

# ACCESSIBILITY PLANS



information sheet

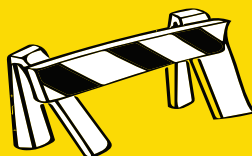


# What are Accessibility Plans?



An Accessibility Plan is a plan that sets out how, over time, the school is going to:

- Increase access for Disabled pupils and students to the school curriculum – this covers teaching, learning, assessment and the wider curriculum such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities, and school visits;
- Improve access to the physical environment – this covers improvements to the built environment of the school and physical aids to access education; and
- Improve delivery of written information to Disabled learners – written information (e.g. handouts and timetables) should take account of the access needs and preferred formats of pupils, students and parents, and should be made available within a reasonable time frame (DfES, 2002).



**Alliance for Inclusive Education**  
336 Brixton Road  
London SW9 7AA  
Tel: 020 7737 6030  
Email: [info@allfie.org.uk](mailto:info@allfie.org.uk)  
Website: [www.allfie.org.uk](http://www.allfie.org.uk)

**A company limited by guarantee**  
Company No. 5988026  
Charity No. 1124424

**Thank you to our funders City  
Bridge Trust and Esmée Fairbairn  
Foundation.**



## Why do we have Accessibility Plans?



The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 set out the requirement for all the schools and education authorities in Britain to have a legal obligation to increase accessibility for Disabled pupils and students (DfES, 2002).



Since September 2002 schools have been required to produce Accessibility Plans for their individual settings, and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are under a duty to prepare accessibility strategies covering the maintained schools in their area.



The Equality Act (EA) 2010 and Children and Families Act (CFA) 2014, replicated and reinforced this duty by making it compulsory for all education and training providers to develop and publish Accessibility Plans, outlining how they intend to make their settings more accessible over time.



Further, education and training providers have a duty to demonstrate how they engage with Disabled pupils and students, and their families, to make the whole learning experience accessible and inclusive (DfE, 2015).



The duty to have Accessibility Plans in place does not require a separate planning process.



Even though Accessibility Plans can be published as standalone documents and must be published on a school's website, they can be published as part of another document.



For example, they can be dovetailed into school equality schemes or school development or improvement plans, e.g. by including a new section on access planning within the special educational needs (SEN) report (DfES, 2002).



Accessibility Plans should focus on improved physical access to learning environments and on the development of a fully accessible curriculum.



For this reason, an effective plan will address not only physical barriers, but also potential obstacles created by the institutional structures, teaching, learning, and assessment practices of a school.

## Are all the Accessibility Plans the same?



They should have similarities, however the nature and content of Accessibility Plans are bespoke to each school, and will depend on the size of a school and the resources available to it (DfES, 2002).

## How do we find Accessibility Plans?



Schools are required to make their plans publicly available as follows:



- Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their Accessibility Plans in their governors' annual report to parents;



- Non-maintained special schools are required to reproduce their Accessibility Plans in their annual prospectus;



- Independent schools have to make their Accessibility Plans available to interested parties on request in a reasonable timeframe;

- They may also be published on the school website.

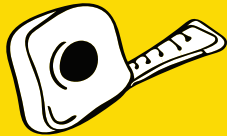
## How do Local Authorities fit in with Accessibility Plans?



When the legislation regarding Accessibility Plans was implemented, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), were required to make their accessibility strategies available for inspection to interested parties in a reasonable timeframe (DfES, 2002).



This is now the responsibility of the Local Authorities as LEAs were abolished under The Local Education Authorities and Children's Services Authorities (Integration of Functions) Order 2010.



Local Authorities do not generally monitor school Accessibility Plans.

## What is the shelf life of an Accessibility Plan?



Accessibility Plans cover a three-year period.

The first plans had to be published in 2003.

Accessibility Plans must be reviewed and revised as necessary at every three-year period and updated plans are due again in April 2021.

## Further Reading



The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) led a project funded by Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL), examining whether Accessibility Plans were effective in driving inclusive education in English Secondary Schools post Equality Act 2010.

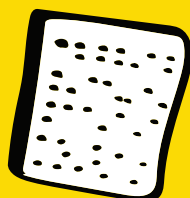


[The report can be found here.](#)

## References



[Department for Education. 2015. Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years.](#)



[Department for Education and Schools. 2002. Accessible Schools: Summary Guidance.](#)