



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

5th February 2025

Report of the Head of Early Years, Inclusion and Partnerships /Pennaeth Blynyddoedd Cynnar, Cynhwysiant a Phartneriaethau

Matter for Decision.

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Neath Port Talbot Accessibility Strategy for Schools 2025-2028

Purpose of the Report:

To request Members' approval to formally adopt the Neath Port Talbot Accessibility Strategy for Schools 2025-28.

Executive Summary:

Local authorities and schools have a duty to prepare Accessibility Strategies and Plans respectively as specified in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act for children and young people with disabilities.

Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This Accessibility Strategy will set out the approach that Neath Port Talbot will take to increase access to education for disabled children and young people.

The strategy has been developed with views of children and young people, parents/carers, schools, and people working to support children with disabilities at school. A planning group of officers from across the Council have also met to discuss current support provided to children and young people in schools and future needs.

Following consideration of desktop research, engagement and input from the planning group, the strategy outlines three action plans identifying low and mid cost priorities that will have positive impacts on disabled pupils:

1. Action plan for increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
2. Action plan for improving the physical environment 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.
3. Action plan for improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Background:

Local authorities and schools have a duty to prepare Accessibility Strategies and Plans respectively as specified in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act for children and young people with disabilities. This sets out 'three planning duties' that require local authorities to improve access to education for disabled children through 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

Schools and local authorities have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. The accessibility strategy will set out the approach that Neath Port Talbot will take to increase access to education for disabled children and young people, so that they can benefit from educational provision to the same extent as children without disabilities.

The Welsh Government Guidance defines disability as:

‘The term ‘pupil’ means a child or young person of any age for who education is, or is required to be, provided.

In accordance with section 6 of the equality Act (2010), a person (P) is disabled if:

- a) P has a physical or mental impairment, **and**
- b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.’

Engagement and Involvement

The Accessibility Strategy for Schools has been developed with views of children and young people (with and without a disability), parents/carers, schools, and people working to support children with disabilities at school.

Online questionnaires were shared to collect their views on a range of questions relating to the three planning duties.

- Learners – 106 responses
- Parents and carers – 87 responses
- Schools – 15 responses
- Professionals supporting children at school – 3 responses

A planning group of officers from across the Council have also met to discuss current support provided to children and young people in schools and future needs, specifically:

Headteacher – Awel y Mor
Think Family Partnership Manager

Child & Family Support Manager, Education
Qualified Teacher for Deaf Education
Qualified Teacher for Visually Impaired
Occupational Therapy Technician
Education Psychologist
Asset Management Surveyor
Education Support Officer
Co-ordinator for Early Years & Partnerships
Deputy Team Manager, Children's Disability Team, Social Services

Following consideration of desktop research, engagement and input from the planning group, the strategy outlines three action plans identifying low and mid cost priorities that will have positive impacts on disabled pupils:

1. Action plan for increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
2. Action plan for improving the physical environment 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. Action plan for improving the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Financial Impacts:

There are no direct financial implications from the document, however, the strategy will influence how school and Council budgets intended to support pupils with disabilities are spent.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below.

Based on the first stage assessment, a full impact assessment is not required as the initiative has low or no impact on the majority of factors indicated. In the few cases where impact has been identified this is positive, improving access to education for children and young people with a disability.

The development of the NPT Accessibility Strategy for Schools has been based on engagement and consultation with stakeholders, including children, young people and families. This has informed the priorities and actions within the document.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce Impacts:

No impact

Legal Impacts:

The Council has a duty under the paragraph 2(4) of schedule 10 of 'The Equality Act' 2010 prepare, implement, review and update a written accessibility strategy, which identifies how strategic actions will improve accessibility to education for disabled pupils.

Risk Management Impacts:

No impact

Consultation:

A two-week public consultation was held on the draft strategy with online questionnaires being available on the Council website. Welsh

language and children and young people friendly versions of the questionnaire were also available.

21 responses were received, including 5 from children and young people. Most respondents agreed with the priorities outlined in the strategy, with comments reinforcing the need for support at school for children and young people with disabilities.

Scrutiny Observations

The item was considered at the Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd January 2025. The report was noted.

Recommendations:

That Members approve the Accessibility Strategy for Schools 2025-28.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Council has a duty under paragraph 2(4) of schedule 10 of 'The Equality Act' 2010 prepare, implement, review and update a written accessibility strategy, which identifies how strategic actions will improve accessibility to education for disabled pupils.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Accessibility Strategy

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

Planning to Increase Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils -
<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-04/planning-to-increase-access-to-schools-for-disabled-pupils.pdf>

Officer Contact:

Hayley Lervy Head of Head of Early Years, Inclusion and Partnerships

h.lervy@npt.gov.uk

Sam Greasley, Headteacher Awel y More Primary School

GreasleyS2@Hwbcymru.net

Allison Harris, Think Family Partnership Manager

a.t.harris@npt.gov.uk