

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE : 1 APRIL 2003

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL PUPILS

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the new requirements on the Educational Services to produce an Accessibility Strategy for Pupils with Disabilities. To seek Committee approval for the attached Accessibility Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Education (Disabilities Strategies and Pupils' Records) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament in March 2002, which requires each local authority to prepare and implement an Accessibility Strategy. They issued guidance in order to help "responsible bodies" meet the accessibility strategy requirements of the new Act; which came into force in October 2002.
- 2.2 By the Act the amended regulations specify that each local authority must produce an Accessibility Strategy by 1 April 2003.
- 2.3 The Strategy must cover 3 main areas for pupils with a disability, namely
- i) improved access to the curriculum.
 - ii) Improved access to the physical environment of the school.
 - iii) Improving communication with pupils of school information and, in particular, providing information to pupils with disabilities in alternative formats within a reasonable timescale.
- 2.4 The guidance also supports the changes put forward by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) which became effective from September 2002.

3. WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 In order to produce this Accessibility Strategy the Educational and Social Services department formed an authority working party. The group consisted of Head teachers, Quality Improvement Officer, personnel from the architects and technical department, council access officer, Early Years officer and two parents of children with special educational needs. The work of this group is being complemented by a corporate group carrying out an authority-wide audit of council properties, in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) recommendations, which includes schools.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation has widely taken place with The Disability Rights Commission, Head teachers, Parents, senior staff in all authority departments, School Boards, Pupil Councils, Access Forums and Young People whom themselves have a special need. The working group also, in addition, attended a national conference run by The Disability Rights Commission and the Executive on planning The Accessibility Strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There will be significant implications arising from this legislation in regards to the cost of bringing all schools in East Ayrshire up to DDA standards. This has been costed through the Estates Management database. The bulk of recommendations contained in the Action Plan will be finance through the Scottish Executive grant, the National Priorities Action Fund and the Special Educational Needs Training Grant. Other money from the capital budget allocation will be used for physical access modifications.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Expectations have been increased for Parents, pupils and staff by this legislation and other recent pieces of legislation such as the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001.
- 6.2** This new Accessibility Strategy and the regulations governing it will require Educational and indeed all authority services to renew/review their policies and procedures in the areas of special education, support for learning, disability and equality. It will also require continuing review of educational provision and staff training.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:
- (i) agree the contents of the Accessibility Strategy 2003/04;
 - (ii) approve the implementation plan and timescales proposed;
 - (iii) agree to the Director of Education and Social Services submitting the attached Access Strategy to the Scottish Executive; and
 - (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

JMcC/MR
12 March 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i) Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- ii) Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000
- iii) Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- iv) Education (Disability Strategies and Access Pupils Records (Scotland) Act 2002

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, Tel: (01563) 576192

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : GRAHAM SHORT

East Ayrshire Council

Department of Educational and Social Services

Accessibility Plan

2003 - 2004

This document should be read in conjunction with East Ayrshire Children's Service Plan and The Strategic Plan, - Priority to Improvement for East Ayrshire local improvement objectives and implementation strategies.

DRAFT

John Mulgrew / Councillor T Farrell

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Developing Excellence in Education and Improving Opportunities for All through Quality, Equality, Access and Partnership.

QUALITY

- i) creating a climate of achievement
- ii) identifying good practice
- iii) disseminating good practice
- iv) establishing means to monitor and evaluate the work of the Department

EQUALITY

- equality of opportunity for all irrespective of gender, race or disability
- valuing diversity in individuals and communities
- ensuring a fair distribution of resources
- counteracting discrimination and victimisation

ACCESS

- open access for all
- assisting those in greatest need to benefit from the service
- determining views locally
- promoting lifelong learning

PARTNERSHIP

- forming strong and constructive partnerships
- working with parents, staff, school boards and community groups
- working with local businesses, industry, higher education, local enterprise company

THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

Ensure that every pupil benefits equally from education by:

- Extending and developing Early Years provision to ensure the best start in education.
- Developing strategies to ensure that Looked After and Accommodated young people and the most valuable learners achieve success within the Scottish Qualification and Credit Framework.
- Linking with Social Services through learning and planning where appropriate.

Support those with disabilities and special educational needs by:

- Producing and implementing a new special educational needs policy taking into account legislative requirements.
- Including young people with special educational needs in mainstream provision, where such placements are appropriate.

Make provision for those who require Gaelic medium teaching (or other lesser used languages) by:

- Extending the existing Pre-5 and primary provision to meet the needs of secondary-aged pupils.

EAST AYRSHIRE CONTEXT

East Ayrshire Council believes that its population should have access to the highest possible quality of service and that the Council can make a positive impact on local communities. There is recognition however that it is necessary to prioritise those areas most in need. The Council's Corporate Plan identifies seven priorities for the years 2000 - 2003

- Tackling Unemployment
- Fighting Poverty
- Better Health
- Improved Housing for All
- Excellence through Education - through access to educational opportunities for the whole of peoples' lives
- Safe, stimulating and sustainable environment ensuring that the rich and varied environment in which we live is accessible to all.
- Inspiring our Young People.

There are Member Officer/ groups within the Council to monitor developments and evaluate progress within each area.

Inspiring Children and Young People 2001 - 2004

This is a joint plan of services for children and young people working in partnership with the Health Board, Trust and Social Services. This plan builds on, and further develops the work initiated in 'Our Children' the authority's first children's service plan which covered the period 1998 - 2001. The 2001 - 2004 plan has four overall aims:

- to ensure children and young people increasingly have a voice on the issues which affect them.
- to ensure that children and young people receive appropriate support, education and services to enable them to achieve their potential, particularly those who are most vulnerable.
- To promote children and young people's positive health
- To promote children and young people's safety and wellbeing.

These are split into thematic priorities

- Children and Young People's Rights
- Good Start in Life
- Health and Well-being
- Learning and Development
- Children and Young People with Additional Needs
- Children and Young People's Safety

Within East Ayrshire Council further consultations have taken place on the disbursement of the Changing Children's Service Fund, and the development and roll out of New Community Schools. The Council has also recently launched its first draft of a Joint Community Care plan with other partner agencies.

Inclusion and Equality - National Priority 3

To promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education, with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and to Gaelic and other lesser used languages.

What this Priority means for us:

Every pupil has the right to derive the maximum benefit from education and to achieve their fullest potential, irrespective of their background. For many young people this will require specific measures of support, either through modifications to provision, differentiated learning methods or additional resources. Whenever possible young people should be educated as close to their home community and alongside their peers. This will only be delivered by a continuing review of policies, practices and procedures in relation to further improving access. Within this commitment, special attention will be given to groups with particular learning needs in terms of lesser used languages.

AIMS OF EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCILS ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

Aims are:

- to see the person before the disability
- to breakdown unnecessary barriers and exclusions by promoting informed understanding
- to respond to children and young people's diverse learning needs
- to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children and young people
- to encourage and develop inclusive practices
- to implement legislation
- to respond to the choices expressed by young people and their parents
- to promote equal opportunities to education for all.

INTRODUCTION

A person is disabled if:

'He or she has a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities:
Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) has been amended by this Act and becomes effective from September 2002. The new duties make it unlawful for the council as an education provider to discriminate against disabled pupils and prospective pupils in the provision of education and associated services in schools. This is also in respect to admissions and exclusions. There are two key duties in this Act:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- to take reasonable steps to avoid treating disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

The Code for Schools has been issued by the Disability Rights Commission and gives guidance on how the new duties under the Disability Discrimination Act should be interpreted.

The Education (Disability Strategy and Pupils Educational Records) Act (2002)

The above legislation will help to promote a positive attitude towards disability in all Scottish schools and will help the authority to ensure that they can meet their new duties under the amended Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This legislation and guidance points to early intervention and multi-agency co-operation and confirms the departments commitment to support children and young people with a disability to ensure their right of access. This has implications for the authority, school management, class teachers, as well as support staff. The support of young people should be seen in the context of a social strategy partnership which recognises rights and reflects the changing attitude of society for the development of more inclusive practices. The Council wishes to maximise inclusion within its communities and schools by addressing issues of access.

The legislation requires that Councils, as the responsible body, have to prepare and implement an initial three year Accessibility Strategy by April 2003 to improve access to education of pupils and prospective pupils with a disability or disabilities. It is the intention of the Department of Educational and Social Services to produce a interim plan for one year which will be gradually incorporated into the cycle of Authority planning. This will be tied in with the duty on the whole Authority to draw together a strategy to tackle improved access to all Council buildings, including schools, by August 2004. The strategy also covers any other establishment other than a school

where the authority provides education. This strategy must cover the following aspects:

- increasing the extent to which pupils can participate in the curriculum
- improving the physical environment of the school or schools to make it more accessible
- improving communication with pupils with school information and providing information to pupils with disabilities in alternative forms both within a reasonable time and taking into account the pupils needs and any preference that they or their parents express.

Further relevant legislative detail is summarised in Appendix 1

APPROACH TO DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

CURRENT PROVISION

East Ayrshire Council has been committed to a policy of inclusion in mainstream schools since its inception in 1996. Since that time all strategic and local plans, and service delivery, have reflected an inclusive approach to pupil support. This has applied to admissions, to exclusions and to education and associated services. All pupils with disabilities are entitled to access an appropriate curriculum within their local school.

During session 2001 - 2002 a major initiative was undertaken to consult staff, children and young people and parents on inclusive principles and practice looking specifically at equality, discrimination and the raising of awareness in regards to staff responsibilities and new duties placed on the authority. A policy on promoting inclusion has been approved by the Education Committee and will soon be distributed widely.

In support of the Department's policy on inclusion, the Excellence Fund: Inclusion 2002-2003 provided additional funding to increase the number of support staff to children and young people with Special Educational Needs, improve access and facilities and provide specialist equipment and ICT hardware and software. (See Appendix 2)

A Code of Practice (Schools) from the Disability Rights Commission has been issued to educational establishments to assist staff review their present policy and practice.

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM

In school support

Each mainstream primary and secondary school has an identified Learning Support Co-ordinator who manages the provision for children with Special Educational Needs. In all but our smallest secondary schools there is a recognised Support for Learning Department managed by a Principal Teacher. In the primary sector there is

an expectation that any additional flexibility of staffing is used for support for learning. Mainstream staff are encouraged to take advantage of the range of courses offered through the Quality Improvement Team's Staff Development Programme and Post Graduate training in SEN. All teachers employ a differentiated curriculum providing educational experiences for a wide range of young people. The differentiated curriculum often leads to the development of Individual Educational Programmes supported by a Multidisciplinary Team.

With the approval of the Education Committee, where appropriate, pupils with disabilities can undertake fewer courses or replace Standard Grade with Access or Intermediate courses within National Qualifications.

Centralised Support Services

Network Support Team

Learning support is provided to pupils in schools by a Network Team of 32.8 FTE teachers. Currently Network teachers are deployed to both primary and secondary schools based on deprivation statistics and individual needs. The Team is managed by the Learning Support Manager and a number of senior staff. There is an ongoing staff development programme which has allowed most Network teachers to achieve the Diploma of Special Educational Needs and has enabled a range of specialisms to be developed in the team e.g. Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties, Challenging Behaviour, Specific Learning Difficulties, Disorders of Communication.

Hospital Service

This Service provides support for young people of school age who have been admitted to hospital for an extended period or who are frequently readmitted to hospital. The Service consists of one full time teacher based in Crosshouse Hospital.

Visual Impairment

The Service assists schools, parents and colleagues in the assessment and management of children who have severe visual impairment. The Service consists of 4.5 teachers and a number of full time SEN auxiliaries based in Grange Academy. They provide support for secondary aged children from across the authority and in addition provide a peripatetic service for all other establishments.

Bilingual Service

The Service provides support for children with little or no English, bilingual children with limited English and children who are fluent in English but not achieving their full potential. The Service consists of one senior teacher who works full time in a base in a St Columba's Primary school and two teachers who work in schools on a peripatetic basis across the authority. A Special Educational Needs Auxiliary and 1FTE Clerical Assistants support the Service.

Hearing Impairment Service

This Service is an inter-authority provision for all three Ayrshire authorities which supports the educational needs of hearing impaired children and young people from the time of diagnosis of a hearing loss until school leaving age. It consists of ten full time teachers qualified in Deaf Education. Staff work on a peripatetic basis across all sectors. A sign language assistant supports the work of the Service.

Audiology Service

The Educational Audiologist provides a service for all three Ayrshire authorities. She is involved in the identification of a hearing loss and the counselling of the family prior to the child being visited by a teacher of the deaf. In addition she evaluates and advises on all audiological equipment and resources.

Pre School Home Visiting Service

The Home Visiting Service provides support to pre-school children with identified special needs. Families are offered support and advice on the development of their child and on access to and the use of support services. One full teacher visits the child in their home or in the nursery.

Psychological Services

There is a statutory duty on the Authority to provide child guidance services, and this duty is fulfilled by maintaining a team of psychologists. There is currently one principal psychologist, four senior psychologists and three main grade psychologists. Each member of the team is assigned a group of establishments and SEN Services to support.

Specialist Provision

Special Schools

Park School provides support to children of both primary and secondary age with moderate learning difficulties. Most children who attend the school are from the Kilmarnock area. The post 16 provision is based in James Hamilton Academy.

Woodstock School in Kilmarnock provides education for pupils with severe learning difficulties between the ages of 5 and post 16, while Witchhill School and Hillside School provide for children from the ages of 5 to post 16 with Profound or Complex Learning Difficulties.

Pupils with complex learning difficulties, often accompanied by multiple disabilities, provide an enormous challenge in providing an appropriate curriculum. In an attempt to meet this challenge some of our schools provide an Elaborated

Curriculum to some pupils with disabilities which includes a wide range of social, independent learning skills.

Supported Learning Centres

Crosshouse Communication Centre

This a facility for primary aged children with severe communication disorders. The Centre caters for five to eight year olds with the emphasis being on integration of the children into mainstream. The Centre offers a specialist facility, but in all aspects is part of the primary school. Staff who support the Centre consist of the Head Teacher of the School, an Assistant Head Teacher, with responsibility for the day to day running of the Centre, two full time class teacher, a full time auxiliary, Senior Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist.

Patna, Barshare, Cumnock Supported Learning Centres

These centres, attached to mainstream schools, provide additional support for primary and secondary aged children young people with moderate learning difficulties who have difficulties in accessing the curriculum.

Centre for Hearing Impairment

This Centre, based in Grange Academy, provides a service to young people of secondary age who are deaf or hearing impaired in all three Ayrshire authorities. The Centre is staffed by three full time specialist teachers of the deaf. A full time SEN auxiliary, who is deaf, also supports pupil's learning and personal development.

Language Unit

The Language Unit caters for the needs of children who have a language or communication disorder from their pre school years to the end of Primary 3. The Language Support Team consists of one full time teacher and a full time speech and language therapist. The Team is supported by an Educational Psychologist. The service is provided both within a base in a Nursery school and on an outreach basis.

Additional Support

Special Educational Needs Auxiliaries

In order to support the Council's policy on inclusion an increasing number of SEN auxiliaries are employed to support children with physical, learning and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools. A continuing programme of staff development is offered to all auxiliaries.

Youth Strategy

There are currently three bases in Shortlees Primary, Kilmarnock Academy and Auchinleck Academy providing support for pupils with challenging behaviour and /or disaffected with traditional education. Additional support is provided by Rathbone and Unity Enterprise

Easter/Summer Support Schemes

Two Summer Support Schemes, based in Hillside School and Witchhill School provide respite for families who have children with complex learning difficulties. The children are offered a wide range of activities throughout the school summer holidays which enhances their core curriculum.

A Support Scheme run by East Ayrshire Council in partnership with the National Autistic Society, based in Crosshouse Communication Centre , provides a wide range of educational activities for children who have severe communication disorders and during the Easter and summer holidays.

Early Years

There is an established Pre-school Community Assessment Team (PRESCAT) which plans appropriately for young children as they move towards school age. In Nursery establishments a Skills Profile, identifying the stage of development in all curriculum areas is completed for all children and transferred to the appropriate school. Early years establishments receive particular support from the Council's psychological services to assist staff in the delivery of appropriate educational experiences for individual children. In addition, visiting support services provided through the Health Trust, for example, physiotherapist, speech and language therapist should work in partnership with parents and staff to enhance the individual learning and care plan.

The early years service has ten peripatetic nursery nurses who support establishments which have been identified by psychological service through a needs assessment. This process acknowledges those establishments that require additional support on educational grounds to assist the integration of children with specific needs. This additional support is allocated annually and is reviewed throughout the course of a year.

In some circumstances a shared placement may be made between an early years establishment and a special school.

Training

An established programme of SEN in-service training provides access to a comprehensive range of staff development opportunities and courses for staff in all educational sectors. Provision for session 2002-2003 is outlined in Appendix 3.

Inter Agency Working

The New Community School approach is fundamental to raising educational attainment and promoting social inclusion. The initial pilot programme has now been rolled out to all schools with the expectation that they take account of the Action Plan on Better Integrated Children's Services through the Changing Children's Service Fund.

As a Department of Educational and Social Services the view on service delivery has changed from the time of distinct and separate departments. There is a wide and clearly evidenced recognition that there are real benefits from better co-ordination of multi-disciplinary working and positive partnerships. This recognition has led to the establishment of nine Learning Partnerships in East Ayrshire which brings together all educational establishment and a range of other relevant agencies with the aim of delivering better services to children and young people.

Guidelines and Procedures

A number of documents have been produced by the authority to support schools in the provision for children with special educational needs. (See Appendix 4)

Information and Communication Technology

There has been significant investment in ICT infrastructure and hardware in East Ayrshire for the benefit of all pupils and staff. Almost all establishments have reached the national targets for pupil/ computer ratio. A system has been established to allow schools to access laptops and other ICT equipment for pupils with Special Educational Needs from centralised resources. There are established links with the Communication Aids for Language and Learning in the University of Edinburgh. Staff take advantage of In-service courses and advice on appropriate ICT devices for individual pupils. Special Schools have developed Board Maker, Communication passports and developed individual assessments leading to the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems.

ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

East Ayrshire Council has been fully committed to a policy of inclusion into mainstream schools since its inception in 1996. Since that time, all strategic/local plans and service delivery have reflected an inclusive approach to pupil support and a presumption in favour of mainstream education. All pupils with disabilities are entitled to access an appropriate curriculum within their local school.

To enable the Council to establish the number and type of facilities available within each educational establishment, an initial survey of establishments was undertaken during session 2000-2001. This information formed the basis of our DDA Asset Management Database which is regularly updated to ensure that any improvement to enhance the accessibility of a school is recorded.

SUMMARY OF FACILITIES : 2000/2001

	Primary Schools (46)	Secondary Schools (10)	Special Schools (4)	Nursery Schools (16)
Ramp - Main Entrance	22	5	4	10
Ramp - Other Areas	22	4	2	3
Disabled Toilet	23	9	4	8
Personal Care Facility	1	1	0	0
Passenger Lift	0	6	0	0
Wheelchair Stair Lift	0	1	0	0

Excluding improvements/adaptations incorporated within major refurbishment work, a total of £400,000 Capital Funding has been spent since 1996 in direct response to individual pupil needs in undertaking essential physical adaptations. A budgetary provision within the Education Capital Programme has been, and will continue to, facilitate the continuous development of adaptations to improve physical access to all educational establishments.

Every opportunity to enhance access to educational provision has been incorporated within refurbishment programmes. The following elements of improved facilities/adaptations have been incorporated as standard into capital projects.

<u>HE Room Upgrades</u>	Wheelchair accessible workstations provided	3 secondary schools
<u>Fire Door Upgrades</u>	Ramped access at final fire exit doors	1 secondary school 3 primary schools
	Double vision panels provided on internal doors	1 secondary school 2 primary schools
<u>Personal Care Facilities</u>	Disabled toilet provision incorporating en-suite shower; hoists; trolleys and changing facilities	2 secondary schools 3 primary schools
<u>Floor Coverings</u>	Floor coverings in circulation areas replaced with matt vinyl with contrasting borders to delineate walls and doors	Various establishments

During a recent part refurbishment of Doon Academy following an asbestos removal programme, significant aspects of improving access to curricular areas and enhanced visual impairment aids/design were incorporated in the final design brief:-

- Adjustable workbenches and sinks in Art; Science & I C T
- Tactile surfaces adjacent to lift door and approaches to stairs
- Viewing panels provided to all doors
- Ironmongery and Handrails
- Shadow Gaps

- Matt floor finishes

SUMMARY OF FACILITIES : 2002/2003

	Primary Schools (46)	Secondary Schools (10)	Special Schools (4)	Nursery Schools (16)
Ramp - Main Entrance	22	6	4	10
Ramp - Other Areas	22	7	2	7
Disabled Toilet	26	9	4	8
Personal Care Facility	4	3	0	0
Passenger Lift	0	6	0	0
Wheelchair Stair Lift	0	1	0	0

As part of the council's approach in addressing DDA issues, a Corporate Working Group was established with representatives from various council departments. Specialist software was purchased and a dedicated team of 3.5 staff were assigned to undertake detailed physical surveys of all council properties, including educational establishments.

A pilot survey of seven educational establishments was undertaken in parallel with surveys of other council buildings to establish an estimated cost of full compliance. These surveys provided information to progress towards a co-ordinated improvement plan to provide inclusive educational facilities. Surveys of the remaining establishments are currently in progress and it is planned that the council's audit programme of all properties will be complete by January 2004.

Surveys comprised of the following key areas:-

- Access From Highway To Site
- Routes Within Site To Entrances
- Car Park
- External Ramps And Step
- Reception Area
- All Circulation Areas – Horizontal and Vertical Including Lif
- Disable Toilets
- Facilities In Buildings Controls – Light Switches; Break Glass Points etc
- Surfaces, Floor Finishes and Wall Finishes
- Signage
- Audio Equipment
- Fire Safety
- Assembly; Dining and Changing Areas
- Teaching Areas

The following key areas were considered in determining our priorities for this strategy:-

- Identifying those establishments currently accommodating pupils with specific needs and establishing if all essential adjustments have been made
- Identifying those establishments where adaptations/improvements are imminent due to the known needs of individual pupils and their progression from Nursery to Primary and from Primary to Secondary
- Identifying establishments where minimal improvements are required and could be implemented with minimal costs
- Establishing elements of works which could be incorporated within refurbishment works
- Identifying interim improvements until long-term improvements can be implemented

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND THE DELIVERY OF SCHOOL INFORMATION

Schools produce information in as easy a way as possible and in plain English. Schools will offer information in different languages and alternative formats where appropriate.

Within the Primary/Secondary sector there are a range of communication structures which presently support communication with pupils and parents

- Role of Tutor/Register Teacher
- Guidance Interview
- Annual Interview
- Staff Handbook/Calendar of Events
- Information Evenings/Parents Nights
- Option booklets to pupils
- Whole School and year Assemblies
- Daily Bulletins
- Pupil Handbooks
- Notice Boards
- Electronic information e.g. e-mail
- Circle Time
- Peer Counselling
- Pupil Councils

Pupils are consulted about their Record of Needs or their Individual Education Plan as part of the ongoing review system. In New Community Schools all children are consulted about their Personal Learning Plans.

Communication is further enhanced within schools with the number of SEN auxiliaries and classroom assistants that are employed to work with disabled youngsters both within the classroom and within the playground. They are often a good communication link for pupils with a disability.

For young people with a hearing impairment (HI) the authority provides the services of an audiologist and a team of specialist teachers who are all skilled in British Sign Language. A sign language assistant attached to the team provides support to pupils and parents whose first language is BSL. An ongoing project is currently being implemented in Grange Academy where there is a hearing impairment unit to provide BSL course for hearing pupils and staff.

The VI Service provides specialist support, equipment and aids to ensure that pupils with a visual impairment can communicate appropriately. Close links have been established with the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Psychological Services has set out a rationale to develop pupil participation in review systems within schools. A small scale pilot of a student booklet to support and encourage students to contribute more fully in their review meetings has been launched in one secondary and one primary school in the authority over the period of January to June 2002. Feedback from stakeholders has been very positive and has enabled the focus of the meetings to be with the students rather than the professionals. It is the intention to extend this approach to all educational establishments.

The Council has a website which give council-wide information. It would be appropriate to consider an education department link with appropriate material available for pupils with disabilities. There also exists a tracking system for bilingual pupils with a disability.

PLANNING GROUP

An interim planning group was established in August 2001 to respond to the draft Code of Practice for Schools. The group was extended as detailed below to respond to the Education Disability Strategies and Pupils' Records (Scotland) Act 2002. This group was involved in the consultation process and the production of the first Accessibility Strategy for East Ayrshire.

Muriel Reid	(Chair) Quality Improvement Officer (SEN)
Garry Blackwood	Senior Architectural Technician
David McDowall	Building Control Manager/Access Officer for the Council
Jim McCaffrey	Head Teacher
Margaret Meechan	Property Development Manager, Educational and Social Services Department
Janie Allen	Principal Officer Early Years
Glynis Morris	Parent
Margaret Murray	Parent

The following groups assisted in the development of this strategy

Representatives from Authority Access Panels
Health Board Representative Ayrshire and Arran Health Board
Head Teacher Primary and Secondary Schools
Young People in Educational Establishments
Young People Forums

CONSULTATION ON ACCESS STRATEGY

A full consultation process has taken place prior to the production of this Accessibility Strategy. A questionnaire was sent to the following staff and other agencies:

- 3 Community Nurseries, 12 Nursery schools and 18 Nursery classes
- 46 Primary Schools
- 9 Secondary Schools
- Pupil Councils
- Young/Pupil Bodied Groups
- Council School Board Meetings
- Parent Forums
- Parent Focus Groups

Other services of the council:

- Social Services
- Community Support
- Support to Communities
- Leisure and Recreation
- Homes and Technical Services

Other Agencies:

- Ayrshire and Arran Health Board
- Community Paediatricians (Primary Care Trust)
- Health Promotion Co-ordinator
- Disability Access Group (DCT)
- Department Child Health Service including
 - Community Paediatrician
 - School Nursing Service
 - School Doctors
- Public Health Practitioner
- Patient and Public Involvement
- Voluntary sector and includes a variety of groups of parents

MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The Access Strategy will be monitored in the following ways:

- Quality Improvement Officer will carry out monitoring visits as part of an ongoing programme using a range of Quality Indicators. The focus of the visits will be on the progress schools have made in breaking down the barriers for children and young people with a disability in the areas of the curriculum, physical access and information.
- As part of the programme of Professional Review and Development, Head Teachers will be accountable for the implementation of the accessibility strategy.
- External evaluation by HMIE will indicate the effectiveness of the arrangements within the authority and the implementation of the accessibility strategy.

- The Regulation of Care Commission reports will evaluate the access to nursery and primary schools as one of the standards for registration.
- Parent Forums will be consulted annually in respect of best value reviews. Feedback will be sought on developments in access.
- Voluntary groups of parents will have access to an officer of the Council on an annual basis to hear their views on access to the curriculum, access to property and how well schools are communicating with disabled pupils.
- Access will be a standing agenda item on all School Boards and pupil councils.
- All pupils with disabilities will have an individual interview with a guidance teacher or key worker on an annual basis.
- Physical access to all Council properties will be reviewed as part of the Council's asset management plan.

Further comments on strategy should be addressed to:

Mr Graham Short
Head of Schools
East Ayrshire Council
Council Headquarters
London Road
KILMARNOCK
KA3 7BU

LEGISLATION

International and national legislation and guidance fall mainly into three categories - Rights, Access and Joint Working and collaboration.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

This is not a legal document, but a code that recognises that young people have rights. The 54 articles in the convention were followed up in 1994 by the Salamanca Statement and Framework. Article 2 of the convention directs all states to adopt a policy ensuring that the rights of children are upheld. It emphasises that all rights apply to all children, without exception. These rights also include that children and young people have the right to participate in decisions which affect them and the right to protection from harm.

The Human Rights Act (1998)

The Human Rights Act (1998) gives further effect in the UK to all fundamental rights and freedoms in the European Convention of Human Rights. In particular it reinforces the rights debate in Article 14 - Prohibition of Discrimination. Also article 2 of protocol 1 - establishes the Right to Education.

The Education (Scotland) Act (1980)

This Act provides a special needs framework for educational provision for pupils with special educational needs many of whom also have a disability. The main duty on education authorities is to secure the adequate and efficient provision of school education for their area.

The Standards in Scotland Schools etc Act 2000

This Act makes further provision than the 1980 Act. It requires that the Council secure that education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential. Section 15 of the Act presumes that education will be provided in mainstream settings for all children. There are 3 exemptions to this:

- it would not be suited to the child's ability or aptitude
- it would not be compatible with the provision of efficient education for other children with whom the child would be educated.
- it would result in unreasonable public expenditure which would not normally be incurred.

It is within this context that East Ayrshire's Department of Educational and Social Services sets this policy paper on support for children and young people. In receiving educational provision within the framework of rights, it is important to

ensure that all children have access to the broadest possible educational and social opportunities. This plan is a strategy that fits into the wider planning context with East Ayrshire including the overall community planning processes.

In further detail section 1 explains a child and young person's rights to school education. Section 2 the duty of the local authority in providing school education and Section 14 provides guidelines on the right of appeal to exclusions. Also through this Act are the production of Educational National Priorities. In particular National Priority 3. Some of the measures related to these objectives are:

- placements of pupils with special educational needs
- effectiveness of learning support systems

The Children (Scotland) Act (1995)

This Act placed responsibility on Scottish Local Authorities to publish Children Service Plans stating how services to children and young people would promote the health, development and welfare of children and young people. Principles from the Act included:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- the views of the child should be listened to and fully taken into account
- sustain the child in the community
- enhancement of practice concerning children and young people's rights.

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001

An Act establishes a new system for care regulation covering the registration and inspection of care services against a set a national care standards. The Act also creates two new national, independent bodies, the Scottish Commission for the Regulation for Care, to regulate care services and the Scottish Social Services Council, to regulate the social services workforce and to promote and regulate its education and training

EXCELLENCE FUND:INCLUSION

Overview of Main Activities

In session 2001/2002 Special Educational Needs Auxiliaries continued to support an increasing number of young people with physical, behavioural and learning difficulties in mainstream schools across the authority. This is in support of the Department's policy on Inclusion. The demand for this form of support is ever increasing, particularly with the number of young people being diagnosed with ADHD and Autistic Spectrum disorders. The Excellence Fund: Inclusion allowed an additional 21.5 SEN auxiliaries to be deployed across four Secondary and six Primary schools, supporting 55 pupils.

A comprehensive audit was carried out in all establishments this session as part of the Council's overall strategy of improving disabled access to our schools. The information from this audit will inform the accessibility strategy as part of the requirement of section 1-3 of the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) Act

A number of schools have benefited from improvements to disabled access and improved environment for pupils with Special Educational Needs. These improvements include:

- changing plinth in new disabled toilet
- resurfacing work to playground and paths
- additional ramp to improve emergency evacuation
- EVAC chairs in a number of schools
- carpets and curtains in two schools to improve environment for pupils with hearing impairment

The Excellence Fund has contributed to the purchased of a variety of specialist equipment including:

- soundfield systems
- tilting boards
- specialist chairs
- stair climber
- mobile hoist for swimming pool

Pupils identified as benefiting from additional equipment to allow them to access the curriculum have been provided with appropriate laptop computers and appropriate software. The Excellence Fund continues to allow the stock of hardware and software to be at a sufficient level to meet the ever increasing demands.

Objectives:

- to support East Ayrshire's Policy on Inclusion and to implement Section 15 of the Standards in Scottish Schools etc Act, by providing additional staffing in mainstream schools to support pupils with Special Educational Needs
- to improve access and facilities for pupils with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools
- to ensure that appropriate specialist equipment is available for pupils with Special Educational Needs in order to comply with current legislation on Moving and Handling
- to provide appropriate ICT hardware and software to improve access to the curriculum for pupils with Special Educational Needs

Statement of Outcomes

In terms of meeting the key objectives of the Excellence Fund Inclusion the Department has:

- maintained the number of SEN auxiliaries available to support pupils with Special Educational Needs
- improved the disabled access to pupils in a number of schools
- purchased additional specialist equipment to support pupils with physical disabilities
 - purchased additional ICT hardware and software and provided appropriate software and hardware for identified pupils

Further Information

With the increase in the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs being integrated into mainstream schools, the provision of additional staffing, equipment and adaptations continually outstrip demands. The Excellence Fund Inclusion continues to add value to the Department's overall strategic plan which includes similar key objectives as stated above.

TRAINING STRATEGY 2002/2003

The Scottish Executive provide funding through specific Grant towards the net cost of releasing education authority staff, educational psychologists and schools support staff for in-service training in the field of working with children with special educational needs.

The authority is encouraged when preparing its training strategy to take account of the following areas:

- inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes
- implementation of the new duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Education (Disability Strategy and Pupils' Records) Act
- multi-disciplinary working such as joint training and in-service days training for teachers and therapists
- pupils with sensory impairment
- neuro-developmental disorders such as autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia
- child protection training for staff working with children with SEN
- SEN pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties
- staff working with minority ethnic children with SEN and their families

The training strategy for special educational needs will be linked directly to the National Priorities and statement of Local Improvement Objectives. In this way there will be a full link to establishments or service development plans and then to the scheme of staff development and review. This package therefore forms a consistent and coherent whole.

The overall aim for SEN training in East Ayrshire is to ensure that all teachers, educational psychologists and support staff are offered appropriate staff development in order that they can support the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and provide a high quality education.

The main focus for SEN training in session 2002/2003 will be to provide staff development for nursery staff, class and subject teachers. This is a vital area for development with the increasing numbers of children and young people being educated in a mainstream setting. A number of different approaches to the delivery of this training will be employed including the following:

- national courses 'Introduction to Support for Learning' for teachers, nursery staff and school managers
- courses on Autism, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia and IEP's to be included in the Quality Development In-service programme
- accredited courses in twilight sessions as part of teachers Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- specific training for teachers in advance of receiving a pupil with special educational needs into their class. Funding for cover will be available to schools to facilitate this
- support service staff will continue to provide staff development to schools on request

- a series of courses will be offered on the implications of new legislation concerning SEN and disability.

Contributions to these training opportunities will be made from a number of agencies including Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and the National Autistic Society.

The authority will continue to support Post Graduate Certificate and Diploma courses for Network staff and mainstream teachers. Training for Network staff will be focussed in the areas of Autism, Dyslexia, Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Challenging Behaviour.

A training programme for SEN Auxiliaries which leads to the Scottish Qualifications Authority Professional Development Award and an Introduction to Moving and Handling will be offered during the next academic session.

Funding will be available to support appropriate training opportunities for Educational Psychologists. In addition contributions will be made to the Post Graduate training of two trainee psychologists.

Increased funding will be available to all support services including the Bilingual Service to enable staff to develop their expertise in a wide range of special needs areas in order to provide support to children and young people across the authority.

A multi - agency group including health, education and social work will be established to consider a joint approach to training in the area of autistic spectrum disorders. This will build on the success of the joint training offered to education and social work staff by the National Autistic Society in 2001.

Funding for staff development will be available to Special Schools to support them in taking forward their Development Plan priorities.

Additional funding will support the staff development element of the roll out across the authority of the Framework for Intervention initiative.

An updated Departmental Child Protection Policy and guidelines will be launched during session 2002/2003 and appropriate staff development will be offered to all staff from both social services and education. SEN issues will be included in these courses.

Early Intervention in partnership with the Network Support Team will take forward a number of initiatives in session 2002/2003 in support of pupils who are identified as 'at risk'. These initiatives will include the development of a reading recovery programme and the revision of the primary three screening programme. Staff development to support the implementation of these initiatives will be offered to both Network and school staff.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

- PreScat System
- Early Educational and Childcare Admission Policy
- Bilingualism and Special Educational Needs: The Assessment of Bilingual Pupils
- Screening in East Ayrshire: Identification and Intervention at Primary 3: A Process Approach
- Screening in East Ayrshire: Identification and Intervention at Primary 3: Assessment Support Pack
- Supporting Learning in Primary Schools: A Collaborative Approach
- Individual Educational Plans Primary
- Individual Educational Plans Secondary
- Programme Planning for children with SEN in Nursery establishments
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- The Elaborated Curriculum for pupils with complex learning difficulties within the framework of 5-14
- Pre -5 Skills Profile
- Nursery to Primary transition records
- Management of Special Educational Needs Auxiliaries
- Collaborative approach to assessment of children with ADHD
- Standard Circular 42: Procedures leading to opening a Record of Needs
- Youth Care Strategy support systems
- SENCAT, SAT, PAT Prioritisation systems
- SEN Policy - Every Child Is Special (2002)
- Children Service Plan 2001-2004

ACTION PLAN

Accessibility strategies should be developed over a three year period. However to ensure consistency and articulation with the Council's Children Service Planning cycle, this Action Plan is being limited to the period 2003-2004. Core mainstream and Special Education Budget will continue to support access for disabled children and young people. In addition several specific Education Department budget sources will be utilised to support this Action Plan.

ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM			
Development	Lead Officer	Resources	Success Criteria
VI Service to review policy in light of the DDA amendments to part 4 covering education	Ronnie Thompson	No financial implications	Revised policy agreed and implemented within the VI Service
Further involve Health Board and Trust personnel in individual pupil planning through IEP's	Tom Williams	No financial implications	Evidence of multi agency involvement in pupil's targets and support and clear health related targets within the IEP
Further involve parents in the planning of their child's learning experience through the IEP's	Muriel Reid	No financial implications	Fully involved in the process of target setting for their child's IEP and partners in supporting their learning
Expand appropriate work experience placements for young people with a disability through marketing the business community by the inter authority Work Experience Unit	Carol Nisbet/Career Service	From existing Education and Careers Service funding	Increase in the number and appropriateness of placements for young people with a disability. Work Experience Unit liaise with schools and business to provide a bank of suitable placements

Support the further re-integration into mainstream primary of children in the Crosshouse communication Centre by expanding the outreach service.	Graham Short	Existing resources/National Priority Action Fund Inclusion	More children and young people supported in their local mainstream school. Children have skills and confidence to cope with new environment
Create a comprehensive secondary support resource for young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder in the Kilmarnock area.	Graham Short	Existing resources/National Priority Fund Inclusion	Centre established to support secondary age pupils with severe communication difficulties unable to fully access mainstream curriculum
Secure up to a maximum of twelve places on the Birmingham University ACE Course.	Anne Basford	SEN Specific Grant	One member of staff in each Learning Partnership trained with a commitment to in-house training for colleagues
Provide training for Senior Management and staff to review their policies and procedures in light of the recent Disability legislation.	Jim McCaffrey	SEN Specific Grant	Policies and Procedures in line with DDA Amendments Part 4 and Code of Practice (Schools)
Establish links with the Mobility and Rehabilitation Technology Centre with the purpose of improving joint working between Health, Social Work and Education for the provision of equipment and ICT Hardware and Software.	Alistair Nairn	No financial implications	Links established and protocol for joint working agreed by all parties. Pupils have access/training in the use of appropriate ICT
Purchase the Playback Resource Pack for all Primary and Secondary schools to increase disability awareness for all children and young people and provide training to each Learning Partnership to support the implementation	Muriel Reid	SEN Specific Grant	Material used in all schools as part of their PSD programme

A multi disciplinary Group Produce will produce a video and support materials on rights and responsibilities	Beth McGeehan	Social Inclusion Partnership funding	Video completed and used for training to raise staff and pupil awareness of issues of rights and disability
Encourage class and subject teachers to take advantage of training opportunities in Special Educational Needs	Muriel Reid	SEN Specific Grant	Increase in the number of class and subject teachers attending courses and deploying strategies to support pupils learning
Provide ten places for Nursery Nurses on the HNC Special Learning Needs Course	Janie Allen	Childcare Workforce Training and development	Course successfully completed by Nursery Nurses and children's learning more effectively supported
Provide Inter agency training opportunities to promote an integrated approach to supporting children and young people with a disability or additional support needs	Hugh Carswell		
Improve access to low and high technology, materials and specialist equipment	Janie Allen/Muriel Reid	No financial implications	Pupils have enhanced access and increased confidence in the use of appropriate technologies
Implement the restructuring and deployment of Network Support Team	Anne Basford	From existing resources	Network staff more effectively deployed and the needs of pupils better supported
Review the roles and responsibilities ,and deployment of SEN auxiliaries , classroom assistants and peripatetic nursery nurses	Review Group	From existing resources	Support staff more effectively deployed and the needs of pupils better supported through targeted provision

Produce practice and procedural guidance to support the reviewed policy on promoting inclusion	Jim McCaffrey	From existing resources	Policy, guidelines and procedures completed and promulgated to all educational establishments. Pupils benefit directly and indirectly from new practices
Submit an application to the New Opportunity Fund Quality Childcare Programme for a group for peripatetic child care workers who can support children with additional needs in out of school care clubs	Janie Allen	No financial implications	Application of funding successful. Team of staff trained and deployed in out of school care provision across the authority
Produce authority guidelines for the transition from P7 to S1 of pupils with Special Educational Needs	Muriel Reid/Jean Kerr	No financial implications	Guidelines completed and good practice disseminated to support effective P7/S1 transition for pupils with a disability

<u>ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</u>			
Major Works	Euan Couperwhite	As part of Capital Programme	Work completed.
Corporate strategy to include audit of school buildings	David McDowell	From existing Council resources	Completion of school building audit and identification of necessary adaptations and development costs
<u>IMPROVING COMMUNICATION AND THE DELIVERY OF SCHOOL INFORMATION</u>			
To empower the Parent Focus groups and Forums to take ownership of the meetings.	Muriel Reid	No financial implications	Parents fully involved in organisation of meetings and improved access to communication between parents and senior Council Officers
Review and improve formats for giving information to pupils with a visual impairment under the headings of oral communication, alternative print formats, tactile formats, audio formats and electronic information. -	Ronnie Thompson/Anne Basford	From existing resources	Young people with a Visual Impairment have improved access to information through a range of appropriate media

Encourage all schools to develop their own website which may include school information such as handbooks, minutes of school board, pupils council etc and information leaflets	Alistair Nairn	From existing school budgets	Increase in the number of schools with own website containing appropriate information related to access in all its forms
Encouraged all schools to include a child or young person with a disability as a member of a pupil council.	Grace Scott/ Dave Farrow	No financial implications	Increase number of disabled children and young people in pupil councils
Roll out across the authority the approach to enable children and young people to contribute more effectively their opinion and views at review meetings	Claire Fletcher	No financial implications	Increase number of pupils attending reviews and offering their views on their future education
Provide a rolling programme of training for all staff to increase their awareness of the alternate means of communication and consultation with children and young people with a disability	Muriel Reid	SEN Specific Grant	Increase in the number of staff attending courses. A wide range of consultation and communication mechanisms deployed to engage young people