

# North Lincolnshire Council Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020



# North Lincolnshire Local Authority Accessibility Strategy 2017 – 2020



## 1. Introduction

This accessibility strategy outlines how North Lincolnshire Local Authority (LA) is making accessibility a priority for disabled children and young people and their families.

## 2. Vision

In promoting diversity and inclusion, North Lincolnshire LA supports the 'social model' view of disability. This identifies that people with impairments are disabled by societal - attitudinal, physical and other barriers. The model endorsed by the experience of many disabled people highlights that attitudes can be the major disabling barrier a person with impairments can encounter.

In developing our strategy we recognise that technological advancements, improved communication and ways information can be accessed, can contribute to more inclusive teaching and learning methods. It can also remove barriers experienced by children and young people with impairments.

## 3. The Legislative Background

There are a number of statutory duties that the LA meets in relation to children and young people with disabilities. These are as follows:

### A) Accessibility Planning Duty

The planning duty for Local Authorities and schools and colleges<sup>2</sup> came into force in September 2002 whereby LAs were required to produce an Accessibility Strategy.

With regard to the planning duty for disabled pupils, three strands are identified as requirements for an accessibility strategy. It is a strategy, from 2017-2020 for:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's or college's curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of the school or college for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school or college.

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<sup>2</sup> In this strategy schools also mean academies.

- Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

## **B) Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies that is the LA and includes maintained schools, academies, and colleges, which extends to all protected characteristics – race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 also requires us as a LA and schools and colleges to meet the specific duties which are to:

- a) to publish information to demonstrate how they we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- b) to prepare and publish equality objectives.

North Lincolnshire's '[Delivering on the Equality Act](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/community-advice-and-support/diversity-and-inclusion/delivering-the-equality-act/)'<sup>3</sup>, provides further details of how we as a LA are delivering on our PSED and specific duties. It also includes details of our published Equality Objectives 2015-2018.

## **C) Children and Family Act 2014 Clause 69**

imposes a duty on the governing bodies of schools, proprietors of academy schools and colleges to prepare a report containing SEN information. This SEN information report has to include information on the schools policy for pupils with SEND, as well as information on the

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/community-advice-and-support/diversity-and-inclusion/delivering-the-equality-act/>

arrangements for the admission of disabled persons as pupils at the school or college; the steps taken to prevent disabled pupils being treated less favorably than other pupils or students; the facilities provided to assist access to the school or college by disabled pupils and the plan prepared by the governing body or proprietor under paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan).

#### **D) SEND Code of Practice 2015**

reinforces the statutory requirements highlighted above in relation to children and young people with disabilities. The SEND Code of Practice also highlights responsibilities with regards to children and young people with medical conditions. Under section 5.11 it states '*All early years providers should take steps to ensure that children with medical conditions get the support required to meet those needs. This is set out in the EYFS framework.*' In section 6.11 of the SEND Code of Practice it states that '*The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'.* North Lincolnshire Council has worked with schools to support pupils with medical needs and has provided guidance entitled '[Supporting pupils with medical conditions- policy and procedure](#)' to assist them in effectively meeting their needs.

#### **4. North Lincolnshire Council's Strategic Priorities**

The following local strategic priorities demonstrate our commitment to making accessibility a priority for our children and young people.

a) [\*\*North Lincolnshire Children's Strategy 2020 'Children and Young People's Challenge'\*\*](#).

The Children's Strategy is set within the context of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy with a particular focus on the partnership action required to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children and young people living in North Lincolnshire, it also incorporates the priorities in the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Business Plan which reflects all partners working together to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The strategy is informed by what we know about outcomes for children and young people and our service offer progress made so far, what children and young people have told us, through their lived experience and the outcomes we know about for children and young people populations, as collated within our Joint Strategic Assessment. Our Children's Strategy gives a common framework and set of drivers for those commissioning and providing services that contribute to the wellbeing and safeguarding priorities. It will give all those working to improve wellbeing and reduce inequalities the same focus to achieve the outcomes.

**b) ['Helping children and families \(Threshold Document\) 2016-2020'](#)**

Our 'Helping Children and Families (Threshold Document) 2016-2020' describes the types of services available for supporting children and families to stay independent and the thresholds applied in accessing a service.

**c) ['All our children - 2020' - North Lincolnshire's Education and Skills Plan for Children and Young People](#)**

This strategy outlines how our local drive towards even better outcomes for children is characterised by child centred approaches, improving outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and embedding the sector led system. As a result, children and young people will:

- **feel safe and be safe**
- **enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing**
- **recognise and achieve their potential**

This plan sets out a shared ambition for educating children and young people in North Lincolnshire. Arrived at after extensive consultation with young people and the education sector, the key priorities within this plan form the agenda for North Lincolnshire Council, Early Years settings, schools, colleges and providers at every age and stage of children's learning.

North Lincolnshire Council is passionately committed to improving the wellbeing and education outcomes of all our children and young people. We call on everyone involved in shaping the learning and development of children to ensure that **equity of opportunity** and **excellence in achievement** become the norm for all.

The Strategic framework for improving outcomes for children through education is as follows with our agreed partnership ambitions being 'ensuring

vulnerable children achieve outstanding outcomes' at the heart of everything we do. This includes our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

**Strategic framework for improving outcomes for children through education**

	Equity and excellence for <u>all</u> our children and young people		
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN	Children feel safe and are safe	Children enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing	Children recognise and achieve their potential
PARTNERSHIP AMBITIONS	Ensuring a supply of strong and sustainable education places	<b>Ensuring vulnerable children achieve outstanding outcomes</b>	Tackling underperformance and ensuring high standards
DRIVERS	Empowering children	Building family and community capacity	Developing the workforce
	Right service, right time, right place		

**d) [North Lincolnshire's Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Inclusion Plan 'All our children' 2017 – 2020](#)**

North Lincolnshire's plan for children and young people (aged 0-25) with SEND is not a stand-alone document. It is aligned very closely with the vision and priorities for 'All our children 2020', Education and Skills Plan for Children and Young People. However, it is also recognised that the significant reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014<sup>5</sup> and the accompanying SEND Code of Practice<sup>6</sup> are a tremendous opportunity to build upon the work already in progress to improve our support and aspiration for children and young people with SEND and their families. This plan outlines our approach to these reforms - reforms that essentially emphasise a holistic, integrated and graduated approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND across education, health and care.

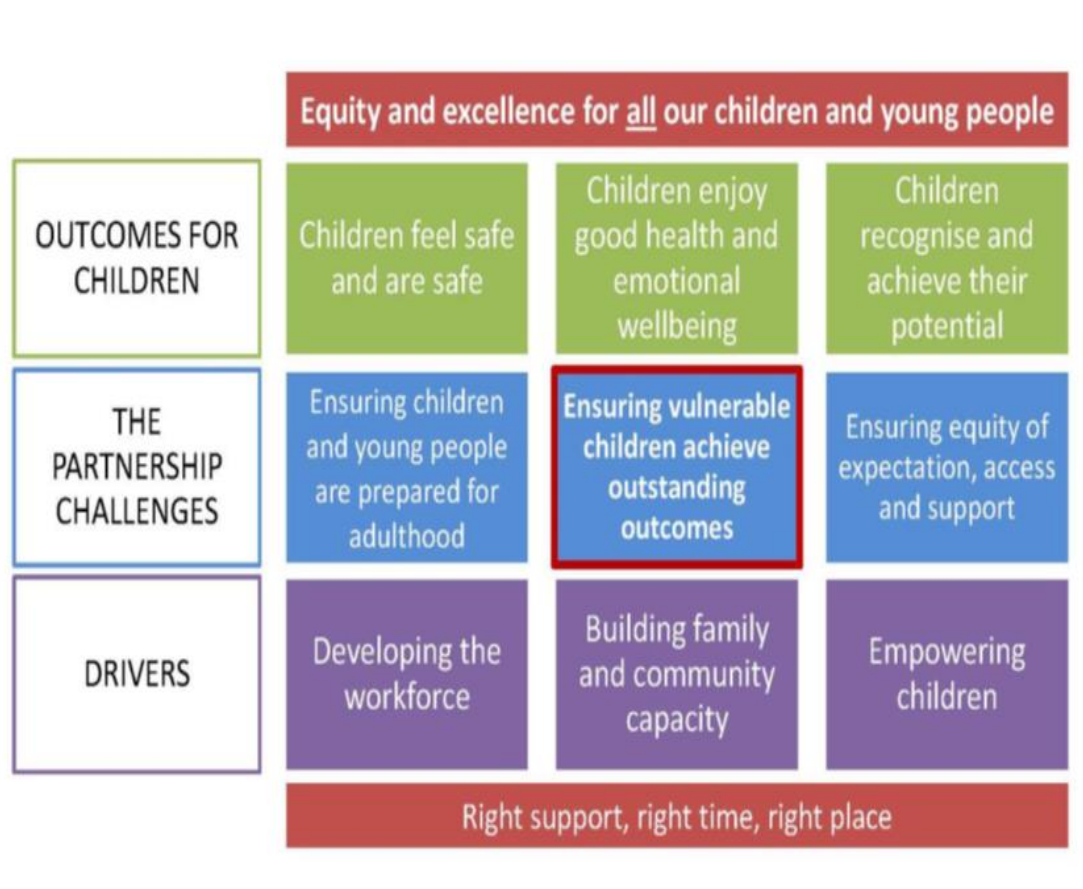
<sup>5</sup> For further details of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#)

<sup>6</sup> [SEND Code of Practice](#)

Through discussions with families and partner organisations three priority areas for further development have been identified. These priority areas are connected very strongly to the broader strategic aims outlined above and they also take into account the significant SEND reforms being implemented from September 2014 (Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice). These priority areas are:

- Ensuring equity of expectation, access and support
- Ensuring vulnerable children achieve outstanding outcomes
- Ensuring children and young people are prepared for adulthood

**Strategic framework for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.**



The SEND Inclusion Plan has been rewritten and updated in 2017 and outlines the actions North Lincolnshire Council is taking to support the principles and objectives laid out in this Accessibility Strategy for disabled children and young people.

## 5. Implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 in North Lincolnshire

- a) **The SEND Board** was established in November 2016. It recognises the collective accountability for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to achieve outstanding outcomes within North Lincolnshire.

The SEND Standards Board ensures a clear line of sight for holders of statutory responsibilities on the duties of the local area for children and young people aged 0-25 years with SEND contained in the Children and Families Act 2014 and amplified in the Code of Practice published jointly by the Department for Health and the Department for Education. Additional duties for promoting the wellbeing of adults are set out in the Care Act 2014.

**The SEND Board's partnership ambition** is through strong and effective local area governance, children and young people with SEND will:

- feel safe and are safe
- enjoy good health and emotional wellbeing
- recognise and achieve their potential

Consequently, young people will be well prepared for adulthood, including being as healthy as possible in adult life, living independently, participating in society and being successful in higher education and employment.

- b) **The Children and Young People SEND Partnership** is a multi-agency partnership group that is specifically overseeing the priorities relevant to the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014, its associated regulations and the SEND Code of Practice. This also includes representatives from across education, health and care. There is also key representation from the North Lincolnshire Parents' Involvement and Participation Group (PIP). Under the oversight of the Children and Young People's SEND Partnership various task groups have been established to further the aims and priorities in this strategy.
- c) **The Education Inclusion Partnership (EIP)** is a multi-disciplinary partnership group that includes representatives from across the range of educational settings – mainstream and specialist educational provision as well as pre and post-16. This particular partnership group focuses upon the key areas of championing inclusion for the most vulnerable (including those children and young people with SEND), improving attainment and



achievement for all and ensuring quality and sufficiency of education provision for all of our children and young people with SEND (including specialist provision where assessment identifies a specialist need). A key principle is that children and young people are educated as close to home as possible - although meeting assessed need in the most appropriate way will always be a key priority.

Both partnerships inform the Children and Young People's Partnership which is a stakeholder group for agencies with a duty to improve outcomes for the children and young people of North Lincolnshire.

## 6. Local Context

North Lincolnshire LA has a wide range of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities<sup>7</sup> (SEND). The LA works effectively with schools to ensure that local provision is of high quality. The provision and support across education, health and care available for children and young people with SEND and their families is clearly listed in [North Lincolnshire's Local Offer](#)

Furthermore, our guidance document [Special Educational Needs Support - The Graduated Approach](#) provides detailed guidance under the following categories of need:

- **Universal** - where there is an entitlement and access for everyone (e.g. schools, Children's Centres, leisure facilities, etc);
- **Targeted** - where there is a need for some additional support or sign-posting. This may be single agency (informal targeted) without the need for a full assessment of plan. Or it may be **Early Help** (targeted formal) with an assessment and co-ordinated plan in place to achieve full access to universal provision and the successful achievement of identified goals and outcomes;
- **Specialist** - where assessment has identified a need for more specialist support or service- such may be the case with a child or young person who has more complex needs and requires an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The Graduated Approach supports professionals to accurately assess needs, as well as providing professionals with guidance as to how they can support children and young people with differing needs to access the curriculum.

The guidance clearly outlines our expectations of teachers and professionals for children and young people with the following needs:

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<sup>7</sup> For definition of disability please read Appendix A

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs
- Sensory and Physical needs
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Physical Disabilities
- Medical Needs

In addition, it provides useful information on how to use the graduated approach, with a focus on person centred planning and provides detailed case studies of how the needs of children and young people with SEND have had their needs met effectively within mainstream provision. The guidance has a dedicated section on auxiliary aids, with examples of the types of equipment schools are expected to provide for students who require alternative resources in order for them to access the curriculum. It also outlines the specialist support available from teams where auxiliary aids or equipment is needed and under the section entitled '**North Lincolnshire Guidance to schools on use of reasonable adjustments, and auxiliary aids, for children and young people with disabilities**' provides detailed additional guidance on reasonable adjustments and auxiliary aids.

In North Lincolnshire we have two special schools, one for secondary and the other for primary aged pupils. In addition, we have one school with a resourced facility. An outreach service from special schools provides an additional resource of support to mainstream colleagues. We have specialist teams who are able to provide advice and support at whole-school, group and individual levels. These specialist services are all listed in our [Local Offer](#)

The SEN Team in the LA continues to work closely with all our schools and colleges to support and challenge them in meeting their statutory duties with regards to disability equality. This includes the following:

- I. **Equality Act 2010.** This includes three duties in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED) and well as their specific duties.
- II. **Accessibility plans** – ensuring schools or colleges are aware that they are required to have Accessibility Plans showing how they are planning strategically to increase access over time; the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010. Their plans must show how the school or college is:
  - a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;

- b) improving the physical environment of schools or colleges to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- c) improving the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities.

III. **SEN information report** – ensuring schools and colleges are complying with The Children and Families Act 2014 Clause 65 to publish this report on its website. As early as September 2014 the LA provided guidance for schools entitled ‘The School Offer & SEND Policies’ which was made readily available on the Local Offer. Since then follow up guidance and support has been provided to schools and where necessary challenge. This also applies to their **SEND policy**.

School and college compliance with these requirements are monitored on a regular basis by the LA SEN Team and follow up advice and support is given and where relevant, challenge. A key function of carrying out this work is to ensure that schools are meeting their accessibility plan requirements.

## **7. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school’s or college’s curriculum**

Schools and colleges are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and have a key role in planning to increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. The curriculum covers not only teaching and learning but the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits. The curriculum should provide relevant and challenging learning to all children. The statutory guidance for the new National Curriculum for England: Framework for key stage 1 to 4 sets out three key principles in its inclusion statement which schools are required to follow:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Schools and colleges should consider the needs of a range of disabled pupils and prospective pupils and are required to make reasonable adjustments to meet a range of specific needs. As part of this it is essential that LA services, schools and colleges actively engage with children and young people and their parents to seek their views so that local provision takes account of their needs.

Additional provision to enable pupils with learning difficulties to access the curriculum is already delivered through the SEN framework and this will cover the needs of many disabled children, but the LA recognises that schools and colleges are likely to require external support to maximise their ability to respond to diverse needs. Therefore, the LA supports schools and colleges to respond to individual needs of pupils and the continuing professional development needs of staff with a range of services, commissioned and traded services. Further details are available on North Lincolnshire's [Local Offer website](#) as well as our guidance document [Special Educational Needs Support - The Graduated Approach](#)

**8. Improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school or college.**

North Lincolnshire LA is committed to developing the range of provision available across the area and recognises that investment in buildings supports improved access to a full curriculum for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

All new school buildings comply with current building regulations and are accessible to disabled pupils. Since 2000 there have been ten new schools/academies built in North Lincolnshire that meet the Disability Discrimination Act standards. In addition, there are two new schools/academies under construction. North Lincolnshire has modernised a large part of the remaining school estate and has, where feasible, included improvements to entrances, circulation areas and welfare facilities to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Where modifications are required to meet the needs of a specific pupil, the LA will work with maintained schools to make reasonable adaptations.

The LA completed building accessibility assessments for maintained schools. The objective of the assessment was to understand how the buildings/grounds function, having in mind the needs of people with disabilities, and establish priorities for future investment. The North Lincolnshire Council Resources team is available to update these assessments to support schools developing their accessibility plans as required by the Equality Act 2010.

**9. Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.**

North Lincolnshire LA is actively committed to ensuring that information routinely provided by schools and colleges and the LA to its pupils and parents is readily accessible to all.

The information should, where reasonably practical, take account of pupils' disabilities, pupils' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame. The information might include handouts, timetables, and information about school or college events. Where reasonable, schools and colleges must make adjustments to provide information in alternative formats (such as large print and audio tape) using ICT, or other ways such providing the information orally.

The Children and Families Act 2014 explicitly requires to LA to publish information about provision and services directly of use for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in an area, through a Local Offer. The Local Offer has the express purpose of making information more accessible.

The [North Lincolnshire Local Offer](#) website also provides a direct link to all schools and colleges websites covering the 0-25 years, where further information on their provision for children and young people is available. For those families who are not able to access the internet, Local Offer information can be requested through schools, libraries and other local places, including our SEN Team (Tel: 01724 297148 or e-mail [special.needssection@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:special.needssection@northlincs.gov.uk) ).

We have also ensured that the Local Offer website has accessibility features built into it such as Browse Aloud, Easy Read booklets, translation features and being able to change the size of the font and page colour to ensure as many people as possible with disabilities are able to access the information easily. We also regularly hold face to face events or conferences focused on the Local Offer, including a market place, to ensure that those who have disabilities and are unable to access the Local Offer directly, can speak to relevant officers within the LA to get the information they require. The accessibility of the Local Offer is reviewed on an annual basis with parents & carers and children & young people and feedback received used to further refine and improve the offer further.

## **10. Information, Advice and Support**

There are a number of dedicated services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families which provide information, advice and support. Young people can also access the service independently from their parents. The service is impartial, confidential, and free. In North Lincolnshire it is provided by **Action for Children, Kaleidoscope & SENDIASS** (Special Educational Needs and Disability, Information, Advice and Support Service - formerly known as the Parent Partnership Service). They have been recruited to deliver Independent Support in North Lincolnshire.

**Action for Children, Kaleidoscope** will be taking the lead with the transfer of a Statement of SEN or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) to an Education, Health

and Care (EHC) plan (transfer reviews). They also provide group based support for families.

**SENDIASS** will be working with families and young people requesting a new EHC plan, although either agency would be available to support any parent or young person if they had a preference.

**Independent Supporters** will be able to work with children and young people with SEND and their parents by:

- Helping them understand the local referral process & local offer
- Act as a named contact person throughout the EHC assessment & planning process
- Focus on the main task of helping them to transfer a Statement of SEN or LDA to an EHC plan
- Work with those who are new to EHC referrals or if they have had a LDA under the old system
- Help them put together a one page profile for your child or young person
- Liaise across a range of local services & help them to gather the information required for an EHC plan
- Provide them with information to help them understand personal budgets
- Signpost them to Information Advice & Support Services (IASS) when the issue is outside the remit of an Independent Supporter.

Any questions or further information required on Independent Supporters can be obtained through contacting either provider directly:

Action for Children Kaleidoscope	SENDIASS (Parent Partnership)
Dunstall Street Scunthorpe DN15 6JZ	Hewson House Station Road Brigg. DN20 8XJ
Telephone: 01724 277766 Email: <a href="mailto:nek@actionforchildren.org.uk">nek@actionforchildren.org.uk</a>	Telephone: 01724 277665 Email: <a href="mailto:sendiass@northlincs.gov.uk">sendiass@northlincs.gov.uk</a>

Our Local Parent Carer Forum, Parents' Involvement in [Parents' Involvement and Participation \(PIP\) group](#)<sup>10</sup> can also provide independent and impartial support for parents and carers.

[Healthwatch North Lincolnshire](#)<sup>11</sup> is the independent voice for the people of North Lincolnshire. It can also helping to shape, challenge and improve local health and social care services.

<sup>10</sup> <http://northlincspipforum.co.uk>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk/>

<b>Healthwatch North Lincolnshire</b>
Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Unit 36 & 37 Normanby Gateway Lysaghts Way Scunthorpe DN15 9YG
Telephone: 01724 844986 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk">enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk</a>

## **11. CONSULTATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

The Children and Young Peoples' SEND Partnership, which is a multi-agency partnership group have been consulted on this accessibility strategy. Parents and carers of children and young people have the opportunity to provide their views via the Local Offer website. In addition, young people have been consulted via the LA 'Young Voices' group. The LA, in partnership with schools and key stakeholders, will implement this strategy to ensure that disabled children enjoy a fully inclusive experience. The Accessibility Strategy will be kept under review and amended as necessary to reflect newly published legislation and statutory guidance, developments in local resources and service delivery, and progress against the action plans. It will be reviewed annually by the North Lincolnshire Children and Young Peoples' SEND Partnership.

## **Appendix A**

### **Definition of disability**

The Equality Act 2010 states a person has a disability if:

- a) They have a physical or mental impairment and
- b) The impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Government guidance states that the term substantial means more than minor or trivial.

The term physical and mental impairment implies that a disability can arise from a wide range of impairments such as:

- Long term medical conditions such as asthma and diabetes
- Fluctuating or progressive conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or motor neurone disease
- Mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder or depression
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning difficulties such as dyslexia and autism
- Sensory impairments
- Learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and autism spectrum conditions
- Cancer
- Multiple sclerosis
- People with severe disfigurement will be protected as disabled without needing to show that it has a substantial adverse effect in day to day activities.