

All Headteachers & SENCOs
Of Schools in Wolverhampton

18 June 2018

Dear Headteacher/Principal/Head of School and SENCO

Re: Draft School Accessibility Strategy

Under the Equality Act 2010 (schedule 10), the Local Authority has a duty to the setting for which it is responsible to produce an Accessibility Strategy. The Strategy sets out how the Local Authority will work with schools to:

1. Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum;
2. Ensure that pupils with disabilities are able to gain maximum benefit from their time in education through improving facilities and services provided or offered by schools;
3. Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils.

The Proposal

The City of Wolverhampton Council (The Council) has prepared a draft strategy, contained in Appendix 1, which once finalised and approved, will be used by schools to inform their Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan. These plans should show how, over time, access to education for disabled pupils will be improved. Schools must publish their Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan with links to their Special Educational Needs (SEN) information report that are available on the Local Offer. Alongside the School Accessibility Strategy, the Council will publish an action plan focusing on key areas of development which will be informed by this consultation.

Publication Process:

Consultation on the proposed draft School Accessibility Strategy commenced on 18 June 2018 and runs until 20 July 2018.

Following consideration of the outcome of consultation, the School Accessibility Strategy will be published along with the associated action plan, in Autumn term 2018.

Consultation:

The Council welcomes any comments you may wish to make on the draft School Accessibility Strategy. You can offer your opinions by either:

- Completing the attached Consultation Response Form and returning it to the below address:

The SEND Team
Education Department
City of Wolverhampton Council
1st Floor, Civic Centre
St Peter's Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RL.

- Or, completing the on-line survey at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/consultations

Please note that the deadline for responses is 20 July 2018. All comments received will support the Council's development of the School Accessibility Strategy and associated action plan.

Should you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact the SEND Team at sendteam@wolverhampton.gov.uk or call 01902 554302.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Leach
Head of SEND

City of Wolverhampton Council Schools Accessibility Strategy

1. Introduction

Educational performance is greatly improved in the City of Wolverhampton. We are incredibly proud of the achievements of the children and young people of our City. Effective education provision is viewed as a key factor in ensuring that Wolverhampton grows and thrives as a City at the heart of the West Midlands.

Improving access to education and educational achievement for pupils with disabilities is essential to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation in society, greater independence, access to employment opportunities and inclusion within mainstream education.

This accessibility strategy sets out the approach that the Council is taking to increase access to education for children and young people with disabilities, so that they can gain maximum benefit from their time in education. This strategy is also designed to support transitions across providers including in and out of Alternative Provision.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by introducing new duties on local authorities (LA) and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The LA is required to have an accessibility strategy under the planning duty in the Equality Act 2010, Part 6, Section 88 (Schedule 10): <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>.

The Equality Act states that Local Authorities in England and Wales must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare an accessibility strategy and further such strategies at such times as may be prescribed.

The Equality Act requires all providers including Schools, Further Education, Higher Education and Early Years settings to make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantaging pupils with disabilities.

In addition to this, any setting constituted as a school have an additional duty to plan for better access for disabled pupils, as detailed below. The reasonable adjustments duty and a wider, more strategic planning approach for schools are intended to complement each other. This strategy therefore only applies only to maintained schools. The strategy is however not exclusive and welcomes alignment by partner academy schools based in the city.

2. The Requirements in Law

The General duty requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010;
- Eliminate harassment of pupils with disabilities that is related to their disability;

- Promote equality of opportunity between people with disabilities and other people;
- Promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities;
- Encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life;
- Take steps to take account of individuals' disabilities even where that involves treating people more favourably than other people.

The General Duty applies across all schools, and applies to pupils, staff, parents/carers, and any other users of the school.

There is also a Specific Duty for schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the General Duty. The main requirement is for schools to prepare and publish a disability equality scheme, involving people with disabilities in its development, and to implement the scheme and report on it as required.

The Equality Act requires schools and LAs to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage and to enable pupils to participate in education and associated services.

When deciding whether a reasonable adjustment is necessary, schools need to consider any potential impacts on pupils with disabilities in terms of time and effort, inconvenience, indignity and discomfort, loss of opportunity and diminished progress.

3. Duties on schools

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to develop and publish an Accessibility Plan that outlines how they will improve the access to education for disabled pupils over time. The school's Accessibility Plan should be published on the school website, and hard copies provided upon request. There should be a link between the school's SEN information and the Accessibility Plan. Wolverhampton's Local Offer website contains links to all school websites and SEN information and this should include their Accessibility plans moving forward.

Key Data

- There are 7,502 pupils resident in the City who receive additional and specialist support
- There are 821 pupils on role in the 8 Special Schools.
- 6,600 pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) are supported in mainstream settings

*source: School Census Spring 2018

Every local area is required to have Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA). Further information on the City's demographics can be found here: <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/jsna>

4. Scope and key aims of The City of Wolverhampton Accessibility Strategy

Ensuring that pupils with disabilities gain maximum benefit from their time in education is a priority for the Council. This can only be achieved through effective partnerships between all agencies that engage with the City's children and young people and their families.

As outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2015:

...[T]he UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education. The Children and Families Act 2014 secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEN should be educated and the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for disabled people.

This strategy forms part of a range of strategies and plans being delivered by the City of Wolverhampton Council designed to improve access to mainstream education for children and young people with both visible and invisible disabilities and special educational needs. Underpinned by the Children and Families Act 2014, this strategy outlines the approach that the council will take when identifying and remediating any issues related to accessibility and participation.

Three key aims have been identified which are intended to maximise the benefits to children and young people with disabilities.

1. Increasing the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the school curriculum;
2. Ensuring that pupils with disabilities are able to gain maximum benefit from their time in education through improving facilities and services provided or offered by schools.
3. Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils.

AIM 1: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

This will be achieved by:

- Providing on-going guidance and training to schools to support them in the effective implementation of Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014
- Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice across the City and the wider educational community
- Providing information to encourage continued professional development in the area of special educational need, disability and inclusion.
- Ensuring continued access to advice and support through centrally maintained specialist services and partner organisations
- Further developing setting, schools and other education providers, as centres of excellence
- Working with schools to ensure that relevant information is readily available to support access on entry to/transfer between schools, and transition in and out of Alternative Provision.
- Ensuring that “inclusivity” is always a main priority whenever any change to curriculum and other policies are proposed.
- Ensuring schools regularly review their accessibility plans
- Ensure that support is available for schools for pupils with SEND who have English as an additional language through specialist CWC services.

- Provide support to pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs through specialist CWC services.

AIM 2: Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting schools in reviewing the physical access audit of their premises and ensuring they understand their responsibilities
- Ensuring that the Planning Authority monitors all building projects carried out centrally or by schools to address accessibility issues
- Providing schools with advice on disability and accessibility issues
- Creating a climate in which schools always identify “inclusivity” as a main priority whenever any change to the physical environment is proposed.
- External Resources Available to Schools
 - Through various specialist teams and services, the LA provides advice to schools about, for example, improving the acoustic environment for pupils with hearing impairment, the reduction of glare and the improvement of signage for pupils with visual impairment, and reasonable adjustments to the physical environment for pupils with mobility difficulties.
 - Physiotherapists can advise a school about an individual pupil’s mobility and physical development. This might include things like co-ordination and ability to sit, stand and walk. They can advise the school on how best to help the child develop physically, to keep the child as mobile as possible and on any appropriate specialist equipment or adaptations to the environment.
 - Occupational Therapists can advise a school about using activity-based therapies to help raise an individual pupil’s self-esteem and to encourage them to be as independent as possible. They will also advise on any appropriate specialist equipment or adaptations to the school environment if required.

AIM 3: Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils

This will be achieved by:

- Creating a culture of Inclusivity, a climate in which schools always identify “inclusivity” as a main priority whenever provision of information is planned. Our vision is also that all children including disabled children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities should be recognised as fully integrated citizens with the ability to contribute to their local community, and that when they need support to do this that the right support is available.
- Continuing to maintain specialist support services. We believe that every child and young person with special educational needs and disabilities from Wolverhampton should expect to receive high quality provision which promotes good health, care and educational progress and achievement. This includes access to universal services as well as specialist support where required.
- Through the Local Offer which provides information in a single place for children and young people with special educational needs (SEND) and their parents or carers. Provision is available, within Wolverhampton Libraries & Community Hubs as well as City of Wolverhampton Council Civic Centre, to support access to the Local Offer.
- Through the Wolverhampton Information Advice and Support Service (WIASS) which is the impartial and confidential information, advice and support on matters relating to a child or

young person's special educational needs or disability from birth to 25 years within Wolverhampton.

5. Governance

This strategy will be led by the Director of Education through a strategic group which will include members from:

- The SEND Service
- The Corporate Landlord Service
- The Health Service
- Parents/carers
- Children and young people

The Accessibility strategy and governance will be aligned to the SEND Partnership and sit within the overall governance structure for delivery of the SEND strategy and align to its priority areas of developing high quality accessible pathways for children and young people with SEND. The SEND Partnership will be responsible for ensuring that the Accessibility Strategy is aligned with and/or inform the following:

- Wolverhampton's Joint Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 2015 - 2020
- Asset Management Plans
- Schools' Accessibility Plans
- The Early Years Plan
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- The Council's Vision for Education
- The Council's Strategic Plans

To support schools across the city and ensure that there is a clear and accessible pathway the Council will provide Wolverhampton Schools with an Accessibility Template. The template will assist school's when creating their own Accessibility Strategies so that mirror the overarching strategy of the Council.

Strategy Review

This strategy will be reviewed and revised as necessary in line with the overall review of SEND priorities and delivery.

Evaluation and Monitoring

The Council recognises the need to monitor, evaluate and review the processes within the Local Authority and schools to ensure that accessibility is increased and the best use is made of all of the resources.

The Corporate Landlord Service, drawing on information provided by schools,

Academies, settings, support organisations and health colleagues will carry out implementation, review and evaluation of the strategy.

Continuing to maintain specialist support services

We believe that every child and young person with special educational needs and disabilities from Wolverhampton should expect to receive high quality provision which promotes good health, care and educational progress and achievement. This includes access to universal services as well as specialist support where required.

Background Documents

The Equality Act 2010 and schools (DfE advice: May 2014):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

SEN Code of Practice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

Draft School Accessibility Strategy

Are you a: *(Please tick as appropriate)*

- Pupil at a Wolverhampton School
- Parent/Carer of a pupil at a Wolverhampton School
- Member of Staff at a Wolverhampton School
- Member of the Governing Board at a Wolverhampton School
- Other *(Please state)*

Do you agree with the 3 key aims of the strategy *(see page 3 of School Accessibility Strategy)*?

- YES NO DON'T KNOW

Please add comments or suggestions here and overleaf:

PTO

Do you feel that any further actions are required to achieve the 3 key aims of the strategy?

- YES NO DON'T KNOW

Please add comments here and overleaf, stating the aim you are referring to:

PTO

Do you agree with the membership of the strategic group *(see page 5 of the School Accessibility Strategy)* that will lead on the strategy and develop the action plan following consultation?

- YES NO DON'T KNOW

If you have answered no, please give details:

PTO

Would all children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities be able to physically access all areas of your (your child's) school?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW
If you have answered no, please give details:					
PTO					

Does your (your child's) school provide information about school activities and how to access them?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW
If you have answered no, please give details:					
PTO					

Are all children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities able to access all information provided from your (your child's) school?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW
If you have answered no, please give details:					
PTO					

Are all children at your (your child's) school given the opportunity to be involved in decision making i.e. school council?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW
If you have answered no, please give details:					
PTO					

Are all children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities able to take part in all activities in your (your child's) School?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW
If you have answered no, please give details:					
PTO					

Do you have any further comments or suggestions that you would like to make regarding the strategy?					
<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	DON'T KNOW
Please add comments here and overleaf:					
PTO					

Title:	First Name:	Surname:
Address:		
		Postcode:
Email:		

Completed Consultation Response Forms should be sent to the following address – The SEND Team, Education Department, City of Wolverhampton Council, 1st Floor, Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RL.

The deadline for receipt of responses is 20 July 2018.

Please note all comments received will be acknowledged if contact details are provided.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.



Data Protection: UK Data Protection law (Data Protection Act 1998) until superseded by (Data Protection Bill 2017-19 once enacted) and (The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 GDPR). Where applicable information entered will be forwarded to the relevant officers and Councillors for action or for a reply to be given. Information contained within this response will inform reports to Cabinet Members, and will be anonymous so that no individual can be identified. Information provided will not be used for any other purpose and will be stored securely in accordance with the Council's records retention policy and schedule. Please contact the City of Wolverhampton Council should at any point you wish to withdraw your responses from the consultation.

About You

This next set of questions are about you. Why do we want to know these things about you?

The Council is committed to being fair in how we deliver services to all people. Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that it does not unfairly discriminate in the services it provides. In order to help us ensure that our Equal Opportunities Policy is working, would you please provide the following information by ticking the appropriate boxes below.

Any answers you give will be treated in complete confidence.

1. Please indicate how old you are:					
Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	16 - 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	25 – 34	<input type="checkbox"/>
45 - 54	<input type="checkbox"/>	55 - 64	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 65	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What gender are you?			
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What is your sexual orientation?			
Lesbian/gay woman	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay man	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/ Straight	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What is your ethnic origin?			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Mixed Background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British – African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British – Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Asian or Asian British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Black or Black British	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	White – British	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	White – Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
		White – Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>
		White – Other European	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other White	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Any Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What religion are you?			
Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
		No Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Any Other Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Do you have a disability which affects your day to day activities, which has lasted, or you expect to last, at least a year?			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>