



## **Newport City Council: Education Services**

21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

Consultation Report

Accessibility Strategy for Schools 2018-2023

Formal Consultation Period: 11 February 2019 - 8 April 2019

This consultation report includes the following sections:

- The Consultation
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People
- Consultation Responses
- Recommendations

## The Consultation

Newport City Council's draft accessibility strategy for schools sets out how the council aims to improve the accessibility of schools to pupils with disabilities.

The draft strategy outlines our commitment to improve:

- the extent to which disabled pupils can **participate in the school curriculum**
- the **physical environment** of the schools
- **access to information** for pupils, carers and families
- **communication and transparency** by being open and honest about what can be expected or achieved

## Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation was issued to the stakeholders outlined below, with either a link to the consultation pack on the Council's website sent by e-mail, or alternatively by hard copies of the consultation material being issued:

- All Newport Schools
- Maintained Nursery Schools
- Aneurin Bevan Health Board
- Newport City Council Social Services
- NASUWT – The Teacher's Union
- NUT – National Union of Teachers
- Unison
- GMB Union
- The Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Newport Youth Council
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese
- Newport Families First
- Newport Family Information Service
- Newport Communities First
- Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Sparkle
- Officers at Newport City Council
- Newport Access Group
- Parent Representatives
- Occupational Therapists
- The 'One Newport' Partnership

## Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People

An Everyday Summary Version of the main consultation document was also published and was targeted specifically at children and young people.

## **Consultation Responses**

There were 9 responses to the consultation, 8 of which responded via the standard response pro-forma questions and 1 of which was an email from a school which provided details of a student discussion about accessibility issues in the school, but did not clearly answer the specific questions contained within the consultation questionnaire.

Of those who answered the standard questions, 7 (87.5%) of the responses supported the adoption of the draft Accessibility Strategy for Schools (question one).

Question 2 asked if respondents believed the adoption of this strategy would improve the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums to which all 9 (100%) of respondents agreed with one saying subject to being supported by sufficient funds by the LA.

7 (87.5%) out of 8 respondents believe the adoption of this strategy will improve the physical accessibility of our school buildings (1 commented subject to sufficient funds from the LA) and that the adoption of this strategy will improve the way the council and schools provide information and communicate with pupils, carers and parents concerning their education.

In addition to answering these questions, a number of comments were made. One Newport school council "believes that the review period of 3 years is too long. They think that a more regular review of what is working or not, means that any changes can be made much sooner. They think an annual review would be best. They feel that this is very important as it could be possible that a child may leave primary school and move to high school within the 3 year period and nothing may have been done to support that person." Another respondent believes funding will be required for many schools to increase accessibility, especially older buildings. Finally, an amendment suggestion for page 9 was to include "people with hearing limitations (hearing loops) and people with sight loss or limitations" as well as wheelchair users.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the responses received, some minor amendments have been made to the strategy document set out below:

- The physical inclusion theme and objectives have been changed to include the aim to improve provision for pupils with sensory impairments
- Reference to the Strategic Equality Plan, 2020 included
- Reference to an annual progress report being created and progress being subject monitoring and governance of the Strategic Equality Group.

It is proposed that the Newport City Council Accessibility Strategy for Schools is implemented in its amended form.