;

- a mixed response when asked about whether the views of disabled learners were listened to '*many pupils that I teach feel that they are not listened to*';
- those who directly support disabled learners and advise schools not being aware of individual school accessibility plans, which implies they have not been consulted.

Priorities for Improvement:

- Produce comprehensive guidance for schools on developing accessibility plans that: affirms the definition of disability; clearly outlines statutory responsibilities; puts children's rights at the centre and ensures improvements are based on the views of those with lived experience.
- Review and improve the information and training available to governors, headteachers/senior leaders, premise managers and ALNCOs with respect of the above.
- Seek to improve attitudes towards disability through promoting an assets-based approach, that also tackles discrimination and ableist microaggressions.
- Widen the scope of the 'diversifying governing bodies' workstream to incorporate increasing the number of governors who identify as disabled.
- Continue to facilitate effective and meaningful participation of disabled learners and their parent carers in shaping accessibility improvements.

THE THREE PLANNING DUTIES

The following sections outline the three planning duties, distinguishing general responsibilities for the local authority and schools as well as outlining the outcomes and identified priorities from the scoping exercise.

The three planning duties are:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools; and
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of written information.

Planning Duty 1

Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

Disabled learners have exactly the same curriculum entitlements as their non-disabled peers. Early intervention and prevention should enable more children to have their needs met in a more inclusive way through universal services. The Equality Act 2010 does not define what is meant by the curriculum. However, it should be recognised as the totality of experiences planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are educated. This totality includes the ethos and life of the school as a community, curriculum areas and subjects,

interdisciplinary learning and opportunities for achievement. [Curriculum for Wales](#) states that a school's curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

*A school's curriculum should raise the aspirations for **all learners**. It should consider how all learners will be supported to realise the four purposes and to progress. This is essential for learners to play an active part in their community and wider society, and to thrive in an increasingly complex world. Schools should be aware of the needs and circumstances of all their learners when designing their own curriculum, considering equity of opportunity when putting into place support and interventions or making reasonable adjustments. Curriculum for Wales*

In considering how disabled learners' access to the curriculum can be improved, there should not be a focus on specific areas of learning and experience or individual subjects but all aspects of the curriculum, including out of school care and activities, must be considered. Planning should include initiatives to overcome any barriers preventing, or making it difficult for, disabled children and young adults to participate fully in school trips and activities such as school plays, after-school clubs and study support clubs.

This planning duty also includes the provision of aids, specialist equipment and assistive technology. In addition, it includes identification of and meeting staff training needs.

What did our scoping exercise tell us?

- Schools were the most positive respondents when asked about access to curriculum and activities, whereas more parent carers felt their child could not access the full curriculum and activities.
- Where schools were identifying issues, it was often conflated with the physical accessibility of different areas of the school building.
- Some learners in secondary school did not have all of their subjects within the mainstream but in specialist provision or were not able to take all subjects.
- The main subject area where concerns were raised by parent carers and learners was accessibility to PE. *School won't let him do certain sports that could be 'dangerous', e.g. rugby could fall or get knocked over. I feel I can take part in all lessons and activities in school apart from PE. Especially when playing ball games as I struggle to see the ball because of the size and the colour.*
- A number of issues were raised around access to before and after school provision, residentials, trips, after school activities:
 - after school and breakfast clubs have 'zero provision for additional needs' (parent)
 - *Unable to join in trips. School won't change the trip to include.*

- parents asked to accompany children on a school trip which was seen as a solution. *We have attended most of the school trips but usually I have to provide additional support or attend with them.*
 - a school trips that were not suitable for a learner with physical disabilities
 - being transported to and from school via taxi prevents learners from engaging in after school activities and clubs.
- There were mixed responses to the provision of **specialist equipment and assistive technology** for access to the curriculum where this was needed. Some parents felt their children were not provided with or permitted to use relevant equipment. Some schools were unsure if all disabled learners had access to the equipment that they need. Some parents had provided equipment themselves.
 - Issues with availability of one-to-one support where needed.
 - There was recognition by parent carers of the challenge in recruiting teaching assistants.
 - It was commented that expectations of Estyn in terms of what is seen as good practice needs improvement, otherwise ineffective practice is perpetuated.
 - Other than education officers, who noted that, *the majority of staff are dedicated to ensuring that learners can access and are engaged in schools*, by far the most negative response across all groups of respondents was around whether **teachers and TAs know how to support access to the curriculum for disabled learners/are adequately trained**. There were a range of comments that indicated that significant improvement is required:
 - ALN not being a whole school focus
 - Teachers/TAs not having access to training before starting to work with learners
 - Difficulties for schools in releasing staff for training
 - Lack of training for new teachers
 - The need to involve parent/carers with lived experiences or organisations who work with disabled people in training
 - Staff not understanding the learners needs
 - Schools not fully sure what training is available or indicating that training needs to be wider in scope
 - A greater need for training and awareness raising amongst mainstream staff and the need to target training wider than ALNCOs and TAs who work directly with disabled learners. *All teaching staff to be trained in autism awareness.*

General Responsibilities

The local authority will continue to support schools through:

- Providing a comprehensive menu of professional learning for schools
- Access to the full range of specialist services who can provide advice and consultation, including through the teams listed on page 14.
- Facilitating the identification of and sharing of effective practice

Schools will:

- Identify all learners and known prospective disabled learners who face barriers to learning and full participation in the curriculum and develop and implement accessible teaching programmes and strategies based on specialist advice where relevant.
- Consider learners assessed needs and implement any reasonable adjustments which may be necessary to enable participation.
- Ensure disabled learners are provided with the necessary aids and assistive technology as required. Schools are expected to fund any equipment up to the cost of £250 per learner.
- Continue to develop and embed approaches to the differentiation of the curriculum to enable increased access for disabled learners.
- Monitor and evaluate participation and progress in the curriculum for disabled learners and identify any necessary improvements.
- Audit staff training needs, including newly qualified or newly appointed staff, in relation to increasing participation in the curriculum for disabled learners and identify and implement plans to meet these.
- Audit learner and prospective learner needs in relation to the wider provision of school, including breakfast/after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips and residential and develop plans to address barriers and ensure participation.
- Consider locating classrooms dedicated to particular curriculum areas such as music, science, art in areas of the school that are fully accessible, eg on the ground floor.

Priorities for Improvement:

- Review and further expand the professional learning offer to ensure it meets the wide scope of training needs for all groups of staff
- Develop guidance for schools on reasonable adjustments for trips and residential
- Develop guidance, including examples of good practice, for inclusive PE/sport
- Enhance the knowledge and use of assistive technology through implementation of the Digital Strategy.

Planning Duty 2

Improving the Physical Environment of Schools for Disabled Learners

The planning duty includes improvements, and how these will be made over time to the physical environment of the school and the provision of physical aids to access education. Improvements need to consider: physical access; access for learners with visual impairments; access for learners with hearing impairments and access for learners with other impairments including sensory. The planning duty also includes access to school transport.

Physical aids to access education include aids or adaptations provided under the planning duty which relates to the learner population (and future population) of the school as opposed to individual aids/assistive technology which are provided on an individual basis.

The physical environment includes:

- Classrooms
- halls/communal areas
- corridors
- steps
- stairways
- kerbs
- exterior surfaces and paving
- parking areas
- building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes)
- internal and external doors
- gates
- toilets and washing facilities
- lighting
- heating
- ventilation
- lifts
- floor coverings
- signs
- interior surfaces
- room/corridor décor and furniture

Improvements to physical access include:

- ramps
- installation of lifts including building works
- creating accessible toilets/changing areas/hygiene rooms
- installing/replacing doors to meet requirements for non-ambulant users
- automated door openers and electronic hold open devices

- installation of grab rails and handrails over and above the needs of other building users
- drop kerbs
- acoustic improvement works such as false ceilings and wall boards
- installation of fixed equipment, eg track hoist, height adjustable bed, washer-dryer toilet
- provision of sound field systems
- provision of secure fencing to create a safe environment to prevent escape, on an exceptional basis only where there is a specific need over and above what would ordinarily be required for the school to comply with its safeguarding duties.
- repairs and maintenance (eg doors, floor surfaces etc)
- install viewing panels at various heights to doors for increased visibility
- replacing door furniture or addition of high handles
- adaptations to entrance matting/trip hazards/flush door detail
- removing trip hazards on external circulation routes, such as uneven paving, potholes and tree roots
- replacing car park line markings for disabled car park spaces
- basic induction loop for a reception area
- installing audio link/call bell from main entrance door to reception area
- visual and tactile warning signs for various requirements – to include Braille signs where required, position of visual indicators
- redecorating wall/ceiling finishes with colour differentiated schemes
- improved signage throughout the site and buildings
- use of appropriate lighting, blinds, whiteboards with matt finish

When any improvements are made it is anticipated that care will be taken to ensure a careful match between the function/purpose of the area and its physical design.

What did our scoping exercise tell us?

- The learners who responded, in general, felt they were able to move around the school.
- There were more mixed reviews from parent/carers. However, some of the inability to move around the school was linked to the 'safety' of the individual to do so, rather than the physical environment of the school per se.
- There were examples of situations that could be easily resolved – *'corridor doors closed and stuff in the corridors'*. *'Corridors blocked by tables, lack of access points'*.
- The area of the school that was specifically mentioned was the hall/canteen due to being too crowded or noisy particularly for those with sensory impairments.
- Physical accessibility was on occasion conflated with health and safety audits by schools and not purely considering access for disabled learners.
- Physical accessibility of schools was generally linked to whether the school was a new build/been remodelled etc. Some school buildings are significantly more inaccessible in the first place so require significantly more work.

- Where remodelling has taken place there are still issues which may have been avoided with the input of those with lived experience.
- There are access issues in the special schools.
- There are issues outside of schools due to lack of dropped kerbs (parent carer) and for schools where there is no parking on site which means they cannot designate disabled parking spaces (schools).
- There were mixed responses to access to school transport. In particular, schools noted lack of accessible minibuses.
- Education officers suggested that once disabled learners had left their school, equipment to improve accessibility often remained within the school but unused. There needs to be better sharing or recycling of equipment around schools even if this was at a cost. There are implications for the storage of such equipment.
- The current system does not facilitate a true understanding of scale of need across the school estate at local authority level.
- Levels of funding are an issue and are likely to pose a risk to delivery of the accessibility strategy and to delivery of accessibility plans in school.

Responsibilities

The Local Authority will:

- review and assess information provided through access audits from schools to help inform design and priorities;
- promote the concept of inclusive design and expect that planning will have regard to inclusive design principles;
- prioritise investment in school buildings according to the scope and objectives of the QEd - Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and the planned development of ALN provision;
- improve physical accessibility when the remodelling and refurbishment of school buildings is undertaken, and fully address accessibility requirements for all new builds;
- progressively increase the number of accessible schools with the aim of maintaining children and young people, where possible and appropriate, within their local schools;
- provide advice to governors, senior leaders and premise managers, regarding improvements to the physical environment of schools as and when required;
- provide advice to schools on a case-by-case basis in relation to planning for improvements to the physical environment for individual learners through referral to the Learning Support Team.
- fund the purchase of specialist aids/equipment over and above £250 which has been recommended by a Swansea Bay University Health Board occupational therapist or physiotherapist and authorised by ALNIT.

- fund accessibility improvements through the capital maintenance programme on a prioritised and match-funded basis in accordance with the Division of Responsibility with primary schools contributing the first £5k and secondary schools the first £10k
- make considered use of incidental ALN grants and where appropriate use this to support accessibility improvements in schools

Schools will:

- take a strategic and proactive approach to physical accessibility through completing an access audit to identify all improvements that need to be made and seek to prioritise these over time
- include minor building works or developments to improve accessibility, as identified through the access audit, into the school improvement plan on an annual basis
- organise any physical adaptations required, and be responsible for the cost of adaptations as set out in the Division of Responsibility with primary schools contributing the first £5k and secondary schools the first £10k
- provide/install specialist aids/equipment to support accessibility and fund this up to £1500
- maintain and service buildings and equipment
- consider, on a planned basis, how to improve accessibility through reorganising or rearranging aspects of the school environment that do not require physical adaptation or building works through:
 - re-arranging room space,
 - removing obstructions from corridors and walkways,
 - changing the layout of classrooms,
 - providing designated storage space
 - relocating rooms for particular subject specialisms on a temporary or permanent basis

Priority Areas for Improvement:

- Develop an easy-to-use audit tool for all schools to use to support their proactive planning for improvement of the physical environment, include accessibility at kerbside.
- Improve the system for identifying and prioritising accessibility improvements across the school estate that uses the access audit as a basis and has specified timescales to support a more strategic use of smaller capital grants.
- Explore the potential for improving accessibility at kerbside with the Highways Team.
- Build a new build special school with 21st century specialist facilities, improved learning environments and increased places.
- Consider incorporating a central equipment repository into the new special school build that supports a more cost-effective re-use/recycling of equipment.

Planning Duty 3

Improving Access to Written Information Provided by the School for Disabled Learners

This section covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its learners accessible to disabled learners. Information might include items such as handouts, timetables, textbooks or information about school events. Alternative formats for the provision of information might include: large print, audio tape, Braille, a recognised symbol system, the use of ICT and the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or in sign language. Information must be provided within a reasonable time, eg a reasonable time frame for the provision of a handout needed during a lesson would be the start of the lesson.

In practice, it is anticipated that the majority of learners requiring information to be provided in a different format will already have had their needs identified through ALN identification processes.

What did our scoping exercise tell us?

- There were mixed responses to the question around understanding written information.
- Where learners need specific resources, equipment or support, this was generally in place.
- The key issues identified by learners, parents and education professionals tended to be around general teaching strategies which were not considering the needs of disabled learners:
 - Too much information given at once
 - Lack of checking understanding of instructions
 - Instructions and vocabulary too complex with lack of visuals or explanation to support understanding
 - Handwriting on the board that is difficult to read and written out of order
 - Not enough processing time

Responsibilities

The Local Authority will:

- Ensure schools are aware of the full range of support services available to provide advice, guidance and directly assist in the conversion of information into alternative formats.
- Review regularly its arrangements for providing information in alternative formats to ensure it has access to adequate capacity in this case.
- provide specialist advice to schools in respect of deaf pupils and those with a visual impairment.
- Encourage schools, including special schools, to share ideas and collect and collate examples of good practice for dissemination.

Schools will:

- Raise awareness amongst staff about the requirement to provide information in alternative formats, if required.
- Maintain up-to-date information on learners' needs for the provision of information in alternative formats and ensure it is shared amongst staff.
- Collect and share examples of good practice amongst staff.
- Review and audit regularly the school's approach to the provision of written information in general to establish if the format could be improved routinely and in general to improve accessibility.
- Seek specialist advice and support in those cases which lie beyond the school's immediate expertise.

Priorities for Improvement in this area:

In essence, the key issues identified indicate a need for further teacher training which has been identified as a priority under planning duty 1.

Section 6: PRIORITIES, ACTION PLANNING and MONITORING

Summary of Priorities

- Produce comprehensive guidance for schools on developing accessibility plans that: affirms the definition of disability; clearly outlines statutory responsibilities; puts children’s rights at the centre and ensures improvements are based on the views of those with lived experience.
- Review and improve the information and training available to governors, headteachers/senior leaders, premise managers and ALNCOs with respect of the above.
- Seek to improve attitudes towards disability through promoting an assets-based approach, that also tackles discrimination and ableist microaggressions.
- Widen the scope of the ‘diversifying governing bodies’ workstream to incorporate increasing the number of governors who identify as disabled.
- Continue to facilitate effective and meaningful participation of disabled learners and their parent carers in shaping accessibility improvements.
- Review and further expand the professional learning offer to ensure it meets the wide scope of training needs for all groups of staff.
- Develop guidance for schools on reasonable adjustments for trips and residential.
- Develop guidance, including examples of good practice, for inclusive PE/sport.
- Develop an audit for all schools to use to support their proactive planning for improvement of the physical environment, include accessibility at kerbside.
- Improve the system for identifying and prioritising accessibility improvements across the school estate that uses the access audit as a basis and has specified timescales to support a more strategic use of smaller capital grants.
- Explore the potential for improving accessibility at kerbside with the Highways Team.
- Build a brand new state-of-the-art special school with integrated specialist facilities, an improved learning environment and increased places.
- Consider incorporating a central equipment repository into the special school build that supports a more cost-effective re-use/recycling of equipment.

Based on impact, cost and resource/work required the priorities have been categorised as:

- Short term – to be addressed within the first year of the strategy
- Medium term – to be started or addressed within the current strategy
- Long term – to be started within the current strategy but ongoing

Priority	Impact	Cost	Resource/ workload	Term
Produce comprehensive guidance for schools on developing accessibility plans that: affirms the definition of disability; clearly outlines statutory responsibilities; puts children’s rights at	High	Low	Medium	Short

the centre and ensures improvements are based on the views of those with lived experience.				
Review and improve the information and training available to governors, headteachers/senior leaders, premise managers and ALNCOs with respect of the above.	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Seek to improve attitudes towards disability through promoting an assets-based approach, that also tackles discrimination and ableist microaggressions.	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium
Widen the scope of the 'diversifying governing bodies' workstream to incorporate increasing the number of governors who identify as disabled.	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Continue to facilitate effective and meaningful participation of disabled learners and their parent carers in shaping accessibility improvements.	High	Low	Low	Long
Review and further expand the professional learning offer to ensure it meets the wide scope of training needs for all groups of staff.	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Develop guidance for schools on reasonable adjustments for trips and residential.	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Develop guidance, including examples of good practice, for inclusive PE/sport.	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Develop an audit for all schools to use to support their proactive planning for improvement of the physical environment, include accessibility at kerbside.	High	Low	Low	Short
Improve the system for identifying and prioritising accessibility improvements across the school estate that uses the access audit as a basis and has specified timescales to support a more strategic use of smaller capital grants.	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

Explore the potential for improving accessibility at kerbside with the Highways Team.	Low	Unknown	Low	Medium
Build a brand new state-of-the-art special school with integrated specialist facilities, an improved learning environment and increased places.	High	High	High	Long
Consider incorporating a central equipment repository into the special school build that supports a more cost-effective re-use/recycling of equipment.	Low	High	Medium	Long

The action plan can be found in Appendix 3.

Monitoring of the progress of the Accessibility Strategy Action Plan will be undertaken through termly meetings of the Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group.

The Action Plan will be updated on an annual basis.

Oversight of the monitoring will be undertaken by the Strategic Leads Board in the Education Directorate.

Appendix 1

UK disability statistics: Prevalence and life experiences House of Commons Research Briefing

- An estimated **16.0 million people** in the UK had a **disability in 2021/22**. This represents **24% of the total population**. The prevalence of disability rises with age: around **11% of children were disabled**, compared with 23% of working age adults and 45% of adults over State Pension age.
- The proportion of **children reporting a disability** has almost **doubled over the last decade** (from 6% in 2011/12 to 11% in 2021/22)
- **Half** (50%) of disabled children reported a **social or behavioural impairment**, followed by **mental health** (21%) and **'other'** impairments (21%).
- **Age-standardised disability prevalence** is highest among people from the **Bangladeshi ethnic group**: around 39% of people aged 16 and over in this ethnic group reported a disability in line with the Equality Act definition. On the other end of the scale, the **Chinese ethnic group has the lowest proportion** of people reporting a disability (15%).
- **Disparities** remain between the **attainment of disabled people and non-disabled people**. The greatest differences are in those attaining degree-level qualifications and those who achieved no qualifications. From July 2020 to June 2021, a quarter (24.9%) of disabled people aged 21 to 64 had a degree as their highest qualification, compared with 42.7% of non-disabled people. In addition, 13.3% of disabled people had no qualifications, almost three times the proportion of non-disabled people (4.6%).
- Disabled people were **considerably more likely to be economically inactive**. While the economic inactivity rate for disabled people was 42.7%, the corresponding figure for those who are not disabled was 14.3%. Disabled people are paid less, on average, than non-disabled people.
- **Families that include a disabled adult or child have significantly lower median incomes** than families in which nobody is disabled. This is driven in part by the barriers that many disabled people face in education and in accessing employment and by caring responsibilities for some family members.

- **Poverty rates are higher** among families where at least one member is disabled. In 2021/22 the proportion of people in relative poverty after housing costs was 27% for families where someone is disabled, compared with 19% for people living in families where no one is disabled.
- Disabled people also report **higher levels of loneliness**: 15.1% of disabled people reported feeling lonely “often or always” in 2020/21, compared with 3.6% of non-disabled people. Those with more severe conditions, who reported being limited a lot in their day-to-day activities, were more than twice as likely to report feeling lonely “often or always” as those who said they were limited a little (25.5% and 10.5% respectively). A higher proportion of younger adults (aged 16 to 24) reported feeling lonely “often or always” than those in older age groups, whether disabled or not
- In the year to March 2023, the **Crime Survey** for England and Wales (CSEW) found that **18.2% of disabled adults aged 16 and over had experienced some form of crime**, compared with 15.5% of non-disabled adults. The **disparity between disabled and non-disabled children was larger**, with disabled children aged 10 to 15 twice as likely to have been the victim of a crime (22.3% compared with 9.2%)

[The disability Perception Gap Report](#) Scope, May 2018, found that:

- **Negative attitudes and prejudice remain a major problem for disabled people** – one in three (32%) disabled respondents said that there is a lot of prejudice against disabled people in Britain. Non-disabled people gave a starkly different response, with just one in five (22%) agreeing there is a lot of prejudice.
- While these negative attitudes can take the form of **outright insults and abuse**, separate ethnographic research, conducted for Scope by Britain Thinks in early 2018, has found that **disabled people frequently encounter other small acts of negative behaviour** such as: wheelchair users finding other people let doors swing back on them rather than waiting to hold the door open; people speaking to a friend or carer and talking in the third person, rather than to the disabled person directly; service staff in shops and restaurants ignoring disabled customers, and ‘sighs’ and ‘tuts’ from others

Relative income poverty: April 2021 to March 2022 (Welsh Government Stats)

- In the latest period (FYE 2020 to FYE 2022) **31%** of children who lived in a family where there was someone **with a disability** were in **relative income poverty** compared with 26% of those in families where no-one was disabled.
- For working-age adults, **28%** who lived in a family where there was someone with a disability were in **relative income poverty** compared with 16% of those in families where no-one was disabled.

Appendix 2

[Full Lives: Equal Access Making rights a reality for all children in Wales A follow up report on wheelchair accessibility in schools in Wales](#) (Children's Commissioner for Wales 2018)

This report found that the majority of local authorities reported some progress since an original report in 2014. However, the report notes that there is room for further development. In particular the following for consideration by local authorities:

- All local authorities should publish on their websites their accessibility strategies, and school accessibility plans should also be made available online.
- Staff within local authorities need to know that these documents exist and be able to provide up to date versions to families who ask about them. Awareness raising and training would assist with this, and we would also recommend that local authorities' buildings and education departments jointly own these documents in order to share clear and up to date information with families.
- Consultation with children and young people and their families is a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and has to form part of the strategies and plans in order to make these meaningful and uphold the rights of children across Wales. All local authorities and schools should therefore be consulting with children, young people and their families in preparing their strategy or plan.
- Local Authorities should use a Children's Rights Approach in all of their work around accessibility for children and young people, to enable pupils and their families to make informed choices and to assist more pupils with disabilities to attend the school of their choice, along with their friends.

Appendix 3

ACTION PLAN: Year 1

This is a working document and will be amended and updated over time.

Priority	Term	Actions Year 1	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria	Monitoring
Produce comprehensive guidance for schools on developing accessibility plans that: affirms the definition of disability; clearly outlines statutory responsibilities; puts children's rights at the centre and ensures improvements are based on the views of those with lived experience.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research guidance and templates produced by other local authorities. • Produce draft guidance and a template accessibility plan. • Run awareness raising event for headteachers and gather feedback on draft plan through a small number of schools trialling • Finalise and circulate approved document. 	Equalities	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools develop accessibility plans in accordance with statutory responsibilities that are available on school websites 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group
Review and improve the information and training available to governors, headteachers/senior leaders, premise managers and ALNCOs with respect of the above.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope existing training and information that is available. • Identify gaps/issues. 	Equalities/ ALN	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate a plan to address gaps including officers responsible for development 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group
Seek to improve attitudes towards disability through promoting an assets-based approach, that also tackles discrimination and ableist microaggressions.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 'language' policy for the Education Directorate 	Vulnerable Learners/ Equalities	December2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy completed, approved and circulated. 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group

Widen the scope of the 'diversifying governing bodies' workstream to incorporate increasing the number of governors who identify as disabled.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing materials/resources for recruiting minority ethnic governors and identify how these can be adapted to incorporate disability. Update the database that gathers information on newly appointed governors to include collection of information on protected characteristics 	Equalities/ Governors	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources required identified and plan to develop these formulated Database amended/updated and fit for purpose 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group
Continue to facilitate effective and meaningful participation of disabled learners and their parent carers in shaping accessibility improvements.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of the requirement for schools to include views of disabled learners and their parent carers within the accessibility plan guidance for schools and through wider SEP guidance. 	Equalities	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School based accessibility plans show evidence of incorporation of views. 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group
Review and further expand the professional learning offer to ensure it meets the wide scope of training needs for all groups of staff.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current offer and identify gaps through consulting relevant stakeholders. 	ALN	July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan developed 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group

Develop guidance for schools on reasonable adjustments for trips and residential.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and scope existing documents/ guidance. 	Equalities	September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key information to be included identified. 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group
Develop guidance, including examples of good practice, for inclusive PE/sport.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and scope existing documents/ guidance. • Link with other organisations that support disability sport 	ALN	September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps identified 	Education Officer Accessibility Strategy Group
Develop an audit for all schools to use to support their proactive planning for improvement of the physical environment, include accessibility at kerbside.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research audits developed by other local authorities. • Produce audit. 	Equalities and Capital	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit circulated and used by schools to formulate their improvement priorities within their Accessibility Plans 	QEd Programme Board monthly
Improve the system for identifying and prioritising accessibility improvements across the school estate that uses the access audit as a basis and has specified timescales to support a more strategic use of smaller capital grants.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit outputs collated and quality assured. • Revised assessment of schools' accessibility using WG criteria 	Capital	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools complete access audits and share with the authority • Priorities and requirements identified to support funding decisions and ability to access future grants. 	QEd Programme Board monthly

Explore the potential for improving accessibility at kerbside with the Highways Team.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope scale of need through school level audits • Engage with Highways to explore potential funding options 	Capital	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priorities and requirements identified to support funding decisions and ability to access future grants • A phased delivery plan agreed 	QEd Programme Board monthly
Build a new build special school with 21 st century specialist facilities, improved learning environments and increased places.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of statutory consultation process • Cabinet approval to proceed to stage one tender • Submission of Outline Business Case and approval by WG 	Multiple	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression to detailed design and planning application 	QEd Programme Board monthly
Consider incorporating a central equipment repository into the special school build that supports a more cost-effective re-use/recycling of equipment.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration by the schools and equipment experts as to the potential to deliver and sustain such a provision. • Development of the schedule of accommodation to incorporate if this is agreed 	Multiple	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sustainable delivery model agreed • Provision included in schedule of accommodation 	QEd Programme Board monthly

Glossary

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALNCO	Additional Learning Needs Coordinator
ALNET	Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act
ALNIT	Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team
ALP	Additional Learning Provision
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
EAL	English as an Additional Language
FYE	Financial Year Ending
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IDP	Individual Development Plan
PE	Physical Education
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
SEP	Strategic Equality Plan
STF	Specialist Teaching Facility
TA	Teaching Assistant
UNCRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child