

## **DISABILITY ADVISORY AND ACCESS FORUM**

**THURSDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2003**

### **Draft Luton LEA Accessibility Strategy (planning duty)**

#### **Background**

1. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by introducing new duties on local education authorities (LEAs) and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective disabled pupils. The main duties are not to treat disabled pupils less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at substantial disadvantage.

#### **Planning duties**

2. Sections 28D and 28E of the Disability Discrimination Act set out requirements on local education authorities to draw up accessibility strategies and accessibility plans for schools, which improve access to education at schools over time. The strategies and plans have to address three distinct elements of planned improvements in access for disabled pupils:
  - Improvements in access to the curriculum
  - Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services
  - Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled pupils

### **Increasing the extent to which Luton's disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.**

3. To support the above aim Luton has already established procedures through SEN clusters and school consultation meetings and support services, such as educational psychologists and learning support and behaviour support advisory teachers to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum. For children accessing the foundation curriculum advice is offered from the Special Educational Needs Team for under 5's (SENST). Training is offered for individual schools from members of the support services in relation to whole school issues and individual pupil needs. Information relating to this is available in the SEN handbook.

There are 961 Luton pupils with statements of special educational needs.

542 attend mainstream schools in Luton	56.39 %
232 attend special schools in Luton	24.14 %

The remaining 19.47% of pupils are educated outside Luton.

### **Improving the physical environment of schools**

4. The following principles are suggested as appropriate for the Council to adopt:

- Wherever possible pupils will be educated in their local mainstream school
- Schools Disability Plans will support this
- Specialist provision will be developed on an area basis across Luton. The School Access Initiative Budget will be used to support this area development.
- Current provisions already established will be supported and resourced to develop to meet the needs of the designated pupils.

### **Improving the delivery of information to Disabled Pupils**

5. The LEA employs a Senior Teacher of the Deaf and a Senior Teacher for Visual Impairment and information on the range of services that are offered are available in the SEN handbook.

The appointment of a disability awareness officer has been agreed. The purpose of this post will be to offer advice to LEA officers, schools and parents in order to ensure the needs of pupils with disability are met.

### **Financial Implications**

6. For 2003-2004 Schools Access Initiative capital budget will be allocated to support these developments. This amounts to £368,000. 65% of the allocation will fund major developments such as improving the accommodation within buildings to include toilets for disabled pupils and changing facilities. 35% will be used to support small projects in schools designed to increase both physical and curriculum access for pupils with disability and SEN. This could include ramps and handrails or improvements for sensory disability such as improved colour schemes.

(The allocation for 2002 –2003 was £285,000. It is envisaged that the funding will continue in the foreseeable future.) . The Finance Manager for Lifelong Learning has approved this report 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003.

All newly built schools should be designed to meet the requirements of the SEN and Disability Act 2001.