

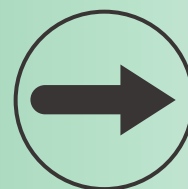
Planning to Increase Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils

National Assembly for Wales

Circular No: 15/2004

Date of Issue: March 2004

Guidance
Circular



Social Inclusion



www.dysgu.cymru.gov.uk
www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Adran Hyfforddiant ac Addysg
Department for Training and Education



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Planning to Increase Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils

Guidance on New Duties placed on Local Education Authorities and schools to plan for increased Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils.

Audience: Local Education Authorities in Wales; governing bodies of maintained schools; proprietors of independent schools; diocesan authorities; voluntary and other bodies dealing with disabled children and children with special educational needs; local authority social services departments; local health boards; teaching and other unions with members in schools; other bodies in Wales concerned with school education.

Overview: This document contains guidance on sections 28D-28E of the Disability Discrimination Act 2001 and the Disability Discrimination (Prescribed Periods for Accessibility Strategies and Plans for Schools) Regulations 2003 which came into force on 08 October 2003.

Action Required: The legislation requires LEAs to put into place accessibility strategies and schools to put in place accessibility plans by 01 April 2004.

Further Information: Enquiries should be directed to David Slade,
Tel: 029 20826066, E-mail:
david.slade@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Additional Copies: Can be obtained from David Slade or accessed on the Assembly's website
www.learning.wales.gov.uk.

Related Documents:

- Disability Rights Commission: DDA part 4 - Code of Practice for Schools (2002)
- Special Educational Needs - Code of Practice for Wales (January 2002)
- Welsh Office Circular 20/97 – What the Disability Discrimination Act means for schools and LEAs

Contents

Paragraph Numbers

Section 1 – Introduction	1.1 – 1.6
Section 2 – Legal Position	2.1 – 2.17
Section 3 – The Planning Duty	3.1 – 3.33
Section 4 – How to develop an accessibility strategy: LEAs	4.1 – 4.15
Section 5 – How to develop an accessibility plan: schools	5.1 – 5.17
Section 6 – Resources, Inspection and Redress	6.1 – 6.10

ANNEXES

PLANNING TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SCHOOLS FOR PUPILS WITH DISABILITIES

Summary

This circular deals with duties placed on local education authorities (LEAs) and schools (maintained and independent) to plan for and implement action to improve accessibility for disabled pupils. The new duties require:

- LEAs to put in place accessibility strategies
- schools to put in place accessibility plans

Both strategies and plans must deal with:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum and in activities such as after school clubs, leisure and sporting events and school trips
- improving the physical environment of schools for disabled pupils
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of written information provided to pupils who are not disabled.

The duties came into force on 8 October 2003 and LEAs and schools are required to have in place accessibility strategies and accessibility plans by 1 April 2004 covering the 3 year period to 31 March 2007.

Section 1 of the circular provides a general introduction.

Section 2 deals with the legal position and the relationship between the new duties and other statutory responsibilities resting on LEAs and schools by virtue of special educational needs (SEN) legislation and other aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

Section 3 sets out the planning duty on LEAs and schools.

Section 4 deals with the development of an LEA accessibility strategy.

Section 5 deals with development of a school accessibility plan.

Section 6 deals with the funding of plans, monitoring through Estyn inspection and redress if an LEA or governing body of a maintained school acts unreasonably in discharge of its planing function or fails to discharge its responsibility.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document provides guidance to local education authorities (LEAs) and schools on their duty in Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) to plan to increase progressively the accessibility of schools to disabled pupils (the planning duty). This duty came into force on 8 October 2003. LEAs' accessibility strategies and schools' accessibility plans have to be in place by 1 April 2004.

1.2 Improving access to education for disabled pupils is a key component in the delivery of the National Assembly's statutory responsibility under the Government of Wales Act 1998 to exercise its functions with regard to providing equality of opportunity for all. Accordingly it wishes disabled people to enjoy full participation in society, independent living and economic self sufficiency.

1.3 Improving the accessibility of schools is not just about removing barriers, it is about increasing access in the widest sense, to ensure that teaching and learning is fully accessible to all pupils. The planning duty embraces three strands as set out in Section 28D of the SEN and Disability Act 2001:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools and;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled.

The planning duty is designed to help LEAs and schools improve access for disabled pupils in a planned and strategic way and in so doing enable disabled pupils to develop their full potential in accordance with the principles set out in The Learning Country.

1.4 This document complements the Code of Practice for Schools published by the Disability Rights Commission on 8 July 2002 which came into effect on 1 September 2002; and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales, which came into effect on 1 April 2002.

How planning assists the institution

1.5 In planning for the needs of disabled pupils and prospective pupils, schools need to bear in mind that improved access for disabled pupils may also improve access for disabled staff, parents and members of the public. This will help schools and LEAs fulfil their legal responsibilities under Parts II and III of the DDA which have applied to schools and LEAs in stages since 1996. (see Welsh Office Circular 20/97)

1.6 Approximately 8.5m people in the UK have a disability within the meaning of the DDA. Planning for the inclusion of disabled pupils helps to provide equality of opportunity for this group and helps schools to provide more fully for the needs of their local communities. Many adaptations and modifications to improve access will also benefit non disabled children and adults. For example, soundfield systems and the acoustic treatment of teaching space can improve listening conditions for all pupils.

SECTION 2

LEGAL POSITION

Definition of Disability

2.1 The DDA defines a disabled person as 'a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

2.2 Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on a person's everyday life. Mental health conditions are also covered when they are a clinically well-recognised illness. Further information is given in Appendix 1 of the Disability Rights Commission's Code of Practice for Schools and in the DfEE publication, Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions in relation to the definition of disability (see Annex A).

An overview of the legislation supporting disabled pupils

2.3. There are three main strands of legislation which support disabled pupils in school:

- The SEN framework (Part IV of the Education Act 1996);
- Disability discrimination duties (sections 28A -28C, 28F, 28G, 28K, 28L of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995); and
- Planning duties (sections 28D -28E of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

The SEN framework

2.4 The purpose of the SEN framework is to meet the special educational needs of individual children, some of whom may be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, provision normally available in schools maintained by the LEA. Under the framework, schools and LEAs need to identify children's special educational needs as early as possible; assess those needs carefully; and make specific provision, whether solely through their school or with the intervention of the LEA by way of a statement, to enable them to learn and achieve. The SEN framework also ensures that children's progress is monitored and reviewed so that the provision being made for them meets their needs. The SEN Code of Practice for Wales provides guidance to schools and LEAs on the SEN framework.

2.5 Children with statements of special educational needs must be educated in a mainstream school unless this is against their parents' wishes or incompatible with the efficient education of other children. These are the only reasons why mainstream education can be refused outright. If it is the second reason, schools and LEAs must demonstrate that there are no reasonable steps that they could take to prevent that incompatibility. Planning to increase access for disabled pupils will help the inclusion of children with statements of SEN.

Disability Discrimination Duties

2.6 Schools and LEAs already have statutory responsibilities under the DDA. Parts II and III of the DDA, and the original Part IV, have applied to schools in stages from 1996. These duties affect schools and LEAs in the employment of staff and the provision of non-educational services to the public, including services to parents.

2.7 Since September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their arrangements for admissions and exclusions and for the provision of education and associated services. Schools and LEAs must:

- Not treat disabled pupils less favourably than other pupils; and

For example:

Refusing to admit a child to school because of their disability

Refusing to let a child attend lessons with other children because of their disability

Refusing to let a child attend a school trip, because the school has not made "reasonable" adjustments regarding his or her disability

Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the "reasonable adjustment" duty)

- Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty).

For example:

A secondary school ensures special arrangements for disabled pupils who are taking public exams

A teacher stops talking whilst writing on a whiteboard so that a deaf pupil can lip-read

A teacher provides a pupil with dyslexia with lesson notes

2.8 Parliament approved on 28 August 2002 a Code of Practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) to explain and illustrate the disability discrimination duties. The Code applies to England and Wales. The Code explains terminology such as 'substantial' and 'reasonable'.

The Planning Duty on LEAs and Schools

2.9 Section 28D of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places a duty on LEAs to plan strategically to increase over time the accessibility of all of their schools, including pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools; and places a duty on the bodies responsible for schools to plan to increase the accessibility of their schools. The responsible body for each type of school is:

Maintained school other than a nursery school	The governing body
Pupil referral unit	The LEA

Nursery School	The LEA
Independent school	The proprietor*
Special school not maintained by an LEA	The proprietor*

- * The Education Act 1996 says that the proprietor is the person or group of people responsible for the management of the school. This will vary according to the type of school but would include the trustees, the governing body, the private owner or the management group of the school.

Reference to 'the school' in this guidance means the body responsible for the school.

2.10 The responsibility for plans for nursery schools will switch to nursery schools themselves in September 2004 when nursery schools will be included in the definition of maintained schools in accordance with section 39 of the Education Act 2002 and will have governing bodies. It is intended that, subject to the approval of the National Assembly to the necessary regulations, these governing bodies will be required to have plans for improving access for disabled pupils in place from 1 April 2005 on the same basis as other schools.

2.11 LEAs and schools are under a duty to prepare accessibility strategies and accessibility plans respectively. An accessibility strategy or plan is a strategy or plan for:

- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- (b) improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services in schools; and
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of written information provided to pupils who are not disabled.

2.12 An LEA strategy has to set out its plans for improving the accessibility of LEA maintained schools and maintained nursery education provision in its area. A school's accessibility plan has to set out how a school is planning to improve its accessibility to disabled pupils.

2.13 The planning duties for LEAs and schools in Wales commenced on 8 October 2003 and that regulations made by the Assembly under section 28D of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 require that accessibility strategies and accessibility plans are in place by 1 April 2004, to cover a period of 3 years i.e. to 31 March 2007. LEAs and schools are also required to review strategies and plans, and revise them if necessary, and to produce new plans at 3 yearly intervals.

2.14 The DDA provides for inspections of LEAs and schools to cover the discharge of their responsibilities to prepare, revise, review and implement their strategies or plans and in respect of a school accessibility plan, to check on the publication of the plan. Estyn will be monitoring LEAs' and schools' exercise of their planning duties in the course of LEA and school visits and inspections.

2.15 The planning duty covers all 'education and associated services' provided by schools. It includes the curriculum, extended-curriculum activities, break and lunch times, and school sports.

2.16 LEAs must implement their accessibility strategies and must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementation. Schools must similarly implement their action plans and must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementation.

Status of this guidance

2.17 This guidance is advisory except for those elements covering

- the persons to be consulted in the preparation of an LEA accessibility strategy (para 4.10);
- the form in which an LEA accessibility strategy is produced (para 4.11 – 4.12); and
- keeping the LEA strategy under review and, if necessary, revising it (paras 4.14-4.15).

LEAs are required by the DDA to have regard to this guidance in respect of these matters.

SECTION 3

THE PLANNING DUTY

3.1 This section explains the respective duties of LEAs and schools under the planning duty and the links between LEAs and maintained schools in planning.

3.2 LEAs and schools should work in partnership to produce accessibility strategies and plans, sharing information and expertise. They should involve people and organisations with relevant expertise such as health and social services, voluntary organisations representing disabled children and young people, parents and disabled children themselves.

INCREASE THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISABLED PUPILS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

3.3 The curriculum covers teaching and learning and wider provision embracing after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips. Planning for improved access to the curriculum includes consideration of school and classroom organisation and support, timetabling, curriculum options, deployment of staff and staff information and training.

3.4 It is important that LEAs and schools plan curriculum access at a ‘whole school’ level. Many barriers to access to the curriculum are similar for groups of children and it is useful to take a strategic approach to removing these barriers. This strand of the planning duty will benefit disabled pupils and prospective pupils with a range of needs including those with learning disabilities. Learning challenges should be set at appropriate levels and respond to the diverse needs of all pupils to enable barriers to learning and assessment to be overcome.

The role of the LEA

3.5 LEA accessibility strategies should focus on helping schools increase the accessibility of the curriculum to disabled children by securing appropriate staff training and encouraging schools to work together and share good practice. LEA should identify the support maintained schools need in making the curriculum accessible and plan accordingly. LEAs should ensure that their schools are aware of their support services to teachers on teaching techniques and strategies, classroom management and curriculum material. They can provide support for curriculum development; direct teaching or practical support for class teachers; part-time specialist help; or access to learning support assistance. Advice should also be available from an LEA’s own specialist staff e.g. educational psychologists and specialist teachers.

An LEA’s strategy might set out how it intends to work with health and social services authorities to provide information and training for teachers and support staff on the educational implications of different disabilities and on the management of particular health needs in the classroom. The strategy might set out plans to create a website for teachers, deploy health and social services staff in the area, and encourage working together to maximise disabled pupils’ access to the curriculum and the full life of the school.

A website could encourage information exchanges on good practice and on the experiences of teachers working with disabled pupils in school. The strategy might include plans to hold regular seminars and training events for mainstream and special schools to disseminate good practice and share information and expertise.

The role of the school

3.6 Schools are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and for planning to increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. In focusing on this part of the duty, schools should identify all pupils and known prospective pupils who face barriers to learning and full participation. Although children with learning disabilities experience some of the greatest barriers to curriculum access, the majority of such children will already have access to the curriculum through the SEN framework including provision through statements of special educational needs.

3.7 The following documents are useful tools in making the curriculum accessible to disabled pupils:

The National Curriculum for Wales, introduced in September 2000, includes a statement on access for all pupils. It emphasises the need for the Programme of Study for each key stage to be taught to pupils in ways appropriate to their developing maturities and abilities.

- ACCAC has produced the following guidance:
 - *Practical suggestions for Assessing Pupils Working towards Level 1.*
 - *A Structure of Success: Guidance on the National Curriculum and Autistic Spectrum Disorder*
 - *Challenging Pupils: Enabling Access – Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*
 - *Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the School Curriculum in Wales*
 - *A focus on achievement – Guidance on including pupils with Additional Needs in Whole School Target Setting.*
- In addition the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for England has produced general and subject guidelines on planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. These booklets are a useful resource but schools should be mindful of the differences in subject orders in Wales. ACCAC has recently produced further guidance on access to the PSE Framework in Wales during 2003-04.

3.8 Schools can use these documents to develop curriculum audits which review patterns of achievement and participation by disabled pupils in different areas of the curriculum, e.g. the inclusion of physically disabled children in PE. Other audit tools include the "Index for Inclusion" which is a set of materials to support schools in a process of inclusive development.

3.9 Schools can use a variety of approaches when planning and delivering the curriculum. For example:

- Grouping arrangements which enable pupils with disabilities to work with their peers.

- Peer support arrangements such as buddying, mentoring or a ‘circle of friends’ who plan ways to help the disabled pupil access the curriculum and the social opportunities provided by the school.
- A resource bank of ideas and lesson plans; using support for curriculum access offered by the LEA and as outlined in LEA’s accessibility strategy.

3.10. Schools should consider pupils’ assessment needs and any reasonable adjustments which may be necessary to enable them to participate in national tests and qualifications as fully as possible. This requires forward planning, gathering of appropriate evidence in advance of any test/examination and involving where necessary expertise from external sources e.g. educational psychologists.

3.11. Schools should also consider staff training needs.

IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS FOR DISABLED PUPILS

3.13. This strand of the planning duty covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.

A school plan might identify a number of priorities for improving access to the curriculum. It could focus on a series of staff development activities, such as linking with other schools in the area to develop and share good practice, and staff training; it could plan to improve channels of communication between disabled pupils and staff including setting up a pupils’ forum; and it could set plans for whole school assemblies to explore disability and access.

3.14 The physical environment includes steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs, interior surfaces, room decor and furniture. Improvements to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, communication aids, well designed (passive) room acoustics and way-finding systems. The provision of ‘quiet’ areas and improvements to the physical safety of the environment, indoors and outdoors, may also enhance access for children with learning disabilities.

3.15. All new school buildings in Wales must comply with the Constructional Standards for School Buildings in Wales, NAW Circular 03/02, which includes standards for disabled access. Improved access in existing buildings can often be achieved by rearranging room space, removing obstructions from walkways, changing the layout of classrooms, providing designated storage space or reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms.

3.16 Improving access to school buildings of historical or architectural significance should not be treated in a different way. However changes do have to comply with building regulations. Bodies such as CADW can provide guidance on how to achieve this. In the case of a listed building or one in a conservation area all major and minor building work needs planning consent.

3.17 Physical aids to access education cover ICT equipment, desks, chairs, writing equipment, science equipment and the like. Examples of improvement include enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, communication aids, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor co-ordination and poor hand/eye skills such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

3.18 There is a distinction between aids provided through the SEN framework and those provided through the planning duty. The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEN route and those provided by the planning duty is that the SEN duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the population (and future population) of the school. For example, a pupil with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through the statement of SEN but the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

The role of the LEA

3.19 LEAs already play a vital role in making community, voluntary controlled and to a significant extent voluntary aided schools physically accessible to disabled children. They manage the capital estate of community and voluntary controlled schools, are closely involved in arrangements for improvements to the buildings of voluntary aided schools and are responsible for funding capital works in foundation schools. Local authorities are preparing condition, suitability and sufficiency assessments of school buildings as part of the preparation of asset management plans (AMPs) for all of their capital assets. AMPs should be in place for all authorities in 2004. They will become the key tool by which authorities prioritise investment.

3.20 The planning duty requires LEAs to take a strategic approach to planning for increased disability access to all maintained schools across their areas. To achieve this, LEAs need good data on the accessibility of their schools, drawing on the AMP suitability assessments. Where an LEA does not have clear information about the accessibility of its schools, it should undertake an access audit to identify all hazards and barriers to access.

3.21 LEAs should link accessibility projects to all capital building work where appropriate. For example, in refurbishing school buildings, an LEA should consider whether aids to physical accessibility, such as ramps or handrails or décor schemes could be incorporated into the plan.

The role of maintained schools

3.22 Whilst, except in the case of voluntary aided schools, LEAs undertake and fund the capital work in maintained schools, that does not mean that a school should wait for its LEA to make its site accessible. Schools should consider what

After carrying out an audit of the accessibility of its schools and plotting the anticipated future needs of disabled pupils on a mapping system, an LEA might decide to adopt a strategy whereby disabled pupils attend their local schools wherever possible. The LEA plans to undertake physical adaptations to several neighbourhood schools over a three year period.

An LEA might decide to improve access to a high proportion of secondary schools, especially where a school is the only secondary provider for a large area or the only provider through the medium of Welsh. The LEA strategy might include at least one large secondary school project per year prioritised according to need.

An LEA might plan to install a rise and fall science and/or CDT bench in one secondary school per area.

An LEA might, using occupational therapist expertise, set up a resource centre for specialist furniture including sloping desks, booster seats and specialist seating.

they can do to improve the accessibility of the physical environment of the school within the resources available to them and consider accessibility in all purchasing decisions.

3.23 In the case of voluntary aided schools, the Assembly expects governing bodies to make appropriate reference to their accessibility plans when they seek Assembly grant aid for capital works.

A school might fit ramps and handrails to the entrance of the school building; move a science laboratory and/or library to the ground floor; install bar taps to the sinks in the science labs, food technology and art rooms; install a soundfield system to provide 'ubiquitous sound' from a microphone worn by the teacher.

Links Between LEAs and Maintained Schools

3.24 The accessibility data will be common to LEA strategies and to school plans. LEAs will draw on AMP data and information from individual schools to identify hazards and barriers to access for their accessibility strategies. Schools should use the same information to formulate their accessibility plans. LEAs and schools need to work together to determine whether existing information is sufficient or whether accessibility audits are needed (paragraphs 4.5 – 4.6 and 5.4 – 5.6 and Annex C provide guidance on access audits). Accessibility audits do not have to be expensive or carried out by a specialist access consultant. Where access consultants are required, Annex B provides the contact details for the Centre for Accessible Environments, which administers a national register of access consultants.

3.25 LEAs and schools need to work together to determine what resources can be made available by the LEA for more expensive projects and how schools might use resources in their delegated budgets.

Independent schools and non-maintained special schools

3.26 Independent schools are wholly responsible for planning for increased physical access of their schools within the resources available to them. They are

not covered by LEA accessibility strategies. They may wish to carry out an initial access audit in order to identify goals in improving accessibility. They may wish to start by tackling inexpensive adaptations and linking the more expensive projects to planned building works and refurbishment.

Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils

3.27 This part of the duty covers planning to make written information normally

If an independent school were refurbishing a block housing its language laboratories and its sixth form provision, it might plan to install low pile, high density carpet as this helps wheelchair users to move with greater ease. It might also plan to make improvements to lighting, colour contrasting decor and signage.

provided by the school to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled pupils. This might include alternative formats such as large print, audio tape, braille, a recognised symbol system, the use of ICT and the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or in sign language. The information should take account of pupils' disabilities and views expressed by pupils or their parents about their preferred means of communication.

3.28 Information must be provided within a reasonable time. A reasonable timeframe would be the start of the academic year for timetables; and the start of the lesson for handouts needed during lessons.

The role of the LEA

3.29 Many LEA support services provide for individual children with low incidence disabilities such as hearing and visual impairment. This often includes helping schools to make written material available in alternative formats for individual pupils.

3.30 Where LEAs have centrally provided support services, they should make sure that all their schools have information about the full range of services they can provide, including systems for converting information into alternative formats.

3.31 LEAs should encourage their schools to share good practice on providing information in different formats. Special schools and special units in mainstream schools in particular may be able to share information and expertise.

3.32 LEA strategies should detail their plans for developing and improving support for the provision of information in different formats.

The role of the school

After undertaking an audit of teaching materials, text books and other information in alternative formats held by the LEA and its schools, the LEA might plan to set up a bank of materials to be loaned to schools. The LEA might also plan to set up a website for its schools providing information on the support available for converting information into different formats, including training, and encouraging schools to share good practice.

3.33 Schools should set out in their plan how they will provide the written material they provide for all pupils in alternative formats for disabled pupils within a reasonable time. Plans could include less reliance on written information, provision of more information pictorially and orally and the use of lip speaking so that disabled pupils can access material. The school should consider how all information normally provided in a written format including work sheets, timetables, school examination papers, newsletters, information about school events, trips and extra curricular provision could be made more accessible over time.

A school's accessibility plan might include plans to liaise with their local support services in order to develop joint practice. For example, the LEA has a Sensory Service, which houses a central resource base. This base handles requests from schools across the LEA, stores details of materials already available in different formats and provides a link for members of the support service working with individual pupils. In addition, training is available to staff in schools to enable them to produce day to day materials to support curriculum access.

SECTION 4

HOW TO DEVELOP AN LEA ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

4.1 LEAs are experienced in strategic planning in the context of nationally required plans, both statutory and non-statutory, and through their own local planning arrangements. Care should be taken to ensure that goals set in an accessibility strategy are consistent with those set in existing plans such as the Education Strategic Plan or school organisation plan.

Content of the accessibility strategy

4.2 This guidance does not prescribe the content of the accessibility strategy, but the main processes LEAs should go through in producing accessibility strategies are:



Access audit and review of accessibility of all maintained schools

4.3 An LEA cannot take a strategic approach to planning for increased disabled access to its schools (including pupil referral units and nursery schools) without knowing the current position. LEAs should have some information on the physical accessibility of their schools to disabled pupils through the development of their AMP and the suitability assessments that underpin the process.

4.4 LEAs should ensure that their information is accurate and up to date. They should make use of the information schools have from their access reviews for their own accessibility plans. LEAs should work with their schools on determining whether existing data on accessibility is sufficient and whether accessibility audits are needed. Where further information is needed, LEAs may find it helpful to refer to Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings and Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design, published by DfES, which provide guidance on carrying out accessibility audits of schools and making schools

accessible. The audit should also include information on schools' attitudes to and experience of inclusion, existing specialist provision for disabled pupils and staff training needs. LEAs should share all relevant accessibility information with their schools.

Identify actions

4.5 Once LEAs have information on the barriers to access for disabled pupils in their maintained schools, they should make appropriate plans and prioritise actions for overcoming the barriers. In developing their strategies, LEAs need to plan for the immediate needs of current pupils and for the needs of future pupils. LEAs might consider working with health services which have information on the numbers of live births in the area; and social services, who have information about the likely population of disabled pupils in the area through the local register of disabled children and family support services. LEAs need to factor in parental choice in forecasting future need.

4.6 LEAs need to use those with appropriate expertise in developing their strategies. This might include local authority access officers, local and national disability and voluntary organisations, disabled people and parents of disabled pupils; and sharing good practice with other LEAs. It might also include working with designated officers in social services and community paediatricians who are able to monitor local trends in numbers of disabled pupils in the area. Such partners can give advice (or make appropriate referrals to sources of advice) on proposed changes to the physical environment of schools and on risk assessment and management of health and safety issues. Annex C includes a list of organisations that are able to provide advice on access issues.

4.7 LEAs might wish to consider the arrangements for support services to schools and the potential of schools to support each other. For example, a special school might provide support for a mainstream school proposing to include a child with a disability.

4.8 LEAs are required to resource adequately their accessibility strategies. This means recognising this as legitimate expenditure and incorporating it into current and future budgets, both recurrent and capital.

Set goals and targets

4.9 LEAs should set goals, targets for achieving goals and timescales for their strategies. Without goals and targets, it is difficult to assess improvements made, review the success of current plans and identify further improvements. Goals and targets should be specific enough to enable them to be measured. They could be expressed in terms of percentages of schools with specified levels of accessibility and against a timescale. However, it is difficult to set quantifiable targets on some aspects of accessibility, such as a change in ethos. At the same time as setting goals and targets, LEAs should be setting up monitoring arrangements and evaluation strategies (see paragraphs 4.14-4.15 below).

Consult on the accessibility strategy

4.10 LEAs should consult as widely as possible in the preparation of their accessibility strategies, but must include consultation with the following:

- All maintained schools, including nursery schools
- Trustees of schools (such as local dioceses)
- Children and Young People's Partnerships
- Early Years and Childcare Partnerships
- Health Authorities and Social Services Departments
- Relevant local voluntary organisations e.g. local disability groups
- teacher unions and other non-teaching staff unions

Adequate time must be allowed for consultees to respond.

A strategy is more effective if it has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders.

Form in which the accessibility strategy is produced

4.11 LEAs should document their accessibility strategies where they believe it is most appropriate to do so. This could be as a free standing document, or linked with an existing document such as an Education Strategic Plan or School Organisation Plan. Strategies should be published in accordance with the authority's Welsh Language Scheme.

Finalising and publicising the strategy

4.12 LEAs need to take account of consultation responses in finalising their strategies. The DDA requires LEAs to make their strategies available for inspection to interested parties at reasonable times. LEAs may want to publicise their strategies more actively to ensure that all those with an interest such as parents' groups and the voluntary sector are informed of its plans. LEAs should be ready to provide their strategies in alternative formats if requested e.g. braille, audio tape, large print.

Implementation

4.13 Once the accessibility strategy is in place, LEAs are required to implement their strategies making available adequate resources to do so. This includes reviewing and evaluating strategies.

Reviewing the strategy

4.14 Without evaluating the strategy there is no way of determining whether goals are being achieved and whether the implementation programme is producing value for the money and effort expended. Evaluation arrangements should be developed in connection with the goals, targets and time frames set in the strategy.

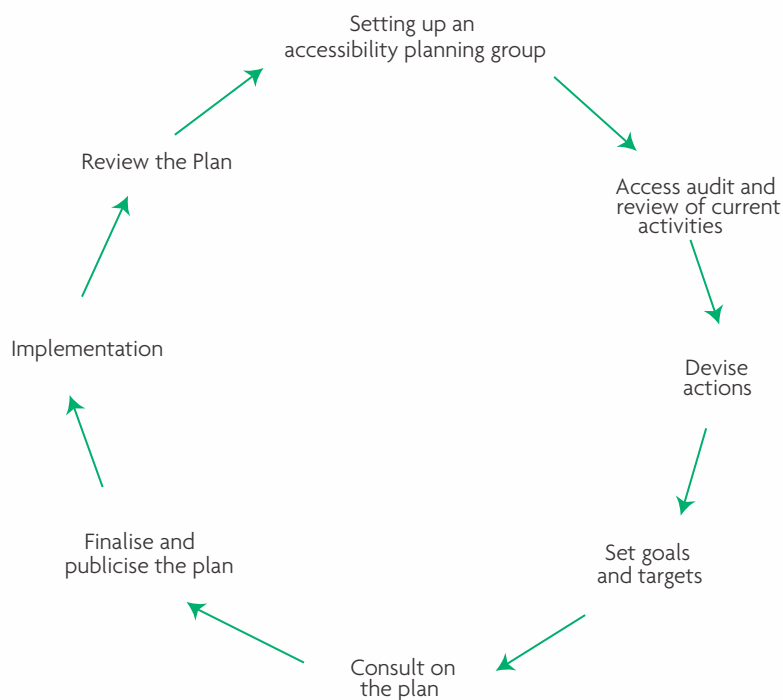
4.15 The success of an accessibility strategy should not just focus on whether goals and targets have been met. It might also be illustrated by:

- greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for them;
- improvements in the physical accessibility of school buildings;
- clear protocols and procedures for multi-agency working with health and social services in order to support pupils with medical needs;
- support schools to help them plan effectively for improved disabled access; and
- schools in the area establishing links and sharing good practice.

SECTION 5

HOW TO DEVELOP SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

5.1 The steps set out below are intended to guide schools in the development of accessibility plans which are responsive to the needs of the school and its pupils or potential pupils. Annex F provides an example of what an accessibility plan might look like.



Setting up a planning group

5.2 The school might set up a planning group to lead the process. This does not need to be a large group, but should be able to reflect all aspects of school life. The working group could include the governor with designated responsibility for SEN, a parent of a disabled pupil, a representative from a local disability organisation and the headteacher.

5.3 The planning group should make use of available expertise in developing, implementing and evaluating plans. Disabled pupils, their parents, specialist teachers, and local voluntary and disability organisations are likely to have experience in identifying barriers to access and could help the planning group identify practices and arrangements that act as a barrier to admitting, accommodating and including disabled children. LEAs are also likely to be able to provide helpful advice and information. Annex C includes a list of organisations that are able to provide advice on access issues.

Access audit and review of current activities

5.4 A school should assess current accessibility and identify barriers to access or inclusion. A school should review the ways in which its current arrangements might prevent or hinder disabled pupils from accessing education and all other aspects of school life. The review of access should cover the physical environment; the provision of auxiliary aids and services; teaching and learning practices; the curriculum; staff training; the culture and ethos of the school; and the provision of written information.

5.5 Schools should consider all relevant existing information on the accessibility of the school and future need. The LEA should have information on the physical accessibility of its schools. LEAs may also be able to provide information on forecasting future needs. Data on the current pupil population should enable the school to plan for the needs of disabled pupils lower down the school. For example, a school knowing of a disabled pupil in a reception class might plan to train particular staff to meet that child's needs later on in the school.

5.6 Annex D provides guidance on undertaking an access audit and offers checklists for identifying physical barriers and barriers to the curriculum. The Index for Inclusion provides helpful guidance on identifying barriers to access. The Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings and Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design, published by DfES, provide guidance on carrying out accessibility audits of schools and making schools accessible. Many local authorities have access officers who are able to offer advice on access issues. If a school wishes to employ an access consultant, it can obtain information from the Centre for Accessible Environments, which maintains a register of approved access consultants (see Annex C).

Devise actions to eliminate barriers

5.7 Having identified barriers to access for disabled pupils, schools need to devise actions to eliminate those barriers. Schools should list all of the necessary adaptations (including realistic cost estimates). Those might be divided into categories such as staff training; teaching and learning practices; refurbishment and maintenance (e.g. use of colour when redecorating and replacing floor coverings or furniture); minor capital expenditure; and major capital expenditure. Schools should then draw up short, medium and long term priorities and devise strategies to address these priorities with clear implementation arrangements and a timeframe for the work. Where priorities involve capital works, LEAs need to be advised of these so that they can be taken into account in the authority's accessibility strategy and its plans for capital works.

A short term strategy might include working within a local cluster of mainstream and special schools to share good practice in differentiating the curriculum. A medium term strategy might be to ensure that all staff received disability equality training within two years with an induction programme established for new staff. A longer term priority might be to plan to make the common areas of the school and selected classrooms physically accessible. The school would need to work with the LEA to secure agreement to the necessary funding.

5.8 Schools need to resource their accessibility plans adequately. This means the costs of implementing the plan are incorporated into current and future budget commitments. Maintained schools should liaise with their LEAs about resources to fund capital projects.

Set goals and targets

5.9 Goals and targets should be specific enough to enable them to be measured (e.g. all staff to receive disability awareness training within two years; one science lab, ICT room, art room and drama studio to be wheelchair

accessible within three years). They should include time frames and evaluation strategies to enable the school to judge how effective plans have been (see paragraphs 5.14 – 5.15)

Consultation on the plan

5.10 A plan is only likely to succeed if those responsible for its implementation have ownership of it. Schools should therefore consult their staff. They should also ensure that all those that have been involved in producing the plan have a final chance to comment before it is signed off. The school might wish to consult more widely with parents, pupils and other bodies. The plan must be approved by the body legally responsible for it – in most cases the governing body (see para 2.1)

Finalising and publicising the plan

5.11 Schools should take account of consultation responses in finalising their plans. Publicising the plan serves to reinforce a sense of ownership and stake in the success of the plan amongst staff, governors, pupils and parents.

5.12 Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their governors' annual report to parents. This might be a summary of the full accessibility plan, making it clear where copies of the full plan can be obtained from. Independent schools are required to make a copy of their accessibility plan available for inspection to anyone who asks to see it. It is good practice for all schools to make their plans available on request. Schools may be asked to provide their strategies in alternative formats e.g. braille, audio tape, large print.

Implementation

5.13 Once a school has produced an accessibility plan, the school has a statutory duty to implement the plan and to allocate adequate resources to it.

Review the plan

5.14 Evaluation is needed to determine whether goals are being achieved and whether the implementation programme is producing value for money. Schools are required to keep the accessibility plan under review and revise it as necessary. Evaluation arrangements should be developed in connection with goals, targets and time frames set in the plan.

5.15 In addition to meeting goals and targets, the success of an accessibility plan might be illustrated by:

- observable changes in staff confidence in teaching and supporting disabled pupils with a range of needs;
- evidence of the greater involvement of disabled pupils in the full life of the school (for example, participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school trips);
- greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for them and their participation in the life of the school;

- audits carried out on the main curriculum areas;
- progressive planned improvements to the physical environment of the school; and
- information for pupils available in a range of formats.

Ensure the future of the accessibility plan

5.16 Incorporation of accessibility planning into wider policy will ensure that commitment to the plan extends beyond the planning group and inspire confidence that the commitment is real.

5.17 In the short term, the accessibility plan may be a separate component of the school's development plan. However, over time, the plan should become an integral component of forward planning - less an independent strategy and more a thread running through all the school's plans and policies, including plans related to premises management, the curriculum, information technology, support services and staff training.

SECTION 6

RESOURCES

6.1 Capital work at maintained schools, such as rebuilding, the installation of lifts, electromagnetic doors, sound proofing, accessible toilets; and provision of more expensive specialist equipment are funded by the LEA except for voluntary aided schools where 85% of such costs can be grant funded by the National Assembly. LEAs have two main sources of funding available to them:

- their own capital resources including unhypothecated General Capital Funding made available annually by the National Assembly (the notional all Wales figure for education is currently £54.9m)
- school building improvement grant (set at £31.105m for 2004-05).

6.2 In inviting LEAs to put forward schemes for their share of schools building improvement grant and in inviting voluntary aided schools to put forward schemes for grant funding, the Welsh Assembly Government places particular emphasis on the duty to plan for and implement improved access for disabled pupils. LEAs and governing bodies are asked to have particular regard to such needs whether by incorporating accessibility features into major building or remodelling schemes or in taking forward discrete accessibility schemes for existing buildings.

6.3 Maintained schools need to look to their delegated budgets to fund the elements of their access plans, other than capital works.

6.4 Funding for aspects of SEN and disability provision is available in the annual GEST programme. This covers training of teachers, learning support assistants and other staff. LEAs determine the use of this funding though it is usually passed to schools to spend. In allocating GEST resources LEAs need to have regard to the new duties placed on their schools to implement plans for disabled access. From 2004-05 this programme will be known as the Better Schools Fund.

6.6 The Welsh Assembly Government intends to monitor capital expenditure on disabled access projects through AMPs and the use of school buildings improvement grant and voluntary aided schools grant.

INSPECTION

6.5 As part of their inspections of schools after 1 April 2004 Estyn will check LEAs accessibility strategies and schools accessibility plans in terms of their preparation, review and implementation. From that date also, LEA accessibility strategies will be considered in any Estyn inspections of LEAs covering access to education. In the case of independent schools, compliance with the planning duty will be included in standards specified for the inspection of such schools by Estyn.

REDRESS

6.7 The Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales is able to hear disability claims relating to individual pupils where the body involved is responsible for a

school in Wales. The tribunal cannot hear claims concerning schools' or LEAs' failure of an LEA to develop an accessibility strategy; or of a school to develop an accessibility plan.

6.8 The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning under powers delegated to her by the National Assembly, can ask for a copy of an LEA strategy or a school's plan. If the Minister is satisfied that an LEA, or the governing body of a maintained school or a non-maintained special school approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996, is acting or proposing to act unreasonably or has failed to carry out its duties she can issue a direction about the discharge of the duty. The Minister can act in response to a complaint or in light of information obtained directly about the LEA or school.

6.9 LEAs and schools should ensure that their complaints procedures cover respectively their accessibility strategies or accessibility plans.

6.10 LEAs and schools must bear in mind that meeting the planning duties means compliance only with part IV of the DDA. Part III of the act contains a duty to make reasonable adjustments to physical features that make it unreasonably difficult for disabled people to attend school events open to the public. County Courts will start to hear cases under the reasonable adjustment duty in Part III from October 2004. They have the power to award financial compensation against schools and LEAs.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE

Welsh Assembly Government documents can be viewed at the Publications Centre, The National Assembly at the Pierhead, the National Assembly for Wales, Pierhead Street, Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA and are generally available on the Welsh Assembly Government's training and education website www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Most unpriced DfES documents can be obtained from the DfES Publications Centre, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottinghamshire NG15 0DJ. Tel. 0845 6022260; fax 0845 6033360; minicom; 0845 60555650; e-mail dfes@prolog.uk.com

Priced documents can usually be obtained from The Stationery Office at: PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel 0870 600 5522; fax 0870 600 5533; website www.thestationeryoffice.com

Publications are listed in alphabetical order of the publisher/ lead organisation:

ACCAC: Equal Opportunities & Diversity in the School Curriculum in Wales.

First published 2001. Available from: ACCAC Publications, PO Box 2129, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 0RD; Tel 07071 223647 (English Medium) or 07071 223646 (Welsh Medium); website www.accac.org.uk

ACCAC: The National Curriculum for Wales. Availability details as above.

ACCAC: A Focus on Achievement – Guidance on including Pupils with Additional Needs in Whole School Target Setting. Availability details as above.

ACCAC: A Structure for Success – Guidance on the National Curriculum and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Availability details as above.

ACCAC: Enabling Access – Meeting the Curriculum Needs of Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Availability details as above.

British Standards [BS8300]: 2001. Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice. Available from British Standards. £148 for non-members. Information from: www.bsi-global.com

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education: Index for Inclusion 2000, £24.95. Can be obtained from CSIE. Tel 0117 344 4007; fax; 0117 344 4005; website www.inclusion.org.uk

DfEE: Designing for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Special School. Building Bulletin 77. Published 1992. Available from The Stationery Office.

DfEE: Guidelines for Environmental Design in Schools. Building Bulletin 87.

Published 1997. Available from The Stationery Office.

DfEE: Lighting Design for Schools. Building Bulletin 90. Published 1999.

Available from The Stationery Office.

DfEE: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings: Management and Design Guide. Building Bulletin 91, published 1999, £14.95 available from The

Stationery Office. Website www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolbuildings

DfEE: Inclusive School Design Building Bulletin 94 published in 2001, £19.95, available from The Stationery Office; Website www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolbuildings

DfEE: DDA 1995 - Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability. ISBN 0-11-270955-9 Available from The Stationery Office.

Disability Equality in Education: Training for Inclusion & Disability Equality Course Book. This and other resources for inclusion and disability equality are available from DEE, tel 020 7359 2855; e-mail info@diseed.org.uk; website www.diseed.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission: DDA part 4 - Code of Practice for Schools

issued to all schools & local education authorities 2002. Further details from www.drc-gb.org Tel 08457 622 633

Disability Rights Commission: Code of Practice on Rights of Access:

Availability as above.

Disability Rights Task Force: Report From Exclusion To Inclusion published in 1999. Unpriced. Available from DfES publication centre and www.disability.gov.uk

Educational Service for Physical Disability (ESPD): Supporting Children with Epilepsy Available from: ESPD, Learning Services, Essex House, Kingston upon Hull, HU1 1YD. Tel: 01482 613423

Estyn: The Inspection Handbook. Available from: Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW. Tel. 029 20446446. Enquiries@estyn.gsi.gov.uk www.estyn.gov.uk

Estyn: The Framework for the Inspection of Schools. Available from: Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW. Tel. 029 20446446. Enquiries@estyn.gsi.gov.uk www.estyn.gov.uk

Estyn: Aiming for Excellence in Provision for SEN (2001). Available from: Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW. Tel. 029 20446446. Enquiries@estyn.gsi.gov.uk www.estyn.gov.uk

Estyn: Standards and Quality in Special Schools. Available from: Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW. Tel. 029 20446446. Enquiries@estyn.gsi.gov.uk www.estyn.gov.uk

JMU Access Partnership: Sign Design Guide (2000); Available from RNIB Customer Services: Tel: 020 7391 2002; Website: www.jmuaccess.org.uk/publications.asp

JMU Access Partnership/ICI Paints/Reading University: Colour and Tonal Contrast 2001 CD Rom: Available from Dulux Technical Group; Tel: 0870 242 1100; Website: www.duluxtrade.co.uk

RNID: Effective inclusion of deaf pupils into mainstream schools. Education guidelines project. 2001. Information available from Tel: 0808 808 9000; Website: www.rnid.org.uk

RNID: Promoting access to the curriculum for deaf pupils. Education guidelines project. 2001. Information available from Tel: 0808 808 0123; Website: www.rnid.org.uk

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. £7.50 and **Explanatory Notes on the Act.** £6.00. Available from The Stationery Office; Website: www.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm

National Assembly for Wales Circular 3/99 (Sept '99 – revised 2001) – Pupil Support & Social Inclusion. Available from: Pupil Support Division 2, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ. Tel: 029 20823835 Website: www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Welsh Office Circular 20/97 – What the Disability Discrimination Act means for Schools and LEAs. Available from: Schools Management Division 1b, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ. Tel: 029 20826068 Website: www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Welsh Office Circular 34/97 (December 97) – Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs. Available from: Schools Management Division 1a, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ. Tel: 029 20826068 Website: www.learning.wales.gov.uk

National Assembly for Wales Circular 03/02 (January 02) – Constructional Standards for School Buildings in Wales. Available from: Schools Management Division 1a, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ. Tel: 029 20826068 Website: www.learning.wales.gov.uk

National Assembly for Wales: Special Educational Needs – Code of Practice for Wales. (January 2002). Available from: Pupil Support Division 1, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ. Tel: 029 20826081 Website: www.learning.wales.gov.uk

Useful websites:

BECTA: British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
www.becta.org.uk

Becta is the Government's lead agency on the use of ICT in education, Becta plays a crucial role in helping to maximise the benefits to all teachers and learners that using ICT can bring. Its main aim is to bridge educational and technological developments and communities. Becta also seeks to:

- Evaluate information and communications technology (ICT) practice

- Support existing applications of ICT
- Investigate emerging technologies and associated pedagogy.

Inclusion website: <http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk/>

This website provides a free catalogue of resources for teaching professionals, learners, parents and carers. Resources include publications, software, hardware, guidance and links to other organisations to aid independent living and learning.

DRC: The Disability Rights Commission www.drc-gb.org

The DRC is an independent commission, set up to help secure civil rights for disabled people. The DRC operates to eliminate discrimination against disabled people; to promote equal opportunities for disabled people; to encourage good practice in treatment of disabled people; and to advise the Government on the working of disability legislation.

ACCAC: The Qualifications, Curriculum & Assessment Authority for Wales.
www.accac.org.uk

QCA: the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for England. www.nc.uk.net

Where to go for further help and information

This list is not exhaustive

Local Services:

- Many local authorities have access officers who are able to offer advice on access issues.
- LEA curriculum support and advisory services can be a resource for advice on specific subject-related teaching techniques and strategies and curriculum materials. Support services can provide advice to teachers (e.g. on teaching techniques and strategies, classroom organisation and management; curriculum materials and curriculum development).
- LEA SEN support services include specialist teachers of pupils with hearing, visual, and speech and language impairments, teachers providing more general learning and behaviour support services, counsellors, educational psychologists, and advisers or teachers with knowledge of information technology for children with special educational needs. They will be able to provide specialist advice on the full range of access issues relating to particular kinds of disabilities.
- Health professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, as well as doctors and the school nurse, also provide advice and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities and may be able to advise on a range of access issues.
- Access Auditors/Consultants on the National Register of Access Consultants (www.nrac.org.uk) and the Access Association

Voluntary Organisations

Action for Sick Children

Provides information to help parents cope with, and prepare for different aspects of children's healthcare. Their work also aims to improve services and attitudes to the way sick children are treated when they are unwell. Tel: 020 7843 6444
www.actionforsickchildren.org

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

Ace is an independent advice centre for parents, offering information about state education in England and Wales for 5-16 year olds. They can offer advice on Special Educational Needs. Tel: 020 7354 8318 www.ace-ed.org.uk

AFASIC

Afasic is the UK charity representing children and young adults with communication impairments, working for their inclusion in society and supporting their parents and carers. Tel: 020 7480 9410 www.afasic.org.uk

Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

ASBAH provides advice and practical support to those with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, their families and carers. Tel: 01733 555988 www.asbah.org

Autism Cymru

Autism Cymru promotes the establishment of high quality services to people with autistic spectrum disorders in Wales. Tel: 01970 639454 www.autismcymru.co.uk

Bobath

The Bobath organisation specialises in the treatment of cerebral palsy and acquired neurological conditions in children & adults. Tel: 029 20 522 600 www.bobath.org.u

British Deaf Association

Provides up to date information, counselling, a help-line, community advocacy and youth services. Tel: 029 2030 2216 www.britishdeafassociation.org.uk

British Dyslexia Association

Offers advice, information and help to families, professionals and dyslexic individuals. We are working to raise awareness and understanding of dyslexia, and to effect change. Tel: 0118 966 2677 www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

British Institute for Learning Disabilities

BILD offers a range of services to support learning by professionals, care staff, service users and their families. Tel: 01562 723010 www.bild.org.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments

See para 3.22 of the Guidance. Tel: 020 7357 8182; Fax: 020 735 8183; e-mail: info@cae.org.uk; website: www.cae.org.uk

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE)

Gives information and advice about inclusive education and related issues. Tel: 0117 923 8450/ 0117 344 4007. www.inclusion.org.uk

Children in Wales

Aim to promote the interests of and take action to identify and meet the needs of children, young people and their families in Wales. Tel: 029 2034 2434 www.childreninwales.org.uk

Contact a Family Wales

Can provide information on over 1,000 rare syndromes and rare disorders and can put families in touch with each other. Tel: 029 2044 9569 www.cafamily.org.uk/wales

Cystic Fibrosis Trust

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust funds medical and scientific research aimed towards understanding, treating and curing Cystic Fibrosis. It also aims to ensure that people with CF receive the best possible care and support in all aspects of their lives. Tel: 020 8464 7211 www.cftrust.org.uk

Deafsign

Aims to provide deaf and hearing people with the means to achieve their potential through information services, training programmes, and one-to-one support. Tel: 01642 580505 www.deafsign.com

Diabetes UK Cymru

Provides a comprehensive bilingual service for those with diabetes, healthcare professionals and local voluntary groups. Tel: 029 2066 8276 www.diabetes.org.uk/cymru

Disability Advisory and Resource Team

Aims to help disabled people to use community education. Offers advice, practical help and a range of classes all over Cardiff. Tel: 02920 644696

Disability Rights Commission

The DRC works to eliminate discrimination against disabled people, promote equal opportunities for disabled people, encourages good practice in the treatment of disabled people; and advises the Government on the working of disability legislation. Tel: 08457 622 633 www.drc-gb.org

Disabled Living Foundation

Helps provide the best possible choice for people who use equipment to live a more independent life. Tel: 020 7289 6111 www.dlf.org.uk

Disability Wales

The national association of disability groups in Wales working to promote the rights, inclusion, equality, and support of all disabled people in Wales. Tel: 029 2088 7325 www.dwac.demon.co.uk

Down's Syndrome Association

The Down's Syndrome Association exists to support people with Down's syndrome, their family and carers as well as providing information for those with a professional interest. Tel: 029 2052 2511 www.dsa-uk.com

Dyspraxia Foundation

Aims to support individuals and families affected by dyspraxia, to promote better diagnostic and treatment facilities for those who have dyspraxia, to help professionals in health and education to assist those with Dyspraxia and promote awareness and understanding of dyspraxia. Tel: 01462 454 986 www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

Discovery Centre

The Trust aims to increase the support provided to both the public and professionals working with individuals with Dyspraxia and related conditions. Tel: 029 2062 8222 www.discovery.co.uk

Epilepsy Action

Epilepsy Action is the working name for British Epilepsy Association. Tel: 0808 800 5050 www.epilepsy.org.uk

Epilepsy Wales

To help people in Wales who have epilepsy and their families and carers. Tel: 01745 584444 www.epilepsy-wales.co.uk

Family Fund Trust

Our purpose is to ease the stress on families in the UK who care for severely disabled children under 16, by providing grants and information related to the care of the child. Tel: 01904 621115 www.familyfundtrust.org.uk

Home Education Advisory Service

HEAS offers information for home educators including advice about educational materials, resources, GCSE examinations, special educational needs, information technology, legal matters and curriculum design. HEAS produces a range of leaflets and the Home Education Handbook. Tel: 01707 371854 www.heas.org.uk

Hyperactive Children's Support Group

Britain's leading proponents of a dietary approach to the problem of hyperactivity in children helping families to cope with their hyperactivity children. Tel: 01243 551313 www.hacsg.org.uk

ICAN (National Educational Charity for Children with Speech and Language Difficulties)

ICAN helps children in their own special schools, nurseries and centres within local schools and by providing training and information for parents, teachers and therapists. Tel: 0870 010 4066 www.ican.org.uk

Independent Panel for Special Education Advice (IPSEA)

IPSEA can provide independent advice on appealing to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal, including representation when needed; Tel: 01394 380 518 Help Line: 0800 018 4016 www.ipsea.org.uk

Independent Special Education Advice (ISEA)

Tel: 0131 665 7080 Help Line: 0131 454 0096

MENCAP Cymru

MENCAP offers information, advice and support to people with a learning disability and their families and carers. Tel: 029 2074 7588 www.mencap.org.uk

MIND Cymru (National Association for Mental Health)

Offers advice and information to those who suffer mental distress and their families/carers. Tel: 029 2039 5123 www.mind.org.uk/mindcymru

Motability

Motability helps disabled people and their families to become more mobile. Tel: 01279 635666 www.motability.co.uk

National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux

Provides independent, confidential, impartial and free advice. Tel: 020 7833 2181 www.nacab.org.uk

National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE)

NACE offers education professionals support, in improving classroom practice for able, gifted and talented pupils, with the intention that all pupils will benefit. Tel: 02865 861 879 www.nace.co.uk

National Association for the Education of Sick Children (NAESC)

The NAESC work exclusively to improve educational opportunity across the UK for all children whose education is disrupted by illness. Tel: 013 3263 8586 www.sickchildren.org.uk

National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN)

NASEN promotes the interests of those with exceptional learning needs and/or disabilities, provides a forum for those actively involved with exceptional learning needs and/or disabilities and contributes to the formulation and development of policy in the area. Tel: 01827 311500 www.nasen.org.uk

National Autistic Society (Wales)

NAS provides education, treatment, welfare and care to people with autism and related conditions. Tel: 01792 815915 www.nas.org.uk

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

The NDCS supports deaf children, young deaf people and their families in overcoming the challenges of childhood deafness. We exist to give them the best possible start, providing the knowledge, support and opportunities to empower all deaf children. Tel: 02920 373474 www.ndcs.org.uk

National Register of Access Consultants

Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London, SE1 2NY. Tel: 020 7234 0434
Minicom: 020 7357 8182 Fax: 020 7357 8183. www.nrac.org.uk

Parents for Inclusion

Parent's help parents so that disabled children can learn, make friends and have a voice in ordinary school. Tel: 020 7735 7735. Getting A Life Help Line: 020 7582 5008. www.parentsforinclusion.org

PHAB Wales

Helps to promote and encourage disabled and non disabled people to come together on equal terms, to achieve complete inclusion within the wider community. Tel: 029 2075 0700 www.phab.org.uk

Present (formerly known as the National Association for the Education of Sick Children)

18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London, E2 9PF. Tel: 020 8980 8523
Website: <http://www.sickchildren.org.uk>

Pre-School Learning Alliance

Is dedicated to supporting the work of community pre-schools, through training courses, quality assurance systems, local visiting by skilled advisers, a range of helpful publications and other merchandise, advice and helplines. Tel: 020 7833 0991 www.pre-school.org.uk

RNIB Cymru

Provides services as effectively as possible to blind and partially sighted people across Wales Tel: 029 2033 30334 www.rnib.org.uk/services/cymru

SCOPE Cwmpas Cymru

Scope's education services provide training and support for children and adults with cerebral palsy, as well as for parents and helpers. Tel: 029 2046 1703 www.scope.org.u

SCOVO Life Options Project

SCOVO is an all-Wales umbrella organisation, helps voluntary groups and organisations in Wales, promoting the right of people with learning disabilities to have valued lives. Tel: 01554 746782 www.scovo.demon.co.uk

SENSE Cymru

Offers advice, groups and services to help sensory impaired people of all ages. Tel: 029 2045 7641 www.senco.org.uk

SNAP Cymru

SNAP Cymru provides Independent Parental Support Services in Wales providing information and support to families of children and young people who have or may have special educational needs. Tel: 029 2038 8776 www.snapcymru.org

Tuberous Sclerosis Association of GB

Supporting sufferers, promoting awareness, and seeking the causes and best possible management of Tuberous Sclerosis. Tel: 01527 871898 www.tuberous-sclerosis.org

ACCESS AUDIT FOR SCHOOLS

Identifying Barriers to Access: A Checklist

This checklist comprises three sections. In the first, you are asked to consider whether the school environment in which you work is designed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN and/or disability. The second and third sections should be used to identify how your school delivers its curriculum and provides written materials in alternative formats and to provide a clearer picture of the barriers to access that exist in the school culture. This list is not exhaustive.

Section 1

Question	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas: including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities; classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms allow access for all pupils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disability; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could any of the décor be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Could any signage be considered confusing or inadequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do areas of storage prevent disabled pupils from accessing aids and equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are steps made to prevent the exclusion of people with disabilities that affect their hearing and vision from arranged events? E.g. considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment and presentation of material.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you make the best use of teaching assistants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there a variety of activities, including discussion, oral presentation, writing, drawing, problem solving, use of library, audio-visual materials, practical tasks and information technology?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils for example using lip reading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are school trips, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff, governors and pupils receive training and education in disability equality issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is everyone made to feel welcome?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there high expectations of all pupils?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff, governors and pupils share a philosophy of inclusion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pupils equally valued?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3

Do you provide information in large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities which affect their vision e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have the facilities to produce written information in a variety of font sizes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you make use of RNIB guidelines on producing written information in accessible formats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the 'responsible body' aware of their duties and responsibilities under DDA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do school general plans take account of the duty to make reasonable adjustments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the school have an adequate internal complaints procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Creating an Access Plan

ANNEX D

This is an example of a plan that a schools' planning group might produce after reviewing existing plans (in particular refurbishment, admissions arrangements and SEN policy), looking at options for improving accessibility within existing arrangements and carrying out an audit of the school site for accessibility. The planning group should continue to meet regularly to monitor the implementation of the plan and to keep under review the access needs of the school.

	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Goals Achieved
Short Term	Availability of written material in alternative formats.	The school makes itself aware of the services available through its LEA for converting written information into alternative	If needed the school can provide written information in alternative formats.	Term 3 2003/4	Delivery of information to disabled pupils improved.
Medium Term	Incorporation of appropriate colour schemes when refurbishing to benefit pupils with visual impairments and install window blinds. Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum.	Seek advice from LEA sensory support service and RNIB on appropriate colour schemes and blinds. After an audit the school decides teachers would benefit from training on differentiating the curriculum.	Several classrooms are made more accessible to visually impaired children. Teachers are able to more fully meet the requirements of disabled children's needs with regards to accessing the curriculum.	Term 1 2004/5 Term 2 2004/5	Physically accessibility of school increased. Increase in access to the National Curriculum.
Long Term	School plans to improve access to designated areas over successive financial years. The school decides which of its entrances and exits have priority, and plans to fit ramps and handrails to all of these.	Review availability of resources in delegated budget and as necessary discuss with LEA funding under schools capital programme.	Over three-year period the school's entry areas, the science block and library areas will be fully accessible.	Term 3 2005/6	Physical accessibility of school increased.