



VALE of GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

# Consultation on proposed Accessibility Strategy 2021-24

Directorate of Learning and Skills



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## Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>The Strategy .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Definitions .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Local Context .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Legal Context .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Access to the Curriculum .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Council Services .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Access to the Physical Environment .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>School Trips Accessibility.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>School Accessibility Policy &amp; Plans.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Evaluation and Review .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Consultation Response Form.....</b>	<b>21</b>

# Vale of Glamorgan Accessibility Strategy 2021-24 (Accessibility for Disabled Pupils)

## 1. Introduction

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils within its maintained schools and educational settings have every opportunity to attain the best possible outcomes. In order to achieve this ambition, it is essential that we ensure schools remain sustainable, reflect the needs of our local communities, and are equipped with the best possible learning environments.

In preparing accessibility strategies and plans, full and effective consultation must be undertaken to identify appropriate improvements. This consultation ensures that the views of disabled pupils and their parents/carers and appropriate professionals are considered. It is important that the consultation is meaningful, relevant and appropriate for the communities that are involved, and the Council has a duty of care to ensure that proposals are clear, transparent, and reflective of those affected. This is a vision that can only be realised by working in partnership with schools, settings governors, parents and the wider communities we serve.

Accessibility strategies and accessibility plans must both identify:

- How schools and the Council will increase the quality and extent to which disabled pupils can fully participate in the curriculum, including after and out-of-school activities? (Articles 23 and 29 of the UNCRC).
- What physical environmental improvements will schools and the Council need to secure in order to maximise access to education, benefits facilities and services for disabled pupils? (Articles 6 and 28 of the UNCRC).
- How will schools and the Council improve the delivery of accessible information to disabled pupils? (Articles 2, 4 and 13 of the UNCRC).
- How are children and young people involved in decision-making (Article 12 of the UNCRC).

This strategy will make clear the Council's position on improving accessibility for disabled pupils and outlines schools' responsibilities in meeting their requirements around accessibility including accessibility of the curriculum, the physical environment and information for disabled pupils. The Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are as fully engaged in their learning and development as is possible and this strategy will help ensure full inclusion of disabled children in a school environment.

Under the Equality Act (2010) the Vale of Glamorgan Council must, for the schools for which it is responsible, prepare an accessibility strategy. This applies to council-maintained schools, nurseries and early year's settings. The accessibility strategy sets out the Councils plan to increase access to education for pupils with disabilities in all schools. Schools should take account of the Councils strategy when drawing up their own school accessibility plans.

All schools have a statutory duty to draw up and publish a school accessibility plan. As well as general duties for public bodies, the Equality Act states the legal obligations that schools, early year's providers, post-16 institutions, and others have towards disabled children and young people. Disability is a protected characteristic within the terms of this Act. This strategy makes clear the Council's priorities in improving accessibility for children and young people who have a disability and to outline maintained schools' and settings responsibilities in meeting these requirements. This is a requirement of law. [Schedule 10 of the Equality Act](#) clearly sets out what every Council in England and Wales must do as part of their accessibility strategy. The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework for this strategy which has been prepared with due consideration to the requirements of the [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#).

## 2. The Strategy

The overall aim of this strategy is to ensure that the Vale of Glamorgan Council supports schools in meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with additional learning needs or disabilities and enables them to achieve aspirational outcomes. With the right level of help and support, all pupils should be equipped to achieve happy, healthy and fulfilling adult lives. The Council aims to equip them as far as possible to live independently, find a job and have an active social life – with support when they need it.

We will work to ensure that our maintained schools and early year's settings:

- have a welcoming and inclusive culture, because all staff will be committed to an inclusive agenda;
- have the infrastructure required to achieve this inclusive agenda, because the strategic planning of both the Council and the school/ setting will support the continuing improvement of access to the curriculum, facilities and information;
- enable success for all, because both the Council and the school/ setting will rigorously monitor and challenge progress and achievement; and
- identify needs at the earliest opportunity; assess and meet needs effectively and in a timely way; improve outcomes and life chances for all children and young people.

The Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Plan outlines the Council's strong vision for the future of the Vale of Glamorgan. This vision guides us in how we plan, deliver and review our services. Our vision for the Vale of Glamorgan is “**Strong communities with a bright future.**” Our well-being outcomes are:

- An Inclusive and Safe Vale
- An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale
- An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale
- An Active and Healthy Vale

Improving access to education for disabled children means considering:

- the curriculum and how it is taught;
- the accessibility of school buildings and their surroundings, school activities including school trips and transport; and
- information and activities provided by schools and how easy it is for disabled pupils and/or their disabled parents to understand.

These are known as the 'three planning duties' and are a statutory requirement of Schedule 10 to 'the Act.

The Council acknowledges that ensuring accessibility is an ongoing focus; staff change, and schools/settings will at times encounter additional learning needs and disabilities for the first time. There will always be a need for further action and development. We therefore aim to foster a 'learning culture' that promotes continual improvement in all that we do. This will be achieved by:

- Providing on-going guidance and training to staff to support them in the effective implementation of relevant legislation.
- Collecting and disseminating examples of good practice across the Council and the wider educational community.
- Providing information to encourage continued professional development in the area of additional learning needs, disability and inclusion.
- Ensuring continued access to advice and support through centrally maintained specialist services and partner organisations.
- Further developing schools as centres of excellence.
- Working with schools to ensure that relevant information is readily available to support access on entry to/transfer between schools.
- Creating a climate in which schools always consider disabled pupils when any change to curriculum and other policies are proposed.
- Ensuring schools regularly review their accessibility plans.

The Council will aim to ensure that improvements to the physical environment of schools are made to increase access to education. This will be achieved by:

- Supporting schools in reviewing the physical access of their premises.
- Ensuring that the Property Department monitors all building projects carried out centrally or by schools to address accessibility issues.
- Providing schools with advice on disability and accessibility issues.

The Council will also aim to ensure that improvements to the provision of information for disabled pupils is prioritised. This will be achieved by providing support and advice on the provision of information and continuing to maintain specialist support services.

This strategy will link into:

- Asset renewal plan
- Capital programme
- School Accessibility Plans
- Council Strategic Plans

The strategy will be made available to all schools and other interested groups and to the public in as accessible form as possible.

### **What we will do next:**

#### **Consultation**

The Council takes its responsibilities for all pupils very seriously and will follow [Welsh Government Guidance](#) in preparing and reviewing this accessibility strategy. We will consult with a broad cross-section of service providers, users and third sector organisations. Children, young people, schools, early years settings and Council services working with schools will be consulted, through an on-line questionnaire from **9 November 2020 to 15 January 2021** to identify strengths of current provision and to identify key areas for improvement. This information, in conjunction with other qualitative and quantitative data held will be used to identify and set targets and priorities for the Council's Accessibility Strategy Action plan prior to its finalisation, delivery and review. The consultation must enable those affected by the accessibility strategy/plan to provide their views. Therefore, the consultation process must also be accessible.

The Council will also review the outcomes of existing strategies/plans to identify what worked and why it worked; what was less successful and why that was the case; and whether the identified needs remain. We will identify remaining barriers to accessibility. Where no accessibility strategy or plan is available, we will undertake research to identify any previous accessibility barriers and to identify best practice in schools.

The Council will focus on desired outcomes and suggested improvement priorities to achieve those outcomes ranked as:

- short - addressed within 1st year
- medium -started or addressed during the current accessibility strategy
- long term - started but seen as an ongoing process

Outcomes should also be ranked according to both cost and impact.

We will then set targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-related, evaluated and reviewed) which will specify what outcomes will be achieved, and by when.

Where necessary we will further consult and finalise the strategy, ensuring that information is provided on why subsequent decisions in drafting have been taken.

Both the accessibility strategy and individual school accessibility plans will be available to anyone on request, in any alternative format required. We will publish the accessibility strategy on the Council's web site and schools will be required to publish their individual accessibility plans on their websites.

Implementation of both the accessibility strategy and individual school accessibility plans will be evidenced and subject to review to identify progress made and barriers

remaining, together with their solutions. The evaluation of the strategy and plan will be published on the Council's website.

### 3. Definitions

**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. A physical or mental impairment can include learning difficulties, mental health conditions, medical conditions or hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism and speech, language and communication impairments (Equality Act, 2010)

**Reasonable Adjustments** - The Equality Act 2010 states that bodies responsible for schools have a duty to make "reasonable adjustments" for disabled people. This includes providing auxiliary aids or a service. It does not include the reasonable adjustment duty to make alterations to physical features. There is a duty to try to avoid disadvantage.

### 4. Local Context

The Vale of Glamorgan Council provides a wide range of provision for children and young people with additional learning needs and disabilities:

- Council services work with schools to ensure that education meets the diverse needs of children.
- All schools have an ALNCo.
- All schools have strong links with Ysgol Y Deri Special School.
- Council Outreach services support and advise schools on strategies to ensure that pupils with ALN / disability are able to access the curriculum and school environment. The specialist teachers and outreach services are flexible in how they meet the needs of pupils.
- Council services work with schools and specialist agencies to ensure that pupils can participate as fully as possible in line with their disability.
- Pupils can be placed in specialist centres of excellence if their disability /additional needs, require intensive input or specialist daily support. These include:
  - Gladstone Primary School
  - Jenner Park Primary Complex Needs Centre of Excellence
  - Palmerston Primary Physical Centre Of Excellence in Barry
  - Llandough Primary Speech and Language Centre of Excellence
  - Cogan Primary Hearing Impairment Centre of Excellence
  - St Cyres Comprehensive Hearing Impairment and Physical Centres of Excellence

#### **Corporate Plan- Vale of Glamorgan Council**

The Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will achieve its vision for the Vale of Glamorgan 'strong communities with a bright future'. Our vision will help guide us in how we plan, deliver and review services. The corporate plan also shows how we contribute to the Well-being Goals for Wales, introduced by the [Well-Being of Future](#)

[Generations Act \(2015\)](#). The Plan describes the four well-being outcomes we want to deliver for our citizens. The well-being outcomes we want to deliver are:

To work with and for our communities	To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth	To support people at home and in their community	To respect, enhance and enjoy our environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resilient, innovative &amp; responsive to the needs of our customers.</li> <li>Involvement, communication &amp; engagement.</li> <li>Our resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A well-educated and skilled population</li> <li>Encouraging people's ambitions.</li> <li>Ensuring that individuals and communities are able to prosper and achieve their best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in partnership to maximise people's physical and mental well-being.</li> <li>Ensure people are safe at home and in the community.</li> <li>Ensures people have the necessary advice, care and support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambitious standards.</li> <li>Understanding how our environment contributes to individual, community and global well-being.</li> <li>Committed to protecting and enhancing our environment.</li> </ul>

The plan details the activities the Council will undertake to ensure the best possible outlook for our citizens and communities and how we will work with partners and the local community to deliver these outcomes. Delivering the plan is underpinned by our Council's values which are ambitious, open, together and proud. These values describe our professional behaviours in how we approach our work, deal with each other and our service users.

## 5. Legal Context

### The Equality Act 2010

Schedule 10 of the Act specifies the requirement of a Council's accessibility strategy which must demonstrate:

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums.
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 Equality Act created the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales. It comprises two separate duties which apply to both councils and schools. This includes maintained, foundation and aided schools. Disability is a protected characteristic within the terms of this Act.



This strategy sets out how the Council will support schools and settings, including those for Early Years and Post-16, for which it is the responsible body, to comply with these duties, specifically to:

- increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools and settings to increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can take advantage of education and associated services; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to pupils with a disability and their parents.

### **The General Duty**

This duty requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled pupils that is related to their disability.
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

The General Duty applies across schools' duties, and applies to disabled pupils, staff and parents/ carers, along with other users of the school.

### **The Specific Duty**

In addition to the General Duty, there is a Specific Duty for schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the General Duty. The main requirement is for schools to prepare and publish a School Accessibility Policy and Plan, involving disabled people in the development of this, and to implement the plan and report on it. In effect, the General Duty sets out what schools do, with the Specific Duty setting out how schools have to do it, and what they need to record as evidence of what they have done.

Schools and the Council must be aware of the wider Equality Act 2010 requirements in Part 3 of the Act relating to the provision of services, goods and facilities. This may affect a range of activities whether they involve the use of school premises by community groups or the Council when delivering its education service and support to schools.

Importantly, the Act encourages the use of reasonable adjustments in order to achieve equality of access for disabled people where no such duty applies to an able person. This applies to both schools and councils in exercising their duty to advance equality.

### **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018**

The new Act affects nearly every education setting in Wales and focusses on the needs of children and young people aged 0 to 25. It requires:

- The replacement of the terms 'special educational needs' and 'learning difficulties / disabilities' with the new term, 'additional learning needs'.

- The creation of a single statutory plan, the Individual Development Plan (IDP) for learners.
- Increased participation of children and young people, ensuring they are at the centre of the planning and decision-making process.
- Prioritising high aspirations and improving outcomes, focusing on the child or young person's achievement of their full potential.
- Providing a simpler and less adversarial process, ensuring learners' needs are at the centre and are continually met.
- Creating new statutory roles within health and education to ensure collaboration and integration so that learners' needs are met.
- Focussing on earlier disagreement resolution, with disagreements resolved at the most local level possible.
- The introduction of clear and consistent rights of appeal where disagreements cannot be resolved at a local level.
- The introduction of a strengthened Code, which will sit alongside the Bill, with mandatory requirements and statutory guidance to support the primary legislation.
- The Bill also supports the Welsh Government's wider vision of achieving one million Welsh speakers by 2050 by including a series of strategic duties aimed at driving progress towards a truly bilingual additional learning needs system.
- Supports students from birth to 25.

### **Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015)**

This strategy will also support and inform the council in contributing to our responsibilities for the Well-being Goals for Wales, introduced by the [Well-Being of Future Generations Act \(2015\)](#)

The Act requires public bodies such as the Council to think more about the long term implications of decisions and actions, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. Public bodies must do what they do in a sustainable way and make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

The Act requires us to:

- work together better
- involve people reflecting the diversity of our communities
- look to the long term as well as focusing on now
- take action to try and stop problems getting worse - or even stop them happening in the first place

The Act establishes a statutory Future Generations Commissioner for Wales whose role is to act as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales, and to support the public bodies listed in the Act to work towards achieving the well-being goals. The Act also established Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. Each PSB must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by working to achieve the well-being goals.

## **6. Access to the Curriculum**

Ensuring access to the curriculum is crucial in developing life opportunities, preparing for adulthood and enabling contribution to the community. All children and young people should have access to high quality teaching that focuses on inclusive practice and breaks down barriers to learning.

All schools are responsible for providing a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum for all pupils, including those with ALN. Parents and carers are key partners in developing support for children and young people with disabilities. Schools must work with both parents and carers and pupils to develop aspirational and appropriate outcomes for their personalised plans.

The Council supports schools through its Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing service and the Standards and Provision service. The services are available to all phases and maintained and special school settings. This includes:

- delivering up to date information to school staff through training days for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators each term;
- offering training in all aspects of additional learning needs and safeguarding;
- supporting through a comprehensive wellbeing agenda that includes on-line assessments, safeguarding policies and anti-bullying strategies; and
- providing support in preparation for Estyn, the independent body that inspects quality and standards in education and training in Wales.

The services enables pupils with a range of needs to access the curriculum with specialist advisory teacher support and Learning Support Assistants. The team also delivers training to schools to ensure there is a whole school approach to improving participation for pupils.

## **7. Council Services**

The Educational Psychology Service is a service that aims to promote the inclusion, wellbeing, attendance and attainment of children and young people. The Educational Psychology Service offers consultation and assessment around a wide range of areas affecting children and young people's development. This includes those with ALN.

The Sensory Support Service involves a team of specialist teachers and support staff that provide support to children and young people from birth. The aim of the service is to ensure that children and young people with a visual or hearing impairment, in mainstream or special schools, enjoy the same opportunities as their peers. It also aims to overcome barriers to maximising potential. The service is also placed in the Hearing Centre of Excellence, at Cogan Primary School. Specialist teachers work with mainstream schools in order to ensure children and young people have access to high quality teaching strategies and targeted support to allow access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.

The Council provides a range of specialist services aimed at supporting schools with pupils at risk of disengagement or exclusion, and those who are permanently excluded. The Council is working with schools to adopt a trauma based approach for

children with social and emotional needs and recognises the importance of Adverse Childhood Experiences on development and learning.

The Speech and Language Service is a specialist service that supports children with the most severe and specific speech, language and communication needs in mainstream schools and resource bases. The service is placed centrally and in the Speech and Language Centre in order to ensure children and young people have access to high quality teaching strategies and targeted support to allow access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.

The Cognitive Outreach Service is a specialist service that supports children with moderate to severe learning needs in mainstream schools. The service is placed in the Cognitive Centre of Excellence at Jenner Park Primary. They work with mainstream schools in order to ensure children and young people have access to high quality teaching strategies and targeted support to allow access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.

The Physical Outreach Service is a specialist service that supports children with moderate to severe physical needs in mainstream schools. The service is placed in the Physical Centre of Excellence at Palmerston Primary, and work with mainstream schools in order to ensure children and young people have access to high quality teaching strategies and targeted support to allow access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.

The Specific Learning Difficulties Outreach Service is a specialist service that supports children with Specific Learning Difficulties in mainstream schools. The service is placed centrally and works with mainstream schools in order to ensure children and young people have access to high quality teaching strategies and targeted support to allow access to a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum.

Guidance on supporting pupils with medical needs is available in the Healthcare Needs policy.

A range of health professional's support schools to include disabled pupils. Occupational therapists advise schools about the suitability of the environment and use of activity based therapies that encourage them to be as independent as possible thus helping to raise an individual's self-esteem. They advise on appropriate specialist equipment or adaptations to the school environment required. Physiotherapists can advise a school about an individual's mobility and physical development. This might include things like co-ordination and ability to sit, stand and walk. They can advise a school on how best to help keep the child as mobile as possible and on any appropriate specialist equipment or adaptations to the environment. They:

- provide support and training to all schools to ensure they can offer pupils and parents/ carers fully accessible information;
- advise schools on the most appropriate methods of conveying information to pupils with additional learning needs;
- provide guidance on teaching and supporting pupils who are sensory impaired;
- provide guidance and support on accessible information formats and methods for communication with parents and carers with disabilities;

- make written guidance materials available to staff, parents and carers; and
- offer expert guidance either by external sources or directly using council resources.

Outreach services from schools and our specialist central services will support and advise schools on a range of environmental strategies that enhance the inclusion of disabled pupils.

For example, Palmerston and St. Cyres Outreach Services can facilitate the access of a pupil with a physical difficulty. The specific learning difficulties (SpLD) outreach team can provide advice to schools on how to support pupils with fine and gross motor difficulties. This can include advice on rearranging room space, removing obstructions from walkways, and changing the layout of classrooms.

The Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Outreach Team at Ysgol Y Deri can support schools to create safe spaces for pupils with ASD needs and advise on arranging physical space in order to avoid sensory overload.

The Behaviour Improvement Team works with schools to identify a quiet space or time out area to enable pupils to manage their emotions.

The Standards and Provision service supports transition from school to school. They support pupils to respond to new situations using a variety of supportive techniques and strategies.

### **School Transport**

The Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for pupils of statutory school age who reside beyond walking distance to the nearest appropriate school. If your child qualifies for free school transport, permission will normally be given to travel on a contract vehicle if there is one serving your area. In other cases, a bus pass will be provided to travel on the service network. The Vale of Glamorgan Council provides free school transport for:

- primary age pupils residing two miles or over from their nearest designated catchment area school of type; and
- secondary age pupils residing three miles or over from their nearest designated catchment area school of type.

Distances are measured by the shortest available walking route and pupils will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult if necessary. Further information on school transport, included information on support for pupils with additional learning needs can be found in the [Policy for the Provision of Home to School/College Transport](#).

## **8. Access to the Physical Environment**

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination of a disabled pupil is where that disabled pupil is treated less favourably than another because of his or her impairment or disability. However, it is not discrimination to treat a disabled pupil more favourably than one who is not disabled. Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty requires a school to take

positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which the school provides.

Reasonable adjustments to cater for current and future disabled pupils must be embedded in accessibility strategies and plans – there is a need to plan ahead and continuously improve irrespective of whether or not disabled pupils currently attend the schools concerned. The Council will seek to improve the physical environment of schools and access to information, 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 schools. The council will take all reasonable action to ensure parity of access to all its buildings, however, it may be restricted in the measures it can take by listed building constraints and other conservation regulations.

A number of local challenges exist within the Vale of Glamorgan with regard to schools. Increases in migration to the Vale of Glamorgan have led to a number of areas requiring new schools or expansion/refurbishments, to accommodate the increases in pupil numbers. Suitability of buildings is also a concern, with a number of sites not currently meeting 21st century standards. Appropriate learning environments for disabled learners and employees is a key consideration, ensuring that wherever possible they have the same opportunities for modern learning environments, specifically tailored to their needs, and ensuring a safe learning environment to both pupils and staff.

The Council takes its responsibilities with regard to maintenance of buildings very seriously and has a rigorous maintenance and capital projects programme in place within the limit of the resources available. However there remains within the Councils assets, some schools that are not suitable to meet the requirements of education in the 21st Century. These schools, categorised as C or C-, have been identified for development in Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme in order to ensure that building condition issues are addressed. This also offers an opportunity to reduce back-log maintenance and create significant efficiency savings that will be generated from shared community facilities and sustainable buildings.

Assessments by schools of physical access to the curriculum and facilities will be encouraged and supported by the Council. The Council will aim to ensure physical support is in place to enable the plans for all pupils with statements and/or Education Health and Care Plans to be implemented in the relevant timescales. An annual budget from the Learning and Skills Asset Renewal programme is allocated to carrying out physical alterations to school buildings meet the needs identified for specific pupils. Previously completed improvements have included widening doorways and installing automatic doors and ramps to provide wheelchair access and modifications to accessible toilets. Where remodelling works are undertaken to, for example, increase capacity, disabled access is improved wherever feasible to meet current standards.

### **Building Accessibility**

The Council has developed a Maintenance Management Accessibility Guide to assist property managers, including head teachers, to meet their legal responsibilities with regards to disabled access when undertaking building works at their school. This is

available to all schools alongside the offer of further advice, support and assistance if required.

Currently 8 schools are fully accessible and 15 are partially accessible. There is an annual rolling programme of accessibility improvement works within the capital programme to carry out physical alterations to school buildings and targets to improve the current position will form part of the Councils 2019-2022 Accessibility Strategy Action plan which will be formalised as a result of this consultation. Due to the limited funding available to maintain existing schools an incremental approach has been taken to improving accessibility to meet pupil needs. The adverse topography in Barry and the fact that many schools in Barry and Penarth are over 100 years old result in a significant number of schools where it is not possible to make the required adaptations to the building to allow full access. The Council has therefore taken the approach of enhancing single storey schools on level sites, for example, to improve accessibility. This has included widening doorways and installing automatic doors and ramps to provide wheelchair access and modifications to accessible toilets to meet pupils' needs. Schools are advised to contact the Property Department as soon as possible once a child's requirements are identified via the Occupational Therapist or other assessment to ensure that adaptations are completed early in order to allow full access to the curriculum.

On large scale projects where remodelling works are undertaken or extensions added to increase capacity disabled access is improved to meet current standards. The types of improvements undertaken have previously included installing internal or external lifts to provide wheelchair access between different levels of the school, providing disabled toilets, ensuring that colour schemes are suitable for the visually impaired and installing flashing beacons within fire alarm systems for hearing impaired building users.

### **Capital Programme**

The Council completed access audits and condition surveys for all schools in the Vale in 2016 and 2014 respectively to prioritise investment and improve access to all schools. We continue to carry out a rolling programme of physical access improvements in schools to meet identified pupil needs. We fund these improvements from either the capital programme or the centrally managed Education revenue budgets, depending on the scale of the adaptations.

### **21st Century School Programme**

The 21st Century Schools Programme is a long-term strategic investment in educational estate throughout Wales. It is a unique collaboration between Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), councils, colleges and diocesan authorities. Full details of this significant and ambitious investment can be found on the Councils [21st Century Schools](#) page. All new school buildings proposed as part of Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme will be designed in such a way as to equip staff to meet the needs of learners with a disability and/ or additional learning needs.

New school buildings are designed in full compliance with disability-related legislation. Any special circumstances regarding current need or for those environments that host additional provision (i.e. resources bases) are given due consideration.



When planning a new school or school building project, many design elements are incorporated to support disabled pupils. These include, for example a small room between a pair of classrooms which could be used for individual / small group learning or could be used as a breakout space should a pupil need to retreat from the classroom. Creative use of acoustic materials and bespoke calming colour schemes etc. are also be considered by part of the design team in full consultation with staff pupils and governors. New school buildings are designed to have flexible spaces which can be adapted using furniture for specific activities, such as quiet areas for individual learning. New buildings are designed to current acoustic standards (BB93). This will define the acoustic performance standard that schools will be designed to. All new school buildings will be designed to comply with current building regulations for disabled access, with parking and access into the school building as well as assess throughout the school. Natural daylighting and ventilation will be a key feature of the new learning environments.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programmes will therefore provide a positive impact for pupils, staff, governors and the wider community visiting the school who have been identified within this protected group as they will have access to fully accessible school buildings which has been designed to consider individual needs.

## **9. School Trips Accessibility**

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. [Welsh Government guidance](#) advises that direct discrimination of a disabled pupil is where that disabled pupil is treated less favourably than another because of his or her impairment or disability. Direct discrimination, for example would be where a pupil with a particular medical condition was refused admission to a school on the basis of that characteristic. However, it is not discrimination to treat a disabled pupil more favourably than one who is not disabled. For example, a pupil with dyslexia may be given additional time to complete a written examination and that may not be considered discrimination. Disabled pupils may experience indirect discrimination where a particular policy, as applied, disadvantages them (or would, if it was applied, disadvantage them). An example of this would be if a school providing for learning disabled pupils has a policy which requires that pupils attending residential trips are fully continent. The policy has the effect of discriminating against those who are not fully continent and excluding them from residential trips. If the reason for not being fully continent was due to a disability this would be indirect discrimination based on disability. It is permissible to indirectly discriminate where such discrimination is objectively justifiable but it is unlikely that the school would be able to justify the action. Discrimination arises when a disabled pupil is treated less favourably not because of the disability itself, but for a reason related to his/her disability and that treatment cannot be justified. A pupil with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told that she will be unable to attend a school trip to a local theatre putting on a play she is currently studying in English, because the building is not wheelchair accessible. The pupil and her parents are aware that the play is also on at a theatre, which is accessible, in a neighbouring city. However, the school does not investigate this option. This is likely to be discrimination arising from a disability.



## 10. School Accessibility Policy & Plans

All schools must have an Accessibility Policy and Plan that shows what actions the schools is taking to increase access to the curriculum, particularly for those pupils with additional learning needs. Schools should include broader aspects and not just individual subjects. Planning ways to increase access to the curriculum should include activities to:

- overcome any barriers which prevent or make it difficult for disabled children and young people to participate fully in school trips and activities such as school plays, after-school clubs and study support clubs; and
- ensure that the ethos of the school is one which celebrates diversity and encourages inclusion.

There is an example of a School Accessibility Policy and Plan attached to this document (Appendix 1)

### **Access to Information**

The Council will ensure information is available describing the provision available for children with disabilities and fulfils the two key requirements to:

- provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it; and
- make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with additional learning needs and their parents and service providers in its development and review.

The Council continues to engage with children, young people and their parents and carers as required in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

## 11. Evaluation and Review

This Strategy covers the period 2021-2024 and will be reviewed and updated annually as required. In order to assist with the implementation of the strategy and the duty, the council may request that all schools provide the council with copies of their accessibility plans.

## Appendix

### School Accessibility Plan

The School's governing body holds responsibility for publishing the Accessibility Plan and as part of the regular review process, schools will need to have regard to the need of providing adequate resources for implementing this plan, and reviewing this plan.

An Accessibility Plan will be deemed satisfactory when:

- It is in writing.
- It covers the following three strands of increasing access over time:
  1. Increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils.
  2. Improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services at the school.
  3. Improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

In addition, an Accessibility Plan should be:

- Adequately resourced;
- Implemented;
- Reviewed regularly;
- Revised as necessary (e.g.: when accommodation improvements or repair and maintenance work are being planned);
- Revised, if necessary, during a three-year period and ensure information is reported to parents/carers annually;
- A free-standing document or part of the school development plan; and
- Published in the context of the Equality Act 2010, which can be interpreted as making the school's plan widely and easily available

An example template is included for school's to use as a starting point for developing their own accessibility plan.

### Accessibility Policy and Plan

**WRITTEN BY:**

**RATIFICATION DATE:**

**FUTURE REVIEW/RENEWAL DATE:**

***This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's ALN Policy***  
**Statutory Requirement**

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements, as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting of progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that

“schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”.

### **Purpose of Plan**

*[insert name of school]* School's Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled pupils, staff and visitors to the school, anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable.

### **Focus of Plan**

The Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:

- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a physical disability and/or sensory impairments, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as the able-bodied pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or schools visits. It also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable time frame; Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable time frame.
- Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

*[name of school]* School's Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information.

### **Definition of Disability**

According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment; and
- b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### **School Values**

*[insert information relating to schools' motto, ethos, values driven curriculum as appropriate / relevant]*

### **Links to other documentations and policies**

This document should be read in conjunction with the following:

*[insert list of relevant documentations and policies for example school development plan, ALN policy, health and safety policy, curriculum policies]*

### **Training and Resources**

Training needs for all school staff can be identified in the following ways:

- Audit of staff expertise and training needs
- Recognising specific needs for individual pupils and how staff can be trained to support that child/group of children
- Elements of the school improvement/development plan to be addressed through training

Resources are purchased as and when they are required and/or recommended from professionals working with pupils.

### **Supporting Partnerships**

We will work closely with parents to ensure that the plan is implemented effectively.

The following agencies will be used to support the plan, amongst others:

*[insert list of agencies for example educational psychologists, health care professions, advisory teachers]*

### **Complaints Procedures**

Positive home school relationships often mean that concerns and complaints can usually be dealt with between parents, carers and school staff. However, when a more formal complaint is made this needs to be in accordance with our school's Complaints Policy.

### **Monitoring procedures**

This Accessibility Policy and Plan will be reviewed every three years by the senior leadership team, including the school's Inclusion Leader, alongside the governing body and ratified accordingly.

## 12. Consultation Response Form

**Consultation on draft Vale of Glamorgan School Accessibility Strategy.**

**The strategy outlines the council's aims and commitments to improve:**

- **The extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the schools' curriculums;**
- **The physical environment of the schools;**
- **Access to Information - for pupils, carers and families; and**
- **Communication and Transparency - being open and honest about what can be expected or achieved.**

Your views matter. Please tell us what you think about the proposed strategy by:

- completing the online response form at  
<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Consultations/Accessibility-Strategy-2021-24-Consultation.aspx>

or

- answering the consultation questions and adding your points of view on this form

Please return the form to the postal address at the bottom of the form.

**Please note that all comments should contain the full name and full postal address of the person making the comments.**

**The closing date for responses to this consultation is 9 November 2020 to 15 January 2021. Unfortunately, no responses received after this date can be considered.**

Any responses received can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act and may have to be made public. However, any information that would identify an individual such as name, email address and postal address would be removed.

Your Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email Address:

Date:

Please tell us whether you are responding as (tick all which apply):

- |                    |                          |                           |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Parent          | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Local Resident         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Pupil           | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Governor        | <input type="checkbox"/> |                           |                          |
| 4. Member of Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |                           |                          |

## Questions

1. **Do you support the adoption of the draft Accessibility Strategy for Schools?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. **Do you believe the adoption of this strategy will improve the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the schools' curriculums?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. **Do you believe the adoption of this strategy will improve the physical accessibility of our school buildings?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. **Do you believe the adoption of this strategy will improve the way the council and schools provide information and communicate with pupils, carers and parents concerning their education?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

If you support or do not support the draft Strategy, then please explain why.

Please identify strengths of current provision below.

Please identify key areas for improvement for the Council below.

Any other comments?

Thank you for your comments

Please tick the box below if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report

☐

**Please return this form to the Vale of Glamorgan Council by no later than 15 January 2021 to;**

Freepost RTGU-JGBH-YYJZ  
Consultation (Education Accessibility Strategy 2021-24)  
Corporate and Customer Services  
The Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Civic Offices,  
Holton Road  
Barry CF63 4RU

## Notes Pages

### Notes on Consultation Document



## Vale of Glamorgan Equality Monitoring Form

Gender and Gender Identity				
What is your gender?		<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male		
At birth were you described as?		<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Intersex <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		
Disability				
Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a physical or mental health condition, illness or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, 12 months or more?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – limited a lot <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – limited a little <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		
Age				
What is your date of birth?				
National Identity				
National Identity – how would you describe your national identity?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> British
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		
Ethnic Group				
Ethnicity – how would you describe your ethnic group?				
White				
<input type="checkbox"/> Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British			<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Irish Traveller		<input type="checkbox"/> Any other white background (please specify):		
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups				
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean		<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African		<input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background (please specify):				
Asian/Asian British				
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background (please specify):				
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British				
<input type="checkbox"/> African		<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean		
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (please specify):				
Other ethnic group				

<input type="checkbox"/> Arab
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please specify):
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

### Welsh Language

Please describe your Welsh language ability by ticking the relevant box(es) below.

	Understand	Speak	Read	Write
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fluent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Sexual Identity

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

<input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual / straight	<input type="checkbox"/> Gay or lesbian	<input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	

### Religion

What is your religion?

<input type="checkbox"/> No religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Christian (all denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist
<input type="checkbox"/> Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/> Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/> Muslim
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other religion (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	

### Pregnancy and Maternity

Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant within the last year?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
Have you taken maternity leave within the past year?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

### Marriage and Civil Partnership

What is your legal marital or same sex civil partnership status?	<input type="checkbox"/> Single, that is never married and never registered in a same sex civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Married and living with husband/wife <input type="checkbox"/> Separated but still legally married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> In a registered same-sex civil partnership and living with your partner
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated, but still legally in a same-sex civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved <input type="checkbox"/> Surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
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