



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL

ACCESSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

2013 - 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

The Education (Disabilities Strategies and Pupils Records)(Scotland) Act 2002 requires each local authority to prepare and implement an Accessibility Framework.

This is the third Accessibility Framework prepared to support educational establishments to ensure that the Local Authority meets its obligations with respect to:

- Access to the curriculum;
- Access to the physical environment of the educational establishment;
- Improved communication.

This Framework covers the period 2013 to 2015. This will allow the Framework to run concurrently with East Ayrshire's Children and Young People's Service Plan which finishes in 2015.

The scope of the Framework starts with children in early childhood centres and extends to primary schools, secondary schools, supported learning centres, communications centres and special schools.

2. A VISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN EAST AYRSHIRE

The Framework is set within the context of East Ayrshire's Community Plan:

"East Ayrshire will be a place with vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high quality services which are sustainable, accessible and meet people's needs"

In the overall context for children's services, the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Service Plan 2011-15 sets out the overall strategy for support for all children and young people in East Ayrshire. In relation to those children and young people with additional support needs the Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004 as amended by the 2009 legislation sets out the requirements on education authorities to assess, plan and review children's needs who require additional support.

This Accessibility Framework specifically supports those children and young people with a disability. It sits within the context of the vision for all children and young people in East Ayrshire, namely:

"We want to ensure that each child in East Ayrshire, including those who are not yet born have the best start in life. Therefore our commitment to children and young people, their families and carers is to provide them with the support they need, when and where they need it in order to help them achieve their aspirations and potential."

3. A GUIDING SET OF PRINCIPLES

The guiding set of principles set out in East Ayrshire's Integrated Children and Young People's Service Plan 2011-15 are:

- **Access, inclusion, equality and quality:** a range of high quality services should be available to children, young people and their families at the time that they need them and in places that make sense to them. Children and young people should be supported in the context of their own families and local communities/services unless it is not safe or appropriate to do so;
- **Prevention and early intervention:** intervening early, particularly in the early stages of a child's life, where appropriate;
- **Listening, active participation and partnership:** children, young people and their families should be active participants in designing, planning and reviewing the services that they receive. Agencies will work in partnership with them and each other to promote self alliance;
- **Protection:** agencies will work with each other and their families to ensure that children and young people are kept safe;
- **Rights and Responsibilities:** agencies will work with children, young people and their families in a way which ensures their rights and responsibilities are clearly recognised and promoted.

Within this context we will **see and value** the child or young person, not his or her disability and in doing so break down barriers by promoting informed understanding of what a child or young person **can** do. Importantly, we will seek to overcome barriers to learning.

4. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if:

"he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities".

5. POLICY CONTEXT

The overarching policy document in East Ayrshire is its Community Plan and associated Single Outcome Agreement. Both the Lifelong Learning Theme and Improving Health and Wellbeing Theme are important in the context of this Strategy. The Lifelong Learning Action Plan has **Positive and Sustained Destinations For Learners Improved as a Local Outcome**. Workstream 2.2 specifically sets out key actions in respect of children and young people with additional support needs. Specific actions include:

- Support young people with additional support needs to secure sustainable destinations;
- Support young people with profound and complex needs to secure sustainable destinations

In relation to health and wellbeing, local outcomes include ***children and young people, including those in early years and their carers, assisted to be active, health, nurtured and included.***

Workstream 5.1 relates to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people and includes a specific action to:

- Deliver programmes within 7 special schools/supported learning centres to children and young people

The Accessibility Framework is integral to the overall policy context in East Ayrshire in relation to equalities, inclusion and lifelong learning. It is integral to our approach to meeting the undernoted legislative requirements:

- Education (Disabilities, Strategies and Pupil Records)(Scotland) Act 2002;
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Additional Support for Learning)(Scotland) Act 2004 as amended 2009
- Getting It Right For Every Child
- Early Years Framework
- Curriculum for Excellence

In East Ayrshire the Framework sits alongside our Additional Support for Learning Planning Guidelines and our local equality outcomes.

As the Council takes forward the Early Years Framework and Curriculum for Excellence, meeting the needs of our children and young people with a disability will be essential.

6. HOW WE DEVELOPED THE NEW ACCESSIBILITY FRAMEWORK?

We have used our routine consultation with children and young people along with evidence from recent publications to prioritise the outcomes and associated action points.

In 2011, we completed work in partnership with Common Ground Mediation to listen to the views of children and young people with additional support needs, the vast majority of whom have a disability. They ranged in age between 5 to 17 years. They told us:



In 2012, the Conversations Project: A Report to the Steering Group of the National Review of Services for Disabled Children and Young People was published.

The project involved 65 disabled young people from across Scotland. In respect of relevant findings in relation to the Accessibility Framework, many young people found school to be a lonely experience. Some who attended a 'special' unit in a mainstream school did not feel that they were part of the school. People who attended a special school had difficulty maintaining friendships outside of school.

In terms of transition, young people felt they needed more information about moving from school and options available for them. For those however who had made the transition from school to university, the experience was positive.

More recently, in 2013 Common Ground Mediation was asked to consult with focus groups of children and young people attending a range of educational establishments across East Ayrshire so that their views could specifically inform the preparation for the Accessibility Framework. A total of 60 children and young people, with a wide range of learning needs and abilities, ranging from 5 years old to 15 years old were consulted.

The children and young people's views are represented throughout Section 9.

7. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY IN EAST AYRSHIRE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS?

The Council has 2,800 children identified with educational additional support needs including children in Early Childhood Centres.

The 2012 census recorded that:

- 29 children and young people assessed and declared as disabled in mainstream, primary and secondary schools;
- 46 children and young people assessed and declared as disabled in special schools;
- 159 children and young people assessed disabled but not declared by parent.

This equates to 1.5% of the total school population of 16,067.

The Census is completed by individual establishments and over the lifetime of the Framework the Council will review how children with a disability are recorded on the census.

8. HOW DO WE SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY IN OUR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS?

A full list of support services is set out in Appendix I.

Case Study

The undernoted sets out some examples of how children and young people are currently supported:

Pupil A is in primary 5 at her local mainstream school. She is blind and a Braille user. Her needs are such that in order to fully access the curriculum and physical environment she requires to have varying levels of VI support in all activities.

Background:

In nursery a multi-agency assessment was undertaken. She was introduced to Braille at this point via a programme of pre-Braille skills.

A is becoming competent in her reading and production of Braille having now completed Grade 1 and Grade 2 Braille. Her sister is also learning to read and write Braille via support from the VI team. There is access to mobility training on an ongoing basis, with continuous liaison between the VI team, school staff and social services.

Technology and Training:

A has been introduced to an electronic Braille Notetaker, and she also accesses screen reader software, with training in these technologies ongoing. All pictures and diagrams are produced using specialist 'swell' paper to allow her to explore the information tactilely. Staff in school have been provided with specific in-service training in understanding the nature of A's abilities and challenges, and in effective tailored strategies.

Summary

A enjoys school, participates in all activities as fully as possible, using her long cane to aid mobility around the school and playground. Supervision and specialist support is always in place and is there to ensure access, and also to encourage independence over time.

Case Study

Background:

B was diagnosed with a profound hearing loss at one year old. A Teacher of the Deaf from the Ayrshire Hearing Impairment Service visited B at home every week and helped the family to understand childhood deafness and to learn how they could support the child. The parent said that the Teacher of the Deaf was 'a lifeline at diagnosis and a brilliant source of advice'. She provided information so that the family could make informed choices about communication options, and she helped the family with the maintenance of

B's hearing aids. She introduced sign language so that B could begin to develop language skills in the critical early years period.

Technology and Training:

Before B began attending her local Early Childhood Centre the Teacher of the Deaf gave deaf awareness training to staff and provided direct teaching support and staff training in nursery, while continuing to give home support. Shortly after starting the Early Childhood Centre, B underwent a cochlear implant operation. The Teacher of the Deaf helped the family to understand the specialist equipment, and supported B, her family and the nursery staff through the rehabilitation programme after surgery.

Summary

B started primary one, albeit with delayed language, in her local school.

In Nov 2012 the parent wrote about the Teacher of the Deaf: 'She was a constant at times of transition. My child went to mainstream school. Without the support of a Teacher of the Deaf this would never have happened and my child would not have achieved as well as she has'.

School staff said they valued the Teacher of the Deaf who 'provided lots of background and specialist knowledge' (Questionnaire, Nov 2012) . As B progressed through school her Teacher of the Deaf continued to raise awareness of her needs, encouraging her independence and providing specialist teaching, tailored to the specific needs of deaf learners. Gradually, B's language deficit became less marked.

In November 2012, B herself summed up the impact of support from her Teacher of the Deaf,

'She helps me with words I don't understand, and she's known me for a long time. She taught me to look after my implant... she takes me to fun days and she makes me work better'.

9. WHAT ARE OUR KEY PRIORITIES?

The legislation requires local authorities to develop priorities in respect of access to the curriculum, communication and the physical environment. The undernoted sets out our priorities over the next two years.



Good teaching and learning is the foundation for all of our children and young people and particularly those with a disability to ensure they achieve their potential.

'I like the work because it's set out and you can see what you're going to be doing. It's called Map of the Day and if you do language one day then you maybe get a break and do something different the next day.'

We will ensure all educational establishments have a written policy on additional support needs which sets out in detail the approach taken to meet the needs of all children and young people with additional support needs and specifically those with a disability.

Each policy will set out how children and young people's educational needs will be met; including how curricular materials will be adapted to support learning and teaching. This may include different formats dependent upon the needs of any child or young person.

We will:

- Assess children and young peoples' needs in relation to the appropriate use of technology
- Focus child's early experience of learning and development on enablement and empower every child/young person to engage positively and confidently with their educational environment so that they have a solid foundation to develop independence
- Expect each educational establishment to have a co-ordinator for children and young people with an additional support need
- Deploy additional support for learning staffing based on need to help meet the educational and care needs of children and young people will be put in place.
- Review children and young peoples' needs including the importance of involving the child or young person, as appropriate, in the review of these educational needs along with parents and carers.
- Work with partners to ensure that all children and young people have fair and equal access to any extracurricular activities planned as part of the establishment programme.
- Review our transition arrangements with our partners with a view to improving outcomes for young people.
- Work in close partnership with Community Planning Partners and in particular NHS Ayrshire & Arran and local colleges.

Access to the Physical Environment

Current legislation has an explicit presumption of mainstreaming (section 15 of Standards in Scotland's Schools etc At 2000) and in this regard it is essential that the Council take every reasonable step to ensure that the physical environment in all educational establishments meets the access needs of all children, young people and adults regardless of any disability they may experience.

'P7 is one big family and we get to move about the school like S1 pupils.' I don't like assembly because it's noisy. I try and cover my ears but the noise just comes through.'

The Council will maintain and update as appropriate an Accessibility Asset Management Database which will allow planning to take place to ensure that all establishments, in time, meet the requirements of the legislation in this regard.

The Council will continue to engage in a programme of new build, refurbishment, upgrade and one-off alterations, all of which will be consistent with our aim of equitable access within the resources available. Access Panels in East Ayrshire are routinely consulted at an early stage of development.

'It's a nice new building', and another pupil said that 'nice kind people open doors for K.'

Since 2008, the Council has renewed (r); refurbished (ref); extended (e) or improved (i) access for children with a disability in the following early childhood centres and schools:

Auchinleck Learning Community

- Auchinleck Academy (i)
- Muirkirk Nursery Class (e); (i)

Cumnock Learning Community

- Barshare Early Childhood Centre (e)
- Greenmill Early Childhood Centre (e)
- New Cumnock Primary School (r) and New Cumnock Early Childhood Centre (r)

Doon Learning Community

- Doon academy (re); (i)
- Littlemill Early Childhood Centre (re)
- Patna Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (r)

Grange Learning Community

- Crosshouse Primary School (i)
- Gargieston Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (r)

James Hamilton Learning Community

- James Hamilton Academy (i)

Loudoun Learning Community

- Darvel Primary School (r) and Darvel Early Childhood Centre (r)
- Galston Primary School (r) and Galston Early Childhood Centre (r)

Stewarton Learning Community

- Dunlop Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (e); (i)
- Lainshaw Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (e); (i)

We will:

- Ensure that where possible every practical step is taken to facilitate physical access to all parts of the school/early childhood centre environment for all children and young people, regardless of any disability;
- Ensure that there is a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for all children, young people and staff in the event of an emergency and that this plan is subject to regular trial tests and drills;
- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of the access needs of any child or young person with a disability and their role in facilitating such access.

Communication

It is essential that we recognise the importance of good communication and in many respects this will be undertaken through the use of the development of appropriate formats to ensure that information is accessible by all, regardless of a child or young person's disability.

Pupils at a school said that they do not take part in meetings:
'We do not have meetings about our education, only our teachers know about our education and how it works.'

'I like homework because I get wee games to play with my mum'.

We will:

- continue to consult with children and young people routinely about their views to help to continue developing our services.

- Make written information available in plain and accessible English;
- Make written information available in other formats that will be pertinent to the needs of children and young people with a disability. This will include:
 - Braille
 - Large print
 - Audio format
 - BSL/Macaton or other signing systems
 - Ethnic languages
- Put in place support for children and young people and parents and carers who may require access to support to make their own needs known to staff. This may include:
 - Interpreters;
 - Signing specialists;
 - The use of “My Views GIRFEC” to support children and young people express their views.

‘Pupils at a number of schools talked about involvement in Eco Committee meetings, Pupil Council meetings and Website Council meetings. Responses varied when we clarified that we were interested in meetings about the pupils’ education. One group of younger children said that they don’t go to meetings about their education and are not involved with planning. However, another older group at the same school all said that they go to review meetings with their mum and dad to discuss progress.’

*One pupil talked about review meetings ‘because I’m in foster `care’:
‘I like it when they say good things about me, but not when they say bad things.....’*

The Council has independent mediation arrangements in place and have a commitment to ensure that these are renewed on an annual basis.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been carried out.

11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Accessibility Framework will be monitored during the two year period. As part of this, the Council will continue to consult with children and young people regarding their educational experience.

SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY

EAST

The EAST service offers specialist advice and direct support to educational establishments and individual children and young people.

In addition children and young people are supported through the service by a:

- Hospital education teacher
- Visual impairment teachers and support staff

AYRSHIRE HEARING IMPAIRMENT SERVICES

Services operate on both a peripatetic basis and in Grange Academy through the Hearing Impairment educational base. Services support the educational needs of children and young people with a hearing impairment.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

The educational psychology service provides advice and guidance to educational establishments; other services such as social work, and direct support to individual children and young people based on their assessed needs.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND SUPPORTED LEARNING CENTRES

The Council has 3 special schools supporting children with mild to profound and complex needs. There are 2 communication centres for children and young people with severe communication disorders. One supports primary aged children in Crosshouse Primary School, the other, secondary aged young people, in Loudoun Academy. Four supported learning centres are located in Patna Primary School; Barshare Primary School; Doon Academy and Cumnock Academy.

The language unit, located in Crosshouse supports children who have a language or communication disorder in pre-school years.

SOCIAL WORK: CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITIES TEAM

Children and families provide social work support to families with children with a disability. Support is provided within a child's home and may take the form of practical support; relationship support or organising periods of respite.

POOLED BUDGET

A pooled budget is available to help children and young people access out of school childcare services.

SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND YOUTH WORK

A range of specialist and integrated activities are available to ensure that local young people with additional support needs can access sport, physical activity and youth work programmes.

Within all Special Schools and Learning Support Units there is a programme of physical and recreational activities delivered during or after school via Active Schools Coordinators. There is also support to ensure that school pupils from Special Schools can access the range of youth related activities such as Consultative Forums and Duke of Edinburgh for example.

In the community, there are specialist sport and physical activity clubs delivered by the Young People, Sport & Diversion Team which specifically offer opportunities for children, young people and adults with disabilities these include activities like Multi-Sports Clubs, Boccia, Integrated Drama and All Ability Bikes.

Over and above this there are a number of excellent local voluntary clubs who specifically develop sports opportunities for disabled athletes; these include the Kilmarnock Jets Swimming Club and Clan Kilmarnock Tri Rugby Club. To help further develop these opportunities there is a newly established Disability Sports Partnership within East Ayrshire and there are likely to be a range of new opportunities as a result of this in particular within Athletics and Football.

East Ayrshire Council, in partnership with East Ayrshire Sports Council, also offer a support programme for talented athletes including those with a disability and those competing at the Special Olympics.