



STOCKPORT

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport

Accessibility Strategy 2015-2018

1. Introduction

The overall aim of this strategy is to ensure that Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council supports educational settings, which it is responsible for, in meeting the needs of disabled learners and raising their attainment. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that increasing the accessibility of the curriculum, enhancing the physical environment and improving information for disabled pupils is central to the delivery of services and supports schools with the development and delivery of activities identified in their individual accessibility plans.

2. Vision

Stockport endorses the 'social model' of disability, which proposes that it is society which dictates who is excluded- not the nature of the disability itself. The model recognises that removing barriers for disabled learners is as much about encouraging positive attitudes and behaviour traits as it is about removing physical barriers. **For Stockport's children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) we want every one of them to access all of the education, employment, training and social opportunities that they need to enhance their life chances, prepare them for adulthood and to enable them to contribute to their community.**

3. Definition

Under The Equality Act 2010 a person is defined as disabled if they have 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Within this definition 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes learning difficulties, mental health needs, sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. 'Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision to be made they will also be covered by the SEN definition.' Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 0-25 years 2014.

4. Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and simplified existing equality legislation. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, introduced new duties on local authorities and schools. The harmonisation of previous equality legislation means that much of what is required of schools is already being carried out by them. The planning duty for local authorities and schools came into force in September 2002. Local authorities were required to produce an Accessibility Strategy and schools were required to produce accessibility plans for publication in April 2003. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty or 'general duty' that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools, academies and Free Schools. With regard to the planning duty for disabled pupils, three strands are required for inclusion in an accessibility strategy and in individual school accessibility plans.

An Accessibility Strategy or Plan must describe how, over a prescribed period of time,-

- the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum is increased,
- the physical environment of the school/s is improved for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided or offered by the school and
- the delivery to disabled pupils of information, which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled, is improved.

Additional provision under the new Equality Act 2010 was introduced in September 2012 and relates to the requirements for schools to provide auxiliary aids for disabled pupils subject to the Reasonable Adjustment duty. Schools also have to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them. OFSTED inspections may include a school's accessibility plan as part of their review. There is also a requirement under the Children and Families Act 2014 for LAs to include their accessibility strategy in the Local Offer and this document will be published in Stockport's Local Offer at www.stockport.gov.uk within the Stockport Family Information Hub.

5. Local context and provision

Stockport has a wide range of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Provision includes a number of special schools, mainstream schools, which are Resourced to include pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, plus mainstream settings that effectively include pupils with SEND. Stockport retains a wide range of specialist services who provide assessment, advice and support to children and young people in schools and at home.

6. Strategic Priorities

The strategic developments around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have been led through the 0-25 Transformation Board, underpinned by the 0-25 Implementation Board, reflecting on the outcomes of thirteen work-streams. At all levels development has been steered through multi-agency representation and supported by parental representation from the agreed parent forum, Parent In Partnership Stockport (PIPS). As Stockport moves from development into implementation these work-streams are currently being re-designed to meet the next phase of development.

Stockport has embarked on a two-year project known as Stockport Family based on the integration and co-location of services around children, young people and their families. This is aimed at improving the outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are also currently reviewing how they can further develop their service to support children and young people around mental health and well-being. The aim is for these three areas of development to 'join up' to maximise the impact of any agreed change.



7. Increasing access to the curriculum

Considerable progress has been made to improve the accessibility of the curriculum. This covers not only teaching and learning, but also the wider curriculum of Early Years settings and schools, such as school trips and visits, after school activities and extended school activities. Early Years settings and schools are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and have a key role in planning to increase access to the curriculum for all pupils, and in particular for pupils with SEN and disability.

Support for Early Years settings and school leaders, including Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO), in relation to policies, strategies and systems, is available from local authority staff, through termly SENCO Briefings, a support group for new SENCOs and through training sessions and specific advice given to Early Years settings and schools. Advice and support in relation to individual pupils is available from a range of LA teams, including the SEN team, and health staff. In line with the new Teachers' Standards (September 2012), and a quality first teaching approach, the School Improvement Service support schools to:

- adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils;
- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively;
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these;
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils' education at different stages of development;
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

Stockport LA will:

- ensure that appropriate links to accessibility are made in all the training that it arranges;
- ensure that awareness training and updates are available for key LA staff, settings and school staff and governors in relation to a range of assessed needs;

- provide training on the responsibilities of governing bodies in relation to the inclusion of pupils with disabilities;
- provide guidance on meeting the medical needs of pupils and for intimate care;
- provide guidance and monitoring (under the auspices of the Local Safeguarding Board) on positive handling and provide Team Teach training;
- encourage Early Years settings and schools to work together and share good practice;
- enable schools to access advice and support from a variety of sources in relation to the wide range of issues involved in accessibility and inclusion;
- provide access to SEN support services to develop capacity in Early Years settings and schools and to support school to adapt and differentiate the curriculum;
- encourage high aspirations for progress of the most vulnerable pupils and prioritise the provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities around the need to narrow gaps and raise the attainment of vulnerable learners;
- ensure schools are aware of the importance of the use of interpreters for those children and families who require them.

Schools will:

- plan for and teach children with learning needs through a range of proven interventions;
- use a range of inclusive teaching strategies;
- take an informed view of the possible literacy and mathematics interventions that will be utilised;
- ensure effectively supported transition of vulnerable children and young people;
- evaluate a range of outcomes of their current additional provision and the value for money it provides;
- make informed decisions about how best to target available funding in the future;
- recognise the potential of vulnerable pupils, reduce barriers to their achievement and inclusion and develop a strong culture for success;
- focus on enhancing the life chances of their most vulnerable children;
- provide effective professional development for staff and governors;
- keep parents and carers informed in line with school policies and the requirements of the 0-25 Code of Practice;
- use interpreters where necessary.

8. Improving access to the environment

Early Years settings and schools are aware that reasonable adjustments may be needed to the classroom or setting to create safe spaces, such as calming areas and workstations for pupils with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) or Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. From September 2012 there has also been a new requirement to provide auxiliary aids for disabled pupils subject to the Reasonable Adjustment Duty.

Support services from health and education can advise about adaptations to the inside and outside environment for individuals to help include pupils with sensory integration needs.

This will include advice and guidance relating to:

- issues of physical space and how to reduce distractions;
- opportunities to present information visually;

- providing organisational strategies to complete activities;
- having visual structure to help with organisation, increase clarity and provide instruction.

9. Improving access to Information

The Local Authority will ensure that appropriate information, advice and support is provided for children and young people with SEN and disability and their families. The Stockport Local Offer provides information about services available for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities and their families and can be found at: www.stockport.gov.uk/localoffer.

Information, advice and support is also provided by the Families Information Service and impartial information, advice and support is provided by the SEND Information Advice and Support Service (formerly Parent Partnership).

Schools also need to set out on their website information about what they provide for pupils with SEN and disability.

Stockport Local Authority will:

- Continue to develop the Local Offer to include a wider range of information and to respond to feedback from those using the Offer, including parents/carers and children and young people;
- Continue to develop information provision and signposting through the Contact centre at Fred Perry House;
- Develop the service offered from the SEND Information Advice and Support Service to increase the information advice and support provided to parents, carers, children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Use a range of methods to distribute information including the Local Offer, council communications such as the Civic News and the website;
- Provide information in a range of accessible formats;
- Support the use of interpreters where required.

Schools will:

- Ensure they publish their School Offer (School Information Report) on their website;
- Explain the measures they are taking to promote accessibility to the curriculum and environment through their Accessibility Plan and in their prospectuses;
- Provide accessible information for disabled pupils and their parents;
- Where necessary provide interpreters, including sign language interpreters, where required,
- Be clear where parents can obtain hard copies of information published on the school website should they not have access to the internet.

10. Areas of need

All schools and settings have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled children and young people. They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. These duties are anticipatory – they require thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that

disadvantage. Schools also have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

Communication and Interaction

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Stockport Local Authority will:

- Provide relevant and appropriate advice, training and development;
- Liaise with health providers including Speech and Language Therapy and CAMHS to support meeting the needs of pupils;
- Commission additionally resourced provision and special educational provision to meet the needs of pupils with this area of SEN.

Cognition and Learning

Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation. Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and associated difficulties with mobility and communication, through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), where children are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment.

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD), affects one or more specific aspects of learning. This encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Stockport Local Authority will:

- Provide relevant and appropriate advice, training and development;
- Commission additionally resourced provision and special educational provision to meet the needs of pupils with this area of SEN.
- Maintain a central Learning Support Service through central and school funding.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils. The Department for Education publishes guidance on managing pupils' mental health and behaviour difficulties in schools.

Stockport Local Authority will:

- Provide relevant and appropriate advice, training and development;
- Liaise with health providers including CAMHS to support meeting the needs of pupils;
- Commission additionally resourced provision and special educational provision to meet the needs of pupils with this area of SEN;
- Maintain a Behaviour Support Service through central and school funding.

Sensory and/or physical needs

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate over time. Many children and young people with vision impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation support. Children and young people with an MSI have a combination of vision and hearing difficulties. Information on how to provide services for deafblind children and young people is available through the Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults guidance published by the Department of Health. Some children and young people with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers.

The Local Authority will:

- Provide relevant and appropriate advice, training and development;
- Liaise with health providers including physiotherapy and occupational therapy to support meeting the needs of pupils;
- Commission additionally resourced provision and special educational provision to meet the needs of pupils with this area of SEN;
- Maintain specialist teaching support for children with hearing and visual impairment through the Stockport Sensory Service;
- Provide funding for specialist equipment and ICT assessment, according to agreed procedures;
- Ensure all new buildings comply with the criteria in the Acoustic Performance Standards for the Priority Schools Building programme or performance standards to the criteria on BB 93 and 103.



Medical Needs

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-

ordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance '*Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions*' (2014).

11. Buildings

Stockport Authority will:

- Support the principles established over the adaptations and specialist spaces needed to enable the access of individual disabled pupils to their education, although all such works must represent efficient use of resources and value for 'the public purse';
- Ensure that all new extensions, adaptations and new buildings meet, or exceed, the DDA access requirements in place at that point (this refers to all learning spaces);
- Work with specialist colleagues and partner schools to review existing arrangements at early years, primary and secondary levels where accommodation requires enhancement to meet accessibility demands;
- Continue to maintain and deploy specialist LA staff to oversee and support the creation and maintenance of specialist places and advise schools over minor amendments their buildings may need for access DDA requirements;
- Individual placements advice will consider buildings condition and suitability as well as what minor modifications may be needed to facilitate pupils accessing education at an establishment of their parents choosing;

Schools are expected to:

- Have an up-to-date accessibility plan, agreed by governors, which informs school planning to increase accessibility over time;
- Consider how to improve accessibility through re-organising or re-arranging aspects of the school environment without building adaptations or modification in the first instance;
- Undertake minor adaptations over a period of time that are needed for a school to provide access to education which is the responsibility of individual schools, although advice and support about any required investment can be supplied from the central LA team.

12. Admissions

Stockport Local Authority will- apply the oversubscription criterion for community and controlled schools in Stockport which gives priority to children in local authority care and secondly to pupils with complex needs who have been discussed at the Special Educational Needs Panel and who have been identified as needing a 'named' primary or secondary mainstream school. Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, follow the arrangements set out in the SEN Code of Practice and associated regulations and are not subject to the general admission arrangements. Local Authority staff will continue to be involved in assisting with issues regarding individual placements. In Stockport, at this time, all admissions policies are aligned and do not vary in academies and voluntary aided and foundation schools.

Schools must not take any action that might discourage the admission of any disabled pupil.

13. Transport

The Local Authority will:

- continue to require transport providers to employ accessible vehicles where these are necessary to enable access by disabled children;
- provide access to additional support, as appropriate and agreed via the relevant risk assessments where these are necessary to ensure that children's reasonable needs can be met;
- anticipate that current established practices will continue particularly regarding the partnership between parents, passenger assistants, schools, transport providers and other agencies in order to provide accessible transport for pupils.

The Council offers independent travel training and is promoting this particular scheme. The Council will always aim to support children and young people to travel as independently as possible.

14. Conclusion and review

This strategy has been developed in discussion with parents, school representatives and other partners. The Local Authority services, in partnership with schools, will implement this strategy to ensure that children and young people enjoy a fully inclusive school experience. This strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the children and young people in Stockport who have a disability.

