**Knowsley Accessibility Strategy 2018-2021**

# Foreword

In Knowsley, **our vision is that all children and young people have the best start in life, thrive, aim high and achieve their potentia**l and naturally, we want the same for those children and young people who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This strategy will be fundamental in helping us to achieve this vision, setting out the joint commitment of all key partners for delivering in a joined up way to improve the lives and life chances of all children and young people aged 0 – 25 with SEND. It links to other key strategy documents:

* Knowsley Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2018 – 2021
* Knowsley Joint Commissioning Strategy for SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disability) 2018-2020.

We have refreshed all our strategy documents so that they reflect our current priorities for development. This exercise has included all partners – staff, parents/carers, children and young people

Children and young people with SEND are at the heart of this strategy, as are their families and carers. Their experiences and contributions have helped to shape this strategy and will also guide the delivery of the strategy and shape the services that they receive.

Our shared aim is to improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND.

## The Legal Requirements

**The Equality Act 2010** brought together a range of existing equality duties within one piece of legislation. The Act introduced **a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) or ‘‘general duty’**; this applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and academies; Free Schools etc.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine “protected” characteristics that are subject to this general duty. They are **age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnicity), religion, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.**

This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011.

The duty has three main parts. In carrying out their functions, public bodies (including educational settings) 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.

Equality Act 2010 (c. 15), - **Part 6 of the Act applies to education.**

Chapter 2 applies to **Further and higher education:** the responsible body must not discriminate against or victimise a student with SEND in respect of admissions/enrolment, treatment as a student enrolled on a course or awarding of a qualification. They are required to make reasonable adjustments. This covers: (a) a course of further or higher education secured by a responsible body in England or Wales; (b) a course of education provided by the governing body of a maintained school under section 80 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The requirement for local authorities to put in place an accessibility strategy is specified in schedule 10 of the Act: Accessibility for disabled pupils.

**Schedule 10** says:

**An accessibility strategy is a strategy for**, over a prescribed period—

1. **increasing** the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools’ **curriculum**;
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 schools;
3. **improving** the delivery to disabled pupils of **information** which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

The delivery of information in (c) must be:

1. within a reasonable time;
2. in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils’ disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

## Definition of Disability

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. (Equality Act 2010).

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.

***It is important to note that because a pupil has a disability does not necessarily mean that he/she has special educational needs.***

## Definition of special educational needs (SEN)

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 a 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

**A child under compulsory school age** has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to meet the definition above when of compulsory school age (or would be likely, if no special educational provision were made). (Children and Families Act 2014)

**The Children and Families Act 2014** introduced changes to the way we work, with an emphasis on **co-production** – we must involve children, young people and their parents or carers in the joint development of services as a whole and those specific services and packages that we put in place to meet an individual’s needs.

We have a duty to work within a **multi-agency approach** to: **identify** special educational needs or disability (SEND); **assess SEND**; ensure that those **needs are met** and that **this improves outcomes** for children and young people with SEND.

The **joint commissioning** of education, health and care provision for children and young people required by this legislation should lead to the development of more **integrated packages of support** which will enable children and young people with disabilities to access the curriculum and make the best progress possible.

**All schools are responsible for providing a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum for all pupils and in particular for pupils with disabilities or SEND**. Parents and carers are key partners in developing support for children and young people with disabilities or SEN. Schools must work with both parents/carers and children/young people to identify appropriate outcomes for inclusion in their personalised plans.

# Knowsley’s Accessibility Strategy

## Principles

1. All adults will follow the **Thrive approach** when identifying and meeting needs – which results in the right support at the right time
2. Adults will support children and young people with SEND in order to equip them as far as possible to **live independently, find a job and live a healthy and active social life** – with the right level of support when they need it as an adult. This means that:
3. We **‘prepare children and young people for adulthood’** from the earliest age and stage possible
4. We seek to **‘empower’ and ‘enable’** and will actively work to avoid developing unnecessary dependency.
5. We agree with the **social model of disability** – a child may have an impairment that presents difficulties in developing and learning, but it is other people and the environment that ‘disables’ them.
6. We will seek to engage and develop our **community assets** [it takes a village to raise a child]; encouraging extended family and community [neighbours and organisations] to support children and young people with SEND so that they become happy and fulfilled participants in their local community. We can all enhance the quality of life for each other.
7. **Reasonable adjustment** means that others change to accommodate the needs of any person with SEND. Everyone has access to the same opportunities appropriate to their needs because we treat everyone differently according to their needs.
8. All children and young people are **valued equally** whatever their needs or ability
9. Once they reach 16 years of age, we **prioritise the choices and voice of the child/young person**; process and partnership working is responsible for ensuring that decisions are in the best interests of the child/young person. In order to balance choice with safety all adults involved in the life of the child/young person have a joint responsibility as follows:
10. We acknowledge the right to make mistakes as part of lifelong learning and the responsibility of all adults to keep children and young people safe from harm

This means that the **nurseries, schools, academies, college and other education settings will:**

* have a **welcoming and inclusive ethos and culture**; all staff will be committed to inclusive provision and inclusive practice
* **have the infrastructure required** to achieve this inclusive agenda, because the strategic planning of both the school and external partners [local authority and health] will support the continuing development and improvement of **access to the curriculum, facilities and information**
* identify needs at the earliest opportunity; assess and meet needs effectively and promptly; improve outcomes and life chances for all children and young people
* enable success for all, because the school and LA will rigorously monitor and challenge progress and achievement, ensuring additional support and expertise as agreed

## Context

In Knowsley there are 50 mainstream primary schools and 6 mainstream secondary schools.

Two of the mainstream primary schools have resourced provision (we refer to these as Designated Special Provision [DSPs]). These provide for autism and speech, language and communication [SLCN].

There are 4 special schools, 1 all age school for severe learning difficulties (SLD), 2 schools for moderate learning difficulties (MLD) – one primary and one secondary and one secondary school for social, emotional or mental health needs (SEMH).

There is 1 pupil referral unit (PRU)

Since 2010, we have addressed our equality duties - within services and within our nurseries/schools/settings/academies. We are committed to accessibility as an ongoing improvement focus; acknowledging that population and staff change; schools/settings will, at times, encounter particular special educational needs and disabilities for the first time. There will always be a need for further action and development. We are not complacent and aim to foster a ‘learning culture’ that promotes continual improvement in all that we do.

## Consultation and Involvement

In reviewing this policy, we involved Leaders at every level through the SEND Partnership Board, the Core Leadership Group, the Joint Operational Managers Group, Parent/Carer Forum [Knowsley Parent/Carer Voice], children and young people through our schools and Knowsley Youth Mutual [KYM]

**Plan to address our equality duties**

1. **Increase access to the whole curriculum offered by schools for disabled pupils by:**

* Providing on-going guidance and training to schools to support them in the effective implementation of Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014
* Supporting and encouraging ‘school to school support’ (and a self-improving school system)
* Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice across the Borough and the wider educational community
* Further developing the role of special schools, as centres of excellence and expertise
* Providing information to encourage continued professional development in the areas of special educational need, disability and inclusion.
* Working with schools to ensure that relevant information is readily available to support access on entry to/transfer between schools, colleges, learning and training providers
* Creating a climate in which schools always think “SEND” whenever any change to curriculum and other policies are proposed
* Schools regularly review their accessibility plans

## Improve the physical environment of schools to increase access to education and associated services by:

* Review special school [special educational provision] to ensure sufficiency of the correct type of provision according to the needs of the pupil population
* Schools continue to review the physical accessibility of their premises and ensure they understand the ‘anticipatory duty’
* Ensure that the local authority monitors all building projects carried out centrally or by schools to address accessibility issues
* Creating a climate in which schools always think “SEND” whenever any change to the physical environment is proposed [to include for example, acoustics for autism and ADHD needs and paintwork/lighting for visual impairment]

## Improvements to the provision of information, for disabled pupils by:

* Providing an accessible [Local Offer](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/categories/knowsley-local-offer-special-educational-needs-and-disability) website for local area services and on all school websites
* Providing support and advice on the provision of information through commissioned SENDIAS services – for parents/carers and for children and young people. To provide impartial and independent information and advice.
* Creating a climate in which schools always think “SEND” whenever provision of information is planned

## Governance

This strategy is owned and monitored by the SEND Partnership Board.

## Accessibility of this strategy

This strategy will be made available through a simplified version that provides a summary.

There will be an audio ‘read text’ facility on the Local Offer so the summary can be listened to.

## Review

Progress on actions in the strategy will be reviewed through the governance process above. There is an annual report to the SEND Partnership Board. This version was produced in August 2018. The Strategy will be refreshed in 2021, the action plan will be updated annually.

## Action Plan 2018 – 2021 [updated annually]

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Desired Outcome** | **Actions** | **Person(s) responsible** | **Timescale [by]** | **Monitoring**  **Process** | **Success Criteria** |
| Ensure **sufficiency** of special educational provision across the full range of need. | * Review provision and recommend changes to extend, change or reduce places for designated types of SEND * Commission specialist capacity and data analysis | AED Education | Sep  2018 | SEND Partnership Board | * Places are available to place local children in local provision |
| Capital spend reflects **accessibility** needs and resources are maximised | * Review Capital Plan for impact on schools’ Accessibility Duty * Survey providers to identify strengths and gaps | Head Of Service  Assets/ AED Education | Mar  2019 | SEND Partnership Board | Schools’ fulfil anticipatory duty in relation to individual pupils |
| **Co-production** is central to way we do things in Knowsley | * Working agreements to formalise the process with parents/carers; children and young people * Surveys to ‘health check’ experience of those with SEND and their families | Core Leadership Group/SEND Partnership Board | Dec  2018 | SEND Partnership Board |  |
| Schools/settings/college **improve outcomes** for children and young people and enhance their opportunities for adult life | * Audit schools’ accessibility/and indicators of inclusive practice – building and curriculum * schools survey | AED Education/Education Inclusion & Support staff | July  2018 | Adviser visits focus; reported to SEND Board | * Inclusion Support managers’ report shows that all providers are compliant with the duty; equipped with knowledge and expectations * Schools’ local offers are compliant |
| **Staff are able to meet needs** across the range of special educational needs and disabilities they encounter | * Exercise across groups of schools to audit needs/capacity to meet needs, provision map and identify support required from ‘teams around the schools’ [Phase 1 – pilot; phase 2 roll-out] | AED Education/Education Inclusion & Support staff/Joint Operational Managers [JOM] | Phase 1  Dec 2018  Phase 2  July 2020 | Core Leadership Group [CLG]/ SEND Partnership Board | Teachers confident to manage a range of special educational needs and disabilities; pupil progress and achievement improves; children and young people stay local; The proportion of SEN Support to EHCP increases [proportion of EHCP reduces] |
| Children and young people with SEND 0-25 are able to express **choice and aspirations** | * Commission Special Educational Need and Disability Information Advice and Support Service [SENDIAS] for children and young people * Refresh the Local Offer website | Core Leadership Group/SEND Partnership Board | Dec  2018  Sep  2018 | Local Offer monitoring; SEND Board | Surveys and feedback shows that SENDIAS has an impact and improves choice and control  **Information** normally produced in written form is provided in an accessible form  Customer satisfaction improves |