

Accessibility Plan 2023-2026



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. The overriding principle of equalities legislation is generally one of equal treatment. However, the provisions in relation to disability are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.

There are some minor differences around disability in the new Act when compared with the previous legislation.

- The Equality Act does not list the types of day-to-day activities which a disabled person must be unable to carry out to meet the definition
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The fact that it must be 'reasonable' provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be justified (bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally).
- Since September 2012 schools and local authorities have been under a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

As in previous legislation a school must not discriminate against a pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability.

It is unlawful for a school to treat a disabled pupil unfavourably. Such treatment could amount to:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a disability
- Harassment

Direct discrimination can never be justified but a school could justify indirect discrimination against a disabled pupil, and discrimination arising from a disability if the discrimination is the result of action that is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

2. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Equality Act 2010: a person has 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 had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

It should be noted that this definition is *not just regarding physical difficulties* but also covers a wide range of:

- Sensory difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Impairment resulting from, or consisting of, a mental illness

In addition, there is a range of 'hidden impairments' such as

- Dyslexia
- Speech and Language Impairments
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Impairment does not itself mean that a pupil is disabled but rather it is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities in one or more of the following areas that has to be considered:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

3. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils:

- When something we do places a disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage to other pupils, we must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- We will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so, and where such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage, the pupil faces in comparison to his non-disabled peers.

A failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be justified. The test is whether the adjustment is reasonable, and if it is then there can be no justification for why it is not made. We will not be expected to make adjustments that are not reasonable.

The Code of Practice gives guidance on 'reasonable' adjustments however, it will be for us to decide the reasonableness of adjustments based on the individual circumstances of each case. Factors to consider may include the financial or other resources available, the effectiveness of the adjustment, its effect on

other pupils, health and safety requirements, and whether aids have been made available through the SEND route.

The reasonable adjustments duty is intended to complement the accessibility planning duties, and the existing special educational needs EHCP provisions, under which Local Authorities have to provide auxiliary aids and services where a EHCCP details that provision. When a disabled pupil does not have a EHCP (or the EHCP does not provide the necessary aid) then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school.

As in the previous legislation we are not under a duty to make alterations to the physical environment though we should be planning to do so as part of our Accessibility planning.

4. AIMS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The planning duties on schools and Local Authorities are the same as the duties in the previous DDA. Schools are required to have an Accessibility Plan detailing how they will improve access to the physical environment, increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils, and how they will improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. The LA is required to have an Access Strategy.

In South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service, we have a commitment to equal opportunities for all members of the school community and our Accessibility Plan outlines our intention to remove barriers for disabled pupils and to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the different areas of the national curriculum, increase access to extra-curricular activities and the wider school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Furthermore, under our equality duties, we intend to improve the physical environment of the school to enable any disabled person (pupil, parent/carer, employees or visitor) to access facilities and services and improve the availability of accessible information to any disabled person.

This Accessibility Plan will, therefore, **begin the process of addressing the needs of disabled people** through specific targets.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan

Compliance with the disability duty under the Equality Act is consistent with the school's aims and Single Equality Scheme, and the operation of the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy.

The Action Plan for physical accessibility relates in part, to the Asset Management Plan (access section) of the school, which is undertaken regularly by the Local Authority. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of this Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. The Plan will need to be revisited prior to the end of each first three-year plan period in order to inform the development of the new Plan for the following period.

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and value diversity.

5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of our Accessibility Plan are as follows:

- To reduce and eliminate barriers to access to the curriculum and to full participation in the school community for pupils, and prospective pupils, with a disability.
- We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
- We are committed to providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles; and we endorse the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework ([Click here to access](#)) which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges;
 - responding to a pupil's diverse learning needs;
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

6. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Please see our centre profile in section 2 (on page 13) of the main policy (EQUALITY POLICY & SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME)

7. DEVELOPMENT

7.1 The Purpose and Direction of the School's Plan: Vision and Values

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service:

- values the individual and the contribution they make to all aspects of school life;
- will strive to ensure that its disabled pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and teaching resources so as to develop fully in their education;
- acknowledges a commitment to embrace the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement;
- will continue to focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school;
- is committed to embracing equal opportunities for all members of the school community.

7.2 Information from Pupil Data and School Audit

Key starting points for the school's plan:

- ***Due to the ever-changing nature of our student population (as we are a PRS and responsible for Hospital & Home Tuition) details can be gained from the school roll at any time.***
- Our development plan takes into account the needs of our diverse student population as well as the needs of its wider community.

In order to ensure that our data is up to date and accurate we will:

- liaise with the Local Authority so as to identify and therefore plan a response to students with a disability before they arrive;
- liaise with referring schools so as to identify and therefore plan a response to students with a disability before they arrive;
- identify early on in their school career any obstacles to the effective learning of disabled students;
- use all available data to inform the planning of individual student learning patterns;

- use information supplied via previous LA Asset management/Accessibility Audits to assist us to develop an action plan to reduce obstacles for the school community.

7.3 Views of those Consulted during the development of the Plan

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service will:

- ensure the development of the plan involves coordination with the Local Authority in line with the LA Accessibility Strategy and ensure that South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service provides the best choices for students;
- consult the full Management Committee;
- consult all staff;
- set up a structure to allow the views of students, both able and disabled to be taken into account;
- involve outside agencies who already exist to assist disabled students in their education and future careers;
- ensure the views of ALL those consulted are taken into consideration and the plan modified where reasonable to meet the needs of stakeholders;

8. SCOPE OF THE PLAN

8.1 Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

- to investigate how the access to those areas of the curriculum that are normally difficult for disabled students to access can be improved;
- to further investigate what support or alternative approaches can be adopted to increase the choice/participation of disabled students;
- to investigate alternative provision/routes and collaboration that will assist disabled students to learn including liaison with the LA Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team.

The school plans to ensure access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are any other pupil. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum. The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers, and of appropriate health professionals.

The school's arrangements to improve access to the curriculum involve:

- Devising and implementing appropriate staff training and development to meet needs as they are identified (e.g. epileptic nurse training with all staff prior to the induction of a student with known epilepsy and staff identified to support the students and administer medication as needed – all details are recorded in the student's health care plan and this is shared with staff after approval from health professionals and parents)
- Consider the physical accessibility of all areas of the building and make improvements to remove barriers where any problems are identified
- The Management Committee should identify action in the school access plan to enhance teaching and learning opportunities for all those in the school community with disabilities.
- Where any issues are identified a risk assessment proforma will be used and action taken to reduce those identified risks;
- In devising the curriculum and timetable the Leadership Team will identify how student support arrangements, such as deployment of support staff, provision of ICT, contribute to, and enhance learning opportunities this will include the implementation of specific strategies such as reduced timetabling, nurture groups, counselling provision, access to therapy, first day absence response, students having enhanced attendance and participation;

- Consideration will be given to how classroom/group organisation has been targeted to ensure that all pupils achieved increased levels of school success and what action needs to be taken to increase curriculum choice and/or flexibility has enhanced the access to appropriate qualifications/attainments;
- liaison communication and relationships with external agencies supports and enhances pupils' access to the curriculum, this is reviewed on an individual student basis according to need;
- staff training needs are identified through appraisal and self-evaluation to effectively meet the diverse abilities and disabilities of all pupils. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention strategies and all students have a behaviour management plan written as part of their induction/assessment process;
- support from centre is provided to encourage parents and carers to see themselves as partners in their children's education and to engage them to be increasingly willing to actively support their children's education;

8.2 Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

- in consultation with the LA (where necessary and appropriate) investigate various improvements to the site;
- improve accessibility points to different curriculum areas;
- investigate ways of making the site more accessible to both disabled parents and adult users.

The school will take account of the needs of pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. This is required regardless of whether the school has pupils or visitors with disabilities and is preparation for a situation when they do.

The school premises plan is prepared in line with the school's 3-year budget plan by the Head teacher and the School Business Manager with the Management Committee's resources committee. This is monitored and evaluated by the Management Committee

The Management Committee will consider and record reflection upon all areas of the physical environment such as:

- Changes to improve access to doors, stairs, toilet, changing facilities, and consideration of the impact of signs, colour schemes and colour contrast, lighting, heating etc.
- Changes outside of the school building e.g. provision of disabled parking etc.
- Management and organisation issues such as maintenance of lights, fire alarms appropriate to those with hearing impairments etc.
- Increased access to and maintenance of, auxiliary aids, ICT apparatus such as computer hardware/software.
- Improvement to the acoustic environment that might include installation of sound fields/hearing loop systems.
- Improvements of storage implications for wheelchairs and other mobility devices should these be required by students in the centre.
- Application and progress on capital funding for major access works funded by the Schools Access Initiative through the Local Authority, and details on schools' funds delegation to support targets such as provision of suitable floor coverings, furniture and layout of the playgrounds.

8.3 Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are disabled

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service will strive to:

- produce all school literature at the correct font size to help visually impaired students;
- investigate alternative ways of providing access to information, software and activities;
- Investigate ways of communicating effectively with disabled parents and carers and other disabled adult users of the site.

The school plans to improve the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame. The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

The school's curriculum plan will be consistent with the aims and objectives of the accessibility plan. The Head teacher and SENCo will monitor the plan and report on it to the Management Committee.

The Management Committee may wish to decide how this is to be achieved, perhaps by:

- Informing readers that school published material is available in a selection of formats e.g., Braille, Makaton, audio tapes and identifying how they can access this provision if requested.
- Considering how to increase information accessibility for those who have English as an additional language or other communication impairments, at school meetings etc.
- Identifying how they have considered the readability of information including that provided by the school website, and how it is monitored to ensure accessibility to a wide range of diverse needs and abilities.
- Identifying how textbooks and other pupil information are selected and provided to meet a diversity of pupil need.
- Ensuring the monitoring of effectiveness of adult support to enhance the opportunities for pupils/parents who have difficulties in accessing information.

8.4 Financial Planning and Control

The Head teacher with the Leadership Team, together with the Staffing & Finance Committee will review the financial implications of the School Accessibility Plan as part of the normal budget review process. The objective is that over time School Accessibility Plan actions will be integrated into the School Development Plan.

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service will finance the plan by identifying costs and incorporating them into current and future budget commitments where practical.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Management, Coordination and Implementation

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service Leadership Team will undertake a disability audit using a cross section of staff, pupils and parents (refer to Section 7.3).

As a result of the audit, we shall:

- produce action plans, with time scales for the implementation of the actions implicit in the plan;
- present the plan to the Management Committee for their approval;
- modify the plan based on the views of stakeholders;

- review the plan and the associated action plans to see if milestones are being met. This plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. A new Accessibility Plan will be drawn up every three years.

9.2 Monitoring

South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

The Management Committee will be required to identify any revisions as necessary. Evaluation that may be useful to judge success may include:

- success in meeting identified targets;
- changes in physical accessibility of school buildings;
- questionnaires, responses from stakeholders e.g. parents, pupils and staff, indicate increased confidence in the schools ability to promote access to educational opportunities for pupils with disabilities;
- pupil responses; verbally, pictorially and written that indicate that they feel themselves to be included;
- Ofsted inspections that identify higher levels of educational inclusion.

9.3 The role of the LA in increasing accessibility

The Management Committee may wish to comment on the impact the County Council has had upon supporting the school to achieve successful implementation of their accessibility plan (where relevant). This may include identifying how the County has:

- provided training and awareness opportunities on issues regarding inclusion to staff, members of the Management Committee and parents and how this has been used in school to promote inclusion e.g. uptake of Dyslexia Friendly status, Inclusion Quality Mark, attendance on courses, use and adaptation of County Council provided information, etc.;
- promoted collaboration through the provision of information aimed at sharing good practice;
- encouraged liaison between centre and mainstream schools to share expertise and pupil placement;
- ensured that schools are aware of support services that provide advice to schools and staff;
- provided specialist help to identify ways forward in increasing the inclusion of all pupils;
- linked building adaptations to refurbishment and capital building works;
- informed schools how information can be provided in a number of different formats.

9.4 Accessing the School's Plan

This will be done through:

- presentation in a section on the school website open to all visitors to the site;
- mention in the head teacher's newsletter of the availability of the plan;

We will ensure that the plan is available in different formats where requested.

The school will achieve successful implementation of the accessibility plan with continued support in the areas of:

- providing training and awareness opportunities to staff, members of the Management Committee and parents/carers on issues regarding equality and inclusion;
- promoting collaboration through the provision of information and the sharing of good practice;
- encouraging liaison between other local schools including special schools;
- seeking support/advice from outside the school, from services, other agencies and organisations;

- ensuring that South Cumbria Pupil Referral Service is aware of all support services that provide advice to schools and staff.

10. RELATED POLICIES

The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies, strategies and procedures:

- Curriculum Policies and Curriculum Plan
- Single Equality Scheme, Policy/Objectives
- Staff Training and Development Plan
- Health & Safety
- Inclusion
- Special Educational Needs
- Educational Visits
- Relationships & Behaviour Regulation
- School Development Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Complaints Policy

In drawing up this Accessibility Plan, the following were consulted:

- Full Management Committee
- Staff (teaching and support, PRU and HHTS)
- Parents/carers/community groups
- Pupils

SOUTH CUMBRIA PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2023 - 2026
IMPROVING THE CURRICULUM ACCESS AT SOUTH CUMBRIA PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Clarify and embed the intent of our curriculum across the service with all staff	Development of service offer under review following LGR in April 2023 – we are now the only PRU in Westmorland & Furness with a larger geographical area to cover	Provision available and accessible to all students across the Westmorland & Furness area (with support of LA transport team)	In progress with new premises scheduled to open 2024	
	Review and develop the implementation of our curriculum	Develop a curriculum that scaffolds learning and progression year on year Development of reading, literacy and oracy with students Identify key issues with reading and identify support that can be put in place for this Support identified and put in place for all staff, especially non-specialist staff in the delivery of subject content and key knowledge such as vocabulary and reading Monitoring and QA of any external provision used and feed back to MC	Summer 2023 (Aut '24 for new site) Reviewed against pupil need identified at assessment Ongoing review and implementation On leadership team agenda weekly	
Assess and evaluate the impact of curriculum and keep under review	Quality of Teaching group – including MC member) oversee quality of education and curriculum Review MIS for data and assessment	Cross curricular plans in place that show clear progression year on year Plan developed and in action Programme of 1:1 sessions include reading, vocabulary and numeracy In house and external CPD opportunities available for staff Delivery via staff mentoring system being in place Confidence in provision in use – registered providers only where possible	termly January 2024	
	Suitable monitoring & filtering in place for the school's system	Clear evidence available of where progress is not being made and what is in place to address this Suitable system in place and has capacity to use over multiple sites/growing cohorts School compliant with DfE filtering & monitoring standards for schools (updated 29/03/2023)	July 2023	

APPENDIX A(ii)

SOUTH CUMBRIA PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2023 - 2026
IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ACCESS AT SOUTH CUMBRIA PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

An Asset Management Plan was carried out by _____ in _____ and a number of recommendations made:

AMP Report Ref. (if relevant)	Item	Activity	Timescale	Cost £	Responsibility
	The LA retain responsibility for ensuring that any matters raised on the Asset Management Plan are actioned in accordance with the W&F Financing Scheme	No current actions as no adaptations can be made to the current buildings (NBH & KTC) and both deemed unfit for purpose/out of scope			LA
	KTC remains inaccessible to a wheelchair user or persons of limited mobility	As above Anyone who needs accessible tuition – this would need to be arranged where access was possible	As required		LA
	New SEMH & AP premises to be fully accessible to all users	Ongoing liaison with LA property team and contractors (Mott MacDonald, Roland Hill)	Opening 2024 (date TBC)		LA
	Any further identified premises to be used to be fully accessible to all users	Ongoing liaison with LA property team and contractors	As identified under development of service for Westmorland & Furness post LGR (1.4.2023)		LA

SOUTH CUMBRIA PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2023 - 2026
IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF WRITTEN INFORMATION AT SOUTH CUMBRIA PUPIL REFERRAL SERVICE

TARGET	STRATEGY	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME	ACHIEVEMENT
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats such as a computer reader for electronic document.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes	Ongoing	Delivery of information to disabled pupils improved
Make available school brochures, school newsletters and other information for parents in alternative formats	Review all current school publications and promote the availability in different formats for those that require it	All school information available for all	Ongoing	Delivery of school information to parents and the local community improved
Survey parents/carers as to the quality of communication to seek their opinions as to how to improve.	Invite parents into centre for session to access school website and look at key policies with support staff Gather feedback from parents via exit questionnaires completed with school leavers Further develop parent forums to support parents and families to access support and advice	School is more aware of the opinions of parents and acts on this. Parents & carers feel supported in dealing with their children and any concerns they have	As part of induction & review process Summer term and with all pupils who leave via reintegration during school year termly	Positive feedback from parents Positive feedback from parents Increase in engagement