



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

**Gloucestershire
Accessibility Strategy
2015-2018**

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Gloucestershire Accessibility Strategy will be further developed through ongoing consultation and co-production with a range of stakeholders and partners including schools (e.g. local diocese and faith organizations), other organizations including the voluntary sector, parents/carers and young people.

Gloucestershire Accessibility Strategy

2015-2018

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has a legal duty to prepare an accessibility strategy for the schools and settings for which it is responsible under the Equality Act (2010).

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>

This strategy sets out how the Local Authority will support schools and settings, for which it is the responsible body, to comply with these duties and other educational settings including those for Early Years and Post 16.

1. Introduction

1.1 Improving access to education and educational achievement by disabled Children and Young People (CYP) is essential to the Government's policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation in society and the economy. (Ref: Children and Families Act 2014)

1.2 GCC is committed to ensuring that all CYP with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) experience a high quality of life and education and achieve the best possible outcomes.

1.3 This document explains GCC's strategic approach to further developing and ensuring equality of access to education provision for CYP with SEND and needs to be read in conjunction with:

- Gloucestershire Early Help and Children and Young People's Partnership Plan: 2015-2018 <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cyppp>
- Previous Gloucestershire Accessibility Strategies from 2003 onwards (Appendix 1)
- Gloucestershire County Council's SEND policy and SEND Implementation Strategy <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/article/106571/Special-Educational-Needs-SEN>
- SENCOSPOT – a website that provides up to date information for schools and settings to support SEND www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/SENCOspot
- GCC has developed and published its Local Offer which sets out information about the provision available for CYP with SEND Gloucestershire; the Local Offer is delivered through the Family Information Service www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fis and the Key Information Service www.keyword.org.uk
- Building Better Lives policy www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/buildingbetterlives
- Gloucestershire Intervention Guidance Booklet for Professionals working with CYP with Additional Needs including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=61267&p=0>
(This is live document so the most current version is available online)
- SEND Pathfinder link www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/SENChanges

2. Gloucestershire's Vision

- Gloucestershire has high aspirations for the achievement of all our CYP and is committed to ensuring our students thrive, access their full educational entitlement and have the right support to meet their potential. Full information can be found in the Gloucestershire Early Help and Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2015-2018 <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cypppp>

2.2 Guiding Principles

- GCC aims to support all CYP to learn within or close to their local community where possible.
- All CYP are entitled to have their educational needs met in local mainstream provision. CYP with SEND will have their needs met in mainstream settings, schools and colleges whenever possible.
- GCC is committed to the Person Centred Principles on which the SEND reforms are based:
 - the views, wishes and feelings of the CYP must be taken into account
 - their parents/carers views must be taken into account
 - the CYP and their parents/carers must be able to participate as fully as possible in decision making, and be provided with the necessary information and support to achieve that decision
 - the CYP and their parents/carers must be supported to help the CYP to effectively prepare for adulthood
- The preferences of parents/carers and CYP for naming a particular educational setting or school, college or other institution will be very carefully considered in the context of suitability, efficient education of others and efficient use of resources and in accordance with the statutory guidance within Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (January 2015).
- GCC will commission a wide range of provision across the authority and actively support families, settings, schools and colleges so that the majority of CYP's special educational needs can be met within mainstream settings.
- Special School or Specialist College provision will be considered when a CYP's outcomes cannot be achieved in a mainstream setting. This decision will be supported by evidence that mainstream options have been fully explored and evidence from professionals indicating that a specialist education placement is required to meet the CYP's outcomes and needs.
- If provision in a specialist setting is necessary, it should be as local as possible, and regularly reviewed with a view to a possible transfer to a mainstream option as outcomes are achieved.
- Residential special educational placements will be considered if one or more of the following criteria is met:
 - CYP have medical or care needs that cannot be supported in mainstream day provision

- CYP live beyond reasonable travelling distance to the nearest appropriate education setting; for Young People (YP) over 16, reasonable travelling distance is where the journey time would be over 75 minutes travelling time
 - for YP 16 – 25, the assessment of the YP needs to demonstrate an essential element can only be provided in a residential setting
 - separate guidance for Post 16 SEND placements for High Needs Students sets out the criteria for decisions on requests for independent educational placements in schools and colleges is available by clicking [here](#)
- GCC strongly endorses the view that all CYP, including those with disabilities, must be able to access after-school clubs/homework clubs etc. including independent child care clubs in schools and settings.
 - GCC strongly endorses the view that all CYP must have access to other learning activities such as, field trips or school camps where issues regarding accessibility and availability of resources to support the CYP for long periods per day need consideration and resolution.
 - GCC strongly supports effective multiagency working to enable disabled CYP to be able to thrive, access their educational entitlement and to fully fulfil their potential. We work with National Health Service (NHS) including Gloucestershire’s Clinical Commissioning Group and the 3 NHS Trusts (Gloucestershire Care Services, 2gether Trusts and Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), Social Care and voluntary agencies.

2.3 Current Context

A wide spectrum of educational provision is commissioned in response to the needs of CYP in Gloucestershire. GCC has developed and published its Local Offer which sets out information about the provision available and additionally in the Gloucestershire Intervention Guidance p.35. It comprises:

Universal Provision

Early Years settings	
There are a range of EY education providers; offering EY education and childcare http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/earlyyears	
Primary Schools	
Infant	15
Junior	16
Primary (Infant and Junior)	178
Total Maintained	209
Primary Academies	
Infant	4
Junior	3
Primary (infant and Junior)	29
Total Academies	36
Free Schools	
Primary (infant and Junior)	1
Total Free School	1
Total Primary	246
Secondary Schools	
11-16	4
11-18	2
Total Maintained	6
Secondary Academies	
11-16	11
11-18	22
Total Academies	33
Total Secondary	39

Specialist Provision

Special Schools		Provision
Maintained	7	For CYP with moderate, severe and additional learning needs or profound and multiple learning difficulties including complex difficulties
Residential	1	For CYP aged 10-16 with severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties with associated complex needs; day places are also offered
Academies	3	For CYP aged 5 - 16 with severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties comprising 1 primary and 2 secondary special academies
EY Assessment Centre	1	For children aged between 2 -7years needing supportive assessment and development of learning skills In addition we have a combination of services that support pre-school children with additional needs (medical/educational) and their families. We aim to offer support as early as possible to promote good outcomes and maximise each child's individual progress http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/earlyyears SEND
Specialist Post 16 Provision attached to special schools	3	For students(aged 16-19) with severe or profound learning difficulties including complex difficulties from across the county
Alternative Provision Schools	3	For CYP who have been excluded from their mainstream schools either on a permanent or fixed time basis Provision is also made for pupils with long-term attendance issues and for pupils who move into the County awaiting special school placement The APS also support pupils on a short time basis who are at risk of being excluded.
Free School	1	Alternative provision school for CYP aged 11-18
Hospital Education Service	1	For CYP aged 5-19 with short and long term medical needs in addition to support for pregnant teenagers and young mothers
Specialist centres for communication and interaction needs including autism	5	For CYP with communication and interaction difficulty that has a severe/profound impact on the student's ability to access the social and academic curriculum but who benefit academically and socially from a mainstream setting comprising 4 Primary Centres/1 Secondary Centre

3. The Legal Position - Statutory Responsibility

3.1 GCC has a legal duty to prepare an accessibility strategy for the schools and settings for which it is responsible under the Act and sets out how the Local Authority will support schools, for which it is the responsible body, to comply with these duties and has elected to extend this duty to other educational settings including those for Early Years and Post 16 within the context of suitability and efficient use of resources.

3.2 Academies and free schools, maintained schools, Early Years settings, Post 16 settings, independent schools and non-maintained special schools must produce their own accessibility plan.

3.3 This accessibility strategy builds on previous Gloucestershire Accessibility Strategies from 2003 onwards (see Appendix 1). It aims to:

- increase the extent to which disabled CYP can participate in the school curriculum
- improve the physical environment to increase the extent to which disabled CYP can take advantage of education and associated services
- improve the access to disabled CYP of written information which is provided to CYP who are not disabled and where necessary alternative communication to written information

3.4 Schools and settings are required to have an accessibility plan, provide adequate resources for implementing their accessibility plan and must regularly review them every 3 years; this is the responsibility of the governing body. An accessibility plan may be published as part of another document such as the school development plan. It must be freely available to parents/carers.

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/112958/Documents-forms-policies-and-useful-links>

4. Definitions and Legal Framework

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 and related Equality Duty 2011, replicate the duties upon schools and settings as laid out in the previous Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance>

4.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as “when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

This broad description covers physical disabilities, sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, and learning disabilities in addition to impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis, chronic fatigue or depression. It will also include some specified medical conditions such as HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer and mental health conditions with symptoms such as - anxiety, panic attacks, phobias and eating disorders, bipolar affective disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, personality disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, and some self-harming behaviour and mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia.

Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85010/disability-definition.pdf

The effect must be:

- substantial (defined as more than minor or trivial)
- adverse (unfavourable or injurious)
- long-term (lasting or liable to last for at least a year or as long as a person lives)

5. The Planning Duty

There are three strands to the planning duty. The following sections provide details of the Gloucestershire strategy for each of the three strands.

5.1 Increase the extent to which disabled CYP can participate in the school curriculum

The Gloucestershire strategy focuses on helping schools and settings to increase the accessibility of the curriculum to disabled CYP by securing appropriate staff training and encouraging schools and settings to work together and share good practice. We want:

- every disabled CYP to access a high quality educational experience and achieve the best possible outcomes
- every CYP with SEND to be assessed and needs met via Early Help/Gloucestershire Integrated Pathway as early as possible
- robust and accessible Early Help Information and our Local Offer through the Gloucestershire Families Directory and Help line
- to actively support schools and settings so the majority of CYP's SEND can be met within mainstream settings. Setting capacity to meet need and increase the extent to which disabled CYP participate in the school curriculum are supported by the following activity:

Activity to build capacity	Provision
<p>Training, and CPD opportunities to increase the participation of disabled CYP in all aspects of the curriculum</p> <p>Developing specific accredited and evidenced interventions/approaches, e.g. Nurture Groups, Therapeutic Story Writing, Instrumental Enrichment, Numicon & Talkboost</p> <p>Teaching and Learning groups for learners with specific need, e.g. Cerebral palsy, learners who use Braille or whom have cochlear implants, Down's Syndrome</p> <p>Developing whole school approaches to increase participation for CYP with complex learning needs, e.g. Total Communication approach</p> <p>Accredited courses for staff working with CYP with autistic spectrum disorders or language, learning or emotional needs</p> <p>Work with CYP, parents/carers and setting staff to increase the quality and consistency of the learning experience for disabled CYP, e.g. Early Bird Plus Training/Early Years Sensory Group for parents/carers</p>	<p>Advice on teaching and learning strategies, classroom management and curriculum material is available from:</p> <p>Advisory Teaching Service http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ats</p> <p>Educational Psychology Service http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/article/108322/Educational-Psychology</p> <p>Glos Education Leaders for SEN and specific curriculum areas http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/110449/GlosEd-Leaders</p> <p>Gloucestershire Special Schools Outreach Service http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/adobe_acrobat/o/b/Glos%20Outreach%20Service.pdf</p> <p>http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/article/108674/The-Gloucestershire-Hospital-Education-Service-GHES-Outpatient-Team</p>

<p>Monitoring provision and progress of CYP with SEND to ensure quality, effectiveness and value for money</p>	<p>http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/114042/SEND-Monitoring-Team Use of National Benchmarking data, e.g. NATSIP, CRIDE, BATOD to monitor participation and educational progress for specific cohorts of CYP need within Gloucestershire against national data</p>
<p>Support for Head teachers, school/setting leaders, Governing Boards and SEN Governors to develop SEND policy, practice and procedure and embed Early Help /Gloucestershire Graduated pathway for SEND</p>	<p>Annual SEND conferences for Headteachers/Governors</p> <p>GCC's Local Offer website details local, regional and some national training www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fis</p> <p>Education, Entitlement and Inclusion Team http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/eei</p> <p>Governor Support http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/governors</p> <p>Education, Performance and Intervention team http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/115137/LA-School-Improvement-Teams</p> <p>Early Help – Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/article/116736/Gloucestershires-SEND-Graduated-Pathway a coherent and unified approach to improved outcomes</p>
<p>Support for SENCO's to share best practice, network locally and increase the extent that disabled CYP take part in school curriculum and embed Early Help/Gloucestershire Graduated Pathway for SEND</p>	<p>Mature SENCO clusters for primary and secondary schools/colleges enabling national/local updates and a Gloucestershire platform to raise awareness of disability, and specific training about SEND</p> <p>Annual conferences for SENCOs to improve outcomes for CYP with SEND</p> <p>Gloucestershire SENCOSPOT – a one stop shop and forum for SENCO's, and professionals/families www.gov.uk/extra/SENCOspot houses the most up to date version of policies, protocols and processes; new information is Tweeted to followers</p>
<p>Support to develop disabled CYP participation in the wider curriculum such as mainstream clubs, leisure,</p>	<p>Well established links with local organisations such as Active Gloucestershire http://www.activegloucestershire.org/, G-Dance</p>

<p>sporting and cultural activities as well as access to special school sports and physical activity facilities for disabled CYP who attend local mainstream schools.</p>	<p>http://www.gdance.co.uk/ and Gloucestershire Deaf Association http://www.glosdeaf.org.uk/ through Gloucestershire Active Inclusion Network increase disabled CYP participation in activities and new opportunities Current information and opportunities for CYP, their families and professionals is housed on the Local Offer www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fis</p>
<p>Support to develop better partnership working which will really make a difference to the outcomes for our vulnerable children and young people. Our plan identifies what organisations are going to do to deliver services to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable, and how they are going to do it.</p>	<p>http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cyppp</p>

5.2 Improving the physical environment of schools and settings

5.2.1 Throughout the Equality Act there is a duty to take reasonable steps to undertake work as required. This strand includes:

- changes to the physical environment of the setting to make it more accessible including steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces, parking areas, building entrances and exits, as well as sensory considerations including lighting and the acoustic environment
- improvements to physical access including the provision of ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, adapted toilets etc and physical aids to education
- changes to the physical environment to improve classroom acoustics and resulting in improved listening conditions for all CYP, for example, installing carpets or acoustic ceiling tiles or undertaking sensory audit to identify changes to the physical environment benefit CYP with sensory needs or processing difficulties
- provision of physical aids to improve access such as adapted ICT equipment, for example, enlarged computer screens, specialist mouse controls or adapted keyboards or individual equipment including specialist chairs

5.2.2 Whilst the Equality Act sets a duty to take reasonable steps to improve a settings physical access there may be some areas within a school or setting which are legitimately defined as inaccessible, as it would not be reasonable to carry out adaptations to gain access to them. This could be because of the type of room it is, because it is replicated on the ground floor, or because the building is listed and adaptations would be very difficult or very costly. In these cases, reasonable adjustments could include re-timetabling lessons or activities in some instances it has been necessary for a CYP at a primary school to remain in the same classroom for more than one year because other rooms could not be made accessible. In these cases the CYP's peers have also remained in that classroom. No CYP should be disadvantaged by such decisions.

5.2.3 All new buildings have to comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and should be physically accessible to disabled CYP. The Equality Act 2010 means that the British Building Standards Guidance has been changed to incorporate its requirements; guidance in BS8300 deals with new buildings; BS993 sets performance standards for reverberation in teaching and study spaces and defines good acoustic standards for schools and settings.

5.2.4 Schools and settings will need to bear in mind equality issues when they undertake to let their premises to ensure access is available for the disabled user. GCC general letting guidance will be updated to reflect the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

5.2.5 GCC plays a vital role in making community, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools (both special schools and mainstream schools) and settings physically accessible to disabled CYP.

We want:

- our disabled CYP to thrive and access their full educational entitlement
- our disabled CYP and their family's needs to be met in their local communities and that our families and disabled CYP are well informed to help themselves
- 100% all our schools to publish their Local Offer on the Family Information Service website

Activity	Provision
GCC has audited every school since April 2003 and has compiled reports regarding the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act	All schools have had audit reports to support the DDA set National Standards and the reports deal with all disabilities including auditory impairment, visual impairment and physical disabilities
GCC seeks to plan ahead in an anticipatory way, through discussions with schools/settings and regular meetings with Health, Early Years Partners and SEND teams to obtain early indications of the needs of CYP moving into primary schools or transferring from primary to secondary schools	Access meetings take place 3 times a year to identify disabled CYP starting schools, in transition between Key Stage 1 and 2, Key Stage 2 and 3, i.e. primary to secondary transition and Post 16 Access needs of all disabled CYP with significant needs in mainstream settings are regularly reviewed through these meetings
All disabled access works undertaken at schools over the past 10 years, other than those undertaken under Building Regulations, or new school builds, have been based on the needs of individual CYP	GCC will continue to focus on the needs of individual CYP to ensure the best use and prioritisation of the available funding Funding is currently targeted towards the needs of CYP requiring adaptations GCC plans to continue upgrading premises as and when required to suit individual need This ensures that the needs of particular CYP are met and that the overall building stock is improved for disabled access in a sensible and effective way

<p>GCC will inform schools and parents/carers of this Accessibility Strategy via Gloucestershire Local Offer, SENCOSPOT and a range of consultation/participation activity</p>	<p>Gloucestershire's schools Local Offer can be found on www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fis - detailing how an individual setting/school will respond to meeting the needs of CYP with SEND and include information about the settings provision, policy and practice so that CYP and their parents/carers can make informed choices</p>
<p>GCC will support schools as they formulate their plans to ensure that they are setting achievable goals and targets for making their premises more accessible. The accessibility report for each school will show what action can be taken towards implementing works either for a CYP who is to attend, or for a member of the general public who might wish to gain access, but who is prevented or restricted from doing so</p>	<p>Schools must include accessibility issues in their asset management and access plans. Plans, goals and targets should be reviewed and reported on annually by governors to parents/carers Accessibility issues including consideration of the acoustic environment as published in the guidance within Building Bulletin 93 should be considered within any development schemes being undertaken</p>

5.3 Improving the delivery of information to disabled CYP

This part of the duty covers planning to make written information, normally provided by the school to its CYP, available to disabled CYP. The information should take account of CYP's disabilities, CYP's preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable timeframe.

5.3.1 GCC has effective specialist support services for individual CYP with SEND including hearing, visual impairment and physical disability who work to build school/setting capacity to meet individual needs in addition to individual work with some CYP.
<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/sen>. Their role also includes supporting settings to make written material available in alternative formats for individual CYP in a timely manner.

The Advisory Teaching Service supports CYP with SEND including low incidence needs. It has 4 area teams based in:

- Cinderford (Forest of Dean)
- Gloucester (Gloucester South and North)
- Cheltenham (including North Cotswolds and Tewkesbury)
- Stroud (South Cotswolds and Cirencester)

Each area base provides specialist support - advice, resource loans, adaption/modification of resources and materials, in addition to direct teaching and supports differentiation of written information provided to disabled CYP. A specialist resource base to produce modified and adapted resources and materials for CYP with VI across Gloucestershire is housed in the Cinderford Base.

Need	Provision
Communication & interaction needs	Support to deliver and produce accessible information and visual timetables, e.g. use of Communicate in Print, developing a Total Communication environment, use of Alternative and Augmented communication methods Parent programs support the delivery of this information
Cognition and learning needs	Support to deliver and produce differentiated learning resources and written information using symbols and photographs
Sensory /physical needs	Support to deliver and produce information including graphs in a range of media including Braille, enlarged print and Moon, as well as support to develop usage of scanners, technology to deliver information Support for CYP HI to take notes in British Sign Language and using tactile methods
Emotional, social, mental health and behavioural needs	Support to provide visual information and schedules to enable consistency of information delivery approach, etc

There are effective quality assurance systems in place to monitor the quality of service delivery. These include self evaluation, feedback from training activities, targeted interviews with parents/carers and self review activities alongside systematic analysis of specific cases.

6. Access audit and review of accessibility in schools and settings

6.1 Appropriate plans will be developed and actions identified to prioritise work including Gloucestershire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of disabled CYP and Early Help and Young People's Partnership Plan, 2015-2018. <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cypppp>

6.2 Adequate resources will be made available to implement this accessibility strategy using capital funding and other funding sources where available. Specific actions will be agreed when settings raise access issues in relation to their access plans and information on individual CYP has been obtained. These goals and targets will be measurable and appropriate review and evaluation procedures will be established including annual report to SEND leadership team.

6.3 Every CYP with SEND and their family will be invited to tell us about how they found our services and feedback used to help us improve. www.gloucesershire.gov.uk/cypfeedback

7. Consultation

This accessibility strategy will be kept under regular annual review by:

- SENCO Clusters
- Parent/Carer Forum
- GAPH/GASH/GASSH
- Student voice platforms
- SEND SLT

**Contributors
Name**

Role

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Gloucestershire Carers	
Sharon Hagg	SENCO Kings Stanley Primary
Sarah Hylton	SEND Early Help Service Manager
Edel Keating	Strategic Lead for SEND Development
Lisa Meggs	School Advisor
Lyn Morris	SEN Post 16 Strategic Lead
Deborah Shepherd	Principal Educational Psychologist/HOS
Brian Storer	Strategic Architect
Nathan Roe	SEN/D Monitoring Officer
Roz Wyatt	Deputy Head Cam Woodfields Junior school/Glos Ed leader (SEND)
Advisory Teaching Service	Specialist teams for; <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Communication Interaction▪ Cognition and Learning;▪ Hearing Impairment▪ Visual Impairment▪ Multisensory impairment▪ Physical Disability

Appendix 1



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