

Introduction

“Our vision for Newham is to ensure that each one of our 85,000 children and young people has the skills, health and resilience to meet the challenges of adult life in the 21st century”¹

Improving access to education and educational achievement for disabled pupils is essential to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation in society, access to employment opportunities and inclusion within mainstream education, the local community and society in general.

This strategy identifies the actions the London Borough of Newham will take, to secure efficient and effective accessibility arrangements.

Background

Local Authorities have a duty to prepare, for the schools for which they are responsible, an accessibility strategy based on the same principles as the accessibility plan for schools.

Accessibility Planning is required to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of all schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

The London Borough of Newham has identified the following strategic goals for its accessibility strategy:

- Maximising access for children and young people with SEN and disabilities to schools so that their long term outcomes are enhanced
- Ensuring that the majority of children and young people with SEN and disabilities access high quality mainstream education.
- Maximising the placement of children and young people with SEN and disabilities in local provision rather than out of borough provision as this adds discomfort to the lives of those involved
- Pursuit of improved access as a shared goal in partnership with all schools, support services, other agencies and notably Health and Social Care
- Ensuring that capital funding is used so that it can better meet the needs of children and young people with SEN and disabilities in local schools
- Facilitating the sharing of good practice between schools
- Supporting the achievement of the Council’s priorities as contained in The Children and Young People’s Plan 2015-2018 in particular Theme 2 Supporting Learning and Skills Priority 2 Redesigning Support for Children and Young People with SEN and disabilities

¹ (Children and Young People’s Plan LB Newham 2015-2018)

Definitions

Disability - a person is disabled “if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.² This includes physical disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered disabilities, regardless of their effect.

Normal day-to-day activities - the test of whether the impairment affects this is one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

Long term - lasting or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Schools - all maintained schools for which The London Borough of Newham is responsible.

Discrimination - a public body (such as school) must not disadvantage a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability. There can be no justification for direct discrimination under any circumstances.

This Accessibility Strategy also seeks to protect pupils from indirect discrimination - a school must not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only.

The Local Authority will work closely with schools and Governing Bodies of schools to agree reasonable adjustments which will allow disabled pupils full access to school facilities and activities.

Reasonable adjustments - this duty applies only to disabled people.

This Accessibility Duty recognises and promotes the principles identified for schools, i.e.

- Where something a school does places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that discrimination
- Schools are not subject to the other reasonable adjustments duty to make alterations to physical features because this is already considered as part of their planning duties
- In addition to having a duty to consider reasonable adjustments for particular identified disabled pupils, schools will also have to consider potential adjustments which may be needed for disabled pupils generally as it is likely that any school will have a disabled pupil at some point. It is important to note that the duty on schools to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory. Schools should not wait until a disabled pupil arrives before making or planning to make adjustments. This may be too late and could lead to the pupil being substantially disadvantaged, it is important, therefore, for schools to plan a broad range of accessibility improvement over time.

² (Equality Act 2010)

Duties within the legislation

Local authorities and schools have had a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils since 2002. Originally under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and subsequently under the Equality Act 2010 and related Disability Discrimination Act 2011.

The three key duties are:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- To publish and implement an accessibility strategy to increase access to school education for disabled pupils

The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty make it clear that schools are still required to produce an accessibility plan, have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing them and must regularly review them.

From September 2012 the reasonable adjustments duty for LAs and schools included a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils. It is anticipated that these aids will usually include low cost items or change in practice e.g. coloured overlays, software, adapted keyboards, enlarging texts etc. It is unlawful for a school to charge a pupil for making a reasonable adjustments in any circumstances, whatever the financial cost to the school and however the school or setting is funded.

Increasing access to the curriculum

The London Borough of Newham provides guidance to school and governing bodies on producing, implementing and reviewing their Accessibility Plans by:

- direct training
- facilitation of network groups
- provision of information on the MLE Fronter system
- facilitation school to school support

A range of services are available to schools to provide advice on curriculum access:

- training on all aspects of SEN, Access and Disability
- school improvement advice
- individual pupil support/casework
- written guidance
- monitoring
- teaching support

The services provided by the London Borough of Newham to support schools in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and disabilities include:

- The Complex Needs and Dyslexia Service (CNDS) – a team of teachers and early years practitioners supports individual pupils referred by schools and early years settings through individual casework and training.
- The Behaviour Support Service (BSS) – a team of teachers and early years practitioners supporting schools through individual casework and training on pupils needs and developing whole school practices

- The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) – a team of Educational Psychologists support schools by assessing pupils, identifying areas of difficulty and planning with the school programmes of support
- The Language, Communication and Interaction Support Service (LCIS) – a team of teachers and practitioners supporting pupils with language and communication disorders and delay and pupils on the Autistic Spectrum through individual casework and training
- The Sensory Service – a team of teachers and practitioners supporting pupils with auditory and visual impairments in schools through individual casework and training

Target	Maintenance /Development	Success Criteria
To ensure good support plans for all pupils with statements /Education Health and Care Plans or pupils with significant needs and high needs funding	Maintenance	All pupils with additional funding have clear support plans indicating the “additional to and different” from provision. To be scrutinised at Annual Review.
To provide training to schools on the use of tools to monitor and compare the progress of pupils with SEN/D	Development	All pupils working below age-related expectations are monitored for progress & comparison with similar pupils nationally

Improving the physical environment

The London Borough of Newham supports early years settings and schools to evaluate current accommodation and improve the physical environment by:

- training on the development and use of work stations for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum delivered by LCIS
- training on the establishment and use of sensory rooms delivered by CNDS and through school-to-school support
- advice on individual pupil needs with regard to personal care/ moving and handling

The London Borough of Newham is committed to providing a range of provision to meet the needs of pupils within the Borough and to improve specialist accommodation as part of its capital investment programme. Key areas of investment 2015- 2018 will be to improve physical environments for pupils on the autism spectrum and those with social and behavioural need.

Target	Maintenance /Development	Success Criteria
All schools with sensory rooms have received training on their use	Development	The full benefits of Sensory Rooms are used to support pupils
New building for pupils with social and behavioural need completed	Development	Eleanor Smith new buildings opened Tunmarsh PRU new building
New provision for children with autism and construction of new specialist centre underway	Development	New autism provisions opened. Building of new specialist centre for autism underway (with expected opening date in 2019)

Improving the availability of accessible information

The London Borough of Newham supports early years settings and schools to present information in an appropriately accessible format by:

- promoting a person centred approach to pupil reviews

- ensuring training is available to schools on the use of visual timetables and other strategies to support pupils on the Autistic Spectrum
- advising schools on appropriate methods of conveying information to pupils with SEN
- Providing specific guidance for pupils with visual impairments on written texts or Braille requirements
- Providing advice and guidance on the teaching of children who are deaf and provision of aids
- Deliver training in schools and to parents of children with SEN on making environments and the curriculum accessible

Target	Maintenance /Development	Success Criteria
To provide training on effective pupil centred planning	Maintenance	Reviews are completed using person centred approaches
To provide advice to schools on best practice for pupils with an identified need	Maintenance	Schools have identified best methods of communication for individual pupils with SEN/D
To ensure that pupils with SEN/D are consulted about how and in which format they wish to received information at school and Borough level	Development	At review all pupils confirm information is accessible

Reviewing the effectiveness of the strategy

“A local authority must keep its accessibility strategy under review during the period to which it relates and, if necessary, revise it”³

This strategy covers the period 2015 - 18 and will be regularly reviewed and revised/updated as necessary within that timeframe.

The London Borough of Newham will review the effectiveness of the Accessibility Strategy by obtaining feedback from:

- children and young people
- parents/carers
- maintained schools
- other stakeholders

and in its review of the Local Offer.

³ (Equality Act 2010: Schedule 10 [1.5])

Action Plan 2015-2018

Target	Success criteria	Target for completion	Lead Officer
To ensure clear support plans are in place for all pupils with statements /EHC plans/ High Needs Funding	All pupils with additional funding have clear provision maps indicating additional to and different from provision. To be scrutinised at Annual Review.	Dec 2016	M Foster
To provide training to schools on the use of tools to monitor and compare the progress of pupils with SEN/D	All pupils working below age-related expectations are monitored for progress & comparison with similar pupils nationally	Sept 2016	L Hare
All schools who request training with sensory rooms have received training on their use	The full benefits of Sensory Rooms are used to support pupils	Dec 2017	J Roux
New building for pupils with social and emotional need completed Building underway for autism specialist centre	Eleanor Smith new building opened Autism build underway	Dec 2018	J Hourigan M Foster
To provide training on effective pupil centred planning	All annual reviews are person centred	Dec 2016	Z Francis
To provide advice to schools on best practice for pupils with an identified need	Schools have been supported to identify methods of communication for individual pupils with SEN/D	Dec 2016	J Roux D Canning
To ensure that pupils with SEN/D are consulted about how and in which format they wish to received information at school and Borough level	At review all pupils confirm information is accessible	Dec 2016	Z Francis