



Children & Young People's Services Accessibility Strategy 2015 – 2018

1. Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that Halton Borough Council supports schools in meeting the needs of disabled pupils and raising their achievement and attainment. It seeks to do so by ensuring that accessibility of the school's curriculum, the physical environment and information for disabled pupils is central to the delivery of services and by supporting schools with their accessibility plans.

2. Vision

For our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) we want them to access to all the education, employment, training and social opportunities that they need to enhance their life chances, prepare them for adulthood and enable them to contribute to their community.

We believe that parents, carers, schools, the local authority and partners should work together to ensure opportunities for every child and young person to strive for the highest aspirations, and we must do all we can to ensure that any barriers (including attitudes, behaviour traits and physical barriers) to learning and participation are removed.

This vision is reflected in the aspirations outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014.

3. Definition

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. A physical or mental impairment includes learning difficulties, mental health conditions, medical conditions and hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism and speech, language and communication impairments (Equality Act 2010).

4. Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and simplifies the different equality laws, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001).

The new Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty that applies to public bodies, including schools extending to all protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

5. Remit and Scope of the Accessibility Strategy

This Strategy focusses on the parts of the Equality Act 2010 relating to disabled children and young people and their access to schools.

This Strategy outlines the LA's duty under equality legislation to prepare an accessibility strategy, describing how the LA will work with schools to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums;
- Improve the physical environment of schools; and
- Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils.

6. Halton Context

Halton Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2014-17 is the main plan for all partners within Halton Children's Trust and the services they provide for children and young people in Halton. This document describes what we will do together in Halton to ensure that regardless of their circumstances, every child and young person has access to the best services. One of our three priorities is around focusing services towards the needs of our most vulnerable children, young people and families to 'close the gap' by improving health, education, social and cultural outcomes.

Halton is making good progress in establishing an ethos of inclusive learning for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We want children and young people to live the lives that they want and there are many different types of support and provision in Halton that can make this happen.

7. Access to Curriculum

From 1st September 2014, governing bodies have a statutory duty to ensure schools make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. A medical conditions policy will be required, ensuring pupils with medical conditions have full access to education, including physical education and school trips.

In Halton there is a range of provision that supports children and young people to access the curriculum in its widest sense, including after school or extended school activities, trips and educational visits.

Schools are responsible for providing a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum for all pupils. The local authority supports schools to respond to individual needs of pupils and training needs of staff with a range of specialist, commissioned and traded services. These include:

Outreach

a) Inclusion for Children with Complex, Physical and Medical Needs

This service can establish the abilities and needs of a child, work alongside staff to provide support, liaise with other agencies involved in the care and support, ensuring

a co-ordinated approach. It can offer support around transition time, manual handling of children, deliver training and support to staff, provide support with Risk Assessments and Health Care Plans.

b) Resource Bases

The Local Authority commissions a range of [specialist provision in Halton](#) to meet the needs of children and young people.

c) Special Schools

There is a range of [Special Schools/Academies](#) in Halton to support those children and young people who have specialised needs.

d) Sensory Support Service

A team of specialist teachers and support staff support children and young people who are visually or hearing impaired.

e) Educational Psychology Service

[The service](#) works with teachers, school staff, professionals and parents through consultation, applying psychology to create positive change. They offer advice on intervention strategies, SEND Support Plans and behaviour management.

f) Specialist Teachers

Help schools to support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, offering a range of services to make sure that pupils can access the curriculum.

g) Attendance and Behaviour Team

This service works with schools, pupils and families to support regular school attendance. They support schools where pupils are at risk of disengagement or exclusion or those that are permanently excluded.

h) Speech and Language Service

Commissioned provision to deliver support and clinical interventions at universal and targeted levels of need across all age groups and work with the children's workforce and families, to support the language and literacy development of children and young people. Through the delivery of training, consultation, advice and support in settings, schools and Resource Bases, the provision focuses upon maximising children and young people's educational attainment and achievement, inclusion and social and emotional development.

i) School Improvement Team

Work in partnership with schools and other services to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people. The service monitors, supports and challenges schools. A key focus for the service is to narrow the gap in outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people.

Support from Health Professionals

There are a wide range of services that can support children, young people, their families, schools and other partners to play a full and active part in the communities in which they live. In particular, health professionals can also support schools to ensure the inclusion of disabled pupils through the provision of services such as:

a) School Nursing Service

[Community based teams](#) deliver the Healthy Child Programme for school-aged children and young people 5-19 years of age. The service will work with children, young people, their families, schools and other partners to understand health needs, to plan appropriate responses and to promote health and wellbeing with a focus on early help and support.

b) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

[Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services](#) (CAMHS) provide a range of interventions and programmes to encourage prevention, early support and detection, effective treatment and recovery of mental health problems for young people aged 0-19 years.

c) The Child Development Team

The [Child Development Team](#) is a community based team of experienced health professionals with the knowledge and skills to provide highly specialist assessment, advice, support and treatment for pre-school children with developmental difficulties and support for their families, working in partnership with other agencies.

d) Occupational Therapists

[Children's Occupational Therapy Service](#) provide support to children and families whose health prevents them from doing the activities that matter to them. They advise children, families and schools about using activity based therapies to help raise an individual's self-esteem and encourage them to be as independent as possible. They can also advise on any appropriate specialist equipment or adaptations to the school environment if required.

e) Physiotherapists

[Physiotherapists](#) advise children, families and schools about an individual's mobility and physical development. This might include co-ordination and ability to sit, stand and walk. They can advise a school on how best to help the child physically, how to keep the child as mobile as possible and on any appropriate specialist equipment or adaptations to the environment.

f) Children's Community Nursing Team

The [Children's Community Nursing Team](#) provide support to children and young people with complex health needs requiring follow-up care or treatment in the

community delivered by a registered children's nurse. The team can deliver training and advice to families, schools and other settings to enable a child/young person to access their community.

g) Health Improvement Team

The [Halton Health Improvement Team \(HIT\)](#) provide a range of free courses and classes across Widnes and Runcorn to help children, families, schools and other partners to get fit and stay healthy.

8. Access to the Environment

Improving the physical environment includes improving access to the school. All new buildings are designed and built to comply with the current building regulations so that they are physically accessible for all pupils. However, for the majority of schools the focus is to improve existing buildings. Improved access to the physical environment can be achieved through reasonable adjustments and schools do need to consider potential reasonable adjustments which may be needed for disabled pupils generally. To support schools, maintained by the LA, bids for additional funding are encouraged which improve access to the school, mobility around the school or access to the curriculum. All funds requested must be matched by a financial contribution by the school.

Over recent years there has been significant capital investment in developing dedicated provision to support the needs of pupils with high functioning autism, Asperger's and social communication needs, investment in the provision of a new sixth form and the creation of independent living facilities as well as rebuilding a fully accessible all through school and large high school.

To further promote access across the Borough, Disabled Go has been commissioned by the Council to review 700 venues including schools around accessibility and pan-disability, which is due to be launched May 2016.

9. Access to Information

[Halton Local Offer](#) is a website providing information about services available and to ensure this information is accessible, it is available online using a mobile phone, desktop PC or tablet. It is also available at the local library, Children's Centres, Schools and Colleges.

- Supported access is available via the Halton SEND Partnership Information, Advice and Support Service - Telephone: 0151 511 7733
- Updates in the quarterly Working Together Newsletter providing information on SEND issues.

The developing and widening use of ICT is significantly transforming the lives of everybody, but especially those children and young people who are unable to communicate using traditional methods.

Schools are encouraged to provide information in a range of different formats.

[Halton SEND Partnership](#) Information, Advice and Guidance is a bespoke service designed for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities. This service includes information for families in different formats, including newsletters and leaflets that can be accessed by telephone, e-mail, website or Facebook.

In addition, Halton can provide a range of teaching materials to support those young people with a visual impairment, through the Sensory Service. This service commissions the provision of information in braille, where required.

The Local Authority commissions English as an Additional Language, providing support, training and resources to schools within the Borough.

As we continue to implement the reform agenda, it places children and families at the heart of process and planning, we will continue to support our schools to work together and with parent carers to ensure our services are designed to maximise inclusion.

10. Evaluation and Review

Halton Borough Council along with its partners will implement this Strategy to ensure that disabled children are fully included, both in schools and in the wider community.

This Strategy will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis by the SEND Strategic Group.