

CARE & LEARNING SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY 2016-2019

Improving Access to Education for Pupils with Disabilities

This Strategy will be kept under review and revised if necessary before the end of the proposed timeframe.

Introduction

This document sets out the Accessibility Strategy for schools managed by Highland Council's Care and Learning Service. It outlines the continuing plans to improve access to a quality education service to all pupils.

This strategy recognises the rights of pupils with disabilities to appropriate education through improved access to information, curriculum and environment.

There is an ongoing duty incumbent on all to promote equality of opportunity and awareness of disabilities and additional support needs. Everyone should strive to create inclusive environments in which the needs of all pupils can be met and in which children and young people can flourish in a safe and nurturing environment. Inclusion is a national and a council priority.

The Highland Council, along with the Scottish Government, is committed to ensuring that all our children and young people are safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included. To support this, all of our children and young people should have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, ambition, confidence and self-esteem to their fullest potential.

Guiding Principles

- All new builds and adaptations, all staff training and all curricular developments will take into account the duties on Highland Council as identified within the Equalities Act 2010.
- Students with Additional Support Needs should have the same opportunities as other students and be educated and supported in environments that reduce the

barriers to inclusion.

- Decisions on educational practice and support will be made in light of the various legislative duties including those within the Standards in Scottish Schools etc Act (2000), the Education (Scotland) ASL Act (2004 and as amended 2009), the Equalities Act (2010), The Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act (2014) and The Education (Scotland) Act (2016).

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SECTION 1

Background to the 2016-19 Accessibility Strategy

1.1 Introduction

This is the Council's fourth Accessibility Strategy. It sets out plans to continually improve access to education for pupils with disabilities in Highland. Much has happened since the first Accessibility Strategy was introduced in 2003, but further work is still needed to achieve full accessibility in a consistent way across educational establishments.

1.2 Policy

The Children's Services Plan ***For Highland's Children 4*** and ***The Highland Practice Model*** set out the process for continued inter-agency improvements that aim to ensure appropriate planning and provision for children and young people through information sharing and integrated working of all involved. Improvement Groups have been established to take forward all identified improvement targets and to report on progress in relation to the outcomes identified within the Children's Services Plan.

1.3 Definitions

The Equalities Act (2010) has provided a duty on public services to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful conduct
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations across all protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics are identified as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This legislation seeks to provide a single process and some clarity around the various aspects of equalities legislation and at the same time extends the requirement on local authorities. The Code of Practice and guidance for schools published in late 2011 supersedes the previous duties provided under the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Equalities Act 2010 considers a person to have a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to

perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

People who have been considered to have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

There are additional provisions within the Act relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis.

The term “additional support needs” is used to apply to a wider group of pupils, only some of whom will be disabled. This term has been introduced into the legal framework as part of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004 and (as amended 2009). It has to be noted also that not all pupils who are disabled will have additional support needs within an educational context.

A pre-school child, a child of school age or a young person is deemed to have Additional Support Needs (ASN) In relation to provision (whether or not educational provision), which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children.

All children and young people need support to help them learn. The main sources of support in pre-school provision and schools are the staff who, through their normal practice, are able to meet a diverse range of needs. With good quality teaching and learning and an appropriate curriculum, most children and young people are able to benefit appropriately from education without the need for additional support.

Some children and young people require support which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the provision that is generally provided to their peers in order to help them benefit from school education. Subsection (3) was amended by the 2009 ASL Act to ensure that additional support is not limited to educational support but can include multi-agency support from health, social services and voluntary agencies. Some pre-school children receiving school education may also require additional support. In addition, education authorities have a duty to make provision for the additional support needs of disabled children under the age of 3 years in certain circumstances and this support is not limited to educational provision.

The definition of additional support provided in the Act is a wide one and it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of all possible forms of additional support. Examples are provided below of forms of additional support which are common in our schools. What is

central to all these forms of support is that they have been identified as additional provision, required to help individual children and young people benefit from school education, taking account of their particular needs and circumstances.

Additional support for children and young people may be provided in a range of locations including in school, at home, in hospital, or in a specialist health, social care or voluntary agency facility. The additional support may include:

- A particular approach to teaching and learning: for example, as used with children and young people with autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia or sensory impairments
- The deployment of personnel from within the school or education authority: for example support from a learning support teacher in the school or from a peripatetic teacher of the deaf or of English as an Additional Language.
- The deployment of personnel from out-with education: for example, support provided by allied health professionals working in health or social workers from the local authority or staff from the voluntary sector.
- Provision of particular resources: including information and communications technology (ICT) and particular teaching materials.

Further illustrations of the meaning of the terms are given in the Code of Practice for the above Act (Supporting Children's Learning).

1.4 Legal Framework

Support for pupils with disabilities in schools comes under different pieces of related legislation including:

- The Equality Duties (Equalities Act 2010);
- Accessibility Strategies (The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002);
- The Additional Support for Learning (ASL) framework (Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004 and 2009);
- The assessment and planning for pupils and reporting on Children's Rights (Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014)

These various pieces of legislation come together into a strong legislative framework to ensure that children and young peoples' needs and rights are met and that an atmosphere of inclusion exists in all of our educational environments.

The Equalities Duties

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 replaced previous duties under Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

The Equality Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct

prohibited by the Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies – such as how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.
- Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve making use of an exception or the positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

The Equality Duty also explicitly recognises that the needs of disabled people may be different from those of non-disabled people. Public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people differently to non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

Accessibility Strategies

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Records) (Scotland) Act 2002) (DSPRA) placed a duty on education authorities, to prepare an accessibility strategy to address three distinct elements of planned improvements in access for disabled pupils:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to make them more accessible for disabled pupils; and
- improving communication with disabled pupils, in particular by providing school information in alternative formats.

Each of these elements is addressed in detail in this Strategy.

Additional Support for Learning (ASL) framework

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009 introduced a new framework to make provision to meet the additional support needs of individual children, replacing the Special Educational Needs (SEN) framework. The duties under the ASL framework are intended to dovetail with existing duties in equalities legislation.

The duties in the ASL legislation are based on the definition of additional support needs. A child or young person has additional support needs if, for whatever reason, they require additional support in order to benefit from school education. School education in this context includes, in particular, 'education directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential'.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act (2000) introduced a 'presumption of inclusion in mainstream education' except in exceptional circumstances. It was the intention of this legislation 'to strengthen the rights of children and young persons to education alongside their peers.' The Highland Council has historically been one of Scotland's more inclusive education authorities both because of the geography of the Highlands and because of an evidence-based belief that normalisation and inclusion give most children and young people the most effective opportunity to prepare for successful and happy adult lives. Opportunities for inclusion have been increased through the development of additionally resourced mainstream schools and through the additional support needs provision included within the new schools built as part of the original PPP programme.

1.5 Overlapping Duties

Clearly, there are large areas of overlap between accessibility strategies, the Equalities Legislation, and duties around Additional Support for Learning. By ensuring that 'adequate and efficient' provision is made for a pupil's additional support needs, and that the accessibility strategy is properly prepared and implemented, education authorities and schools will go a long way to ensuring that they are complying with the equalities duties as well. Strategic thinking to ensure the active promotion of true equality of opportunity is essential if the effect of this Strategy is to become a reality for children and young people.

1.6 Who is covered by the Strategy?

This Strategy for disabled pupils will include those with additional support needs who require special arrangements to allow access to curriculum or information or for physical access. In order that the Strategy is truly inclusive in nature, pupils who require any kind of help to enable them to access education are covered by this Accessibility Strategy, whether formal assessment has taken place or not. A broad range of pupils are therefore included.

Some disabilities such as epilepsy or diabetes are 'hidden' and if well controlled, may not necessarily give rise to additional support needs. Those with mild learning difficulties however are not described as 'disabled', even though they may at times require additional

support.

Some, though not all, of those with learning difficulties and other disabilities may have additional social, emotional and behavioural needs. Others may have social, emotional and behavioural needs, but no disability. The Strategy adopts an inclusive approach to this wide range of needs.

The Strategy covers the access to education for current pupils with disability and also prospective pupils who may attend the school in the future and who may have a disability. Schools must therefore be prepared to accept and welcome pupils with disability even though they are unaware at present of who these pupils might be. Schools should also consider parents and carers with disability and ensure that they are also given appropriate access.

Children who are receiving pre-school education from the local authority are also covered by the Strategy. The Highland Council therefore plans proactively to meet the needs of pupils who currently have disabilities and also those who may later have disabilities.

1.7 Aims

In preparing this strategy, Highland Council aims to build on existing good practice and improve over time access to education for all pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities. This includes promoting a positive attitude to inclusion and disability in all its educational establishments, including provision for Gypsy/Travellers and other interrupted learners. The Council plans to support staff and raise awareness of all that is concerned in terms of the legislation. All staff are encouraged to adopt the positive inclusive ethos embodied in the legislation and in related service policy documents.

The Highland Council will actively work to ensure that transitions are planned for and dealt with effectively to ensure appropriate opportunities are made available and that pupils are not held back due to inadequate support and provision at critical stages in their lives. Accessibility is an acknowledged priority which responsible parties will ensure throughout the transition process. In particular, if disabled pupils are unable to attend school regularly for health or other acknowledged reasons, it is important that their needs are recognised and appropriate planning and provision is put in place.

1.8 Time Period Covered

This Strategy covers a period of three years (2016–2019) and will be reflected in individual school development planning.

When referring to curriculum and information/communication developments, short term will be within a year, medium between 1 and 2 years and long term will take up to three years.

The part of the strategy which covers building adaptations takes a longer timescale due to the nature of what is required and the time which is necessary to effect change: identifying need, drawing up an overall plan, formal consultation processes, identifying land where necessary, planning permission, bidding, and the actual building itself. Short term building work therefore refers to work which can be done within a year. Medium term is likely to take 1 to 3 years and long term could take up to 10 years for buildings which are not a current priority.

SECTION 2

Review of the previous strategy and planning for the 2016-19 period

2.1 Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 reinforced, and increased previous duties on all schools and Local Authorities to plan to increase over time the accessibility of schools with regard to disabled pupils and to implement their plans. Not only was physical accessibility to be considered, but also access to the curriculum and to information.

Since 2003 The Highland Council has produced a series of three year strategies in order to plan for the needs of disabled pupils in educational establishments. Schools have to take due account of the Accessibility Strategy and reflect its principles in their Improvement Plans. It is hoped that all school staff, parents, children and young people are now aware of the duties which are required by this and the other legislation previously set out and can refer to the strategy at any time through The Highland Council's website at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/>

In order to support schools to include pupils with additional support needs and in giving them access to the rich curricula and social opportunities of a mainstream school environment, the Care and Learning Service of The Highland Council, has developed policy and guidance covering a range of specific needs e.g. Autism, Persistent Difficulties with Reading, Looked After Children etc. and has more general documents for pupils with high levels of need eg:

- Moving and Handling
- Intimate Personal Care
- Administration of Medicines in Schools
- Building Positive Relationships for School Improvement
- The Highland Practice Model (Getting it Right for Every Child)

The policies and guidance papers relating to meeting the needs of pupils with additional support needs can be found on the ASN website:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/>

2.2 Assessment of Levels of Accessibility

Highland Council has been proactive in promoting inclusiveness through making adaptations to accommodate the needs of disabled pupils. An initial audit of all Highland schools was carried out in January 2003 to establish a baseline. This audit covered the three main areas of curriculum, physical accessibility and communication / information.

Data for the previous strategy came from a number of sources, including the audit of all schools and Best Value questionnaires which had been completed. A further audit of accessibility took place in December 2005, 2010, 2013, and 2015. The fourth iteration of this strategy has been developed from previous audit processes and the audit that was completed by all schools in Highland in 2015.

Evidence has also been gathered from an audit of the use of protocols for individuals and an annual audit of Children's Plans, independent reports prepared for the Council by Highlands Children Forum and feedback from officers and service users.

A copy of the 2015 Accessibility Audit Tool for schools can be found as **Appendix 5**.

2.3 Achievements in terms of accessibility

Highland Council has worked hard to ensure that the needs of all its children and young people are met. In the education of deaf pupils, for example, an inclusive ethos has existed whereby there has been an assumption of mainstream schooling with support from teachers of the deaf, with signing being taught and used where appropriate.

The Highland Education Vision and Deaf Support Services, Gypsy/Travellers support, English as an Additional Language Service, the Assistive Technology Support Service and allied health professionals each provide specialist advice and support where this is considered appropriate as an aid to curricular access.

There has been a considerable increase in the power and effectiveness of the assistive technology available to support pupils over the past few years and staff awareness and their ability to support pupils across the whole curriculum and ability range through effective use of ICT has steadily increased.

The needs of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are supported by trained teachers based in each area of Highland who can offer consultation to schools. The specialist services for Autism based in The Pines in Inverness offers training and post diagnosis support for families of children and young people with ASD.

The support and consultation for pre-school children with additional support needs is provided by a Pre-School Home Visiting Teacher service based in each Area in Highland

as part of the Highland Council Psychological Service.

Additional Support Needs provision in each of the four Highland Areas is managed by an Area Additional Support Needs Manager (ASNM). They are assisted by an Additional Support Needs Officer (ASNO). Each Area has a team of Learning Support Teachers and Pupil Support Assistants who are allocated to support and consult in schools, based on an allocation model.

There has been considerable proactive work to ensure that schools are fit for 21st century purposes. This includes the completion of new schools (many built under Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements). Other developments in terms of disability and physical adaptations to schools have been dealt with as and when needs arose. The Council endeavours to meet the needs of all children and is being proactive in seeking work to be done before it is actually needed.

All alterations to buildings and updating work undertaken in the last few years have taken account of accessibility (**see appendix 2**). Future work will increase the accessibility of buildings and other physical aspects, including signage and transport, to comply with the terms of the legislation and will, as a result, increase the choice of school for those who may have physical access needs.

However, Highland Council has over 160 schools, many of which are old Victorian buildings. The process of updating and adapting this number of schools of this age is significant and will take time and careful planning to achieve. It is accepted that some schools are not able to be fully adapted to meet needs and being able to provide an alternative school within reasonable travelling distance for any pupil where this is required, is a crucial part of this strategy.

While a considerable amount of information is available, there is a continuing need now to consider how the format of such information can be adapted or changed to make it fully accessible to all. Communication may in some instances require to be improved and channels and procedures may need to be clarified, with protocols drawn up where appropriate.

Considerable investment has been made in terms of personnel to support pupils. There are area teams of support teachers across all Areas in Highland, and additional Pupil Support Assistants help provide for the educational, physical and health needs of pupils. Specialist support and advice is available to pupils with a range of needs including autism, learning difficulties, sensory impairments and developmental disorders. Early intervention is a priority and has helped identify and provide for pupils who may have as yet undiagnosed disabilities at an early stage.

The specialised support services provide regular training for both special school and mainstream staff. There is an ongoing process of staff development and training for all

school staff including janitorial and school meals staff. Multi-agency training too has increased considerably and more and more, training is delivered by and to multi-agency staff, taking a holistic view of the needs of the child.

2.4 Curricular Access

There is a need to consider the curriculum in its widest sense, bearing in mind that for some pupils, the curriculum will not consist of academic content, but basic life skills and/or social development. While access to the formal curriculum will be a priority, with curriculum for excellence this will increasingly involve a greater level of accessibility required to enable learning outside the classroom. Efforts will also be made to remove any barriers to access to school trips, to extra-curricular activities and access to associated transport, bearing in mind the dispersed geography of some Highland communities.

Special arrangements will require to be made to ensure that pupils with additional support needs have appropriate arrangements to enable them to demonstrate achievement and attainment. It is important that these are in place for all day-to-day activities in the classroom. These arrangements may require to be made in examination circumstances. The Council works closely with the SQA to ensure that pupils receive the reasonable adjustments they require in examinations.

Reasonable adjustments will be made by schools themselves. Schools should ensure that pupils with particular needs are not disadvantaged in any area. Adjustments can be large or small, but even small adjustments can often make a big difference to a pupils' ability to access the curriculum. It is essential that the needs of the pupil are shared on a proportionate basis with all staff working with him/her, including temporary or visiting staff.

Access to technology and appropriate software and other arrangements may be required to enable pupils to demonstrate what they can do. Increasing priority is being given to technology. Schools are able to access specialist expertise and to obtain advice and training on aspects of technology which they see as being important to their own establishments and pupils. Staff can gain appropriate advice and training on software and specialist aids to increase accessibility as well as the minor adjustments they can readily make for themselves if they have the knowledge. For pupils with complex needs, the Council has a service level agreement in place with the CALL Centre to provide advice and support on specialised assistive technology. Access to specialist assessment, advice and consultation about equipment needs is through requesting assistance from the Assistive Technology Service.

Various methods of curriculum delivery require to be considered for pupils with specific needs. Any adaptations which are required should, where possible, be carried out speedily without undue delay.

2.5 Physical Access

The Highland Council maintains a high number of small schools with relatively low pupil numbers in rural areas as well as large schools in Inverness and the larger towns. While considerable effort has been made to ensure that school buildings are well maintained and appropriate for purpose, it has proved difficult for a variety of reasons to ensure that all these schools are fully accessible to all children who may wish to attend. This is being addressed gradually as budgets and prioritisation allows - plans are included later in this document.

The Council has a range of information available on its buildings, including the audits done for the three previous strategies and the most recent audit completed by all schools in 2015.

The Council has a three year planning process in order to give the substantial time required to plan, secure the funding and implement building changes to the physical access for disabled pupils.

In terms of physical accessibility to school buildings, there is still considerable work to be done, with schools identifying areas such as signage, parking, changing rooms and facilities, emergency evacuation procedures, emergency alarms etc for the deaf and hearing impaired, as areas which require attention. While accessible toilet accommodation has improved, there are still schools where wheelchair access would not be possible and some where the toilets have been adapted, but space is still limited and so they are not accessible to pupils with the most complex physical needs. Some of these schools do not currently have any pupils with mobility or continence needs, and for many, none are expected to be enrolled in the medium term future, so that physical adaptations of these schools are not a priority. A transitions policy and guidance has been put in place to further improve the planning and preparation to ensure physical access needs are met. Where prospective pupils have been identified in schools through the transitions process, accessibility will require to be addressed quickly to ensure schools are prepared and able to give access to all children and young people. Where the costs of adapting a building are prohibitive or where adaptations would be required on a building that is under review as part of the Management of Schools review, a more accessible alternative placement will be offered to the pupil. While it is not ideal to transport a pupil to a placement out-with his/her geographical catchment, it is sometimes inevitable and where specialist provision has been created, there are often benefits to the pupil in terms of teaching expertise, ease of access to equipment and a wider peer group with similar needs.

An implementation strategy must then be put in place to address any shortcomings, while at the same time maintaining and improving access through better signage, more appropriate colour schemes and appropriate lighting etc.

Policy and guidance has been produced on Moving and Handling, Intimate Care, risk

assessment, the use of protocols and Administration of Medicines, to ensure that pupils are able to have full and safe access to the curriculum within their school. Audit of the use of protocols was included for the first time in this Accessibility Strategy and this shows that good progress has been made where training and support has been provided for their use. The area that now needs a greater focus is the creation and use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (**see appendix 6**).

2.6 Access to Information

The roll out of the Highland Practice Model has enhanced effective communication with parents and carers and has improved the way professionals and families share and use information. School Improvement Plans have included targets to promote an inclusive ethos and should continue to do so. Training in various strategies that supports more inclusive practice is available to individual schools as well as through the annual staff development calendar. Training for staff, particularly with regard to disability and the associated legislation is offered regularly, with briefing papers sent out and placed on the ASN website for reference, to update staff knowledge and to meet the needs of new staff.

Where appropriate, the use of protocols for Moving and Handling, Intimate Care, Administration of Medicine, and Positive Behaviour Strategies, ensure consistency of practice is maintained. These protocols provide staff with information on the agreed strategies to be used with individuals. As part of the audit for this fourth Accessibility Strategy, schools were asked about such protocols. We now have a base line audit and the Council will continue to monitor the use and provision of protocols in future audits, to ensure improvements in practice. A copy of the Protocol Audit can be found as part of **Appendix 5** and a summary of results found as **Appendix 6**.

While individual Highland schools have different strengths, overall the main strengths are their positive ethos, flexible and hardworking staff, a commitment to inclusion, a broad and balanced curriculum, and positive, forward thinking management.

Pupils with disabilities and their families or carers are entitled to receive information about their education and the opportunities available to them. Access to such information has been increased through the ASN website, <http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/> which now includes information on the specialist services provided by Highland Council, as well as information on the current legislation, codes of practice, policies and guidance documents, assessment, planning and intervention strategies, for pupils with additional support needs. Much of this information is included in the **ASN Manual**, which is also accessed from this site.

As Highland is increasingly welcoming to its communities with families where English is an additional language, there is a need to increase the number of languages that our information can be provided in. The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service

helps support the provision of information to families whose first language is not English or Gaelic. Various different channels, such as press releases, school newsletters, school handbooks, information leaflets etc. are available. Information can be made available in different formats, such as large print, different languages, audio-versions etc. Particular attention requires to be given however to directly consulting with pupils and parents/carers who have significant communication difficulties.

2.7 Curriculum Accessibility

In terms of curriculum accessibility, a number of areas continue to require further development.

As schools embed outdoor learning and cross curricular activities as part of implementing the Curriculum for Excellence, access to these wider educational experiences and school trips can sometimes provide challenges. Sometimes this is due to the social or behavioural needs of a pupil, or the additional support required to meet health needs, or the physical access to the planned activities. Staff concerns may be for the safety of the whole group of children as well as wishing to ensure that all pupils have access to the particular aspect of curriculum and achieve the educational objectives. Careful consideration is required in each case to ensure that no child is discriminated against while no child's safety is put at risk. This may require head teachers to make difficult decisions in the interests of all the pupils they support. Guidance has been produced by the Council's outdoor education service to help schools plan trips and outdoor excursions, to ensure equality duties are met. <https://www.hIGHLIFEHIGHLAND.com/outdoor-education/wp-content/uploads/sites/125/2015/02/Highland-Excursions-Policy-Guidance-2015.pdf>

Clear information and guidance is available to schools to enable them to work closely with other agencies. Collaborative planning and working is actively encouraged and schools should discuss any concerns with the pupil and their family and with their permission, they can also contact Health and Social Care colleagues for information on specific aspects of the child or young person's disability which are giving cause for concern, in order to put in place an appropriate curriculum.

Access to particular subject areas will also require to be addressed to ensure that inclusive strategies are built in and underpin all teaching and learning. An inclusive ethos and a willingness to consider alternative methods of teaching and learning are important. On-going training is available to staff to help them be as prepared as they ought to be for meeting the needs of pupils with additional support needs in their classrooms.

2.8 The Planning Group

Relevant officers of the Council have contributed to compiling the Highland Council's Strategy for 2016-19, including members of the specialist services and the Additional Support Needs Team.

All schools completed the audit to identify the current position across Highland, in relation to the various strands of accessibility. This comprehensive audit has provided good quality information from support for learning teams and senior management teams in all schools. The Council now has data from four audits enabling progress to be monitored.

Highland Children's Forum is a voluntary organisation that has carried out various consultations with pupils and parents. They have produced very helpful reports on inclusion and accessibility from the users' perspective. These reports have informed this strategy and also the various individual strategy groups working on improvement objectives contained within the current Integrated Children's Plan - For Highland's Children 4.

An Equalities Working Group meets regularly to ensure that planned developments across the Council take place in a systematic and progressive manner and the actions taken within Care and Learning are part of the overall corporate Equalities Framework.

When necessary, the Accessibility Strategy will be revised to take account of any changes which may be required from new information arising. The strategy will be monitored on a regular basis.

2.9 Areas of Priority

2.9.1 Physical Accessibility

Physical accessibility has been identified as a major short, medium and long term priority. Because of the number of buildings involved and the remoteness and small numbers of children involved in some of the locations, consideration has and is being given to how best to tackle the building programme necessary to make all schools physically accessible. Schools which have, or are expecting to have, a child with a physical disability which will require building adaptations will be prioritised to ensure that their needs are met. All new buildings are fully accessible.

Two new secondary schools (Glen Urquhart High School and Ardnamurchan) and two new primaries (Strathdearn and Spean Bridge) were built in a first phase of the Public, Private Partnership (PPP) building strategy. A further building programme was then followed through as the 21st Century School Improvement programme (**see appendix 2**). The planned PPP schools took account of accessibility at all stages of the planning and building process.

The new Drummond Special School completed in 2008 accommodates interagency working with increased access to Health Services through the adjacent Interagency Centre, The Pines, completed in 2009. The Highland Council's two other Special Schools St Duthus in Tain and St Clements in Dingwall underwent major improvements in 2015. St Duthus School moved into a purpose built modular design prior to a planned move into the new Tain 3-18 campus in 2020. St Clements primary department moved into a new wing

built on the school campus.

Inshes Primary and Millburn Academy were built to offer facilities for pupils with a range of support needs within a mainstream environment. This gives choice to parents of children and young people with complex needs in the South Area, to have their children educated in an inclusive setting which is geared to meet individualised additional needs. Resourced bases have been established in other areas of the Council to offer a similar types of inclusive educational opportunities.

The Authority has instigated a transition plan to ensure that information on pupils who will require significant adaptations and accommodations to be made should be passed on at least three years in advance. This means that secondary schools should be made aware of a child with significant needs by the time that child has completed the Primary 4 stage of school.

Schools have highlighted the need for support and advice on how to plan for physical adaptations. To meet this need a team of Moving and Handling trainers has been set up in each area of the council. These trainers along with a group of Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and staff from the Council's estates team have undergone training in planning for new builds and adaptations. Guidance has been produced for Head Teachers and Managers on adaptations required to meet the needs of specific disabilities. This sits alongside paperwork to plan for Moving and Handling needs and Personal Emergency Evacuations Plans. The Moving and Handling team offer an annual programme of training and review all information to ensure it meets the needs of children and young people.

2.9.2 Curriculum Accessibility

A continuing priority identified in the audit was the need for continuing and further staff development to support the ASL Act, the Equalities Act and Disability Awareness. A range of courses are offered through the Council's Continuing Professional Development Programme to all staff in schools - teaching and ancillary. A programme of training on these issues is delivered to all probationer teachers working in Highland on an annual basis. The move to an integrated Care and Learning Service in 2015 means that training is available to all departments within the service and delivered to include the needs of all participants.

2.9.3 Accessibility of Information

The Highland Practice Model includes an agreement for information sharing among those supporting a pupil with Additional Support Needs. It also ensures that the views of parents and Children and Young People are central to the assessment and planning process. Schools require to build on existing good practice, being open and flexible in responding to

parents' and pupils' requests.

2.10 Consultation

The fourth Accessibility Strategy has been circulated for consultation with interested people and bodies. There has been considerable discussion and debate and issues arising from the Strategy have been discussed and queries followed up and addressed. There is a tight monitoring of the Strategy through visits to schools, a range of improvement monitoring groups and through the Equalities Improvement Group.

This 2016-19 strategy will be reflected in school improvement plans as appropriate. To ensure that the plans embodied in the document are taken forward and future developments are taken into account, the Equalities Improvement Group and ASN Team will continue to monitor the strategy.

2.11 Complaint/Grievance

It is hoped that solutions can be found to any difficulties or problems encountered regarding Accessibility. Should a concern or problem occur and the young person or parents/carers feel progress is not being made towards resolving the situation, the procedure for dealing with complaints and grievances is set out in **Appendix 4**.

SECTION 3

Access to Curriculum

3.1 Introduction

The primary responsibility for ensuring that pupils with disabilities have equity of access to the curriculum lies with Highland schools who must ensure that pupils receive their entitlement and opportunities to extend their experiences and understanding in a range of contexts. This covers learning and teaching and the full breadth of the curriculum including after-school clubs, sports, leisure and cultural activities and school visits. The Curriculum for Excellence places the learner at the centre and is designed to better meet the needs and aspirations of all children and young people in the 21st Century. In particular, the Care and Learning Service is committed to developing greater pupil engagement in learning and teaching through dialogue and co-operation with others.

Future provision to ensure appropriate accommodation for children and young people to access the curriculum requires close liaison and integrated planning with other agencies, parents and pupils.

The Highland Council Care and Learning Service will continuously and pro-actively promote an inclusive ethos through its engagement with schools.

3.2 Different Disabilities

In considering barriers to full participation in the curriculum, the Highland Council will consider pupils with all types of disabilities e.g. communication difficulties, specific learning difficulties (i.e. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.), other learning difficulties, specific language impairment, autism spectrum disorders, hearing impairment, visual impairments and physical disabilities/motor impairments. Not all pupils with additional support needs will be defined under the Equalities Act (2010) as 'disabled' and the Authority will look in turn at the additional support needs of this group of learners to facilitate access to an appropriate curriculum:

- Additional support from staff or other professionals.
- Different levels of curriculum delivery.
- Use of auxiliary aids or specialist equipment.
- Improvements in physical environment including adapting classroom furniture and planning the flexibility of equipment.
- Improving the provision of school information (e.g. textbooks or handouts in large print or Braille).

3.2.1 Considerations

Innovative changes in ways of delivering the curriculum to pupils should be considered through the accessibility strategy to take account of the different ways in which pupils learn. Teaching styles need to be considered alongside learning styles in order that all needs are met. General and specialist advice and information is available through the Council's website, as well as from Quality Improvement Officers, Educational Psychologists and Specialist Services. The Council's website gives straight forward access to accessibility tools in accordance with accessibility standards. This website is available to parents/carers and professionals. Collaborative working with other agencies, professionals, and parents/carers will help ensure appropriate practice and resources are in place for children and young people with disabilities.

Assessment and planning of service delivery has been developed as part of the Highland Practice Model, with Child's Plans providing the main assessment and planning record for meeting pupils' needs.

Interventions must take account of the individual pupil's learning styles. Planning and representation can be carried out through the use of mind maps or computer versions of these. Pupils who are visual learners may benefit as well as those who have limited writing and planning skills from visually presented material which can readily be visualised. Computer programs such as Inspiration software can assist pupils with a range of difficulties as well as pupils with no such problems.

Teachers too should be aware of their own teaching style and the possible mismatches

and conflicts that might exist between their teaching style and the pupils' style of learning.

3.3 Curriculum

Children and young people with disabilities have a right to equal opportunities to achieve excellence, and to have the highest expectations set for them. Learners are entitled to a curriculum which satisfies the principles of breadth, balance, progression, continuity and coherence and is considered in accordance with Highland Council policy and in line with national guidance. The Curriculum for Excellence presents enhanced opportunities for pupils with disabilities to participate in a curriculum matched with their needs and ambitions.

3.3.1 Adapted Curriculum

Some pupils with additional support needs which are severe and complex may require adapted or alternative materials in order to access Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. For others, different approaches to learning and teaching will be needed and often both will be required. Schools will take responsibility for providing equal access and opportunities for pupils with disabilities and/or additional support needs and for promoting awareness of disability and the duties to make reasonable adjustments to ensure access. Advice and support is available from specialist services, the additional support teams, sensory services teams, the Psychological Service, health services, family teams and others as required.

In 2015 the Care and Learning Service introduced the Quest and Q Skills assessing, tracking and monitoring materials for use with learners with complex needs. A working group was set up in support of roll out and a sharepoint site has been established to support the sharing of practice and curricular materials.

3.3.2 Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) seeks to develop “successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society”. CfE gives teachers many more opportunities for creativity and innovation as new experiences are offered with different outcomes. It must be ensured that children and young people with additional support needs gain from these new challenges and benefit through increased opportunities from a curriculum fitted to their needs and aspirations.

3.3.3 Assessment is for Learning (AifL)

In an AifL school everyone is considered to be learning together, assessment being part of learning and teaching. Through using formative assessment, reflective self-assessment and summative assessment – assessment FOR learning, assessment AS learning and assessment OF learning – becomes an integral part of learning and teaching. Schools can

assist all pupils to achieve course aims and develop their learning and thinking skills. Assessment can help ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and ensures that all pupils learn at an appropriate level and pace. All pupils must be considered and the associated Learning and Teaching Toolkit assists all schools to evaluate best practice for all pupils, including those with disabilities.

In 2015, the assessment materials Quest and Q Skills were introduced to Highland special schools, resourced bases and mainstream schools supporting pupils with profound and complex needs. The Quest and Q Skills materials focus on those early communication and cognitive skills that are crucial to all future learning and improved quality of life. They allow schools to plan and accurately record progress for pupils with complex needs.

For national testing and examinations, guidance is available from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). See <http://www.sqa.org.uk> Plans to increase accessibility and to ease pupils' stress at times of examination should take account of SQA guidance and reasonable adjustments should be made to give access as widely as possible to National Examinations. Any adjustments will require regular practice in the assessment situation. Where readers and/or scribes are involved, pupils should regularly practise with whoever will support them in the formal assessment situation.

2008 saw the introduction of the on-line exams developments which has been extended and expanded for a range of pupils with additional support needs. Highland secondary schools have introduced these digital options to pupils who would benefit from examinations presented in this way and are continuing to develop these options.

There are now a range of alternative Senior Phase external qualifications available for pupils with additional support needs who require access to life skills or sensory programmes. Schools offer individualised programmes to meet individual needs.

The internal tracking and monitoring testing (SOSCA and INCAS), used for pupils in mainstream schools can be adapted to ensure pupils with additional support needs are not put at a disadvantage, however, tracking and monitoring is essential for all pupils, even where these systems are not appropriate and in such cases, schools should consider the use of Quest and Q skills.

The use of technology should be considered when appropriate in order that children and young people can have as much independence as possible. The Assistive Technology Service is available to advise and help school staff to deliver their responsibility in ensuring pupils are given appropriate access. Preparation for the use of technology in examination situations will require pupils to practise how they can make best use of the technology available to them. Minor improvements involving reasonable adjustments for individual pupils should be carried out at school level.

3.3.4 Framework for Support

The Authority has in place a staged process of requesting support. This fits with the duties of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) and includes

documentation for teachers to plan and record the strategies they use with pupils. The guidance on the staged approach can be accessed at http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/149/getting_it_right_for_every_child_the_staged_approach_and_the_childrens_plan

This process is part of the Highland Practice Model of assessment, planning and support in Children's Services and is designed to be open and transparent to all staff who should be aware of its existence and the associated procedures and paperwork.

3.3.5 Awareness Raising

All staff will have access to the Accessibility Strategy and must be aware of their responsibilities through the Service's consultation and information processes with heads of establishments. The Authority will continue to raise awareness of disability, the equalities duties and additional support needs amongst all staff. This will include:

- Opportunities for staff development and training
- Joint working arrangements
- Information bank
- Contacts
- Funding
- Guidance for staff
- Resources
- Identified curricular issues

3.3.6 Facilitating Accessibility

The Authority will implement strategies for removing barriers to facilitate full participation in education, including provision of appropriate high quality equipment, e.g. standing frames, furniture, ICT resources, changing facilities, moving and handling equipment etc.

Since the inception of the first Accessibility Strategy in 2002, the potential of online digital resources has been foreseen and continues to be developed. The use of audio and video podcasts and video conferencing through GLOW etc, to provide access for pupils with a range of disabilities is growing. In Highland this will be a considerable development over the next few years, exploiting e-learning even further.

3.3.7 Training

Staff training in alternative approaches for teaching and support will be incorporated in the Support for Learning staff development strategy.

3.3.8 Good Practice

Exemplars of good practice including effective joint working arrangements and the promotion of appropriate publications should be provided to schools.

3.3.9 Flexibility and Breadth in the Curriculum

The Authority will clearly define flexibility in order to increase accessibility for all, taking account of Highland Council's policy on Flexibility in the Curriculum and changes arising from the development of a Curriculum for Excellence. Innovative strategies will help facilitate access for all pupils with disabilities. It should be acknowledged that the actions of teachers and other adults has an impact on pupils and therefore expectations for those working with pupils with disabilities should be included in the pupils' plans. Child's plans should include expected adult behaviours, expected school action and interim measures.

The Authority will continue to facilitate access to the wider curriculum including Personal and Social Development e.g. school trips and excursions, school plays, extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs and social events. Such experiences and clubs can assist all children's learning and should be equally available to pupils with disabilities. When transport is needed to facilitate access, this should be considered and provided as appropriate whenever possible.

3.3.10 Integrating Services and Approaches

There is already considerable joint working between agencies. There will be continued development of integrated approaches within Children's Services to deliver improved access to the curriculum. Other services such as the Integrated Library Service can make a vital contribution to providing and enhancing the curriculum. The Children in Highlands Information Point (CHIP+) is a valuable source of support and information to parents and young people and is supported by The Highland Council. The Care and Learning Service Plan 'For Highland's Children' and this Accessibility Strategy set out plans for agencies to work together with families to produce better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

3.3.11 Transitions

There is now effective multi-service practice and guidance on the management of key transition stages i.e. home to nursery or other early years provision, nursery to Primary 1, Primary 7 to secondary education, secondary to post-school provision, including work, further and higher education where applicable. [LINK to Transitions doc](#)

3.4 Transport

There are occasions when pupils with disabilities will require specific transport arrangements to enable access to school facilities. Schools will be expected to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate arrangements. Consultation with stakeholders will determine what is required. To facilitate Services in making appropriate provision for transporting pupils with disabilities the appropriate form should be completed on enrolment or at transition and reviewed as part of the Child's Plan review process, so that relevant transport can be allocated and training provided to drivers and escorts:

3.5 Duties of Staff

The Authority has clarified responsibilities, duties and expectations of staff with regard to accessibility. Much has already been done within the current Policy Framework, but will require to be maintained for all new staff ensuring that all teachers, Pupil Support Assistants, Early Years Practitioners and janitorial staff are aware of expected good practice and of their duties in terms of the Equalities Act.

Information about the duties and responsibilities of the Education sector within Care and Learning is routinely included in training in relation to disability and additional support needs. Further emphasis and clarification have been given as part of recent work to develop policy and guidance in relation to Moving and Handling of people, Intimate Personal Care, and the Administration of Medicines in Schools. Newly appointed staff at practitioner and management levels will continue to require training and support to ensure that their knowledge and understanding is current and appropriate to their role.

Annual training is run for ASN staff and probationary teachers new to the authority, to ensure knowledge and good practice in relation to meeting individual need is passed to all staff.

3.6 Planning

3.6.1 Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs)

All pupils who have significant learning needs which are such that they require the curriculum to be individualised for them, will have an IEP. Targets set within this plan should be for set periods of time and should be defined as short, medium or long-term. Short-term is around six to eight weeks, medium would be considered as a school term and long-term an academic year or beyond. Targets which are set must be reviewed regularly and records kept to ensure that pupils are obtaining access to a broad and balanced curriculum which suits their needs. Parents/carers and the pupils themselves should be consulted on appropriate targets and should feel they have ownership of these targets. Targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited (SMART). The IEP is not a separate planning document, standing apart from other plans, but is incorporated into the Child's Plan.

3.6.2 Personal Learning Planning

Personal Learning Planning should be used to improve the learning experiences of all pupils. It will help track progress which has previously been agreed and will provide evidence of achievement for those who should have it - pupils, professionals and parents. Pupils will know what they have achieved, what they are trying to achieve and how to achieve their agreed aims. Schools are developing ways of recording achievements as part of learning, ensuring learning conversations to provide focused feedback, and self or peer assessment and this should be backed by the effective use of ICT to record achievements.

Personal Learning Planning is for all children and young people, and therefore involves those with disabilities.

3.6.3 Co-ordinated Support Plans

The Council is required to maintain Co-ordinated Support Plans for those pupils who have long-term additional support needs which require support from more than one agency or service. The format and process for developing Co-ordinated Support Plans is set out in law. The CSP targets will be included and reviewed as part of the multi-agency Child's Plan. Guidance is given on the ASN website at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/>

SECTION 4

Access to the Physical Environment

4.1 Introduction

This section covers improvements to the physical environment of schools and also to physical aids which may be required to ensure access to appropriate education. Aspects such as classrooms, school environs and surroundings are required to be taken into account. Reference to physical factors includes accessibility of school transport and outdoor activities. A guidance document on providing building adaptations for pupils with disabilities is included as Appendix 3 and provides the protocol for information sharing to support consideration for possible adaptations to existing buildings for some pupils with high level physical needs.

4.2 Building improvements since inception of Accessibility Strategy

Through the auspices of the Estates Strategy Manager, ASN Officers and Property and Architectural Services, a wide range of building improvements have taken place in a large number of schools to improve access for pupils with disabilities.

Major works have comprised:

- assisted disabled toilet, shower and electric changing bench facilities
- disabled toilets installed
- major external ramps and handrails
- haven rooms for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- disabled parking bays created
- internal lift provided to upper floors
- secure fencing and gate provisions for ASD pupils
- replacement of lighting for visually impaired pupils etc.

4.3 New Buildings and Adaptations

All new Secondary and Primary Schools built in Highland and the replacement special school built under the PPP2 project are all fully accessible with full assisted toilet facilities. All schools built under the Council's capital plan are also fully accessible. All new builds will meet the highest specification for accessibility for pupils, parents, staff and visitors. A list of builds and improvements completed and in progress can be found in Appendix 2.

4.4 Drivers for Strategy

The following are specific considerations that link to access to curriculum or information:

- Classrooms where specific equipment/adaptations may be required e.g. Science, Home Economics, Technical subjects.
- Access to sports facilities: both on site and off site.
- ICT provision where current provision does not support access and impact upon ICT networks and schools building infrastructure.
- Accommodations for pupils who can only access part of mainstream provision. Compatibility of technological equipment – e.g. infra-red IT systems and infra-red listening devices for pupils with a hearing impairment.
- Appropriate space for group activities.

4.5 What needs to be provided

It is considered that Physical Access operates on four distinct levels:

	Definition	Example of impact
Level 1	Pupil has ability to access whole school without any mobility difficulty.	Access to curriculum e.g. special workstation, computers or adaptations for using equipment.
Level 2	<p>Pupil has physical or sensory disability e.g.</p> <p>i) mobility-wheelchair, walking aids</p> <p>ii) hearing impairment</p> <p>iii) visual impairment</p> <p>iv) spatial recognition/memory leading to disorientation/lack of perception of risk or damage.</p>	<p>Physical access changes required throughout school.</p> <p>Audio loops, acoustics (physical changes) sound field systems.</p> <p>Quiet withdrawal space. Intercoms and sound based alarms require alternatives.</p> <p>Physical changes to building to identify: wayfinding, alarms, area recognition.</p> <p>Changes to physical environment to promote mainstream inclusion, e.g. colour, physical shapes and light and sound.</p>

Level 3	Complex physical and educational need with some ability to access mainstream curriculum.	Physical access changes as per Level 2. Specific areas for specialist facilities such as intimate care, curriculum support and visiting specialist support.
Level 4	Pupils with complex and physical educational needs that inhibit mainstream education.	Specialist buildings providing both education and residential facility supporting pupils Highland-wide.

4.6 Current Availability of Information

Information exists on pupils with disabilities with respect to the various levels of need (1-4) on SEEMIS, the pupil database used in schools. Considerable work has been carried out to ensure the accuracy of information held on SEEMIS, so that this can be used to plan strategically. Sustainability and quality of pupil information improves progressively from pre-school through to secondary school and this is facilitated by effective joint working and the Highland Practice Childs Plan Model.

Prior to school entry, information can be provided by Midwives, Health Visitors, Specialist Therapists and Services, Early Years Practitioners, Social Care Staff, Private and Voluntary Sector providers, etc. Early Years Developmental Overviews are completed for all 4 year olds and some 3 years olds, prior to school entry and this provides information to support planning for training and support in the preschool years and early primary stages.

Health visitors provide information prior to the child entering early years/nursery through their pathway of assessment and support and this is critical to provide an early indication of need for children.

Note: Information on pupils transferring into an area is obtained direct from Parent, Health Practitioners and previous schools.

All information on required access should be held within a child's plan and this will inform the annual audit of needs undertaken at Area level. There needs to be effective and efficient methods of communication for all at every stage of education to ensure this information is current and informs the Accessibility Strategy for the Council.

4.7 Current Initiatives

Current initiatives directly influencing strategy are:-

- The School Estate Review. Looking at each ASG and considering the educational provision, occupancy rates and the conditions of buildings in relation to their purpose and need for provision in the area. All ASGs are being reviewed to consider the needs of all pupils and the provision available. For some ASGs this may lead to public consultation on amalgamation, closure, adaptation and/or new build.
- Year on year allocation of funding to provide for minor adaptations to school

facilities Highland wide, e.g. handrails, disabled toilets, ramps.

- A centrally held budget to provide specific equipment for individual pupils to enhance their access to subject areas and to the curriculum.

4.8 Strategy

Development of the strategy for the Highlands is complex, due to the diverse nature of the school estate, current initiatives, variation in population density etc. However, the requirement to deal with the short, medium and long term remains important and the following represents the Highland Council's strategy for dealing with Physical Accessibility. It is also recognised that this strategy does not stand alone but forms an integral part of the overall approach to managing the school estate strategy.

4.9 Short term Strategy (Within 1 year)

4.9.1 Information Gathering

- Information will be gathered using the three year planning strategy
- Continue to identify pupils by catchment area. Prepare list of pupils in form of school roll and stage.
- Undertake progressive Physical Access surveys of schools with emphasis on known priorities, e.g. pupils with disabilities progressing from Primary to Secondary, pupils with needs to access certain aspects of curriculum.
- Maintain and update the central database of ancillary equipment with storage and servicing facilities shared with Health and Social Work.
- Priorities identified as part of benchmark survey of schools.
- Identify costs of building and curriculum compliance.
- Ensure all Head Teachers are aware that they must have a Fire Evacuation Strategy for their schools incorporating procedures for evacuating disabled pupils to a place of safety.

4.9.2 Resource Allocation

- Work within current capital funds already allocated to development of facilities for pupils with disabilities in schools.
- Further develop network between specialists and building specifiers (in house).
- Maintain and improve current databases for ease of access and gathering of information.
- Consider one off requests for funding to schools to ensure disabled pupils' access to trips, after-school activities and related transport.

4.9.3 Prioritise

- Mainstream schools. Prioritise works to properties based upon:
 - Nurseries - known need based upon current pupils and information from external services.

- Primary schools - known need based upon current pupils and pre-school 3-5 year old.
- Secondary schools - known need based upon current secondary pupils and primary pupils at P6 and P7.
- Respond to current specific needs through a short-term programme of adaptations within capital resources.
- Specialist provision for pupils who require significant additional support to access mainstream education.
 - Assess proposals for specialist provision within specific schools on an area/population basis.
 - Establish development programme and costs.
 - Respond to current specific needs through a short-term programme of adaptations within capital resources.
- Schools to identify current building access problems through Area Offices. Prioritised by need - e.g.
 - No facilities
 - Some facilities but major shortcomings
 - Some facilities but minor shortcomings
 - Improvement on current facilities that already meet need -e.g. upgrading of equipment.
- Programme of Developments
 - Develop programme based upon priorities and resources available and integrated with known initiatives e.g. the School Estates Strategy.

4.9.4 Medium Term Strategy (2-6 years)

- Implement development programme.
- Set aside funding for meeting immediate need, e.g. Pupil transferring from another area mid-way through a school session.
- Respond to current specific need as prioritised by Area Managers (as short term above).
- Review programme on an annual basis and revise where appropriate. Consider schools that are not currently programmed during the last year of programme.
- Re-audit on a 5 year annual cycle to gather detailed information from individual schools. Brief audit completed every 3 years from information available through ASN team members.

4.9.5 Long Term Strategy (3-10 years)

It is considered that the medium term strategy will achieve significant development of facilities for disabled pupils but some smaller schools in sparsely populated areas will not have significantly improved because no pupils with disabilities with respect to physical

access, have or are about to enrol. It should be recognised that it may not be possible, on cost grounds to implement changes to buildings if no need is evident. Gradually as budgets allow, all buildings will become more accessible through revisiting the programme of development to identify shortcomings in current provision and, where necessary, address shortcomings in the long term strategy on the basis of the resultant data from the detailed re-audit process.

SECTION 5

Improving Communication and Access to Information

5.1 Introduction

This section covers the ways in which a school or other establishment makes information available. The term 'information' refers to all information that is regularly issued through schools including handouts, timetables, textbooks, newsletters and information about school events and may include information which is available electronically through Highland Council's website, and through links to other sources on the Internet. Highland Council cannot, however, take responsibility for the reliability of information available elsewhere.

Information should take account of pupils' disabilities and the requests of parents or pupils for a preferred format which takes account of home language spoken, cultural factors, reading difficulties etc. Information will be supplied within a reasonable timescale as soon as is practicable.

5.2 Different formats

All information should be available to parents, carers and pupils in a format which is accessible to them. All authority documents will require to be kept under review to ensure that they are accessible to those who require them but who may be non-readers or unable to access print by the usual channels. If requested, information can be made available in Braille, audio tape, computer disk or a range of other languages. This document can be made available on request in an accessible format for anyone requesting it.

5.2.1 Sensory Impairment

Highland Deaf Education Service and Highland Education Vision Support Service will provide advice and guidance to schools and families on alternative formats for the presentation of information and the use of technology to support pupils with sensory impairments.

Pupils who are blind and visually impaired may require computer programmes to produce customised materials. Specialist aids should be available for those who require them and consideration is being given in all new buildings to the installation of loop and sound field systems at the time of building. Consideration will also be given to the colour schemes,

lighting and signage of all new building, and of existing buildings at times of decoration. Plans of school layout can be made available to pupils to facilitate their access to the whole school, and to help parents/carers to prepare their children for a new school.

5.2.2 Dyslexia, other reading problems and Specific Persistent Literacy Difficulties

Steps must be taken to facilitate access to printed matter for pupils with dyslexia or other reading and writing difficulties. This can be through accommodations such as a reader and/or scribe, but more independent methods of providing information support can be through appropriate use of assistive technology.

A sign system to facilitate access for pupils with dyslexia and communication difficulties in areas such as dining hall can consist of symbols, pictures, or photographs as part of the menu. This avoids any form of discrimination against non-reading pupils. Lengthy pieces of text such as school handbooks can be made available in audio form for those with difficulties in reading, including the blind. Similarly, unless they have already done so, schools must think about making information available to parents through the school's website. In designing their website, schools should consult guidance on accessibility of websites where necessary.

It is reasonable to expect teachers to encourage pupils to take account of the needs of others to help accessibility. A school ethos where pupils are actively encouraged to help pupils with different skills and abilities, by providing reading or other help to their peers can enable effective inclusion and better access to the curriculum.

5.2.3 Speech and Communication Difficulties

The paediatric Speech and Language Service is part of the integrated Care and learning Service. Therefore close collaborative work can take place through the Child's Plan process. This includes joint planning and training strategies.

Children with speech and communication difficulties including those with severe autism are likely to benefit from an alternative communication system which can be acknowledged by all. The use of Touch Talkers and other aids to facilitate communication should be acceptable practice in the mainstream classroom. Low-technology systems such as 'Talking Mats', PECS, Makaton and other similar means of support should be strategies to routinely aid communication and increase accessibility. Training needs to be available to enable teachers to give pupils maximum benefit from such tools.

Joint training is available to staff in language assessment materials such as the Derbyshire Language Scheme in order to ensure accurate data on pupils' communication needs.

5.3 Communicating with Others

Communication with parents/carers can be through a variety of channels. Schools should be prepared to contact parents and carers by the most effective way to make the information accessible. This may mean the use of a textphone, Typetalk, mobile phone or

fax for deaf or hard of hearing parents, or the use of a tape or email for those with visual difficulties or dyslexia. It is essential therefore that schools should know which parents can readily access technology in the home so that pupils are not caused embarrassment. Though access to computer in the home is increasing, not all homes will have a computer. Good liaison is essential to ensure no-one is disadvantaged by lack of appropriate computer access, and alternatives should always be available.

5.4 Staff Awareness of Accessibility of Information

Consultation will be required to ensure that staff are aware of what is appropriate and helpful. Parents should be encouraged to approach school management if there are aspects of accessibility they have concerns about so that strategies can be considered and put in place. Parents/carers should be encouraged to be routinely involved in reviewing provision for their child. Pupils will be involved in determining their own provision if they are able to do so, and should be given support and training in how to cope with meetings and procedures. If they are unhappy or unable to contribute to a meeting they should be consulted out-with the meeting, so that their views can be presented by others and feedback provided to them, but they must nonetheless be asked, if they wish to take part. If they choose to stay out-with the meeting, the main outcomes and decisions should be communicated to them later and their views should be taken into account in future planning.

5.5 Accessible Information to Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must be consulted at time of enrolment to ensure that the format of information which is sent home is accessible to them. Where specialist support and information is required, this too must be presented in alternative formats where necessary to ensure accessibility and help understanding. Leaflets and other Highland Council productions must be available and accessible as required. Highland Council's own Support for Learners' website has been significantly developed and comments are welcomed on how it might be improved further.

5.6 Children in the Highlands Information Point (CHIP+)

CHIP+ has produced a series of information leaflets on the various aspects of recent legislation and these are available from CHIP+, and also on Highland Council's Support for Learners' website. These will be kept updated and will be revised when necessary.

5.7 Specialist Services and Support for Pupils

Information leaflets are available on the specialist services provided by Highland Council for pupils with disabilities. Services include assistive technology, visual and hearing impairments. In addition, information is provided on Area Additional Support Teams, home education, Gypsy/Travellers and other Interrupted Learners etc.

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools -
additional support needs/40/gypsies travellers and interrupted learners](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/886/schools_-_additional_support_needs/40/gypsies_travellers_and_interrupted_learners)

SECTION 6

Staff Development and Training

6.1 Introduction

Legislation such as (Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act, 2004) and as amended 2009), has emphasised the need for joint planning and working. Clear targets for progressing interagency planning and working are embodied in the Children's Services Plan, For Highland's Children. In an area as wide and diverse as Highland, there needs to be clear prioritisation to clarify what needs to be done and when. Considerable work has already taken place in relation to previous plans, but there is still much to be done, and maintenance is necessary to ensure we are aware of all new standards. There has been an increase in joint working and of integration of training, services, processes and policies. Area Service Manager Groups are addressing many issues locally. This needs to continue to ensure further accessibility is prioritised. An audit was undertaken to collate all the training courses which can be offered by the various groups within the Care and Learning ASN teams.

6.2 Training

One of the greatest challenges is that of ensuring that all Highland staff are trained to cope with the changing demands which inclusion and its supporting legislation places on all of its staff. There are issues for learning and teaching which require to be addressed separately but in tandem with curriculum training. While it is necessary to improve training for teachers, there are many others involved in the lives of pupils who also require appropriate training including all the support and ancillary staff who work in schools.

Every opportunity should be taken to involve parents/carers, other services and the young people themselves in training. There is also a need to further widen training within and outwith schools to affect those involved in Gypsy/Traveller education and Home Education. Awareness raising seminars and developments in ICT continue to increase the access which Gypsy/Traveller children have to Education, and there is an ongoing increase in the number of Gypsy/Traveller children and young people and other interrupted learners accessing education since the last plan. This will continue to be developed in the duration of this plan in a drive for equity and fairness for all Highland communities and in an effort to ensure that these pupils, even if not disabled, are not discriminated against. The roll out of Chrome books to schools over the next few years includes machines being allocated for the use of interrupted learners.

The original training programme has kept pace with the legislation as it has been enacted. Current training in the area of Additional Support for Learning, Inclusive Practice and planning for children, including Co-ordinated Support Plans, is in line with the legislation that has been introduced and this will continue in the longer term to ensure that all staff are kept up-to-date with the initiatives that are evolving. Through the 2005 and 2010 audits,

data was available to inform the training programme. A major feature of the training calendar continues to be awareness raising of the Equality Duty associated with the Equality Act 2010 and its implications for educational establishments. Improvement Plans will reflect the assumption of inclusion and inclusive practices and this will be evaluated by the Quality Improvement Team on their school visits until such time as these are fully embedded in practice.

Inclusion places many stresses on teachers. The training strategy requires to respond quickly to unpredictable events such as a child with a low incidence disability enrolling in a school with little or no notice. Parents/carers and young people with disabilities need to be involved with school staff in staff development which is taking place. This will increase understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, with the Childs Plan being the method for joint planning for a pupil.

At times of increasing pressures on budgets and a decrease in these budgets, it is necessary to turn to our own staff to provide much of the training that is needed. Those with expertise in particular areas can provide valuable support and training to teaching, ancillary staff and others providing for the needs of pupils.

Members of the Additional Support Needs Team, Psychological Services, Specialist Coordinators and Additional Support Needs Officers and Managers will be involved in the delivery of staff development to teachers and ancillary staff. They will also have a role in the development of the quality assurance of support for pupils with disabilities. External providers will be involved in training where their skills are more appropriate and this will enhance the provision of training.

Head Teachers have a role to play in informing staff and encouraging appropriate staff development through awareness raising at Annual Professional Review and Development meetings and other appropriate opportunities. Teachers can develop skills by exchanging places with those in other types of establishment in order to share and pass on skills. Special school staff have considerable skills which can benefit staff in mainstream to help them break down tasks and teaching points into very small manageable steps for pupils with severe and/or complex needs. Likewise those in special schools can benefit from working on mainstream curricular areas and considering how they might take back aspects of this which could benefit their own schools.

6.2.1 Moving and Handling

The inclusion of pupils with severe and complex health needs and/or limited movement, necessitates help in moving and handling. Education, social care and health staff provide support to individuals who require assistance with movement, to get from place to place and in relation to intimate personal care.

The Council's Care and Learning Service has developed policy and guidance in relation to the moving and handling of people. This documentation includes the protocols which must be used to ensure safe, best practice. All of those involved in the moving and handling of

pupils require to be trained in techniques which are effective and which safeguard the health and safety of employees and the pupil. Appropriate equipment is provided, for example hoists and changing benches. Training needs to be available for school transport drivers, escorts and support assistants, as well as for teachers and all others who are likely to be required to move pupils. The Highland Council has identified people to provide oversight of training in moving and handling, who can give advice in any situation where training, equipment or adaptations are required to meet an individual's physical needs. While all unnecessary moving and handling should be avoided in order to maintain and develop the maximum degree of independence for individual pupils, there will be occasions when pupils will require assistance with movement in order to facilitate access to some aspect of the curriculum, to another part of the school site, to home school transport, or to intimate personal care:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/34/policies_and_guidance-support_for_learners

The Highland Council Care and Learning Service has a team of trained trainers who can accredit the quality of staff training. Risk assessments should be carried out in consultation with other professionals and where appropriate, training must be kept up to date. Training in how to carry out risk assessments is delivered by the Council's Health and Safety Team. All staff trained are issued with a copy of the Scottish Manual Handling Passport to record their training and subsequent updates.

6.2.2 Dealing with Behaviour which Challenges

A major challenge to the success of inclusion has been the difficulties which many staff have in dealing with pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. An understanding of the reasons for the pupils' behaviour is necessary for teachers in particular to accept that a child is not simply being naughty, but requires specific interventions or non-confrontational challenges to be able to operate in the classroom environment. Promoting positive relationships through creating a positive ethos and defusing confrontation are the main priorities.

The behaviour of some pupils in schools is potentially significantly challenging, but methods and approaches have been identified which are effective in preventing, minimising or managing most problematic behaviour. Key approaches include Circle Time, establishing a Circles of Friends, developing Emotional Literacy, and using Restorative Approaches. Familiarity with these approaches has established that they are underpinned by a consistent rationale and that they are compatible as approaches. An over-arching Policy 'Building Positive Relationships for School Improvement' is supported by a detailed training strategy and can be accessed

at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12443/the_use_of_physical_intervention_in_educational_establishments_policy

The Promoting Positive Relationships Team can support schools with advice, training and support.

Even with a full knowledge of pupils' needs there may be occasions where a pupil exhibits dangerous behaviour either towards another pupil or to a staff member. In these cases, staff require to know what they can do to prevent and/or minimise injury to the pupil and to themselves and others. Staff require to be trained in de-escalation strategies and procedures such as physical intervention to enable them to judge exactly how best to deal with the situation. Any risk of injury must be considered and necessary measures must be in place to ensure identified risks are eliminated or minimised. Physical intervention should not involve unreasonable risks. Clear guidance is available to all and recording of incidents must take place in line with Council policy.

Policy documents and guidance on Building Positive Relationships, creating behaviour protocols, undertaking risk assessments and on Physical Intervention can be found at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/395889/positive_behaviour_in_schools

http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12443/the_use_of_physical_intervention_in_educational_establishments_policy

6.2.3 Provision of Intimate Care

Intimate Care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children carry out for themselves but which some are unable to do due to physical disability, additional support needs associated with learning difficulties, medical needs or needs arising from the child's stage of development.

Intimate Care may involve help with drinking, eating, dressing and toileting. Help may also be needed with changing colostomy bags and other such equipment. It may also require the administration of invasive medication.

In most cases Intimate Care will involve procedures to do with personal hygiene and the cleaning of equipment associated with the process. In the case of a specialised procedure only a person suitably trained and assessed as competent should carry out the procedure. Staff providing Intimate Care must be aware of the need to adhere to good Child Protection practice in order to minimise the risks for both children and staff. It is important that staff are supported and trained so that they feel confident in their practice. There are trainers based in each area to deliver Intimate Care training to staff, access to this service is through the Area ASN Manager.

The Highland Council has now developed detailed guidance for all staff who provide intimate personal care to children and young people and this can be accessed at:

http://highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/155/intimate_care_for_children_and_young_people

6.2.4 The Administration of Medicines to Pupils

For pupils with health needs or disorders such as ADHD, epilepsy etc., the administration of medicines may be vital to enable them to function in the learning environment.

Responsibility for the administration of medicines is shared by parents/carers and NHS

Highland although school staff may be willing to assist.

Individual detailed healthcare plans should be incorporated into the child's plan for all pupils with health needs. These are agreed with the relevant professionals, parents/carers and the children or young people. Where staff training is required, this must be arranged timeously so that appropriate care is always taken to enable the pupil to access an appropriate curriculum and to function to their potential. Where necessary, training should be undertaken in advance of the pupil being placed. Staff should be aware of the importance of adhering to protocols and procedures and the rules for the safe keeping of medicines and record keeping as set out in the joint policy and guidance. Health professionals liaise with Care and Learning Managers in order to ensure that all staff concerned receive appropriate training. Any risks must be assessed to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and pupils are supported in the best way possible.

http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/904/risk_assessment_and_handling_plan

6.2.5 Treatment and Therapy Needs

There are a few pupils with complex health needs who require routine treatments, emergency treatments and therapy in school. A joint approach with health professionals to meeting these needs will ensure appropriate provision. Policy, planning and responsibilities are similar to those for the administration of medicines.

6.3 Funding

Some funding for staff development and training and for equipment is devolved to schools and schools should consider equipment and training needs as part of development planning in order to inform resource allocation and purchasing decisions.

A further budget for service wide staff development priorities and specialist training in relation to Additional Support Needs is held centrally. This can be applied for through the Development Officer ASN who holds the central staff development budget. However, many courses and training opportunities are also provided free by the ASN team. Some carry a small charge, where materials and resources are purchased as part of the training programme e.g. Resilient Kids, Seasons for Growth, Video Interaction Guidance etc.

Some more expensive items of equipment such as hoists and specialist chairs or standing frames will require to be funded from centrally-held budgets. Routine maintenance of equipment and safe storage should help extend the useful life of the specialist equipment and individual schools have responsibility for ensuring regular checks and maintenance is done of this equipment. Schools' plans should show how ongoing accessibility improvements will dovetail into school improvement and budget plans.

6.4 Priorities for Training Affecting Accessibility (See appendix 1)

- Continuing awareness raising for all staff of accessibility issues, guidance and training on identifying and addressing accessibility issues.

- Continuing training on the ASN Acts and Equalities Act and its implications on meeting needs and supporting accessibility.
- Continuing to support staff undertaking specialist qualifications e.g. Deaf, Vision, plus offering a CPD programme to disseminate training.
- Delivering training on a range of the Council's guidance and Policy Documents e.g. Working in a solution-focussed way, promoting positive relationships, Emotional Literacy, Assessment and Planning, meeting individual needs etc.
- Training and guidance on supporting pupils requiring protocols on Administration of Medicines, Moving and Handling, Intimate Care, Physical Intervention, etc. and incorporating risk assessment and Health & Safety matters within these.
- Collaborative training courses in support of multi-agency working delivering Integrated Children's Services and meeting shared objectives.
- On-going support for post graduate qualifications in various aspects of ASN as required by the authority.

SECTION 7

Addressing Concerns

7.1 Addressing Concerns

Concerns are almost always most quickly and easily addressed informally through discussion between parents/carers and those most directly involved with their child. Initially parents/carers should be advised to discuss concerns with the class teacher or Head Teacher. If however, after making an initial approach to the school, a parent or carer feels that appropriate access is not available to their child, they should be advised that they may wish to consider taking further steps as follows:

Stage 1

Arrange to meet with the Head Teacher and to discuss their concerns and a way forward. A timescale for any action identified should be agreed.

Stage 2

If it is then felt that satisfactory progress is not being made, parents/carers are advised to contact the Head Teacher and to request that the Head Teacher should take responsibility for organising a meeting of appropriate personnel to try to address parental/carer concerns. Parents/carers must be consulted on who will be involved and may wish to take someone to the meeting in a supportive role. Parents/carers should be given a written action plan confirming what has been agreed.

Solution-focussed meetings are helpful in developing action plans. Recommended strategies and approaches should be made clear to parents/carers and any support expected from parents or carers should be explained. Parental/carer involvement is important throughout the child's schooling and especially if the child or young person has a

disability.

Stage 3

The Head Teacher may consider involving the Independent Mediation Service available to the Council, to support the process of finding a resolution if discussions do not seem to be reaching a satisfactory conclusion for both parties. This service can be accessed through discussion with the Area ASN Manager. A leaflet about this service can be downloaded from the ASN Website:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8/working_together_and_resolving_disagreements.pdf

Stage 4

If all school-based dialogue has been exhausted and a conclusion satisfactory to the parents/carers and child/young person has not been reached, then the parents/carers and young person have the right to invite a representative of the Area Management Team to investigate. (The Head Teacher might also decide to request the assistance of a representative of the Area Team). This will often be the Area Care and Learning Manager or his/her representative.

Stage 5

If difficulties persist and there is still no satisfactory resolution and the mediation service has not been involved up to this point, then parents/carers can request the involvement of the independent mediation service which the Authority has established as part of its provision to comply with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. (Independent mediation operates in accordance with the ASL Act Code of Practice).

7.2 Summary

With a transparent policy in every school, staff and parents/carers should be able to see clearly the steps which are being taken and the accommodations being made. Formal procedures under the Equalities Legislation or ASL Legislation can often be avoided by timely responses and appropriate action. If communication is established at an early point and maintained, a solution should be able to be found.

SECTION 8

Conclusion

In order to ensure that this document is acted on and its recommendations carried out, the ASN Head of Service Team and ASN Improvement Group will regularly monitor its progress and make further plans for change when necessary. Evidence of improvement will be sought. This evidence will be gathered in a number of different ways, but will involve pupils, parents, teaching and ancillary staff and others involved in the life of the children

and young people whose education the Strategy is designed to help.

Transfer of information between agencies and services, Early Years, Primary and Secondary schools and families is vital. As much notice as possible must be given in order to plan adaptations to buildings, curriculum and staff training. Multi-agency involvement will be required to ensure that the Accessibility Strategy is appropriate and is available for all who require to know its content.

SECTION 9

Action Plans

A fuller explanation of points can be found in Section 3 of the full Accessibility Strategy

IDENTIFIED TARGETS	Responsibility for ongoing training and maintenance		
Curriculum Action Plan	School Level	ASN Team	Authority Level
1. Quest and Q Skills [Awareness raising required. Update new Head Teachers and key staff.]	X	X	X
2. Framework for Support [QI Team to monitor. Further staff development required on Staged process and ASN structures]	X	X	X
3. Awareness [Ongoing rollout of Equalities and ASN Legislation training to all staff.]	X	X	
4. Training [Audit of training needs undertaken annually and implemented as appropriate]	X	X	
5. Good Practice [The Highland Practice Model used by all staff working in Children's Services for Assessment, Planning and Review]	X	X	X
6. Flexibility in the curriculum [A Curriculum for Excellence, Assessment is for Learning, Quest and Q Skills]	X	X	X
7. Transitions [Key transition stages should use effective multi-agency good practice as laid out in the Transitions Guidance}	X	X	X
8. Alternative Curriculum [School trips, extra-curricular activities, homework accessibility]	X	X	
9. Reasonable adjustments [SQA procedures for making reasonable adjustments for pupils in exam situations]	X	X	
10. Duties of Staff [Roll out of training of guidelines to staff on responsibilities, duties and expectations –intimate care, administration of medicines, moving and handling physical intervention, etc]	X	X	
11. Personal Learning Planning [For all pupils to support access to the curriculum with IEPs where appropriate]	X	X	X

12. Child's Plans [Ensure these are put in place and implemented where appropriate]	X	X	X
13. ICT [Training and updates on what is available – hardware and software to facilitate accessibility, opportunities of SSDN]	X	X	X
14. Considerations for Delivering the curriculum [Curricular differentiation, Learning and Teaching Toolkit, Emotional Literacy, CfE differentiated materials]	X	X	X

IDENTIFIED TARGETS AND PLANNING CYCLE

Physical Environment – Action Plan

Short Term (1 year - Annual)	Medium Term (up to 3 years)	Long Term (up to 10 years)
Information gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil <input type="checkbox"/> Physical access surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Identify priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Identify project costs and budget allocation. 	Development programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implement in accordance with priority <input type="checkbox"/> Identify resources <input type="checkbox"/> Programme review on annual basis. 	Programme review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Programme for small schools in rural areas with no current need.
Resource allocation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain current capital funds <input type="checkbox"/> Develop network of specialists and building specifiers <input type="checkbox"/> Develop knowledge base of Education and Technical agents. 	Current needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to needs as required. 	Development programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continued implementation taking account of emerging need and priorities.
Prioritise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Works to mainstream schools <input type="checkbox"/> Identify area for specialist provision within specific schools <input type="checkbox"/> Programme of development integrated with known initiatives. 	Programme review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Revisit development <input type="checkbox"/> Programme annually 	Current needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to needs as required.
Current needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to needs as required. 	Information gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Refine information <input type="checkbox"/> Progress physical access surveys as and when required. 	

IDENTIFIED TARGETS AND PLANNING CYCLE		PLAN CYCLE		
Information / Communication Action Plan		Short-term Targets 2016-2017	Medium-term Targets 2016-2018	Long-term Targets 2016-2019
1. Awareness raising of need to make all aware of accessibility issues when presenting information (ASL and Equalities legislation, Inclusive ethos etc.)		X	X	X
2. Follow up audit of accessibility and identify training needs		X	X	X
3. Ensure awareness of translation and interpretation and how to access and budget		X	X	X
4. Audit accessibility of Highland Council Support for Learners' website.			X	X
5. Identify areas for improvement		X	X	X
6. Ensure compliance with Standard for Disability Information and Advice Provision for website.		X	X	
7. Use of alternative methods of providing homework to pupils put in place by schools.			X	X
8. Ensure use of plain English whenever possible.		X	X	
9. Identify pupils and parents preferred methods of communication.		X	X	
10. Review communication strategies to incorporate into audit results.			X	X
11. Audit service users on communication use.		X	X	
12. Schools to ensure awareness of SQA 'reasonable adjustments' for assessment situations.		X	X	
13. Training for staff in using additional support strategies.		X	X	X
14. Schools to ensure presentation of material in appropriate fonts, language etc.		X	X	X

Training Strategy

An ASN Training Strategy has been created, initially from a training audit undertaken with all schools in Highland, and updated and enhanced on the basis of changing legislation and current need. Key members of ASL Staff are regularly consulted on training needs and the opportunity is taken to consult frontline staff in various ways to obtain their views of current need. Data from this ongoing audit informs the priorities within the training programme. A constant priority however is to enhance the understanding of frontline staff in relation to changing ASL Legislation and its implication for education establishments and Care and Learning Services.

The training programme requires to be flexible and wide ranging in order to meet the Council's proposals in the Accessibility Strategy and to meet changing needs. A full audit of all courses which can be provided on request by Highland's Support for Learning Team has been collated. Courses can be requested through Area Additional Support Needs Managers.

The primary need to be met by the training programme has to be to continue to raise awareness of the Equalities Legislation and its implications for all staff working with children and young people. In addition, schools will need training support in order to make appropriate changes, to practices and policies through their development plans.

Current Priorities

- Ongoing awareness raising of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) and (as amended 2009), and its implications.
Target Audience: All staff.
- Introduction of Quest and Q Skills
Target Audience: All staff working with pupils with Severe and Complex Needs.
- Awareness of the Equalities Act (2010) and the duties this places upon Education.
Target Audience: All staff.
- Ongoing moving and handling training with attention to Health and Safety, Risk Assessment and Movement Protocols.
Target Audience: Staff working with pupils with physical needs.
- Ongoing programme of in-house training to raise level of knowledge on specific support needs in relation to individual needs eg. Autism, Assistive Technology, Sensory Impairment, Specific Difficulties etc.
Target Audience: Appropriate staff working with pupils with these specific needs.
- Ongoing training on collaborative working and the Highland Practice Model
Target Audience: All staff.

- Ongoing programme of training to support the understanding of emotional literacy, including the development of skills in both preventative and direct strategies to promote positive relationships and positive physical intervention.
Target Audience: All staff (preventative strategies). Staff working with pupils with significant emotional and behavioural needs (physical intervention).
- Ongoing programme of training on intimate care and protocols, including risk assessments, health and safety and equipment use.
Target audience: Staff working with pupils with intimate care needs.
- Detailed knowledge on specific issues highlighted by the Councils audits. Targeting these issues will aid and support inclusive practice. Training in improving communication between pupils/parents and schools/services, especially in relation to the involvement of pupils with additional support needs and disabilities who require alternative strategies due to their communication needs;
Target Audience: Appropriate staff
- Regular awareness raising training on Inclusive practice and equality duties as part of the Council's probationer training initiative and as part of an induction programme for all new staff.
Target Audience: Probationer Teachers and new members of staff.
- Ongoing in-service courses which help support parents and pupils (including foster parents and carers)
Target Audience: Parents and Pupils
- Training on management and leadership issues:
 - Creating a vision, values and aims and developing and building teams
 - Providing coaching, mentoring and supervision
 - Understanding how motivation works and working in collaborative relationships
 - Reviewing, evaluation and development planning**Target Audience:** Managers and leaders

An annual audit/training delivered by the ASN Team will be undertaken to ensure all priority areas are covered and to provide information on possible future training events for service users.

The training budget will continue to support a small number of staff undertaking postgraduate qualifications. This enables the authority to increase the number of staff with advanced knowledge in specific areas where pupils require additional support.

Training will generally be offered at 3 levels:

1. Awareness raising
2. Skills building
3. Advanced Skills

To access a higher level of training, staff will be expected to have first completed the earlier level of training.

Training will be offered in various ways: on an ad hoc basis to individual groups, services, teams and schools. Through direct request to member of the ASN Team; through the staff development calendar within Care and Learning; and as part of an agreed strategy to inform/raise awareness of all staff, through direct invitation to specific events.

Appendix 2

Schools Improvement Programme

New Build Schools		
Area	School	Status
West	Portree High School	Completed
West	Kinlochleven Primary/Secondary	Completed
West	Bun Sgoil Ghalig Lochaber	Completed 2016
West	Lunduvra Primary	Completed 2016
West	Gaelic Medium Portree Primary	Due 2018
South	Inshes Primary	Completed
South	Drummond School	Completed
South	Gaelic Primary School, Inverness	Completed
South	Millburn Academy	Completed
South	Cawdor Primary	Completed
South	Milton of Leys Primary	Completed
South	Aviemore Primary	Completed
Mid	Culbokie Primary	Completed
Mid	Dingwall Academy	Completed
Mid	Ben Wyvis Primary School	Completed
Mid	Tain Royal Academy 3-18 campus	Due 2020
Mid	Alness Academy	Due 2020
North	Noss Primary	Completed 2016
North	Newton Park Primary	Completion 2016
North	Wick High School	Completion 2016

UPGRADES MADE TO SCHOOLS		
Area		Status
Mid		Completed
Mid		Completed 2015
Mid		Due 2020
Mid		Completed 2016
Mid		Completed 2016
Mid		2016
Mid		2016
Mid	St Clements School new primary accommodation	Completed 2015
North	Farr Primary	Completion 2016
North	Miller Academy	Completion 2016
North	Golspie Primary	Completion 2016
North		Completion 2016
West		Completion 2016
West	Kilmuir Primary	Completion 2016
West		Completion 2016
West		Completion 2016
West		Completion 2016
West		Completion 2016
West		Completion 2016
South		Completion 2015
South	Kingussie High School accommodation for ASN	Completed 2015
South		Due 2017
South		Due 2017



GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS ON FACILITATING BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY FOR PARTICULAR PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Strategy will be kept under review and revised as and when necessary if required before the end of the proposed timeframe

Introduction

The Highland Council's Accessibility Strategy anticipates that changes to school buildings and grounds will range from simple changes such as handrails and ramps to promote social inclusion to major structural changes that support the physical needs of the child. Children on the autism spectrum and children with sensory impairments may also require specific building improvements.

This guidance includes a protocol for capturing information on needs and managing the implementation of changes to buildings. The aim is to ensure that the level of support required for the child with regard to the physical aspects of the building are appropriately defined sufficiently far ahead to ensure all works can be completed before the child attend. As major works can take a long time to plan and complete, it is essential that head teachers and childcare centres look ahead to future transition locations and made the Area Education Manager and the receiving school aware of future needs as far as 3 years ahead.

Given that there are over 200 schools in Highland and a limited budget available, careful consideration has to be given to the actual current needs of the child. Whilst it is recognised that, at an early stage, all potential changes should be identified, it must be noted that costs of these changes could prevent the meeting of the needs of another child in a different school. Assurances of the work to be done should not, therefore, be given to stakeholders until tenders have been accepted.

Stakeholders

The following is a check list of potential stakeholders who may be involved in the identification of the physical needs of the child:

- Moving and Handling Coordinator
- Development Officer – Additional Support Needs
- Pupil and Parent(s)/Carer(s)
- Community Children's Nurse
- General Practitioner
- Community Paediatrician
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Early Years staff/Nursery Teacher (Particular responsibility well ahead of Nursery – P1 transition)
- Primary Head Teacher (particular responsibility well ahead of P7-S1 transition)
- Secondary Head Teacher (particular responsibility well ahead of P7-S1 transition)
- Area Additional Support Needs Manager
- Area Care and Learning Manager
- Educational Psychologies
- Principal Teacher – Pupil Support
- Pre-school Home Visiting Teacher
- Assistive Technology Education Support Service
- Sensory Support Services (Vision and Hearing)
- Social Work Service (Disability)
- Parent Council (where major building improvements are taking place)

Information Gathering

The Accessibility Strategy identifies the information required to be gathered. It is vital that information is held at a point central to the process of building improvement and this may be the Area ASN Officer and Area Education Manager. It is not intended that information of a medically confidential nature should be communicated or held on a central database but it is essential that detailed building improvements required for specific pupils are recorded with location details, required timescale and the names and contact details of the range of professionals involved.

The attached Protocol outlines the process and possible professionals involved but it is not exclusive. The main priority in information gathering should be that the Area Education Manager is informed as early as possible of future requirements, so if several professionals highlight the likely need that is infinitely preferable to all presuming someone else will raise

the issue.

The best time for the Area Education Manager to be informed of all the requirements is at the earliest multi-agency meeting that is held to discuss the prospective pupil's requirements after the child has reached aged two. As these are often held in the property which will require improvement, it is helpful if those directly involved in advising on physical needs give guidance on site on the day or arrange a site visit with the Area Education Manager or his/her representative and architectural/property staff as soon as possible thereafter. Significant building improvements such as ramps, platform stair lifts and installation of assisted toilets, showers and changing benches can take many months through planning and tendering to installation, so early involvement of appropriate staff is vital.

The Care and Learning link in Property and Architectural Services is:

Estate Strategy Manager Highland Council – HQ Glenurquhart Road Inverness
IV3 5NX
Telephone: 01463 702812

Protocol for addressing building adaptation requirements for pupils with ASN

HT/ACLM/AASNM receives advanced warning of child with additional needs affecting the school property.
Detailed information is required and should be confidential within the Child's Plan.

Short notice requirement of child with additional support needs affecting the school property.
Usually identified by parent, home visiting teacher, or health professionals for a child newly moved into the area.

HT in consultation with ACLM/AASNM calls together practitioners and stakeholders for multi-agency assessment of both physical needs and those identified through Child's Plan process.

HT minutes responses from multidisciplinary teams and identifies physical requirements.

If advice needed contact ACLM/AASNM and other agencies as appropriate.

HT (in consultation with representative of ASN Team and/or Moving & Handling Coordinator) produces brief as to physical requirements of the child, e.g. wheelchair access, toilet facilities, specialist equipment etc.

Forward brief to ACLM/AASNM and ASNO in order that a record is held.

ACLM/AASNM advises Estate Strategy Manager of works in accordance with brief, priority, budget allocation, and timescale. Estate Strategy Manager instructs P & AS.

P & AS carry out feasibility and costing of works.

If project is not feasible on building or cost grounds, P & AS reports to Estate Strategy Manager and ACLM/AASNM.

ACLM/AASNM will keep HT, ASNO, and LP updated on progress.

ACLM= Area Care and Learning Manager
AASNM = Area Additional Support Needs Manager
P & AS = Property & Architectural Services
ASNO = Additional Support Needs Officer
HT = Head Teacher
LP = Lead Professional

Addressing Parental or Carers' Concerns

Concerns are almost always most quickly and easily addressed informally through discussion between parents/carers and those most directly involved with their child. Initially parents/carers should be advised to discuss concerns with the class teacher or Head Teacher. If however, after making an initial approach to the school, a parent or carer feels that appropriate access is not available to their child, they should be advised that they may wish to consider taking further steps as follows:

Stage 1: Arrange to meet with the Head Teacher and to discuss their concerns and a way forward. A time scale for any action identified should be agreed.

Stage 2: If it is felt that satisfactory progress is not being made, parents/carers are advised to contact the Head Teacher and to request that the Head Teacher should take responsibility for organising a meeting of appropriate personnel to try to address parental/carer concerns. Parents/carers must be consulted on who will be involved and may wish to take someone to the meeting in a supportive role. Parents/carers should be given a written action plan confirming what has been agreed.

Solution-focused meetings are often helpful in developing action plans. Recommended strategies and approaches should be made clear to parents/carers and any support expected from parents or carers should be explained. Parental/carer involvement is important throughout the child's schooling, and especially if the child or young person has a disability.

Stage 3: If all school-based dialogue has been exhausted and a conclusion satisfactory to the parents/carers and child/young person has not been reached, then the parents/carers and young person have the right to invite a representative of the Area Management Team to investigate. (The Head Teacher might also decide to request the assistance of a representative of the Area Management Team.)

Stage 4: If difficulties persist and there is still no satisfactory resolution, then parents/carers can request the involvement of the independent mediation service which the Authority has established as part of its provision to comply with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) and the Authority will comply with this request. (Independent mediation operates in accordance with the ASL Act Code of Practice). Parents may elect to request mediation at Stage 3 above or earlier.

If communication is established at an early point and maintained, a solution should be able to be found. Part of this process may be the convening of a Child's Plan Meeting to generate solutions. If the child or young person has a Co-ordinated Support Plan, then it is essential to consider the information contained in this.

With a transparent policy in every school, staff and parents/carers should be able to see clearly the steps which are being taken and the accommodations being given. Formal procedures can often be avoided by timely responses and appropriate action.

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Appendix 5

School:				Completed by:			
Physical Accessibility	Weak..... Excellent						Comment
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
How would you rate the physical accessibility of your school? e.g. colour contrast signs, disabled parking, lowered kerbs							
How would you rate the disabled access to your classrooms? e.g. number of rooms accessible to wheelchairs, can wheelchairs manoeuvre around rooms and corridors							
How would you rate the hygiene facilities? e.g. space for disabled pupil to be changed, changing bed available, shower available							
How would you rate your emergency measures? e.g. flashing fire alarm, emergency evacuation arrangements							

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Curriculum Accessibility	Weak.....Excellent						Comment
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
How do you rate your school's curriculum and its ability to meet the needs of all pupils?							
How well embedded is the process for identifying planning for and requesting assistance for children with specific difficulties? e.g. staged approach GIRFEC							
How would you rate your staff's ability to differentiate content and presentation of the curriculum for individuals?							
How would you rate other Highland Council buildings used by your school to support the curriculum? e.g. library, swimming pool							
How would you rate your disabled pupils' access to school trips?							
How would you rate your school's ability to transport disabled pupils to external experiences supporting the curriculum?							

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Curriculum Accessibility (contd)	Weak..... Excellent						Comment
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
How would you rate your school's use of specialist resources to enable disabled pupils to access the curriculum? e.g. technology, radio aids							
How would you rate the effectiveness of your contacts and communications with other agencies to support planning and access to wider curricular experiences?							

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Information Accessibility	Weak -----Excellent						Comment
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
How would you rate the access you provide to information on ASN issues? e.g. support provided, how you meet needs etc.							
How would you rate your school's communication with parents about child's plans, meetings and wider ASN issues?							
How effective do you find the Council's services in supporting schools in providing information in alternative formats for parents and pupils?							
How do you rate your school's ability to involve pupils in their child's plan and child's plan meetings?							
How do you feel the training needs of your staff have been met in respect of accessibility, disability, children's rights and equality issues?							

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This section refers to the use of protocols to support pupils with significant needs. There is a requirement to ensure that correct processes are in place to ensure that staff and pupils are supported within Highland Council policy and practice guidance.

1. Intimate Care Protocols

These protocols are required for any pupil requiring help with intimate care tasks.

Number of pupils requiring intimate care:	_____
Number of protocols in place:	_____
Shared as appropriate with all those involved with the pupil?	All/Some/None
Agreed with parents?	All/Some/None
Agreed with pupils (where appropriate)?	All/Some/None
Reviewed regularly as part of the Child's Planning process	All/Some/None

2. Moving and Handling Protocol

These protocols are required for any pupil requiring help with movement.

Number of pupils requiring moving and handling:	_____
Number of protocols in place:	_____
Shared as appropriate with all those involved with the pupil?	All/Some/None
Agreed with parents?	All/Some/None
Agreed with pupils (where appropriate)?	All/Some/None
Reviewed regularly as part of the Child's Planning process	All/Some/None

3. PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)

A plan should be in place for any pupil who may have difficulties evacuating a building in an emergency e.g. Motor difficulties, Vision or Hearing problems, Behavioural Issues, ASD, Sensory problems etc. Plans should also be made for other buildings used by a pupil during the school week.

Number of pupils requiring a PEEP:	_____
Number of protocols in place:	_____
Shared as appropriate with all those involved with the pupil?	All/Some/None
Agreed with parents?	All/Some/None
Agreed with pupils (where appropriate)?	All/Some/None
Reviewed regularly as part of the Child's Planning process	All/Some/None

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4. Behavioural Protocol

A protocol should be in place for any pupil exhibiting regular and significant challenging behaviour.

Number of pupils requiring significant support:	_____
Number of protocols in place:	_____
Shared as appropriate with all those involved with the pupil?	All/Some/None
Agreed with parents?	All/Some/None
Agreed with pupils (where appropriate)?	All/Some/None
Reviewed regularly as part of the Child's Planning process	All/Some/None

5. Administration of Medicine

These protocols are required for any pupil on regular medication that requires to be given during the school day for example, Diabetes, Epilepsy, ADHD etc.

Number of pupils requiring medication in school:	_____
Number of protocols in place:	_____
Shared as appropriate with all those involved with the pupil?	All/Some/None
Agreed with parents?	All/Some/None
Agreed with pupils (where appropriate)?	All/Some/None
Reviewed regularly as part of the Child's Planning process	All/Some/None

6. **Are there any issues you would wish to raise about any aspects of completing and maintaining protocols that would help in reviewing our policy and practice documents?**

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If you need to review your own practice, you can access the Highland Council practice guidance here:

Intimate care:

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/155/intimate care for children and young people](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/155/intimate_care_for_children_and_young_people)

Moving and Handling:

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/904/risk assessment and handling plan](http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/904/risk_assessment_and_handling_plan)

PEEP:

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/905/guidance notes on completion of peep](http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/905/guidance_notes_on_completion_of_peep)

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/901/peep checklist for head teachers](http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/901/peep_checklist_for_head_teachers)

Behaviour:

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12443/the use of physical intervention in educational establishments policy](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12443/the_use_of_physical_intervention_in_educational_establishments_policy)

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/906/draft peep](http://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/906/draft_peep)

Admin of Medicines

[http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12935/administration of medication](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/12935/administration_of_medication)

Protocols for Pupils in Highland with Significant ASN

Total number of establishments = 211

Intimate Care				
Number of schools with pupils requiring intimate care	Number of schools with intimate care protocols	Total number of pupils requiring intimate care	Total number of pupils with intimate care protocols	% of pupils with intimate care needs AND protocols are in place
81	77	252	240	95%
Number and % of schools who share ALL protocols with the team around the child	Number and % of schools who have protocols agreed with/by parents	Number and % of schools who have protocols agreed with/by pupils	Number and % of schools where protocols are reviewed with the Child's Plan.	
71 (92%)	72 (93%)	46 (60%)	68 (88%)	

Moving and Handling				
Number of schools with pupils requiring moving and handling	Number of schools with moving and handling protocols	Total number of pupils requiring moving and handling	Total number of pupils with moving and handling care protocols	% of pupils with moving and handling needs AND protocols are in place
41	40	86	86	100%
Number and % of schools who share ALL protocols with the team around the child	Number and % of schools who have protocols agreed with/by parents	Number and % of schools who have protocols agreed with/by pupils	Number and % of schools where protocols are reviewed with the Child's Plan.	
38 (95%)	38 (95%)	24 (60%)	35 (88%)	

Personalised Evacuation Plan				
Number of schools with pupils requiring evacuation plans	Number of schools with evacuation protocols	Total number of pupils requiring evacuation protocols	Total number of pupils with evacuation protocols	% of pupils needing evacuation plans AND protocols are in place
70	55	263	164	62%

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Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who share ALL protocols with the team around the child	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who have protocols agreed with/by parents	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who have protocols agreed with/by pupils	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS where protocols are reviewed with the Child's Plan.	
46 (84%)	39 (71%)	29 (53%)	35 (64%)	

Behavioural Needs				
Number of schools with pupils requiring behavioural support	Number of schools with behavioural support protocols	Total number of pupils requiring behavioural support	Total number of pupils with behavioural support protocols	% of pupils with behavioural support needs AND protocols are in place
92	84	374	306	82%
Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS, who share ALL protocols with the team around the child	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who have protocols agreed with/by parents	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who have protocols agreed with/by pupils	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS where protocols are reviewed with the Child's Plan.	
74 (88%)	68 (81%)	51 (61%)	66 (79%)	

Administration of Medicines				
Number of schools with pupils requiring admin of meds	Number of schools with admin of meds protocols	Total number of pupils requiring admin of meds	Total number of pupils with admin of meds protocols	% of pupils requiring admin of meds AND protocols are in place
116	116	546	516	95%
Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who share ALL protocols with the team around the child	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who have protocols agreed with/by parents	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS who have protocols agreed with/by pupils	Number and % of schools WITH PROTOCOLS where protocols are reviewed with the Child's Plan.	
96 (83%)	99 (85%)	85 (73%)	82 (71%)	