

## Accessibility Strategy 2014

### Introduction

The Equality Act 2010<sup>1</sup> and the Equality Duty 2011 reinforce the duty upon education settings, including early years education providers, in relation to pupils and potential pupils with disabilities around inclusion and accessibility, as previously stated in the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

Lincolnshire County Council is required to produce an accessibility strategy in line with the accessibility plans that schools are required to produce in accordance with the duties in the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010, section 88, states:

- (2) An accessibility strategy is a strategy for, over a prescribed period—
- a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums;
  - b) improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools;
  - c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.
- (3) The delivery in sub-paragraph (2)(c) must be—
- a) within a reasonable time;
  - b) in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

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<sup>1</sup> [Equality Act 2010: Advice for schools](#) - Non-statutory advice from the Department for Education, produced to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act

## Lincolnshire's strategic priorities

Lincolnshire County Council's key strategic priorities for children and young people in the county are explained within the [Children and Young People's Plan 2013-16](#)

The central vision of the Children and Young People's Plan is that **"every child in every part of the county should achieve their potential"**.

## National context

The Children and Families Act 2014 and the accompanying [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) provided significant changes to the delivery of services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25.

This includes transforming Statements of Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDA) to Education Health and Care (EHC) plans. EHC plans may offer Personal Budgets, and incorporate preparation for adulthood through Lincolnshire's Transitions Pathway when this is age appropriate, focusing on outcomes to meet the child/young person's needs.

Each Local Authority is required to make this information available in one place within the SEND Local Offer. The SEND Local Offer should also include education, health and social care services that the Local Authority believes to be available locally, as well as national organisations and a wide range of other support services.

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## Lincolnshire principles of accessibility

Lincolnshire County Council will ensure it meets the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through:

### 1. High quality curriculum and support

We will ensure all children have access to appropriate high quality curriculum and learning opportunities to meet their educational needs.

#### Graduated approach

Special Educational Needs are often first identified in an educational setting and teaching staff at all education provision in Lincolnshire are supported by a wide range of services to ensure all children in Lincolnshire receive the most appropriate support.

It is expected that the SEN needs of most children will be met through personalised learning plans and interactions and that this will be achieved within the existing education provider's budget and staffing.

It is not necessary to have a formal Statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to be able to access support through education settings, though it is acknowledged that in

some cases these do enable the commissioning of appropriate services for additional educational needs.

The needs of many children and young people are likely to be met through accessing services, information and activities available on the Local Authority's Local Offer at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDlocaloffer](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDlocaloffer)

## **SEN Support**

SEN (Special Educational Need) Support replaces the previously used categories of Early Years/School Action and Early Years/School Action Plus. Special Educational Needs are often first identified in an education setting.

The setting, whether it be early years (such as nurseries or childminders), schools or further education (such as colleges and 16-19 academies), must contact parents (or if the young person is over 16yrs, they may be contacted directly) to discuss and explain what support is available and what provision will be put in place to meet the young person's identified needs.

Where a pupil is identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), schools are expected to identify the needs, remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place through their SEN Support arrangements.

## **Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan**

Once the graduated response and SEN Support by the education setting has been exhausted, and if the education setting is still unable to meet the educational needs of the child/young person, a request for an EHC needs assessment will be made. The Local Authority will then decide whether the request warrants a needs assessment. If so, the assessment will also include any social care or health involvement necessary in the one EHC plan.

Where the SEN needs of the child are assessed through the graduated approach (see p.2) as needing additional support, beyond that which should be available to all children, the education provider can make a request for additional funding to specifically support the child/young person's additional SEN needs.

This will enable the education provider to implement tailored and bespoke learning and curriculum support to meet the identified medical<sup>2</sup>, social care and learning needs of the child, which will then be identified in an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan where relevant.

Under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, all education settings are required to publish an SEN Information Report about how they support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. This must be available on

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<sup>2</sup> [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(2014\)](#) - statutory guidance from the Department for Education

their local school websites and via the Local Authority's Local Offer at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDlocaloffer](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDlocaloffer)

### **Lincolnshire's Criteria of Support for Children and Young People with SEND 0-25 years**

This document lays out the Graduated Approach pathway. More information about EHC needs assessments and plans can also be found on the the Local Authority's Local Offer at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDlocaloffer](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDlocaloffer)

#### **Pre-school assessment places**

For children who are not of statutory school age and who have severe and/or complex needs there may be a need for them to be placed within Assessment provision when local provision is not able to support their needs.

There are several settings across the county which offer Assessment Provision places:

- St Bernard's Special School (part of the Lincolnshire Wold's Federation), Louth
- Warren Wood Special School (part of the Gainsborough Federation)
- St Christopher's Special School, Lincoln
- Gosberton House School
- The Eresby School, Spilsby
- Bourne Willoughby Special School, Bourne
- Grantham Wyndham Park Nursery School, Grantham

#### **Admission to special schools**

The majority of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND) will have their needs met within local mainstream early year's settings, schools or colleges.

Pupils can only be admitted to a special school if they have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This will require an EHC needs assessment in order for the Local Authority to decide whether a special school placement is appropriate. The Local Authority has a duty to consult with mainstream education settings in the first instance.

Occasionally there are some exceptional circumstances which arise (for example a serious head injury) meaning that the young person cannot return to their mainstream school. This may result in a pupil being admitted to a special school on an assessment basis while an EHC needs assessment takes place.

## Other education support

Support within education settings may be available from the following services:

- **Early Years team** - provides bespoke inclusion support for local Early Years providers (i.e. pre-schools, playgroups, day nurseries, registered childminders and Local Authority Nursery Classes or Schools) to promote and support the early identification of children aged 0-5 years with additional needs and disabilities in order to improve their identified outcome needs. They also co-ordinate Early Years Inclusion Funding and support for Early Years providers and wider training to the childcare sector.
- **Early Support Care Coordination (ESCO)** - targeted service provided by Lincolnshire County Council Children Services, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service. The ESCO service facilitate drop in clinics across Lincolnshire at a convenient Children's Centre. For many parents/carers, having the opportunity to sit down with a knowledgeable professional for a brief consultation can be all that is required to enable them to navigate the system of services and identify local universal and targeted services for children with additional needs.
- **Portage** - home visiting educational service for pre-school children with special educational needs. In Lincolnshire there are eight Portage Teams funded by Lincolnshire County Council. Financial resources are placed in eight special schools countywide to promote, develop and maintain the work of the Portage Teams across Lincolnshire.
- **Sensory Education and Support Team (SEST)** - offers support and specialist teaching to children with hearing impairments, multi-sensory impairments and/or visual impairments and their families and schools and aims to ensure that children and young people with a hearing impairment are able to access their educational environment and make progress in order to raise aspirations and maximise their development.
- **Specialist Teaching Team (STT)** - offers high quality specialist support to education settings working with students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. They support education settings with the graduated approach and SEN support as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. STT provides expertise and practical specialised assistance that enables children and young people with SEND to achieve the best possible educational outcomes and make successful transitions to adulthood. The team also includes Dyslexia Outreach.
- **Working Together Team** - offer high quality support to schools and academies working with students with a wide range of social communication and / or learning needs. Working in partnership with colleagues in schools and academies within the graduated approach outlined in the SEN Code of Practice, the Working Together Team provides expertise and practical specialised assistance that enables children and young people to achieve the best possible educational outcomes and make successful transitions to adulthood.

- **Outreach Inclusion Support Service for pupils with physical/medical disability** – support the aim of pupil's entitlement to mainstream school placement where appropriate; supporting curriculum access and all issues involving pupils' individual care needs within school.
- **ECLIPS (Extended Communication & Language Impairment Provision for Students)** - meet the needs of students with severe specific speech and/or language disorders in secondary schools and Further Education colleges across Lincolnshire. Each ECLIPS team consists of one Teacher who specialises in Speech and Language, and one Speech and Language Therapist, working collaboratively. The primary role of ECLIPS is to provide an outreach model of provision, to enable students aged 11 - 25 to attend the local mainstream establishment of their choice in Lincolnshire.
- **Speech and Language Therapy** – the team is part of Lincolnshire Community Health Services (LCHS) Children's Therapy team and work across the county in a variety of settings with children and young people aged 0-19 years who have identified Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and/or motor difficulties with eating, drinking or swallowing.
- **Educational Psychology Team** – work with young people aged 0-25 who have the most complex needs such as autism, attachment issues and emotional wellbeing as well as their teachers and their parents to help them make the most of learning opportunities.
- **SENCO cluster groups** - all education settings have to ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as their SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). SENCO Cluster Groups are organised across the county as a way of providing professional support and development opportunities for SENCOs. Some are organised by SENCOs themselves or by support agencies such as the Educational Psychology Team.
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** - help with a range of complex mental and emotional health issues including: anxiety, self-harm, suicidal thinking, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, psychosis, bipolar affective disorder, eating disorders, somatoform disorders, and severe ADHD (Hyperkinetic disorder). Assessment and therapeutic interventions are also provided for children who are experiencing trauma due to sexual abuse, or who are displaying sexually harmful behaviour. Children who have received a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who also have a mental health disorder are also provided with mental health assessments and interventions. The Primary Mental Health Team provides links with Lincolnshire Schools via the 'school pathway'. This service can be accessed via the school nurse, or school's pastoral care.
- **Specialist Nurse Trainers** - The Specialist Nurse Trainers are nurses with qualifications in children's nursing that have a range of experience in caring for children with disabilities in the community and hospital settings. They aim to support children with a disability and additional physical health needs in a variety of settings by providing training and support for their carers.

There is also information available for education staff on [www.lincolnshirechildren.net](http://www.lincolnshirechildren.net) which is Lincolnshire's partnership website for the children's workforce.

In addition to children and young people with disabilities, Lincolnshire County Council is committed to ensure all children are supported to access high quality curriculum provision:

- **Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team (EMTET)** - offer support to ethnic minority and Traveller children to access and integrate into appropriate educational provision, promote and celebrate different cultures and lifestyles and help challenge racism and discrimination
- **Elective Home Education** – although there is no financial assistance available for Elective Home Education, the Local Authority may ask for information about a child's efficient and suitable education.
- **Looked After Children** - Education is a vital component of care planning for Looked After Children alongside the planning for other aspects of a child's life such as their health and where they will live. There is a dedicated Looked After Children's education service which champions the education of Looked After Children. One-to-one tuition is available to all Looked After Children from Key Stage 2. All Looked After Children who have been looked after for six months are eligible for the Pupil Premium to support their educational attainment. All school-age Looked After Children will have a Personal Education Plan within 10 days of becoming looked after. Looked After Children are able to access 2 year old funding from the day after their second birthday.

## 2. Inclusive and accessible environment

We will ensure that the physical environment within education providers is accessible and appropriate for children with special education needs and/or disabilities.

All new build or building extensions are required to comply with modern building regulations and must be accessible for pupils with disabilities. However, many of Lincolnshire's schools are in older buildings and whilst every effort should be made to ensure they are accessible, education providers are not expected to anticipate and prepare for every possible disability, but consider reasonable adjustments<sup>3</sup>.

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to improvements relating to school premises and undertake a programme of facilities management and maintenance as required and as priorities arise.

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<sup>3</sup> [Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils \(2015\)](#) - Technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission

### **3. High quality information and support**

#### **Local Offer**

Lincolnshire County Council is committed to making information about available services easily accessible to professionals and families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 through the provision of the Local Offer (Children and Families Act 2014).

The Local Offer is part of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms from the Children and Families Act 2014.

There are two main purposes for the Local Offer

- to improve information about services and provision available for families, children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and to make it easier for all families to find this information by making it available in one place.
- by working directly with families, children and young people in developing the Local Offer, Local Authorities and Health partners can improve provision.

Lincolnshire's Local Offer includes information on leisure and activity providers, health and social care services, education providers and support groups. It also contains information about support services and processes including EHC plans and preparing for adulthood.

The Local Offer sits within the universal Family Services Directory website and is designed to meet the needs of all families in Lincolnshire about the services available.

#### **Other information:**

##### **[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Information and Support](#)**

**[booklet](#)** – the booklet has been written for parents and covers the SEND reforms and the processes for parents. The booklet is reviewed regularly and is available from professionals and on the Local Offer.

##### **Family Information Service (FIS) & Liaise (SEND information Advice and Support)**

– The Family Information Service help families looking for children's services including childcare, support services and leisure opportunities as well as information about family entitlements and other help. The FIS use and support the Family Services Directory and Local Offer and can therefore support any family who may not be able to access the website or find the services they need. The FIS take initial referrals on behalf of Liaise who then call back to offer information, advice and support on SEND including legal information on all matters associated with SEND including school support, EHC assessments and plans, exclusions and admissions.

**Teenage information and preparing for adulthood** – Lincolnshire County Council has two websites that support young people aged 13-25 with careers and lifestyle choices to prepare them for adulthood. [www.teeninfoincs.co.uk](http://www.teeninfoincs.co.uk) has information on careers and

options, lifestyle and support, and links to [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/transitions](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/transitions) which is the easy-read version for young people with special educational needs.

**Training offer to professionals** – Lincolnshire County Council is committed to the continuous professional development of the children's services workforce. Early Years and childcare providers can access training through the on-line [Training Directory for the Children's Workforce in Lincolnshire](#), teaching staff access a range of statutory and subject-related training both through school and through the Local Authority and children's services staff are encouraged to continually upskill themselves with relevant training. The aim is to enable all professionals working with children and young people to have the necessary skills to offer effective support and information provision.

### **Co-production and review**

The changes to the SEND processes in Lincolnshire have been co-produced with parents, young people and professionals to develop the processes and documentation to best meet their needs.

Parents and carers, children and young people, and children's services professionals have been invited to a number of meetings and co-production events to give their views about the changes. Co-production events and opportunities are continuing and feedback captured is an integral part of the ongoing development of services and information.

Families, children and young people and professionals are encouraged to provide feedback about the quality or lack of services, all of which are passed on to appropriate Children's Services teams to aid service development and appropriate commissioning arrangements. Feedback can be given directly to professionals during meetings, or via the feedback forms used by individual services. The definition of 'professional' includes those involved in statutory service delivery, voluntary groups and independent services involved with families, and we will work with them to ensure the feedback mechanisms are effective and clear.

On-line feedback about services can be left and a summary of comments received can be viewed on the "Tell Us" area of the Family Services Directory website in the "You Said, We Did" page. This will be summarised in the SEND report which will be published in the autumn term 2015 and annually thereafter.

Lincolnshire County Council wants to understand which services are working well, which services may need to be improved and which services it may need to procure.

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### **Definitions:**

#### **1. Education setting**

The accessibility strategy applies to all education providers for young people up to the age of 25; maintained and independent schools and academies within the Local Authority, including maintained nursery schools, special schools, primary and secondary schools, and other specialist provision.

Whilst the accessibility strategy under the terms of the Education Act is not required to be applicable to education provision beyond these terms, Lincolnshire County Council will work to a local understanding of education provision which includes private, independent and voluntary (PVI) early education providers and is committed to enabling all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to ensure they have access to services appropriate to their needs irrespective of education setting.

## 2. Special educational needs and/or disabilities

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age
- or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

## 3. Local Offer for special educational needs and disabilities

Sections 27, 28, 30, 32, 41, 49, and 51-57 of the Children and Families Act 2014 require Local Authorities to produce a Local Offer:

Local authorities **must** publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. In setting out what they 'expect to be available', local authorities should include provision which they believe will actually be available.

*Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2014, Section 4*

The Local Offer is more than a directory of services, and should be developed through co-production with parents, professionals and children and young people, with the further duty of helping to develop services through feedback and comment from service users.

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## Additional Lincolnshire strategies

The following current Lincolnshire strategies should, where appropriate, be read in conjunction with the Accessibility Strategy:

- [All-ages Autism Strategy](#) – Lincolnshire has taken the proactive decision to develop an all-age autism strategy. We have undertaken a series of engagements with key stakeholders in order to develop a draft strategy that reflects the needs of people with autism of all ages that live in the county.

- [Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire 2013 – 2018](#) - This is the first Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire. It has been produced by the Lincolnshire Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and is based on the five priorities identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Lincolnshire
  - [Joint Carers Strategy 2014-18](#) - This strategy provides insight into the issues facing unpaid family carers in Lincolnshire with a vision of how together we can resolve those issues.
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### **Accessibility Strategy Review**

The Accessibility Strategy will be reviewed in 2016 in line with the expected review of the [Children and Young People's Plan 2013-16](#)