



Rowlands Gill Primary School

Accessibility Guidance Policy





Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils

Executive summary

Overview

This document contains guidance for LEAs and schools on the new duty to plan to increase the accessibility of schools to disabled pupils (the planning duty). The duty comes into force in September 2002. The guidance advises on:

- the legal position and coverage of the planning duty;
- the three strands of the planning duty; and
- the main processes LEAs and schools should consider in

producing accessibility strategies and accessibility plans.

The guidance is part statutory and part non-statutory. The statutory elements relate to LEA accessibility strategies only and are provided in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.11

The guidance will be sent to LEAs and a summary of the guidance will be sent to all schools. It applies to England only. The National Assembly for Wales is issuing separate guidance to cover the Principality.

Further information

Schools Disability and Access Team, DfES, 2T Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, LONDON, SW1P 3BT; Email: planning.guidance@dfes.gsi.gov.uk ; Tel 020 7925 6148

Further copies

DfES Publications on Tel 0845 60 222 60. It is available in Braille, large print and audio tape. The guidance is also available from the DfES website at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen>.



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Improving access to education and educational achievement by disabled pupils is essential to the Government's policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation in society and the economy.

1.2 The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by introducing new duties on local education authorities (LEAs) and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. A person has a disability if he or she 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. The main duties are not to treat disabled pupils less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Further information on this wider context is provided at Annex A.

1.3 LEAs and schools are also required to prepare accessibility strategies and accessibility plans respectively for increasing over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils (the planning duty). This need not be a standalone plan. If they wish, LEAs and schools may dovetail their plans with existing planning processes. This document provides guidance on the planning duty and further information on the legal position and status of the guidance is provided at section 2.

1.4 The duty and this guidance will help all LEAs and schools improve access for disabled pupils in a planned and strategic way. LEAs and schools already provide for the additional needs of disabled pupils who have special educational needs (SEN). LEAs and schools that are ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils should find these duties very manageable.

1.5 This document complements the *Schools Disability Code of Practice* published by the Disability Rights Commission, the *SEN Code of Practice and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Guidance on Inclusive Schooling*.

A full list of relevant publications (DfES and external publications) is at Annex B.

SECTION 2

LEGAL POSITION

Statutory responsibilities

2.1 All LEAs have a legal duty to prepare accessibility strategies for the schools for which they are responsible under the Act.

2.2 Maintained schools, independent schools, and non-maintained special schools must produce their own accessibility plans. The Act places the duty to do so on the responsible body for the school and this will be the governing body in the case of maintained schools, and the proprietor in the case of independent and non-maintained special schools. For ease of reference, this guidance will refer to 'the school' for purposes of the duty to produce accessibility plans.

2.3 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; and
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of written information which is provided to pupils who are not disabled. This should be done within a reasonable period of time and in formats which take account of views expressed by the pupils or parents about their preferred means of communication.

2.4 Accessibility strategies and plans must be in writing. LEAs and schools have a duty to review strategies and plans, revise them if necessary, and implement them. LEAs and schools are required to allocate adequate resources for implementing their strategies and plans.

2.5 Schools and LEAs are required to make their plans publicly available as follows:

x_maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their governors' annual report to parents;

x_non-maintained special schools are required to reproduce their accessibility plan in their annual prospectus;

x_independent schools have to make their accessibility plans available to interested parties on request at reasonable times; and

x_LEAs are required to make their strategies available for inspection to interested parties at reasonable times.

2.6 The Act provides for OfSTED 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 an accessibility plan, the publication of the plan.



OfSTED will be monitoring the planning duty through their inspections of LEAs and schools. The Secretary of State can intervene where an LEA or school is not complying with the planning duty and can direct an LEA or school to do so.

2.7 The planning duty comes into force in September 2002. LEAs and schools are required to start formulating strategies and plans from September and to have written strategies and plans in place by April 2003. Regulations prescribe that strategies and plans should run for an initial period of 3 years, from 1 April 2003 until 31 March 2006. LEAs and schools can also plan for longer periods. They may also decide to dovetail plans with existing planning processes.

2.8 The Act requires LEAs to have regard to any guidance that the Secretary of State issues on the following:

- x_the content of an accessibility strategy;
- x_the form in which it is to be produced;
- x_the persons to be consulted in its preparation; and
- x_reviewing and revising the strategy.

These elements are statutory guidance to which LEAs must have regard. The statutory guidance is provided in the boxed section below.

Statutory Guidance

2.9 The Secretary of State is issuing guidance under section 28E(1)(b)(iii) concerning the persons to be consulted in the preparation of the accessibility strategy. The Secretary of State is not issuing any guidance under section 28E(1)(b)(i),(ii) and (2) on the content or the form of the accessibility strategy or issuing guidance on compliance with the duty to review the strategy and to revise it as necessary.

Consultation on the accessibility strategy

2.10 In preparing their accessibility strategies, LEAs must consult:

- all schools in respect of which the LEA must produce its accessibility strategy; and
- trustees of schools (e.g. local dioceses and faith organisations).

2.11 Section 4 provides non-statutory guidance for LEAs on preparing accessibility strategies. LEAs have no legal obligation to have regard to it.



SECTION 3

THE PLANNING DUTY

3.1 There are three strands to the planning duty and this section provides guidance on what might be covered by each of the strands. However, planning will be dependent on local circumstances and decisions.

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

3.2 The curriculum covers not only teaching and learning but the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits.

3.3 Curriculum access should be considered at a 'whole school' level as many barriers to access to the curriculum will be similar for many groups of children and it is helpful to take a strategic approach to removing those barriers.

LEAs

3.4 LEA accessibility strategies might 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. LEAs might ensure that their schools are aware of their support services which can provide advice 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 teaching assistance.

Example: An LEA's strategy might set out how it intends to work with Health and Social Services in order 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 in the area to disseminate good practice and share information and expertise.

Schools

3.5 Schools are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and have a key role in planning to increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. They already provide additional provision to enable pupils with learning difficulties to access the curriculum through the SEN framework and this will cover many disabled children. In focusing on this part of the duty, schools should consider the needs of a range of disabled pupils and prospective pupils.

3.6 The following documents are useful tools in making the curriculum accessible to disabled pupils.

- x_ The National Curriculum 2000 which incorporates a statement on *Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all children* to which all maintained schools must have regard. The Inclusion Statement suggests some ways in which to plan classroom organisation and how teaching and learning can address the needs of disabled children.
- x_ The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) general and subject guidelines on *planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties*, help schools differentiate the curriculum. The subject guidelines cover all subjects in the curriculum including personal, social and health education.
- x_ *Supporting The Target Setting Process* (revised March 2001) published by the DfES and QCA, provides guidance on effective target setting for pupils with special educational needs. This includes performance descriptions of pupils' attainment in eight levels from P1 to P8 showing progress below level 3 of the National Curriculum (better known as P scales or P levels).

3.7 Schools using these tools are likely to be making the curriculum accessible to all pupils. Schools (including independent schools) can use these documents to develop the use of curriculum audits to 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* and OfSTED's *Evaluating Educational Inclusion*.

3.8 Schools can use a variety of approaches when planning and delivering the curriculum to draw on the different strengths and aptitudes of pupils. That might include using flexible grouping arrangements including ones where pupils with disabilities can work with their peers, and encouraging peer support by, for example, setting up buddying or mentoring arrangements.

3.9 Schools might also consider staff training needs. Schools can utilise the Standards Fund to support staff training and development to facilitate the teaching and support of disabled children. The *National Special Educational Needs Specialist Standards* published by the Teacher Training Agency in 1999 include an accessible audit tool to identify specific teacher training and development needs. There is also the DfES good practice guidance *Working with Teaching Assistants*.

Example: A school plan identifies a number of priorities for improving access to the curriculum. It focuses 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 plans to improve channels of communication between disabled pupils and staff including setting up a pupils' forum. The school also devises plans for future whole school assemblies to explore disability and access.

IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS

3.10 This strand of the planning duty includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. 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, signs, interior surfaces, floor coverings, room décor and furniture. Improvements to physical access might include - ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, well designed room acoustics and way-finding systems.

3.11 Physical aids to access education might include ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils. These lists are not exhaustive.

3.12 All new school buildings have to comply with the Building Regulations and The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and should be physically accessible to disabled pupils. The DfES Constructional Standards for Schools and Approved Document M provide guidance on these regulations (see Annex B). Much of the work in this area will involve improving access to existing buildings. Improved access to the physical environment can be achieved by rearranging room space, removing obstructions from walkways, changing the layout of classrooms, designated storage space or by reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms.

3.13 Improving access to buildings of historical or architectural significance should not be treated in a different way to other buildings. However they do have to comply with building regulations. Bodies such as English Heritage provide guidance on ways in which this may be achieved. All major building work, and minor work in the case of a listed building or one in a conservation area, will need planning consent.

LEAs

3.14 LEAs already play a vital role in making community, voluntary controlled and to an extent voluntary aided (VA) schools (both special schools and mainstream schools) physically accessible to disabled children. LEAs should take a strategic approach to planning for increased disability access to the schools for which they are responsible under the Act. This might include linking accessibility projects to all other capital building work where appropriate. For example, if 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.

Example: 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 decides 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.

Another LEA decides to improve access to a high proportion of secondary schools, especially where a school is the sole provider of secondary places within a large area. The LEA strategy includes at least one large secondary school project per year prioritised according to known need.



In addition, an LEA might plan to install a rise and fall science and/or CDT bench in one secondary school per area. An LEA might, in conjunction with the occupational therapists, set up a central resource centre for portable specialist furniture including sloping desks, booster seats and specialist seating as identified by occupational therapists.

Schools

3.15 Schools should consider what they can do to improve the physical environment of the school within the resources available to them. Schools might consider accessibility in all purchasing decisions.

Example: A maintained school's accessibility plan might include the installation of bar taps to the sinks in the science labs, food technology and art rooms or the installation of a Soundfield system to provide 'ubiquitous sound' from a microphone worn by the teacher.

An independent school refurbishing a block housing its language laboratories and its sixth form provision in 2003, might plan to install low pile, high density carpet as this helps wheelchair users to move with greater ease within the block. It might also plan to make improvements to lighting, colour contrasting décor and signage.

IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION TO DISABLED PUPILS

3.16 This part of the duty covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils available to disabled pupils. The information should take account of pupils' disabilities, pupils' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame. The information might include handouts, timetables, and information about school events. The school might consider providing the information in alternative formats (such as large print and audio tape) using ICT, or providing the information orally.

LEAs

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

3.18 Where LEAs have centrally provided support services, they should make sure that all their schools have information about the full range of services and what they can provide, including systems for converting information into alternative formats. LEAs might encourage their schools to share good practice on providing information in different formats. Special schools in particular might be able to share valuable information and expertise on this subject. LEA strategies should detail their plans for developing and improving support for the provision of information in different formats.



Example: 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 in alternative formats to be loaned to schools as necessary. 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 to encourage schools to link up and share good practice.

Schools

3.19 Schools might set out in their plan how they will provide the written material they usually provide for all pupils to disabled pupils within a reasonable time. Plans could include 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 could be made more accessible over time.

Example: A school's accessibility plan includes plans to liaise with their local support services in order to develop joint practice. Their 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

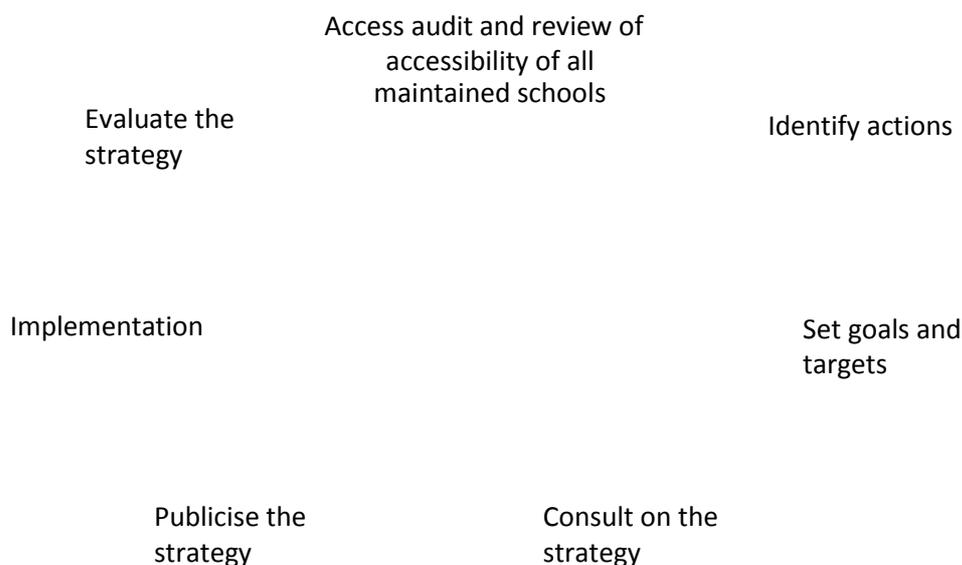
HOW TO DEVELOP AN ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

LEAs

4.1 This section of the guidance is non-statutory; the statutory guidance is referred to in paragraphs 2.9 - 2.11. LEAs must have regard to the statutory guidance but are encouraged to have regard to this section as well.

4.2 LEAs have considerable experience of strategic planning in the context of nationally required plans, both statutory and non-statutory, and through their own local planning arrangements. Whilst the Act requires a distinct planning process, LEAs are not required to undertake a separate planning process for accessibility strategies. LEAs are encouraged to dovetail their accessibility strategies with their other plans such as Asset Management Plans (AMP) or Education Development Plans. This is consistent with the proposals for plan rationalisation in the Local Government White Paper *Strong Local Leadership - Quality Public Services* published in December 2001. This should help minimise the work load involved in producing the accessibility strategy. The guidance below describes the elements of an effective planning strategy.

The stages in producing an accessibility strategy



Access audit and review of accessibility of all maintained schools

4.3 An LEA cannot take a strategic approach to planning for increased access for disabled pupils to its schools without knowing the current position. LEAs should have some information on the accessibility of their schools to disabled pupils through the management of the Schools Access Initiative (SAI) and the AMP suitability assessments.

4.4 LEAs should ensure that their information is accurate and up to date. They should make use of the information schools will have from their access reviews for their own accessibility plans. Where further information is needed, LEAs might find it helpful to refer to *Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings* and



Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design 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; and should identify the barriers to access for disabled pupils. LEAs should work with their schools on determining whether existing data on accessibility is sufficient and whether accessibility audits are needed. LEAs should also 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 identify actions for overcoming the barriers and prioritise their work. In developing their strategies, LEAs will need to plan for the more immediate needs of current and future pupils. This might include some forecasting of how needs will change in future years and planning for the necessary adaptations. LEAs should work with colleagues from the health services, who will have information on the numbers of live births in the area; and social services, who will have information about the likely population of disabled children in the area through the local register of disabled children and family support services. LEAs will need to factor in parental choice in forecasting future need. LEAs should also consider the Children Services Planning and other strategic planning arrangements.

4.6 LEAs should also make use of other expertise in this area. This might include working with local authority access officers, local and national disability and voluntary organisations, disabled people, parents of disabled pupils and developing links with other LEAs and sharing good practice.

4.7 LEAs might also wish to consider, together with their schools, the arrangements made to provide support services to schools and the potential of schools to support each other. For example, a special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties might provide support to mainstream schools proposing to include a child with a learning difficulty. LEAs might wish to include in their strategy contacts, including those within the LEA and local health services, who can advise on issues such as health and safety and the appropriate equipment or adaptations for disabled pupils etc. Annex C also includes a list of organisations that are able to provide advice on access issues.

4.8 The Act requires LEAs to allocate adequate resources to implement 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 will be difficult to assess improvements made, review the success of current plans and identify further improvements. Goals and targets should, as far as possible, be specific enough to enable them to be measured. This could be expressed in terms of percentages of schools with specified levels of accessibility and timescales. 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 arrangements for reviewing and evaluating the strategies.



Consult on the accessibility strategy

4.10 In addition to those bodies identified for consultation in the statutory guidance, LEAs might also consult with Health and Social Services colleagues, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, School Organisation Committees, local voluntary organisations, and disabled pupils.

Publicise the strategy

4.11 The Act requires LEAs to make their strategies available for inspection to interested parties at reasonable times. LEAs may also want to publicise their strategies more actively and to ensure that all those with an interest in this area are informed of the LEA's plans, such as parents' groups and the voluntary sector. A strategy will be more effective if it has been developed and is regularly reviewed in partnership with key stakeholders. LEAs should also be aware that they might be asked to provide their strategies in alternative formats.

Implementation

4.12 Once the accessibility strategy is in place, LEAs are required to implement their strategies making available adequate resources to do so. This will include reviewing and evaluating their strategies as necessary.

Evaluate the strategy

4.13 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 plans should be developed in connection with goals, targets and time frames.

4.14 The success of an effective accessibility strategy should not just focus on whether goals and targets have been met. It might also be illustrated by a number of changes such as:

- x_improvements in the physical accessibility of school buildings;
- x_clear protocols and procedures for multi-agency working with health and social services in order to support pupils with medical needs;
- x_schools in the area establishing links and sharing good practice;
- x_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);
- x_observable changes in the confidence of staff in teaching and supporting disabled children with a range of needs; and
- x_greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for disabled pupils.

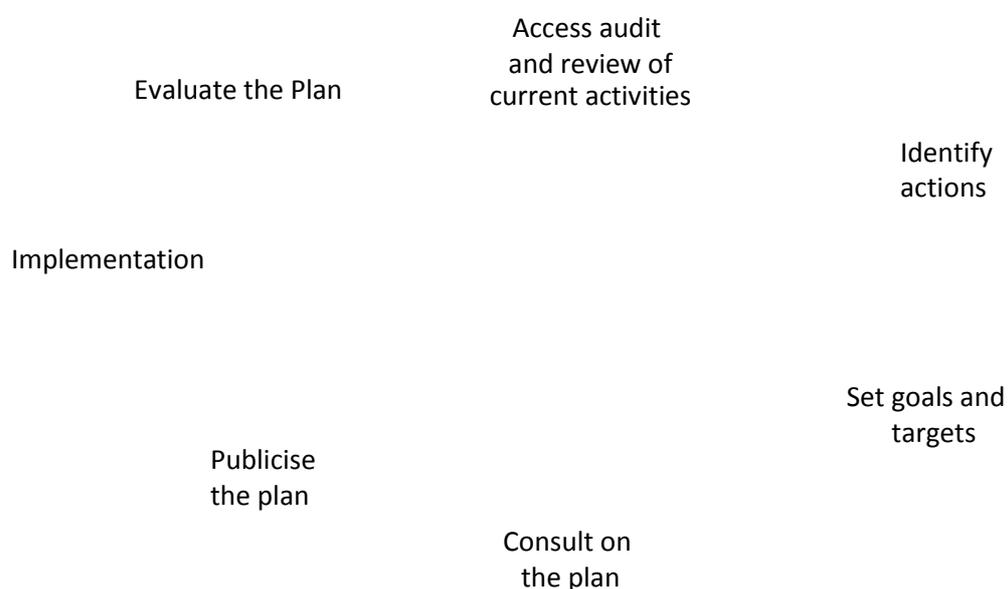
4.15 In evaluating the strategy LEAs might want to work with schools to identify some of the common evidence that will indicate greater inclusion of disabled children in schools.

SECTION 5

HOW TO DEVELOP AN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Schools

5.1 Whilst the Act imposes a distinct planning duty, schools are not required to undertake a separate planning process. Schools might dovetail their accessibility plans with other plans, for example the School Development Plan. In providing information about the accessibility plan in their annual report, governors might include a new section on accessibility planning within the SEN report. The guidance below describes the elements of an effective planning process. Annex E provides an example of what an accessibility plan might look like.



5.2 The school might set up or use an existing planning group to lead the process. This might not be a large group, but should be able to reflect all aspects of school life. For example the working group of a larger school could include the governor with designated responsibility for SEN, the headteacher and a parent of a disabled pupil.

5.3 The school should make best use of the available expertise. Disabled pupils, their parents, specialist teachers, local voluntary and disability organisations might be able to bring a useful perspective to help 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 Schools should assess current accessibility and identify barriers to access or inclusion. A 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 and data on the

accessibility of the school and future need. LEAs should have some information on the accessibility of its maintained schools and might have information forecasting future needs. Data on the current pupil population might 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. Data on the likely future pupil population might enable the school to plan for the needs of future disabled pupils such as those transferring from primary to secondary school.

5.6 Annex D provides a checklist 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* 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 National Register of Access Consultants.

Identify actions

5.7 The next step will be for schools to devise actions to eliminate those barriers. Schools should list all of the necessary adaptations (including realistic cost estimates), which might be divided into categories such as staff training; teaching and learning practices; refurbishment and maintenance; 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.

Example: A short term strategy might include actively 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 and the school would need to work with the LEA to secure agreement for the project to be funded from its capital resources.

Example of implementation arrangements: Discuss collecting good practice on curriculum differentiation with curriculum advisors in the authority and place it on the agenda for the next cluster meeting. Carry out an access audit to identify potential barriers to access in all areas of school life. Aim to provide appropriate training for staff and governors. Review and improve the school's arrangements for accessible information. Utilise the routine refurbishment and other maintenance and equipment budgets to improve the physical environment of the school. Think long-term and approach the LEA for assistance with capital costs on the basis of a well thought out and costed plan.

5.8 The Act requires schools to resource their accessibility plans adequately. Schools should recognise the costs of implementing the plan as legitimate expenditure which should be incorporated into current and future budget commitments. Maintained schools should liaise with their LEAs about using resources such as the Schools Access Initiative to fund more expensive 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 paragraph 5.14).

Consultation on the plan

5.10 If schools consult with their staff, they will be more committed to the plan. Schools 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.

Publicise the plan

5.11 Publicising the plan will encourage a sense of ownership and stake in the success of the plan among staff, governors, pupils and parents.

5.12 Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their governors' report to parents. We recommend that schools reproduce the full accessibility plan in the governors' report to parents. Independent schools are under a duty to make a copy of their accessibility plan available for inspection to anyone who asks to see it. An amendment to the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools)(England) Regulations 1999 requires non-maintained special schools to include their accessibility plans in their annual prospectus. City Academies are required through their funding agreement to include information on their accessibility plans in their annual report to parents. It is good practice for all schools to make their plans available on request. Schools may be asked to provide their plans in alternative formats.

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.

Evaluate the plan

5.14 Schools are required to keep the accessibility plan under review and revise it as necessary. Evaluation is also needed to determine whether goals are being achieved within the timescale. The success of an effective accessibility plan might be measured by a number of improvements. Schools might adopt some of the following measures:

- x_greater satisfaction of disabled pupils and their parents with the provision made for them;

- x_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 visits);

- x_observable changes in staff confidence in teaching and supporting disabled pupils with a range of needs;



x_audits carried out on the main curriculum areas;

x_progressive planned improvements to the physical environment of the school; and

x_information for pupils available in a range of formats.

Schools might wish to share their progress in increasing access with their LEA.

Ensure the future of the accessibility plan

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

5.16 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 a component of the general approach to forward planning. It will be less an independent strategy and more a thread running through all the school's plans and policies, including plans related to capital works and premises management, the curriculum, information technology support services, staff training and other associated services.



SECTION 6

RESOURCES

6.1 LEAs have a number of sources of funding available to them that can be used for disability access projects. This includes formulaic capital funding for school building projects, including those addressing barriers to access. LEAs have information on their individual allocations of these funding programmes. There is a total of £6.5 billion of capital available over 2002-03 and 2003-04, and LEAs should consider disability access as part of all capital work. The Schools Access Initiative provides capital funding specifically for disability access projects at mainstream schools and there is a total of £70 million available in 2002-03 and £100 million in 2003-04, which is allocated to LEAs by formula. Maintained schools can use their delegated budget for disability access including the use of devolved capital funding.

6.2 There is £91 million available in 2002-03 for SEN and disability under the Standards Fund. The majority of this funding will be delegated to schools and it is a key source of funding for training teachers, teaching assistants and other staff.

MONITORING

6.3 As part of their inspections, OfSTED will monitor LEAs' accessibility strategies and schools' accessibility plans. OfSTED will inspect the LEA and school functions in relation to the preparation, review, revision and implementation of their accessibility strategy or plan and the publication of the plan in respect of schools.

6.4 The DfES will also monitor capital expenditure on disability access projects through the AMPs and through the Schools Access Initiative implementation reports.

REDRESS

6.5 The SEN and Disability Tribunal, which begins hearing certain types of disability discrimination cases from September 2002, does not have the power to hear appeals from parents or other interested parties against LEAs and schools concerning their responsibilities under the planning duty.

6.6 The Secretary of State can intervene where an LEA or school is not complying with the planning duty and can direct an LEA or school to do so. LEAs and schools might find it helpful to extend their local complaint procedures to cover their accessibility strategies and plans.

ANNEX A

Definition of Disability

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) uses a broad definition of “disability”. A person has a disability if he or she 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. Physical or mental impairments can include 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 pupils’ everyday lives. Further information is given in Appendix One of the DRC Code of Practice on schools and in The Stationery Office publication, *Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions in relation to the definition of disability*. (Annex B provides information on where to obtain copies of these documents).

An overview of the legislation supporting disabled pupils

3. There are three main strands of support for disabled pupils in school. The relationships between these different duties are important. Support is through:

- x_ the SEN framework (Part IV of the Education Act 1996);
- x_ the disability discrimination duties (sections 28A -28C of the DDA); and
- x_ the planning duties (sections 28D -28E of the DDA)

The SEN Framework

4. The purpose of the SEN framework is to meet the special educational needs of individual children, some of whom may also be disabled, who need provision that is additional to, or different from, what is normally available in schools maintained by the LEA. Under the framework, schools and LEAs should 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 to check that provision being made for them continues to meet their needs. The SEN Code of Practice provides guidance to schools and LEAs on operating within the SEN framework.
5. In general, children with statements of SEN must be educated in a mainstream school unless this is incompatible with parents wishes or the provision of efficient education of other children. These are the only reasons why mainstream education can be refused outright. If schools and LEAs feel that inclusion is incompatible with the efficient education of other children, they must demonstrate that there are no reasonable steps that they could take to prevent that incompatibility. The DfES statutory guidance *Inclusive Schooling - Children With Special Educational Needs* provides advice on the practical operation of the new arrangements including reasonable steps to include all pupils. Planning for disability access will help the inclusion of children with statements of SEN.



The Disability Discrimination Act

6. From September 2002, it will be unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services. Schools and LEAs must:

x_not treat disabled pupils less favourably; and

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

The DRC has produced a Code of Practice to explain and illustrate the disability discrimination duties. The Code explains terminology such as 'substantial' and 'reasonable'.

7. Reasonable adjustment duties do not apply to auxiliary aids and services such as the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance. Such provision will mainly be made for an individual pupil through a statement of SEN and generally through the planning duty. 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. Schools are not required to make physical alterations under the reasonable adjustments duty as these will be achieved through a more strategic approach to improving access to school buildings through the planning duty.

Existing Disability Discrimination Act duties

8. 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.

The diagram below illustrates the ways in which the different pieces of legislation and legislative guidance fit together and support disabled pupils.

The SEN Framework

GUIDANCE:
Code of Practice
Inclusive Schooling

Identifying and meeting needs:
including provision of auxiliary
aids and services

The Disability Framework:
Anti-discrimination duties
and planning for access

GUIDANCE:
DRC Code Planning
Guidance

Protecting pupils from
discrimination and
improving access to
premises and curriculum



ANNEX B

Useful documents (this list is not exhaustive)

Most unpriced documents can be obtained from the **DfES Publications Centre** at: PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottinghamshire NG15 0DJ. Tel: 0845 60 222 60; Fax: 0845 60 333 60; minicom: 0845 60 555 650; 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 or www.clicktso.com

Key documents

Disability Rights Commission: Code of Practice for Schools. Available from the DRC. Tel: 08457 622 633; website: www.drc-gb.org

Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability. Available from The Stationery Office.

DfES: Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs (Ref DfES 0774/2001) published November 2001. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/sen

DfES: SEN Code of Practice 2001 and SEN Toolkit published December 2001. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/sen

Access to school premises

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

DfEE: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings: Management and Design Guide. Building Bulletin 91. 1999. £14.95. Available from The Stationery Office and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolbuildings

DfEE and DfES Asset Management Plans Guidance sections 1-6. 2000 and 2001. Sent to all LEAs. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolbuildings

DfEE: Inclusive School Design Building Bulletin 94. 2001. £19.95. Available from The Stationery Office and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolbuildings

DfES: Guidance on the Constructional Standards for Schools. July 2001. Available from website: www.teachernet.gov.uk/sbconstand

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

JMU Access Partnership: Sign Design Guide (2000); Available from Royal National Institute of the Blind customer services: tel: 020 7391 2002; website: www.jmuaccess.org.uk/publications.asp



The Building Regulations. 1991: Access and Facilities for disabled people: approved document M. 1999. £7.99. Available from The Stationary Office.

Other useful publications

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education: Index for Inclusion 2000. £24.50. Available from CSIE. tel: 0117 344 4007; fax: 0117 344 4005; website: www.inclusion.org.uk

DfEE: Connecting Schools for Inclusion an interactive CD Rom which looks at strengthening links between special and mainstream schools to support the inclusion of pupils with SEN. Available from Voluntary Partnerships Team, SEN Division, DfES. tel: 020 7925 6881; fax: 020 7925 5920

DfEE: National Curriculum 2000 sets out the curriculum for schools and local education authorities. Also includes Inclusion Statement at beginning of the document. Available from website: www.nc.uk.net

DfEE/QCA: Supporting the Target Setting Process DfES Communication: 0065/2001 (Revised March 2001) guidance for effective target setting for pupils with special educational needs 2001. Also known as the 'P scales'. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

DfES: The Distribution of Resources to Support Inclusion (Ref LEA/080/2001) Nov 2001. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.dfes.gov.uk

Disability Equality in Education: Training for Inclusion & Disability Equality Course Book. Priced. 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

OFSTED: Evaluating Educational Inclusion - Guidance for inspectors and schools. October 2000. Ref No. HMI 235. Available from OfSTED. tel: 020 7421 6800; website: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties 2001. £60. Available from Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Publications; PO Box 99, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2SN; tel 01787 884 444; website: www.qca.org.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

Teacher Training Agency: The National SEN Specialist Standards identifying your training needs. 1999. CD-ROMs available from TTA Publications; tel 0845 606 0323; e-mail publications@ttalit.co.uk website: www.canteach.gov.uk

Useful websites:

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

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



ANNEX C

Where to go for further help and information (This list is not exhaustive)

Local Services:

- x_ Many local authorities have access officers who are able to offer advice on access issues.

- x_ 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).

- x_ 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 may be able to provide specialist advice on the full range of access issues relating to particular kinds of disabilities.

- x_ 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.

- x_ Access Auditors/Consultants on the National Register of Access Consultants (www.nrac.org.uk) and the Access Association

Organisations

- x_ **AFASIC:** 50-52 Great Sutton Street; London; EC1V 0DJ; tel: 020 7490 9411; fax: 020 7251 2834; e-mail: info@afasic.org.uk website; www.afasic.org.uk

- x_ **Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus:** Asbah House; 42 Park Road; Peterborough PE1 2UQ; tel: 01733 555988; website: www.asbah.org

- x_ **Association of Teachers and Lecturers:** 7 Northumberland Street; London; WC2N 5DA; tel: 020 7930 6441

- x_ **Barnardo's:** Tanners Lane; Barkingside; Ilford; Essex IG6 1QG; tel: 020 8550 8822; website: www.barnardos.org.uk

- x_ **British Deaf Association:** 1-3 Worship Street; London EC2A 2AB; tel: 020 7588 3520; website: www.britishdeafassociation.org.uk

- x_ **British Diabetic Association UK:** 10 Parkway; Camden; NW1 7AA; tel: 020 7424 1000; fax: 020 7424 1001; e-mail: info@diabities.org.uk website: www.diabities.org.uk

- x_ **British Dyslexia Society:** 98 London Road; Reading; RG1 5AU; tel: 0118 966 8271; fax: 0118 935 1927; website: www.bda/dyslexia.org.uk/

- x_ **British Epilepsy Association:** New Anstey House; Gate Way Drive; Yeadon; Leeds LS19 7XY; tel: 01132 108800; helpline: 0808 8005050; website: www.epilepsy.org.uk

- x_ **Brittle Bone Society:** 30 Guthrie Street; Dundee; DD1 5BS; tel: 01328 204446; e-mail:



bbs@brittlebone.org.uk website: www.brittlebone.org.uk

x_ **Centre for Accessible Environments:** Nutmeg House; 60 Gainford Street; London SE1 2NY; tel: 020 7357 8182; fax: 7357 8183; e-mail: info@cae.org.uk website: www.cae.org.uk

x_ **Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education:** Room 2S203, S Block, Frenchay Campus, Cold Harbour Lane BS16 1QU; tel: 0117 344 4007; fax 0117 344 4005; website: www.inclusion.org.uk

x_ **Council for Disabled Children:** National Children's Bureau; 8 Wakley Street; London; EC1V 7QE; tel: 020 7843 6000; fax: 020 7278 9512; website: www.ncb.org.uk

x_ **Cystic Fibrosis Trust:** 11 London Road; Bromley; Kent BR1 1BY; tel: 020 8464 7211; website: www.cftrust.org.uk

x_ **Disability Equality in Education:** Unit GL; Leroy House; 436 Essex Road; London N1 3QP; tel: 020 7359 2855; e-mail: info@diseed.org.uk website: www.diseed.org.uk

x_ **Disability Living Foundation:** 380-384 Harrow Road; London W9 2HU; tel: 020 7289 6111; fax: 020 7266 2922; helpline: 0845 130 9177 (This advice line is open from Mon- Fri; 10am - 4pm); e-mail: info@dlf.org.uk website: www.dlf.org.uk

x_ **Disability Rights Commission:** DRC Helpline, Freepost, MID 02164, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire. CV37 9BR; tel: 08457 622 633; fax: 08457 778 878; e-mail: enquiry@drc-gb.org website: www.drc-gb.org

x_ **Down's Syndrome Association:** 155 Mitcham Road; London SW17 9PG; tel: 020 8682 4001; e-mail: info@downs-syndrome.org.uk website: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

x_ **Dyslexia Institute:** 133 Gresham Road; Staines; Middlesex. TW18 2AJ; tel: 01784 463851; website: www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

x_ **Dyspraxia Foundation:** 8 West Alley; Hitchin; Hertfordshire SG5 1EG; tel: 01462 454986; website: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

x_ **Haemophilia Society:** Chesterfield House; 385 Euston Road; London NW1 3AU; tel: 020 7380 0600; fax: 020 7387 8220; e-mail: infor@haemophilia.org.uk website: www.haemophilia.org.uk

x_ **Headway National Head Injuries Association:** 4 King Edward Court; King Edward Street; Nottingham NG1 1EW; tel: 01159 240 800; fax: 0115 958 446; e-mail: enquiries@headway.org.uk website: www.headway.org.uk

x_ **ICAN:** 4 Dyer's Buildings; Holborn; London; EC1N 2JP; tel: 0870 010 4066; fax: 0870 010 4067; e-mail: ican@ican.org.uk website: www.ican.org.uk

x_ **JMU Access Partnership:** 105 Judd Street; London; WC1H 9NE; tel 020 7391 2002; fax: 020 7387 7109; e-mail Jmu@rnib.org.uk website: www.jmuaccess.org.uk

x_ **Kidsactive:** Pryor's Bank; Bishop's Park; London SW6 3LA; tel: 020 7736 4443; fax: 020 7731 4426; e-mail: office@kidsactive.org.uk website: www.kidsactive.org.uk

x_ **LOOK:** c/o Queen Alexander College; 49 Court Oak Road; Harborne; Birmingham B17 9TG; tel: 01214 285 038; fax: 0121 427 9800; e-mail: office@look-uk.org website: www.look-uk.org



- x_ **MENCAP:** 117 - 123 Golden Lane; London; EC1Y 0RT; tel: 020 7454 0454; fax: 020 7696 5540; e-mail: information@mencap.org.uk website: www.mencap.org.uk
- x_ **Motability:** Goodman House; Station Approach; Harlow; CM20 2ET; tel: 01279 635666; website: www.motability.co.uk
- x_ **National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN):** 4/5 Amber Business Village; Amber Close; Amington; Tamworth; Staffs; B77 4RP; tel: 01827 311500; fax: 01827 313 005; e-mail: welcome@nasen.org.uk website: www.nasen.org.uk
- x_ **National Association of Head Teachers:** 1 Heath Square; Boltro road; Haywards Heath; West Sussex; RH16 1BL; tel: 01444 472 472
- x_ **National Association of Parent partnership Services (napps):** c/o Parent Partnerships Service; Conciliation and Appeals Unit; Children, Schools and Families; County Hall; Hertford. SG13 8DF; tel: 01992 555 922 e-mail: parent.partnership@hertscc.gov.uk
- x_ **National Asthma Campaign:** Providence House; Providence Place; London N1 0NT; tel: 020 7226 2260; helpline: 08457 010203; website: www.asthma.org.uk
- x_ **National Autistic Society:** 393 City Road; London EC1V 1NG; tel: 020 7833 2299; fax: 020 7833 9666; e-mail: nas@nas.org.uk website: www.nas.org.uk
- x_ **NASUWT:** Education Centre; Rose Hill; Rednal; Birmingham; B45 8RS; tel: 0121 453 6150
- x_ **National Blind Children's Society:** Bradbury House; Market Street; Highbridge; Somerset TA9 3BW; tel: 01278 764764; fax: 01278 764790; e-mail: businessenquiries@nbcs.org.uk website: www.nbcs.org.uk
- x_ **National Deaf Children's Society:** 15 Dufferin Street; London EC1Y 8UR; tel: 0808 800 8880; fax: 020 7251 5020; e-mail: helpline@nbcs.org.uk website: www.ndcs.org.uk
- x_ **National Eczema Society:** Hill House; Highgate Hill; London N19 5NA; tel: 08702 413604; tel: 020 7281 3553; fax: 020 7281 6395; website: www.eczema.org
- x_ **National Federation of the Blind of the UK:** Sir John Wilson House; 215 Kirkgate; Wakefield; West Yorkshire WF1 1JG; tel: 01924 291313; fax: 01924 200 244; e-mail: nfbuk@globalnet.co.uk website: www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~nfbuk
- x_ **National Register of Access Consultants:** Nutmeg House; 60 Gainford Street; London. SE1 2NY; tel: 020 7234 0434; fax: 020 7357 8183; website: www.nrac.org.uk
- x_ **National Society for Epilepsy:** Chesham Lane; Chalfont St Peter; Buckinghamshire SL9 0RJ; tel: 01494 601300; fax: 01494 871 927; helpline: 01494 601 400; website: www.epilepsyinse.org.uk
- x_ **National Union of Teachers:** Hamilton House; Mabledon Place; London; WC1H 9BD; tel: 020 7388 6191
- x_ **Physically Disabled and Able Bodied (PHAB LTD):** Summit House; Wandle Road; Croydon CR0 1DF; tel: 020 8667 9443; fax: 020 8681 1399; e-mail: info@phabengland.org.uk website: www.phabengland.org.uk
- x_ **Pre-school Learning Alliance:** 69 Kings Cross Road; London WC1X 9LL; tel: 020 7833 0991; fax: 020 7837 4942; e-mail: pla@pre-school.org.uk website: www.pre-school.org.uk



x_ **Professional Association of Teachers:** 2 St James' Court; Friar Gate; Derby; DE1 1BT; tel: 01332 372 337

x_ **RADAR:** 12 City Forum; 250 City Road; London; EC1V 8AF; tel: 020 7250 3222; fax: 020 7250 0212; e-mail: radar@radar.org.uk website: www.radar.org.uk

x_ **Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID):** 19-23 Featherstone Street; London; EC1Y 8SL; tel: 020 7296 8000; fax: 020 7296 8199; e-mail: informationline@rnid.org.uk website: www.rnib.org.uk

x_ **Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB):** 105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE; tel: 020 7388 1266; fax: 020 7388 2034; website: www.rnib.org.uk

x_ **SCOPE:** 6 Market Road; London N7 9PW; tel: 020 7619 7100; fax: 020 7619 7399; helpline: 0808 800 3333 (9am to 9pm weekdays) (2pm to 6pm weekends); website: www.scope.org.co.uk/

x_ **Secondary Heads Association:** 130 regents Street; Leicester; LE1 7PG; tel: 0116 299 1122

x_ **Sense:** 11-13 Clifton Terrace; London; N4 3SR; tel: 020 7272 7774; fax: 020 7272 6012; e-mail: enquiries@sense.org.uk website: www.sense.org.uk

x_ **Sickle Cell Society:** 54 Station Road; London NW10 4UA; tel: 020 8961 7795; fax: 020 8961 8346; e-mail: sicklecellsoc@btinternet.com website: www.sicklecellsociety.org

x_ **Society of Education Officers:** Manchester House; 84-86 Princess Street; Manchester; M1 6NG. tel: 0161 275 8801

x_ **Young Minds:** Dinah Morley; Deputy Director; 102-108 Clerkenwell Road; London; EC1M 5SA; tel: 020 7336 8445; fax: 020 7336 8446; e-mail: enquiries@youngminds.org.uk website: www.youngminds.org.uk

Annex D

Identifying Barriers to Access: A Checklist

This list should help you identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.

Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils?		
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?		
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?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectations of all pupils?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		



Section 2: Is your school designed to meet the needs of all pupils?

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?

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?

Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?

Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?

Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?

Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?

Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?

Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such as considering a room's acoustics and noisy equipment?

Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?

Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?

Question

Yes No

Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?

Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?

Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?

Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?

Annex E

Creating an Accessibility Plan

This is an example of a plan that a school might produce after reviewing existing plans (in particular refurbishments and arrangements and SEN policy), looking at options for improving accessibility within existing arrangements and an audit of the school site for accessibility. The school should monitor the implementation of the plan and to keep under review the access needs of the school.

Short Term	Targets	Strategies	Outcome	Timeframe	Goals Achieved
	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 formats. Seek advice from LEA sensory support service on appropriate colour schemes and blinds.	If needed the school can provide written information in alternative formats.	Term 3 2002/03	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.	After an audit the school decides that some 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 2003/04 Term 2 2003/04	Physical 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.	Planned use of minor capital delegated resources and discuss with the LEA using Schools Access Initiative funding.	Having secured capital resources from the LEA, over a three year period the school's entry areas, will be fully accessible.	Term 3 2004/05	Physical accessibility of school increased.



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