

Barnet Accessibility Strategy 2016-2019 for the Inclusion of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in educational settings.

OUR VISION

The Barnet Accessibility Strategy 2016-2019 sets out the vision for children and young people with SEND as follows:

All children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 will have access to high quality local provision that meets their needs. Schools, early years settings, colleges, services, families and the local authority work together to support children and young people to make good progress and achieve outcomes that prepare them for adulthood.

In line with the 2014 Children and Families Act, Barnet is committed to:

- A person-centred, joined up approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children, young people and their families
- Increased engagement and participation of young people and families so that they have greater choice and control, are listened to and their concerns are resolved swiftly;
- A published local offer of support, services and provision, how to access it and how to raise concerns or seek redress
- The use of effective practice, data and wider intelligence and independent assessment to drive improvement
- Clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities
- Increased integration of services and joint commissioning across the Local Authority and Health

In the [Barnet Corporate Plan](#) 2016-2019 the approach to Equalities is identified to:-

- Embed equalities considerations into everything we do
- Assess the Equalities impact of our proposals and use this in decision making
- Use evidence and data to understand service users, impact, trends and gaps in service design and delivery
- Know and engage with our communities and build on community strengths to optimise independence and support people to take control of their own lives
- Check how we are doing and monitor our performance against equalities objectives and resident satisfaction and publish the information.

Barnet is committed to ensuring [equality](#) within the Borough:

The vision outlined in Barnet's Children and Young people's Plan is that:-

All children and young people in Barnet should achieve the best possible outcomes to enable them to become successful adults, especially our most vulnerable children. They should be supported by high quality; integrated and inclusive services that identify additional support needs early; are accessible, responsive and affordable for the individual child and their family.

The Accessibility Strategy complements the SEN and Disability Legislation and helps to turn the vision for the education of children and young people with SEND into reality. Improving access to education for pupils with SEND is essential to ensure equality of opportunity, participation in society, access to employment opportunities and inclusion within mainstream and specialist education settings.

SCOPE AND KEY AIMS OF THE STRATEGY

Audience

The Accessibility Strategy sets out the local authority plan to increase access to education for pupils with disabilities in the schools for which it is responsible. Schools should take account of the local authority strategy when drawing up their own school accessibility plans.

The strategy is also relevant to academies, free schools and other education settings not maintained by the local authority as they also have a statutory duty to draw up and publish a school accessibility plan.

Definition of Disability

Under the 2010 Equality Act, 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 do normal day to day activities*'.

This definition provides a relatively low threshold. The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means '*limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people*'.

- '*Substantial*' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial. Guidance from the 'Office for Disability Issues' illustrates the factors which might reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect on normal day to day activities
- '*Long term*' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so

- ‘*Normal day to day activities*’ could be determined by reference to the illustrative, non-exhaustive list of factors in pages 47 to 51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010. (Study and education related activities are included in the meaning of ‘day to day’ activities).

The definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer; it is not just restricted to those children with an Education Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Children and young people with long term health conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

Key Aims of the Accessibility Strategy

The key aims of the Accessibility strategy are:

1. To enable all pupils, whatever their needs, to have access to the full range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
2. To improve the physical environment of schools to ensure, wherever possible, that accessibility is not a barrier to preventing pupils from attending their local schools.
3. To ensure that information provided by a school is made available to pupils and parents with disabilities, using alternative formats where required.
4. To ensure that admissions processes to schools and other education providers are fair and enable pupils with SEND to access high quality provision that meets their needs.

OUR DUTIES

2010 Equality Act

Local authority accessibility strategies and school accessibility plans are a requirement of Schedule 10 of the 2010 Equality Act. As well as general duties for public bodies, the Equality Act states the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, Local Authorities and others have towards disabled children and young people:

- They **must not** directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimize disabled children and young people
- They **must** protect disabled pupils from discrimination and harassment and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled peers

- They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage.

The reasonable adjustments duty (schedule 13 of the 2010 Equality Act)

The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires schools and other education providers to take positive steps to ensure that students with disabilities can enjoy the benefits, facilities and services provided for all students. Reasonable adjustments meet the statutory duty when they act to prevent students with disabilities being placed at a substantial disadvantage. Guidance for education providers on making reasonable adjustments is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Anticipating reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory one and therefore the setting needs to make plans in advance about what students with disabilities might require and what adjustments might need to be made. They should not wait until the students are on roll.

SEN Information Report

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 states that a school's reasonable adjustments, along with other provisions, must be described in their 'SEN Information Report'.

Schools Accessibility Plan

Schools must publish their Accessibility Plans. The Accessibility Plan should be appended to or be part of the SEN Information Report. Ofsted may request a school's accessibility plan as part of inspection evidence.

Provision and Improving the Physical Environment

In Barnet, there is a continuum of provision to support children in mainstream schools whether it be in community, voluntary aided, academies or free schools. Barnet mainstream schools are inclusive; there are additionally resourced schools to meet the needs of children and young people with hearing impairment, physical difficulties, language and communication difficulties, and autism spectrum disorders. There are also four special schools.

There are specialist teams of teachers, staff from special schools and educational psychologists who provide advice to schools at a whole school, group or individual level. These teams support SENCOs in schools to continually enhance their provisions for children and young people with SEND. This includes advisory teachers for autism spectrum, hearing and visual impairments, physical and medical needs

and behavioural and communication difficulties. These teams support children and young people with a range of SEND and provide specific advice to school staff to ensure that children and young people have full access to life at school.

All new school buildings must comply with current building regulations and must be physically accessible to pupils with a disability.

Schools are encouraged to have their own accessibility plans in place and can apply for small grants from the local authority to ensure that they can make their schools as accessible as possible.

Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Barnet has co-produced with schools the '[ordinarily available document](#)' which outlines what schools need to put in place to ensure pupils with SEND can have full access to life in school which must include:

- High quality teaching
- A structured and graduated response to meeting individual needs which is delivered through the Plan, Do and Review cycle set out in 2014 Code of Practice.

Barnet Schools are grouped into four networks, three of these are primary networks and one of these a secondary network. Head teachers come together in these networks to share good practice. In addition, in preparation for a school led improvement system, thirteen partnerships have been created to promote further collaborative learning and the sharing of good practice.

The Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) delivers a high quality training programme and consultancy support and facilitates the sharing of good practice between schools. Excellent practitioners from schools are encouraged to become School Based BPSI Advisers in order to offer support to other schools. In addition, through the Professional Development Exchange, schools are encouraged to celebrate and share good practice by offering opportunities for other schools to visit to share best practice.

Barnet helps schools, through support from the Narrowing the Gap Advisor, to ensure that their provision and practice enable all children to have access to the learning experiences and support arrangements they need in order to make good progress. Schools are supported to make effective use of the Pupil Premium Grant and other funding in order to optimise provision for disadvantaged pupils. A Pupil Premium Self Evaluation Tool and External Review has been produced by the Narrowing the Gap Adviser, through BPSI.

There are a number of specialist services that can provide additional input to schools and educational settings to further support their capacity to meet the needs of

children and young people with SEND. Examples of specialist services include the Autism Advisory Team, Sensory Teams, Physical Disabilities Team, High Incidence Support Teams and Educational Psychologist Service. Some of these services provide a 'core offer' that schools can access if the individual needs meet certain criteria / thresholds. There also 'central training offers' available to all Barnet maintained settings, where professionals from a service offer specialist training on an area of SEND to further develop schools capacity. Additionally some teams offer a traded service that schools can purchase to offer additional support. Information on all these services is available on the Barnet Local Offer.

Improving Access to Information

Barnet strives to continue to improve access to information. The aim is to write web content in plain English so that it is accessible for everyone, mindful that is easy to read. The accessibility statement outlines the efforts made to ensure the Barnet website is accessible for all.

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/council-and-democracy/policy-and-performance/website-policies/Accessibility-.html>

Benchmarking by Soctim gives Barnet 4 stars (highest grade) for accessibility <https://betterconnected.socitm.net/councils/barnet>

The Children's and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to develop a Local Offer to make information more accessible. Barnet's Local Offer is being co-produced with children and young people with SEND and their families.

For more information please see the following link.

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/children-young-people-and-families/the-local-offer-and-special-educational-needs.html>

The Barnet SENDIAS service offers impartial advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their families.

For more information please see the following link.

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/children-young-people-and-families/the-local-offer-and-special-educational-needs/barnet-send-information-advice-and-support-service.html>

Barnet will evaluate and review the strategy when required by legislation, and revised and updated as required and work with The Barnet Voluntary sector, Barnet parents' carers' forum, Young people and the local community. We would be pleased to receive your comments on the strategy document and would welcome suggestions about ways of improving this document and examples of good practice.