



Halton Education Accessibility Strategy 2023-25

November 2023

Halton Borough Council

The requirements for Local Authorities to put in place a written Accessibility Strategy are specified in Schedule 10 (Accessibility for Disabled Pupils) of the 2010 Equality Act.

Draft Created By: Jill Farrell [Operational Director for Education. Inclusion and Provision]

Names of Co-producers for final document:

- Louise Corlett/Ami McNamee/Tracy Ryan/ Charlotte Finch - Education
- Kat Gater – Designated Clinical Officer, Health
- Natasha Hilderley Interim Operational Director for Children Social Children Social Care
- Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum

Introduction and background

The Equality Act 2010 (hereafter referred to as the Act) brought together a range of equality duties and requirements within one piece of legislation. The Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and academies (including Free Schools) and which extends to all protected characteristics:

- race
- age
- disability
- marriage /civil partnership
- sex
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- pregnancy and maternity
- gender reassignment
- marriage /civil partnership

This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. The public sector equality duty is a duty on public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. This can be viewed on the Government website: Equality Act 2010 ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk))

The duty has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Disability definition

The Equality Act is a law which protects individuals from discrimination. It means that discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as disability, is now against the law in almost all cases.

Disability is defined in the Equality Act of 2010 as "where a person has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities". This means that nationally, about 9% of children and young people and up to 22% of adults reported they had a disability (figures from The Family Resources Survey for the financial year 2020 to 2021; published in March 2022).

It is acknowledged that schools and settings do not necessarily have complete information about disabilities as this is not always disclosed by parents/ carers and there is no consistent national way of collecting such information.

The SEND Code of Practice 2014 states:

'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.'

'Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010, that is '...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing and long-term health conditions such as:

- asthma
- diabetes
- epilepsy
- cancer

Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Terminology

We recognise the importance of language. We use 'Additional Needs and Disabilities', rather than "Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)", wherever possible, however, we will sometimes need to continue to use the term 'SEND' or 'SEN', while this is the term used in national legislation or in naming localised services linked to such legislation.

Halton's vision

Our aspiration is to enable Halton children and young people aged 0-25 with additional needs and/or disabilities to lead the best possible life. Further details are available in the

- [Halton SEND Strategy 2021-2025](#)
- Information relating to the Halton SEND Partnership can be found on the [Useful Information and Documents page](#)
- [Halton Local Offer](#)

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. We must all work towards removing any barriers that may exist to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude child and young people with Additional Needs and Disabilities.

Education Accessibility

This strategy sets out the Council's responsibilities for ensuring education is accessible for pupils with additional needs and disabilities in the schools for which it is responsible (publicly funded schools), specifically the following aims:

- 1) Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculum by an increased focus on relevance, modes of presentation and pupil involvement.
- 2) Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.
- 3) Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible by an increased focus on relevance, modes of presentation and pupil involvement.

The Strategy applies to:

- the Council's maintained schools, nurseries, and early years settings as well as academies. It applies to children and young people with pupils with additional needs and disabilities who are currently in schools, settings and educational provisions;
- Children who are in the school system but at an earlier key stage e.g. early years settings;
- Children who are not yet in the school system but are known to the Council or other agencies.

The strategy is for schools, governors, parents/carers, children and young people, professionals, other educational settings, and members of the local community. It should provide guidance and be a reference point from which to inform and develop individual Education Health and Care plans (EHCPs) and SEN Support Arrangements (SSA) that are co-produced with pupils and their parents/ carers and educational professionals.

AIM 1: Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculum by an increased focus on relevance, modes of presentation and pupil involvement.

How this will be achieved:

- Schools will ensure access to the curriculum and provide equal opportunities to children and young people with Additional Needs and Disabilities. Schools need to consider how to improve the accessibility of the curriculum, covering teaching and learning, trips and visits and after school activities.
- Schools will provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and play a key role in planning increase access to the curriculum for all pupils. Therefore, schools are required to have an 'Accessibility Plan' that demonstrates what actions the school is taking to increase access to the curriculum, particularly those with Additional Needs and Disabilities.
- All schools must "use their best endeavours" to provide "high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised" and which should "meet the individual

needs of the majority of children and young people” (SEN Code of Practice 1.24).

- Halton Children’s, Health and Education Services advise educational settings about suitable and reasonable adaptations to the inside and outside environment to help include pupils with SEND including those with sensory impairments or who are neurodivergent.
- Schools are required to provide auxiliary aids for disabled pupils subject to the Reasonable Adjustment Duty. Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Halton’s SEN Service, Physical and Sensory Support Service and Teachers of the Deaf and Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment support schools with environmental audits and provide advice, strategies, and equipment to support and include d/Deaf and vision impaired pupils. The Specialist Advisor for Complex Needs, rehabilitation support from a commissioned charity and the OT service provide support around manual handling to safely support children and young people with physical and medical needs. The OT service advises educational settings on any specialist equipment they need to purchase/secure to support access to learning, provide information advice and support to schools and communication for children and students. The aim is to ensure that children and students can access their learning environment and get the most out of their education.
- The LA provides support for schools and families and work to maintain the attendance and engagement of children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) or are Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (GRT) through Halton’s Education Welfare Service.
- The SEN Service provides support at all levels of the Graduated Response. They can work with any school to support the inclusion and achievement of children with additional and special educational needs.

AIM 2: Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.

How this will be achieved:

- Schools will make reasonable adjustments as appropriate to ensure equity of access to the learning environment. [Further information for schools](#) is available on the Halton Local Offer including information on [equipment](#).
- Halton Education Services advise educational settings about suitable and reasonable adaptations to the inside and outside environment to help include pupils with SEND including those with sensory impairments or who are neurodivergent.
- There is need for significant investment in special school places in Halton to enable children and young people to remain educated locally for their families, with an additional 97 places planned locally (by 2024) in specialist provision. Strong partnerships with local special schools and robust forecasting of need are helping us to understand what the profile of need will look like Borough-wide over the coming years.
- Our SEND Capital Building programme is evidence based and has resulted in more planned places for autistic and neurodiverse children and young people in Halton to allow them to stay closer to home and access education in their

own communities. Leaders recognise the need for additional educational places for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

- Every year we publish details of **school place planning and provision** and continually consult on any proposals to expand schools. We aim to provide increasing capacity for education close to home to support all children and young people to achieve their potential

AIM 3: Improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils, which is readily accessible by an increased focus on relevance, modes of presentation and pupil involvement.

How this will be achieved:

- Information, advice and guidance is provided through the Halton Local Offer, see links below. These provide detailed information, advice and links to resources to support schools in utilising or accessing evidence-based interventions from the earliest stage - [Halton Local Offer Education Menu page](#).
- A comprehensive list of provision that should be ordinarily available for all children and young people of statutory school age is published on the Education section of the Halton Local Offer –
 - [Primary Schools and Section 41 List](#)
 - [Secondary Schools, Special Schools, Post 16 Options and Specialist Provision](#)
- **Duties on Schools:** The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to develop and publish an Accessibility Plan that outlines how they will improve the access to education for disabled pupils over time. The school's Accessibility Plan should be published on the school website, and hard copies provided upon request. There should be a link between the school's Special Educational Needs information and the Accessibility Plan. Details can be found on the above links Local Offer links which includes the links to all school websites and the SEND Information Reports for families.
- In addition to the School SEND Information Reports via above links, Childcare-PVI SEND Information Reports can be found on the are available on the [Early Years and Childcare](#) page. All schools/settings undertake an annual review of these which are published for families to access information about what they provide for children and young with SEND/disabilities.
- The Council's Health Improvement Team support schools, children and young people through the Halton Healthy Schools programme based on the Thrive principles to support emotional and mental health and wellbeing
 - [Health Schools Primary](#)
 - [Health Schools Secondary](#)
- We lead on statutory school improvement for maintained settings, including school governance, sharing information, system leadership thus enabling schools to deliver high quality teaching and learning to all children including those with additional needs.
- We work with [Halton SEND Parent Carer Forum](#) which brings together families within Halton to support children with additional needs and disabilities, to ensure consistency of approach and a strong voice for those concerned.

Local Context of SEND within Halton schools

There were 19094 pupils recorded on the annual pupil census at Halton schools in January 2023, including 42 pupils in independent schools in Halton. Of these children: 53.5% of children are educated in primary schools, 42.8% in secondary schools, 2.2% in special schools, 1.1% in nursery schools, 0.2% in Pupil referral Units (PRUs) and 0.2% in independent schools.

4.9% of these children have an Education, Health & Care Plan (compared with 4.3% nationally) and 14.9% of children were identified as SEN Support (compared with 13% nationally).

940 children had EHC Plans. For these children with EHC Plans, 29.9% are within state-funded primary schools, 19.9% are within state-funded secondary schools and 44.9% are within state-funded special schools in Halton, with 4.5% being in independent schools in Halton, 0.5% being within state-funded PRUs and 0.3% in state-funded nursery schools.

2838 children were identified as being SEN support in January 2023. In state-funded primary schools, 17.4% of pupils have SEN support, for Halton's academy primary settings this is 18.3%. In state-funded secondary schools, 3.1% of pupils have SEN Support, for Halton's secondary academies this is 13.7%.

In addition to mainstream schools, Halton has a range of more specialist provisions that cater for students with more complex needs, these include:

- specialist centres/bases at mainstream primary settings.
- Specialist centres/bases at secondary settings
- maintained special schools
- alternative learning provision/a pupil referral unit (PRU)

Governance

This Strategy will be regularly reviewed by the contributors and revised/updated and published on the Education section of the Halton Local Offer.

The strategy will be led by Quality of Services and Provision Subgroup on behalf of the SEND Strategic Partnership.

Key Legislation

Equality Act 2010 [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/1) [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010) is a statute which protects individuals from discrimination. It also places a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. It means that discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of certain personal characteristics, such as disability, is now against the law in almost all cases.

Children and Families Act 2014 [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/1) [Young person's guide to the Children and Families Act 2014 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/young-persons-guide-to-the-children-and-families-act-2014) applies to all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

aged 0-25, as long as they are in or wish to remain in education or training (or are seeking a placement).

The SEND Code of Practice (CoP) [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/616722/SEND_Code_of_Practice_0_to_25_years.pdf) sets out the guidance on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system for children and young people aged 0 to 25.

Key Documents and Additional Resources

[Halton Children's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) is an assessment of the current and future health and social care needs of the population of Halton. It supports local leaders and commissioners to make informed decisions and to shape services in a way that best serves their communities.










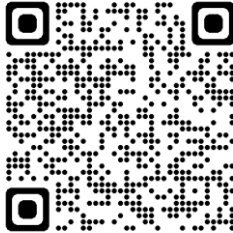














[Halton Graduated Approach and Strategy Toolkit](#) Where a child or young person is identified as having SEN, educational settings should take action to enable the child or young person to participate in learning and to make progress. The educational setting should put special educational support or strategies in place through the use of a Graduated Approach. The Graduated Approach is a four-part continuous cycle: Assess; Plan; Do and Review. The Strategy Toolkit provides support strategies for this process across the different SEND areas of identified need.

The [Halton Local Offer](#) provides access to a wide range of support services and partners that the work alongside the Council and schools towards achieving the above aims. The QR Codes Leaflet can be found on the final page of this Strategy which provides a summary Section Guide, links to each section and QR Codes.



Section Guide

Find out about the [Halton Local Offer](#) here

<p>Help, Support & Advice</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Budgets/Direct Payments• Information and Advice• Parent carer networks• Local Support Groups	<p>Leisure</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latest Activity Flyers• Local Support Groups• Halton Short Breaks• Sports, Groups and Place to Go	<p>Education, Health & Care Plan</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education, Health & Care Plan• EHC Plan and Review Documents• Complaints, Disagreement Resolution and Appeals		
<p>Health</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Services• Health and Wellbeing• A-Z of Health Conditions	<p>Education, Early Years & Childcare</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Years & Childcare• Schools, Colleges & Post 16• Education Support Services• Useful Information & Documents• Graduated Approach & Strategy Toolkit	<p>Transport</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blue Badge & Halton AccessAble• School Travel Support, Independent Travel Training and School Bus information• Local Travel Information		
<p>Children & Family Service</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Halton Children & Family Service information Statutory Duties• Halton Short Breaks• Equipment• Care Leavers Local Offer	<p>Care Leavers Local Offer</p>   <table><tr><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in Society• Accommodation• Health/Wellbeing• Relationships</td><td><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education/Training• Employment• Useful Information• Finances</td></tr></table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in Society• Accommodation• Health/Wellbeing• Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education/Training• Employment• Useful Information• Finances	<p>Preparing for Adulthood</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PfA Guide and Vision• Employment and Education• Independent Living• Community Inclusion• Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in Society• Accommodation• Health/Wellbeing• Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education/Training• Employment• Useful Information• Finances			
<p>Training/Events</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training Courses• Events	<p>You Said, We Did</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and Co-production• Local Offer Annual Reports	<p>Case Studies</p>   <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Studies-Video Clips		