



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

**DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE**

Accessibility Strategy 2024-2027

Rheynn Ynsee, Spoyrt as Cultoor
Plan Strateishagh 2024 - 2027





ST. NINIAN'S LOWER SCHOOL

scoil a' bhàird na h-àite

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE MINISTER

The Equality Act is a pivotal piece of social legislation that was introduced in the Isle of Man in 2017. We recognise our statutory obligation under this Act to publish an accessibility strategy.

I am pleased to deliver this accessibility strategy for the Department. The aim of this strategy is to ensure that we do not remain static when it comes to ensuring that pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum, that the physical environment of schools and UCM are improved to increase the extent to which they can take advantage of education, services or other benefits and to improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily available to pupils who are not disabled.

This strategy aims to provide direction and support for all DESC provided or maintained schools (including UCM) involved in delivering education for pupils with disabilities on the Isle of Man and for schools to publish their accessibility plans. The overall aim of this strategy is to ensure that we help, support and guide schools in meeting the needs of their disabled pupils to enable them to flourish and thrive in their environment. This will help make schools strive to be a great place for all pupils to succeed and progress as individuals.

The Department of Education, Sport and Culture will keep this strategy under review and will revise again in 2027.

Hon Julie Edge MHK

Minister for Education, Sport and Culture



(December 2023)

Glossary

DESC means the Department of Education, Sport and Culture

Pupil means a person attending, or registered as a pupil at school or college

AEN means Additional Educational Needs

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2017 applies to DESC maintained, provided and special schools

Schedule 12 of the Equality Act 2017 applies to the University College Isle of Man

School means an institution for providing primary education or secondary education or both, being a school maintained by the Department

UCM means University College Isle of Man

Responsible body means the governing body at a primary, secondary school or University College Isle of Man.

OUR SHARED VISION...

To inspire, empower and provide learning, sporting and cultural opportunities that support all children, young people and adults.

In striving for excellence, be a forward thinking, inclusive and nurturing organisation which enables everyone to achieve; enriching the lives of the community within the Isle of Man.

OUR SHARED VALUES...

- Respect
- Integrity
- Caring
- Fairness
- Trust

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE – About this Strategy

Enabling all pupils to access the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

The Department of Education, Sport and Culture is committed to supporting the needs of disabled pupils at school to enable them to achieve their educational requirements.

It is a statutory duty for DESC under the Equality Act 2017, Schedule 10, for DESC to prepare and publish an accessibility strategy. It is also a requirement Under Schedule 12 for schools and UCM to develop accessibility plans for schools and UCM.

An accessibility strategy is a strategy for —

- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum of the schools referred to in subparagraph (1); and
- (b) improving the physical environment of those schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of —
 - (i) education, and
 - (ii) benefits, facilities or services, provided or offered by those schools;
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily available to pupils who are not disabled.

The improvement in delivery referred to in subparagraph (2)(c) must be achieved within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of —

- (a) the disabilities of the pupils attending the schools in question; and
- (b) any preferences expressed by them or their parents or guardians.

DESC must keep its accessibility strategy under review, and must revise it if appears to DESC to be necessary to do so.¹⁰²
DESC must implement the accessibility strategy.¹⁰³

To achieve this, the Department has developed this Accessibility Strategy to support pupils at school with their access requirements to information, curriculum and the physical environment and to achieve full compliance with our statutory obligations.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE – About this Strategy

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

This Accessibility Strategy takes into account:

- The Equality Act 2017
https://legislation.gov.im/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2017/2017-0005/EqualityAct2017_10.pdf
- The Human Rights Act 2001
https://legislation.gov.im/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2001/2001-0001/HumanRightsAct2001_2.pdf
- The UN Convention on rights of the Child
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf>
- Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1977
https://legislation.gov.im/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1977/1977-0001/HealthandSafetyatWorkEtcAct1977_2.pdf

Public Sector Equality Duty – Equality Act 2017, Part 11, Section 143

Section 143 of the Equality Act 2017 creates a legal duty on specific public authorities to prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation by considering the effect of their policies or decisions on people who are protected by the Act.

When making decisions and exercising its functions, a public authority must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Engagement and Expectations

Enabling all pupils to access the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Pupils are entitled to:

High quality care and learning experiences

Learning which is personalised to individual needs

Involvement in the curriculum and activities to meet their needs

Engagement in discussions over education

Be supported and encouraged to develop positive attitudes to diversity

We expect Parents and Carers to:

Be fully involved with your child's education as an active partnership

Have shared responsibility and shared accountability

Have their views respected, listened to and valued

Offer feedback and contribute to your child's educational experience

Work with schools on continual improvement for your child's needs

These measures can be achieved through:

- meaningful conversations before a pupil commences education or in advance of joining their secondary school
- two-way discussions at parents' evenings and 1-2-1 meetings
- teacher discussions with pupils on their ongoing learning
- involvement from the third sector
- parent/carer surveys
- school assessments
- engaging volunteers into the school
- training teachers and support staff developing their understanding of needs of pupils with additional support needs,

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE – What is a Disability Under The Equality Act 2017?

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

What counts as a disability?

Under the Equality Act 2017 definition of disability:

'A person (P) has a disability if —

- (a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

This definition of disability is further expanded on in the Equality Act 2017, Schedule 1 Part 1, Determination of Disability.

Long term impairment means having lasted at least 12 months, likely to last for at least 12 months or is likely to last for the rest of a person's life.

Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.

For further information on what a disability is, the link below will offers guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1367732/final-ea2017-guidance-on-the-definition-of-disability-v-181219.pdf>

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Is it a Disability?

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Is it a Disability?

Not every condition or impairment amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2017 . Not every additional educational need will meet the definition of a disability.

A pupil has broken their leg.

Though the pupil now has a physical impairment that is substantial and affecting their ability to carry out normal day to day activities, it is not long term (i.e. it is unlikely to last beyond 12 months). So this would **not** meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2017.

A pupil has suffered from severe anxiety for 2 years.

The pupil has a mental impairment that is long term (longer than 12 months) with a substantial effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This pupil would meet the definition of disability as defined under the Equality Act 2017.

A pupil is short sighted (mild) and wears glasses.

Though the pupil has a physical impairment that is long term (i.e. likely to last for the rest of the pupil's life) and without measures to correct it (i.e. having glasses) it would have an effect on their day to day activities the impairment is not substantial (i.e. it is minor). So this would **not** meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2017.

A pupil has cerebral palsy with no additional educational needs.

The pupil has a physical impairment that is long term (i.e. likely to last for the rest of the pupil's life). If the pupil's cerebral palsy had a substantial effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities this pupil would meet the definition of disability as defined in the Equality Act 2017.

A pupil has cancer.

Under "certain medical conditions" of the Equality Act 2017 (Schedule 1, Part 1) a pupil with cancer would automatically meet the definition of disability. This also applies to individuals with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis (MS). This is because it is accepted that these conditions are likely to have long term, substantial effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Reasonable Adjustments

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.



Reasonable Adjustments

In schools, we strive towards providing opportunities so that disabled pupils are able to access the curriculum, physical environment and information as easily as a pupil who is not disabled.

Schedule 14 of the Education Act 2017, provides for reasonable adjustments to be made by schools in relation to disabled people. Reasonable adjustments are changes that make it easier for a disabled person to access or do something.

In a school this could be:

- Changing the way things are done. For example, arranging for a pupil who uses a wheelchair to have classes on the ground floor of the building.
- Making a change to the physical environment. For example, making signs clear or installing automatic doors.
- Providing extra aids or services. For example, giving a pupil with dyslexia a plastic overlay to make it easier for them to read text.

An adjustment would not be considered reasonable if it poses an unreasonable risk to the health or safety of the disabled pupil or to anyone else. Schools will make an assessment of any proposed adjustments on health and safety grounds before progressing with any changes.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE – Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Disability	Action from School	Reasonable Adjustment	Is this a reasonable adjustment?
Pupil has a tracheotomy which needs monitoring and needs occasional intervention to clear his airways.	The school works closely with Manx Care to arrange staff training and carries out a comprehensive risk assessment. To enable attendance at school the pupil must be supported by a member of staff at all times who is trained to provide the necessary monitoring and intervention.	The school arranges for these staff and any others who volunteer to be trained in tracheotomy care and then timetables the trained staff so one is always able to monitor the pupil.	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the risk assessment.
A disabled pupil with a stair climbing wheelchair applies to a large secondary school with several flights of stairs.	The school prevents him from using the stair climbing wheelchair in the school until they have consulted with a Health and Safety Adviser and carried out a comprehensive risk assessment as they are concerned about the level of risk.	The school realises after the assessment that the wheelchair doesn't present a significant health and safety risk and the pupil is able to safely use the stair climbing wheelchair in the school.	This would be a reasonable response from the school so that the disabled pupil can use their stair climbing wheelchair.
A pupil suffering from severe anxiety leading to unwillingness to attend school.	The school discusses additional provision and support available with the pupil and parents/carer in order to agree a plan of support. The pupil is not able to study at home as this increases anxiety.	A part time timetable is implemented in agreement with the parents/carer. The school provides a space for the pupil in school before supporting the pupil to attend mainstream lessons. The pupil's voice is at the centre of the planning, taking into account the advice from mental health services and the current home situation. The plan is regularly reviewed looking at the push / pull factors for the pupil attending school whilst working to overcome the barriers to attendance through self- regulation of anxiety.	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to this disability.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Disability	Action from School	Reasonable Adjustment	Is this a reasonable adjustment?
A year 11 pupil with significant health needs, misses a considerable amount of school time due to his need to attend hospital and because he has regular periods of absence when he isn't well enough to attend school.	The school looks at alternatives to regular school hours.	The school involves and consults with the Pathway for Children who are Ill. It was decided that the pupil has a reduced timetable and is taking a total of six GCSEs. This ensures the best chance of success at grade C or above, keeping all post 16 options open. The additional time this frees up gives them the opportunity of catching up on work that they missed. The subject teachers ensure that when the student is absent the work they have missed is emailed to them with any teacher resources that may be helpful.	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the pupil's disability.
A pupil has a physical and sensory disability that makes it difficult for them to process information at the same pace as their peers. Their motor control is poor and this affects their ability to word process on her laptop at the speed needed to complete tasks in their mainstream classroom. They also has a visual impairment that worsens when the pupil is tired.	The school looks at alternatives to allow the pupil to process information at a rate that allows her to keep up with her peers.	To reduce fatigue, the pupil uses immersive reader. All resources are modified in an appropriate font and when the pupil tires, there would be breaks built into the curriculum. Any missed work, the school will email the pupil the appropriate worksheets or homework electronically. The school applies for extra time for all assessments and public examinations.	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the pupil's disability.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE – Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Disability	Action from School	Reasonable Adjustment	Is this a reasonable adjustment?
A year 10 pupil with a serious visual impairment struggles to read information and aspects of the curriculum.	School should make a referral to the Visual Impairment Team who will advise them of any adjustments that must be made for the pupil so they can access their curriculum and the wider school environment. Teachers assess the needs of the pupil on conjunction with parents and the pupil and put together alternatives so that the pupil can view the required information.	All subject teachers make practice papers available to support staff at least two weeks ahead of use so that font, background, diagrams and tables can be appropriately modified in line with the adaptations allowed by the examination board. Trained and experienced teaching assistances are made available on the day of examinations. Where papers can be opened early for modification, this happens in time for the pupil to access the paper with all the other pupils taking the examination. Adaptations may also include support from the Visual Impairment Team and/or the use of specialist technology.	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the pupil's disability.
A year 4 pupil has a significant learning disability which can't be accommodated at their catchment school.	The school liaises with DESC to ascertain the nearest school that can accommodate this pupil's needs. The pupil may be assessed as requiring a placement in a Specialist Provision Centre.	An alternative school is identified that can support this pupil's needs. Communication commences with the parents to agree their child's requirements and transition plans are put in place. A home to school transport arrangement is put in place to take the child to their out of catchment school.	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the pupil's needs.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Disability	Action from School	Reasonable Adjustment	Is this a reasonable adjustment?
A disabled pupil requires assistance with personal care needs such as toileting, washing and dressing. The school wants to arrange a residential trip and the pupil would like to go but can't unless his personal care needs are met.	Not going would put this pupil at a substantial disadvantage so the school starts looking at options so the pupil can attend such as a parent going with him or a teaching assistant. After a discussion with parents, a solution was found.	A family member accompanies the child on the trip to ensure that his needs are met.	These is reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the pupil's disability and prevented him from being disadvantaged.
A year 6 pupil with autism, anxiety and attachment disorder experienced significant difficulties with learning and coping in her mainstream school. Her level of anxiety was such that she had not used the toilet in school for some time.	A transition plan was put in place with the support of the AEN team, parents, primary and secondary teachers.	Following the advice, the school worked diligently to make a range of adaptations to reduce her anxiety, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the disabled toilet; • Staff to speak as calmly as possible, even in the most urgent/demanding situations; • A colour-coded timetable (e.g. green for positive work and behaviour) was created to provide visual reminders of good efforts/achievements. • Homework was mainly allowed to be completed at school. 	These are reasonable adjustments for the school to make in response to the pupil's disability and to make the transition into secondary school easier for the pupil.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Responsibilities of Schools & UCM - Accessibility plans

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

The responsible body of a school and UCM must prepare an accessibility plan – this is a requirement under Schedule 10 and Schedule 12 of the Equality Act 2017.

An accessibility plan sets out how a school and UCM will increase access to education for disabled pupils.

An accessibility plan is a plan for:

- a) Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum and how pupils can participate in the institutions courses.
- b) Improving the physical environment of the school and UCM 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 UCM.
- c) Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Disabled pupils should have the opportunity to take part in all aspects of education. This includes having access to the wider opportunities offered by their education setting.



EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Improving the Physical Environment

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.



Improved access to the physical environment can be achieved through reasonable adjustments. An access audit will be conducted to assess each school and UCM's accessibility for disabled pupils.

However, schools are not obliged to anticipate and adjust for every imaginable disability and need only consider general reasonable adjustments.

The aim is for all school settings to be "broadly accessible." This means buildings would have a range of features to meet the core needs associated with physical challenges, including the following where possible:

- accessible parking
- access ramps
- tactile signage
- induction loops
- signage at lower eye levels
- doors permitting wheelchair access
- accessible toilet facilities
- quiet spaces

The physical needs of some pupils (including those with sensory impairments) are very specific and may require specific further adaptations.

It should be noted that not all works will be feasible or achievable for a school. However, what is important is that a process is undertaken to review the barriers to participation.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Improving Access to the Curriculum

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Ensuring access to the curriculum is vital in providing equal opportunities to pupils. Schools have an obligation to engage and listen to pupils and parents, reflect and consider how to improve the accessibility of the curriculum, covering teaching and learning, the learning environment, trips and visits and after school activities. Schools aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and plays a key role in planning to increase access to the curriculum for all pupils.

This will be achieved by a combination of DESC and Schools:

- Providing ongoing guidance and training to schools
- Collecting and disseminating examples of best practice across schools
- Providing information and support to ensure continued professional development in the area of special educational need, disability and inclusion is considered a priority within schools
- Ensuring continued access to advice and support through centrally maintained specialist services and partner organisations.
- Working with schools to ensure that relevant information is readily available to support access on entry to/transition between schools.
- Ensuring that "inclusivity" is always a main priority whenever any change to curriculum and other policies are proposed.
- Ensuring schools regularly review and publish their accessibility plans.
- Provide support to pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs through specialist services.



EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE Improving Access to Information

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

There is a duty to provide information in accessible forms to pupils who may have difficulty reading the information in standard written form.

This includes any information given to pupils by the school, such as:

- letters
- handouts and worksheets
- textbooks
- timetables
- handbooks
- test and examination papers
- notices and notice boards
- posters around the school
- information about school events
- reports on progress.

Schools should be aware that the 'written form' does not simply mean printed text and might also include curriculum materials including handouts and worksheets that may include:

- illustrations
- diagrams
- maps
- materials presented on whiteboards
- flipcharts
- ICT systems
- wall displays



Reasonable adjustments may be applicable here by using any of the following:

- A larger text
- Immersive reader
- Different colour paper
- Changing the colour of text
- Avoiding glossy paper or laminates
- Allowing extra space for completing forms
- Using digital formats

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE – Strategic Priorities

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Strategic Priority 1.

Engage pupils and parents around diversity and inclusion.

Key Activities

Engagement around diversity and inclusion through hosting surveys and securing feedback from pupils and parents.

Measurement of Success

More collaboration and openness around diversity and inclusion will improve communication with pupils and parents.

Strategic Priority 2.

Ensure that statutory responsibilities are carried out efficiently and effectively in accordance with legislation.

Key Activities

DESC ensures that the accessibility strategy and school plans are reviewed as necessary in accordance with statutory responsibilities.

Measurement of Success

Building trust that schools are compliant with their statutory obligations and adhering to legislation.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Strategic Priorities

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Strategic Priority 3.

Share information to promote pupils' wellbeing.

Key Activities

Highlighting wellbeing initiatives being organised around schools to share best practice and encouraging initiatives.

Measurement of Success

Enhancing wellbeing in schools through sharing of information.

Strategic Priority 4.

Work collaboratively in the development of access to the curriculum, the physical environment and make information accessible for all.

Key activities

Schools working closely with stakeholders and responding to feedback to ensure pupils have access to the curriculum, the physical environment and information.

Measurements of success

Pupils gain access to curriculum, the physical environment and information to suit their needs.



EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Strategic Priorities

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Strategic Priority 5.

Recognise the variety of disabled pupils' needs and maintain and develop high quality provision in education settings in the Isle of Man.

Key activities

Schools having a strong understanding of the variety of disabled pupils in their educational setting and ensuring their needs are met, where possible and appropriate.

Measurement of success

Schools understand the needs of their disabled pupils and strives towards offering a high quality education.

Strategic Priority 6.

Support professional development for all staff to ensure that high standards of service delivery and provision are achieved.

Key activities

Ensuring staff receive training to achieve high standards of service to disabled pupils.

Measures of Success

That staff have received development so that standards of service are high and consistent.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Strategic Priorities

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Strategic Priority 7.

Trained DESC personnel will conduct access audits in all educational settings to ensure access to the physical environment is achievable.

Key activities

Access audits will be hosted at all schools and recommendations will be offered for improvements to the physical environment.

Measures of Success

Where possible, school buildings should be adapted to allow pupils to access the physical environment.

Strategic Priority 8.

Encourage all stakeholders to be active partners in developing positive attitudes towards diversity, equality and disabled people.

Key Activities

Encouraging a positive culture of inclusion, diversity and equality of disabled pupils through communication channels and information shared.

Measures of Success

A strong culture of inclusion, diversity and equality where all pupils feel valued and respected.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE - Consultation

Enabling all pupils to access to the curriculum, physical environment and information at their school.

Who developed this strategy?

This strategy has been produced and led by the Equality Lead in collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders including:

- An online consultation undertaken through the Isle of Man Government Consultation Hub – December 2020 and educational professionals.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY 2024-2027

