

REPORT TO:	Education Committee	2
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MEETING DATE: 24 March 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Education Accessibility Strategy 2014-2016

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update the Committee of the Accessibility Strategy 2014-2016.

2 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - i. Approve the Accessibility Strategy (Appendix 1) and authorise me to distribute the Accessibility Strategy 2014-2016 to all educational establishments in East Lothian.
 - ii. Authorise me to implement the Action Plan (Appendix 2) resulting from the Accessibility Strategy 2014-2016.
 - iii. Authorise me to review consultation procedures and consult on an annual basis.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The draft Accessibility Strategy 2014-16 was presented to Committee in September 2014 and approved, pending consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- 3.2 Consultation ran between 27 January 2015 and 27 February 2015. Despite promotion of the consultation, no responses were received. It is proposed that future consultation methods are reviewed and following this consultation takes place on an annual basis with targeted groups of stakeholders.
- 3.3 The most recent data collated (Appendix 1 within the Accessibility Strategy) is a result of a consultation process undertaken with young people, parents/carers and disability team representatives.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All current and future policies will take account of the duties set down by the Equality Act 2010, the Education Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009).

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial Current policy on Accessibility requires the Authority to make reasonable adjustments where required to provide access for pupils to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, built environment and communication. These adjustments will continue to be met from the Education budget.
- 6.2 Personnel None
- 6.3 Other None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

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Appendix 1



ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY 2014 - 2016

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ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY: August 2014 – July 2016

East Lothian Council Education Service values and respects the diverse communities it serves and has policy and guidance documents in place to promote positive attitudes and eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all of its establishments. Every school and nursery within the education authority is made aware of relevant policies/guidance and is required to develop strategies to implement them. The Accessibility Strategy, which sits alongside the ELC Equality Plan, is one such document.

Legislative Context

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 places a duty on education authorities to prepare a strategy to increase the physical accessibility of the school environment, increase the accessibility of the curriculum and improve communication, especially in relation to the provision of school information, for those pupils who have disabilities, and also to plan for prospective pupils who may have. Schools and nurseries must take the Accessibility Strategy into account in any management decisions and improvement planning.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009) requires that education authorities make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by a child or young person and, make appropriate arrangements for keeping under consideration the additional support needs and the adequacy of the additional support provided. When providing appropriate arrangements schools must take account of guidance as set out in the *Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice* (the document relating to the ASL Act) <u>http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/04/04090720/21</u> and the authority's *Framework for Meeting Additional Support Needs* <u>http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3944/a framework for meeting additional support for r learning needs</u>

The Equality Act 2010 restates the previously existing duty that an education authority is required to "make reasonable adjustment" for disabled persons in schools, where an existing arrangement places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to persons who are not disabled, to remove that disadvantage.

The law states that a person has a disability if (s)*he "has a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-today activities"*

long term	last or likely for at least 12 months or for the rest of a persons life
substantial adverse effect	an effect which is neither minor nor trivial and affects one of the special capabilities of mobility, manual dexterity, speech, seeing, hearing, remembering

The Act also restates the duty of the education authority to prevent discrimination against disabled pupils. Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats another person less favourably, because of their disability, than a non-disabled person would be treated.

However, it is not discrimination of a person who is not disabled to treat a disabled person more favourably.

Accessibility Strategy 2008-2011

A review of the accessibility requirements, with reference to the elements of access to the physical environment, access to the curriculum and improving communication was carried out in 2008 and an Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan produced. The areas identified in the Action Plan have, in the main been resolved, with the following identified targets still to be achieved:

- Data collection mechanism for pupils affected by disability (currently being developed)
- Review of VI service (planned as part of a rolling programme)
- Increase access of children and young people who have disability or are affected by SEBD at after school clubs(no data available for the duration of the 08-11 strategy)
- 365 day provision for children and young people who have severe and complex needs (current position is that the use of external providers for respite is to continue)

The details of a revised strategy covering the period from 2014-2016 has been determined through a process of consultation and review and, where appropriate, incorporating targets not yet achieved in the period of the previous strategy.

With reference to indicators of equality which cover the protected characteristics identified by the *Equality Act* 2010, the duties set down by the *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Education Records) (Scotland)* Act 2002 and the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act* 2004 (amended 2009), the headings set out below are the basis on which planning of a new Accessibility Strategy has been determined.

- 1. Know the number of disabled pupils in our schools and how well they are attaining. This data is currently available through SEEMIS and PIPS but more systematic use of it needs to be developed.
- Ask pupils/parents/carers if there are any curricular, physical or communication barriers which prevent young people who have a disability from taking part in all aspects of school life.
 Data from surveys 2010-2012 – see appendices.
- Ask pupils/parents/carers/school and other staff if they are aware of any instances of negative stereotyping based in disability in any areas of the authority's education provision.
 Data from surveys 2010-2012 – see appendices.
- 4. Consult the relevant young people and service providers to know the extent to which careers advice and work placements meet the needs and aspirations of young people who have a disability.

Data not currently available. Can systems be developed?

- Consult with parents/carers, pupils, teachers to find out if they know how to report incidents of bullying/unfair treatment due to disability.
 Data from 2012 surveys - see appendices.
- 6. Find out from the above group(s) if reported incidents have been adequately resolved. Data from 2012 surveys – see appendices.

7. Identify which documents still need to be changed to be made accessible and available in a range of formats.

Task still to be undertaken.

8. Consult with parents/carers/pupils/teachers to identify any instances of extracurricular programmes or special events which have not been planned to include pupils who have a disability.

Data from 2012 surveys – see appendices.

9. Consult with parents/carers/learners/staff/the local community to identify instances where the built environment, the curriculum and information about school are not fully accessible to pupils who have a disability.

Data from 2012 surveys.

Collated Data from Surveys - 2010-2012

There have been recent consultations with young people, parents/carers, Disability team rep.

Parents Calling Parents Survey 2010 Shared Services Consultation Focus groups involving parents/carers/young people (2011) Director's 'Listen and Learn' session with young people at RHS and MGS (2012) FLIP Focus Group - parents/carers of children and YP who have a disability/complex needs (2012) Interview with Befriending Service Co-ordinator (2012)

From these consultations the following as possible areas for attention/development have become apparent

Access to the curriculum

- Support to be available to pupils as required
- All staff to be aware of the need for support to be given when it exists in relation to specific conditions e.g. dyslexia, ADD
- More non-academic options to meet the needs of pupils who have disabilities which affect learning
- Longer nursery places for pupils who have complex needs
- More mainstream nursery places available to pupils who have complex needs/disabilities
- Specialised curriculum adaptations –pupils cannot always be supported to 'fit' existing curricular arrangements, some changes to curriculum and/or its delivery can be required e.g.specialised fitness prog. for pupils who have disability

Access to extra-curricular activities

- Lack of availability of suitable options for children/YP across the range of ages/types of disabilities (provision offered can be too narrow in its focus or too general, some targeted provision, which accounts for a lot of the available funding e.g. Special Needs Playscheme, have waiting lists)
- Support for individuals to be available as required absence of it can totally exclude individuals from taking part
- Need to develop capacity of all staff to be able to include children and YP affected by disability (see model of Disability Team training and work done to develop youth club opportunities and swimming events)

Built Environment

• All school playgrounds should have specialist equipment

Communication

- Parents would like the opportunity to meet with other parents
- Parents would like more info to be available to them re services in web-based, leaflet and face-to-face formats
- A consistent, user-friendly communication channel for individuals (e.g. lead professional)
- There is a need to communicate with parents/carers/all staff/all pupils how and why some children and young people who have disabilities need to be treated differently ('different' treatment is often seen as preferential)
- Complaints procedure options need to be more widely known
- Face-to-face communication in relation to complaints need to be handled more consistently and sympathetically that is sometimes the case
- There needs to be consistent use of systems across all schools and information routinely shared with parents (e.g. SAI)

<u>Other</u>

- Improved access to transport when it is required (for children and YP who have a disability)
- Improved availability of suitable specially adapted buses/taxis (for children and YP who have a disability
- Can other services be taken into schools (e.g. medical appointments)?
- Staff need to be trained to recognise/deal with behaviours linked to specific learning difficulties even before they are officially labelled by medical processes

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY SURVEY MONKEY QUESTIONNAIRE – GENERAL PUBLIC (JULY 2012)

The questionnaire sought responses in relation to five areas.

- 1. Curriculum
- 2. Extra curricular events
- 3. Built environment
- 4. Communications
- 5. Ways in which ELC could remove barriers to education (for children and young people who have a disability)

The response rate was low (9). The following summarises the responses received.

1. Curriculum

No parent/carer identified instances of curriculum access being a problem.

2. Extra curricular events

3 responses identified problems with sufficient staff being available to provide 1-1 support where it was required – camps and after school clubs (and including personal care issues).

2 responses identified instances where pupils who had a disability were not allowed to access a mainstream activity. Only one was school based (dance class), the other was regarding a scout group.

1 parent referred to lack of provision for after school care for disabled pupils.

3. Built environment

2 responses identified problems with wheelchair access to buildings – but this did not seem to be restricted to schools.

4. Communications

1 response identified that "easy to read" information regarding services is not generally available.

5. Actions for ELC

- Disability legislation/awareness training (for staff, pupils and the general public).
- Mechanisms to be developed to facilitate access to school clubs/other activities (e.g. direct payments to enhance availability of 1-1 support).
- Creation of accessible formats for information.
- To have open/honest dialogue with pupils/carers.

Question 1 (a) In your school what do you think prevents individuals who have a disability from fully accessing the curriculum?

There were 114 responses, summarised below.

- 1. 23 responded that they did not think there were any problems.
- 53 cited lack of support staff
 11 cited lack of equipment
 3 cited lack of Support for Learning
 6 cited lack of external specialist support (3 specified SALT)
 6 cited lack of time/class sizes

Not clear if this was restricted to pupils who had a disability or related to a wider population of pupils who had learning difficulties.

- 3. 6 responses mentioned specific equipment/resource issues.
 - Lack of handrails/ramps (1)
 - Lack of loop system for HI (1)
 - Lack of large print materials (1)
 - Broken blinds (1)
 - Formal classroom layouts (1)
 - Required ICT breaking down (1)
- 4. 4 responses identified the following.
 - Lack of appropriate curricula (2)
 - Inability of pupils to meet the demands of mainstream (2)
 "science is too difficult for people who cannot remember things"
 "physical disabilities make practical tasks difficult"

Issues raised

As we are required by law to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure that systems/practices/environments do not discriminate against individuals who have a disability.

- How can we ensure that sufficient staff/resources are deployed to meet the needs of pupils who have a disability?
- What systems are in place to provide specialist equipment/resources and are they working as well as they need to? What can we do if they aren't?

- What further training is required to equip staff to have appropriate expectations of pupils who have a disability and to be able to provide appropriate learning experiences?

Question 1 (b) In your school, what do you think prevents individuals who have a disability from fully accessing extracurricular events?

There were 97 responses, summarised below.

- 1. 24 responded that there were no barriers to prevent individuals who had a disability from fully accessing extracurricular events.
- 2. The following responses identified barriers to participation:
 - 33 cited a lack of support staff to help pupils as required
 - 8 cited the lack of availability of appropriate activities
 - 5 identified the need for staff training (to support the above 2 points)
 - 9 cited lack of transport
 - 2 noted that the lack of after school care could be a barrier to children's participation and also prevent parents from attending activities relating to their children
 - 1 cited the lack of changing facilities
 - 1 noted that problems could arise if a pupil's disability was not taken into account at the planning stage of an event/excursion
 - 2 responses suggested that there may be issues relating to staff awareness of the rights of pupils and the responsibilities of schools (they are paraphrased): "school not at fault if there is a mismatch between an individual's disability and the activity" "some activities which involve physical activity are exclusive, e.g. kayaking"

- Lack of transport is a recurring theme (see other questions)
- What training/awareness raising requirements are suggested?

Question 1 (c) In your school, what do you think prevents individuals who have a disability from fully accessing the built environment?

There were 97 responses, summarised below.

- 1. 34 responded that there were no problems.
- 2. The following responses identified problems with accessibility:
 - 31 noted that disabled access is not provided in all areas (including toilets, building entrances and exits)
 - 8 identified the need for ramps/lifts/handrails
 - 6 noted that lack of space could be a problem (reasons were varied building limitations, increasing class sizes, amount of furniture in any one area)
 - 3 commented on the lack of dedicated space for therapists
 - 3 commented that separate access for wheelchair users made some pupils "different"
 - 2 noted that busy environments in small spaces (cloakrooms, corridors) could create problems
- 3. The following individual responses mentioned specific issues:
 - Overload of information (visual/auditory) in classrooms
 - Noise of bell (especially problematic for ASD)
 - Lack of hearing loop
 - Lack of quiet/secure areas
 - Height of tables not suitable for wheelchairs
 - Signage could be improved
 - Heavy doors
 - Special aids required in toilet
 - Locked gates create problems for disabled pupils' transport
 - Lack of changing facilities

- Are there any cross-authority or high priority issues?
- What systems are in place to enable schools to be able to make adaptations as required? Are they working as well as they need to and what can we do if they are not?

Question 1 (d) In your school, what do you think prevents individuals who have a disability from fully accessing communications about education?

There were 72 responses, summarised below.

- 1. 7 responded that they did not think there were any problems.
- 2. 23 responses related to in-school communications between professionals (indicative of a lack of understanding of what area of communication was to be considered).
- 3. The following responses mentioned specific issues:
 - 15 noted that the most frequent form of communication was text based and often complicated
 - 5 referred to the fact that although information provided to parents/carers was text based, staff were available to talk to parents /carers
 - 3 responses indentified a need to have systems/formats to reach those who did not/could not access information provided as text based, or on-line, or at information points such as libraries.

- What other formats/systems for information sharing are required?
- A large number of the responses suggested no apparent awareness of the need for easy to understand information to be available at different access points and in different formats. Is there a training issue which needs to be addressed?

Questions 2 and 3 (Bullying in relation to disability)

There were 72 responses, summarised below:

		YES	NO	DON'T
				KNOW
2a)	Does your school have a policy or guidance about	28	55	3
	bullying related to disability?			
2b)	Do you think it should have?	31	42	6
3a)	Are you aware of any incident of bullying related to	16	84	1
	disability?			
3b)	Was the incident satisfactorily resolved	12	1	

- 7 responses stated that all bullying should be dealt with in a general policy and that disability should not be singled out. Should they be dealt with separately?
- Responses show either a low number of incidents in this area or a lack of awareness/unreported incidents. How do we interpret this, and are there any actions which need to be taken?

Question 4 What could East Lothian Council do to improve accessibility to education for individuals who have a disability?

There were 89 responses, summarised below.

- 1. 43 responses made generalised reference to the need for more funding/resources/ staff.
- 2. The following specific issues were noted:
 - 6 cited the need for the authority to ensure that all buildings were fully accessible (including disabled child-friendly systems and spaces)
 - 6 cited the need for input from specialist teachers
 - 5 cited a need for staff training/awareness raising regarding disability and how to meet individual needs
 - 4 cited a need for smaller classes where pupil(s) have high levels of need
 - 4 cited the need for dedicated facilities for therapists
 - 2 cited the need for more time to be provided for teachers/support staff to consult with other agencies
 - 2 suggested the development of a centralised system to adapt and bank resources, and share information
 - 2 cited how the provision of transport to allow individuals to attend after-school activities was necessary to support social integration
 - 2 suggested a system should be developed to consult all schools regarding disability requirements and to monitor accessibility.
- 3. Individual responses raised the following issues:
 - Need to have community access to Snoozelem
 - Need for access to music therapy
 - More use could be made of IT for individual pupils
 - More SALT support
 - Targeted support required to parents who have a disability
 - Special aids/equipment to be provided as required
 - Group individuals who have a disability into separate classes for part of their education

- Curriculum development required
- Resources for pupils who have VI to be available
- Networking groups for young people could be established
- Specialist support/advice could help schools identify accessibility issues/solutions
- Anti-bullying policies should be general, not specific to disability

- Points made in relation to the need for funding/staffing are not within the scope of this exercise. However, should they be raised at some other forum?
- The need for an ongoing programme of consulting/identifying physical and/or resource adaptations is clearly stated. What systems do we have in place to do this? Are they working as well as they should? What action needs to be taken?
- Are there any cross-authority or high priority issues?
- Many of the responses were general and related to maintaining the status quo. One response advocated ELC adopt a more pro-active approach:
 "(ELC should) ensure education is appealing; ensure disability is not viewed as something which prevents individuals participating fully; ensure staff are trained and feel confident when working with children with a disability; maintain an ethos of valuing each individual as an individual; piggyback on events such as the Paralympics to encourage open-mindedness; ensure all educational establishments are equipped with basic facilities and resources (accessible entrances, toilets, flashing lights/visual cues for alarms for hearing impaired, doorways wide enough for wheelchairs, appropriate furniture, etc), and ring fence funding."

Accessibility Strategy August 2014 - July 2016

Areas for development within the scope of
this document are:A: Curricular
B: Extra Curricular

C: Physical Access (Built Environment) D: Communication

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
 To offer CPD for teachers/school managers to develop capacity to provide appropriate curricular/extra- curricular options for pupils who have a disability 	Α, Β	Training and Development Officer Health and Safety Implementation Officer	Guidance document: Equality Act 2010: Organising Inclusive School Trips, Outings and Activities Twilight training sessions to be offered on an ongoing basis	Equality Plan Training Strategy	End academic Year 2013- 14 and ongoing	Training delivered to schools. May 2014. Also available online for future training.
(2) To provide information/training for all school staff and others who work with children and young people who have a disability to make clear the authority/the individuals' legal obligations under current legislation	A, B, C,D	Equalities Officer	Equalities Officer to produce documentation Possibility of offering training sessions if required – look at a training session combining 1 & 2 – Initial e-learning, legal section from Lesley Crozier, Practical advice from Judith Wood, scenario to work through	Equality Plan	Academic Session 2014-2015	

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
(3) (a) Finalise new Anti- bullying Policy including recording methodology	A, B, C, D	Principal Officer, Inclusion and Equality	No additional resources required	Equality Plan Anti-Bullying Strategy (new)	For start Academic Year 2014- 15	New Anti-Bullying Strategy and recording mechanism will be provided to schools in academic year 2014-15
(b) Deliver a programme of awareness raising in respect of bullying related to disability	A, B, C, D	Training and Development Officer	Anti-Bullying Strategy (new)	Equality Plan Anti-Bullying Strategy (new)	Ongoing 2014-2016	
(c) Review data from schools re incidents of bullying related to disability at end of session 2014-2015	A, B, C, D	Service Manager – Education (ASN and Early Years)	No additional resources required	Equality Plan Anti-Bullying Strategy (new)	End of Academic Session 2014-2015 and ongoing	

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
 Review the targeted service for visually impaired people (currently provided by CEC) to ensure best value and equity of provision across all schools 	A, B, C, D	Service Manager – Education (ASN and Early Years)	 Departmental staff to gather information 	Equality Plan	By end of March 2015	Service Level Agreement in place with ongoing review on a regular basis
(2) Review arrangements for allocating resources (for assessing and authorising equipment and buildings adaptations to ensure access for children and young people with a disability.	A, B, C, D	Access Officer, Education Support Officer (ASN), Service Manager – Education (Strategy and Operations)	Associated documentation Access officer	Equality Plan Framework for Meeting Additional Support for Learning Needs	By end of 2014 with ongoing reviews	Revised process and documentation implemented in January 2014

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
 (3) Procedures for auditing accessibility to be integrated into schools' planning/review cycles 	A, B, C, D	Head Teachers, QIOs, Education Support Officer (ASN), Business Support Officer	Documentation to be developed as required – template for schools to complete	Equality Plan	Start in Academic Year 2015/16	Audit and review of accessibility for pupils is integrated into planning cycles for all school
 (4) Set up arrangements for the regular monitoring/updating of actions contained in the Accessibility Strategy within its 3 year time frame 	A, B, C, D	Business Support Officer, Service Manager – Education (ASN and Early Years)	Accessibility Strategy Steering Group Information out to schools	Equality Plan	End of Academic Year 2014/15 and ongoing	Annual Report and meetings

Aim: To further improve for those who are affected by disability, the communication and delivery of, and opportunity to contribute to, school information

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
(1) Ensure Education staff are aware of the requirement to provide documents that are accessible, available in a range of formats, and at different contact points	D	Service Manager – Education (Strategy and Operations), Service Manager – Education (ASN and Early Years)		Equality Plan	By end of 2015	
(2) Identify the preferred points and means of communication for service users affected by disability	A, B, C, D	Business Support Officer	Parent Councils Survey Monkey	Equality Plan	By end of Academic Session 2014-2015	Survey to be given to parent councils October 2014
(3) Complaints procedure to be widely published/distributed so that it is know and accessible to all service users and used by all staff when dealing with complaints	D	Customer Feedback Manager	New procedure (available on- line and Intra-net).	Equality Plan	By end of 2014	Article has been published in <i>Living.</i> Briefing given at HT conference and to Principal Officers Leaflets are in all schools.

Aim: To further improve for those who are affected by disability, the communication and delivery of, and opportunity to contribute to, school information (Continued)

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
 (4) Establish arrangements to enable the voice of children, young people, parents and carers to routinely inform Accessibility Strategy Planning 	A, B, C, D	Performance and Practice Development Officer Dialogue Youth Co-ordinator		Equality Plan	June 2016	Pupil, parent/carer voice will be heard and inform the Accessibility strategy
(a) Collect pupil's views during the period of this Accessibility Strategy to inform the next one.		Head Teachers	Additional questions in the Pupil Satisfaction Evaluation Survey Focus groups Other relevant sources			
 (b) Collect parent/carer's views during the period of this Accessibility Strategy to inform the next one. 			FLIP group Other relevant sources			

Agreed Actions	Area	Person(s) Responsible	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Links with other Plans	Timescales	Outcome
 Schools to consider (annually) attainment data in respect of pupils who have a disability 	A	Head Teachers QIOs Information and Research Officers	SEÉMIS SQA data	Equality Plan	From Academic Session 2014- 15 and ongoing	