

Enquiry Number – FS53573151

Request and Response:

Freedom of Information (FOI) questions on local authority (LA) education provision for children and young people with vision impairment: 2017

Section 1: Organisation and funding of your local authority's Education Vision Impairment (VI) Advisory Service

Q1 - How does your local authority meet its responsibility to provide a VI service (i.e. specialist educational provision for children and young people with vision impairment)? Please tick all that apply.

A	In-house service provided centrally by the LA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	Part of a consortium of LAs/joint arrangement with other LAs. Please give names of the other LAs Please give the name of the lead LA	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Bought in from another LA (please give the name of the LA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Commissioned to a school/group of schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	Commissioned to a charity or voluntary organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	Commissioned to an external (non-public sector) agency	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	Other (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 - How is the VI service positioned in your LA? Please tick one only.

A	Within generic SEN service (i.e. wider range of SEN than sensory)	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Within sensory service (VI, HI and MSI)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C	Stand-alone VI service	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Other (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3a - What is the overall VI service budget (including staff, equipment and training) for 2017/18?

A3a - **£423,050**

Q3b - What was the overall VI service budget (staff, equipment and training) for 2016/17?

A3b - **£447,700**

Q4 - Which of the following arrangements apply to the VI service in your LA? Please tick all that apply.

A	Fully traded to maintained schools (including academies)	
B	Partially traded to maintained schools (including academies)	
C	No elements of VI service support are traded to maintained schools (including academies)	✓
D	Fully traded to further education (FE) colleges	✓
E	Partially traded to further education (FE) colleges	

Please give further details about the traded services arrangements recorded in Q4 Service Level Agreements with some colleges.

Section 2: Number of children and young people (CYP) on the VI service caseload

Q5a - Please give the number of children and young people with vision impairment on the VI service caseload (i.e. those supported by the VI service and not included in Q5b).

Total aged 0-4	51
Total aged 5-16	300
Total aged 17-19	37
Total aged 20-25	0

Q5b - Please give the number of children and young people with vision impairment, known to the VI service but not receiving direct support from the LA service (e.g. who are being monitored only, who are in a VI resourced or independent school, or whose family home is in the LA but who are being educated in another authority). These are *in addition to* CYP included in Q5a.

Total aged 0 - 4	0
Total aged 5 - 16	20
Total aged 17 - 19	5
Total aged 20 - 25	0

Q6a - What is the total number of children and young people on the VI service caseload (recorded in Q5a) who use (or in the case of EYFS children, are expected to use) braille as their sole or main literacy medium?

A6a - 8

Q6b. What is the total number of children and young people known to the VI service (recorded in Q5b) who use braille as their sole or main literacy medium?

A6b - 1

Section 3: VI service policies

Q7a - Are there any groups of children and young people with VI that are NOT currently supported by the VI service?

- a) Specific age groups (please give details of age groups not supported): **NO**
- b) CYP in specific types of setting (please give details of the settings where there is no VI service support): **YES**
- c) CYP with complex needs: **NO**
- d) Any other groups (please give details of the groups concerned): **NO**

Q7b - If YES to any of the above, for each of the groups affected please give reasons why support is not provided:

Reason	Group(s) affected
Lack of staff capacity	Post 16 years
CYP in this group do not meet VI service criteria for support	
Settings won't buy in support from the VI service	Post 16 years
The VI service has never supported this group	
Alternative provision is made for this group (please give details)	
Other reason (please give details)	

Q8 - Has VI service support been REDUCED for any children or young people with VI within the past 12 months? **NO**

If YES, please give reasons why support has been reduced and the group(s) of CYP who have been affected.

Q9 - In which of the following settings does the VI service support early years children (i.e. 3 years and under)? Please tick all that apply.

A	Within the child's home	✓
B	In pre-school/early years settings	✓
C	School settings (e.g. nursery class in mainstream or special school)	✓
D	In settings where the child is cared for by a childminder	✓
E	Other settings (Please give details)	

Q10 - What criteria does the VI service use to determine eligibility for support?

- a) NatSIP Eligibility Framework for Scoring Support Levels (2015). **YES**
If 'yes', please give the minimum score for VI service support.
- b) Level of visual acuity (VA) **YES**
If 'YES', please give the minimum VA for VI service support. **6/9**
- c) Only CYP who are registered as severely sight impaired/blind or sight impaired/partially sighted are eligible for support. **NO**
- d) Support is provided to ALL CYP in certain groups (e.g. early years) **YES**
If 'YES' please give details:
- e) Other: **NO**
If 'YES', please give details:

Q11. What criteria does the VI service use for allocating levels of support?

- a) NatSIP Eligibility Framework for Scoring Support Levels (2015). **YES**
- b) An earlier version of the NatSIP-Eligibility Framework:
- c) Modified NatSIP Eligibility Framework:
- d) Banding system:
- e) Locally developed criteria:
- f) Other arrangement (please give details):

Q12a. Does your LA require a child or young person with VI to meet any of the following criteria before they will be considered for assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

- a) The CYP's VI must be of a specified level of severity/visual acuity. **NO**
- b) The CYP must have additional SEND. **NO**
- c) The CYP must be failing to make the expected level of progress. **YES**
- d) The CYP is expected to attend a special school. **NO**

Q12b - Please give details of any other criteria your LA uses to decide whether to assess a child or young person with VI for an EHCP. **N/A**

Q13 - Please give the link to your LA's Local Offer page for the VI/sensory education service:

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200220/disability/2065/sensory_support_team_for_children_34K

Section 4: Joint working with other agencies.

Q14 - What arrangements do you have for working with health and social care?

- a) Established arrangement with Health for referring babies and children to the VI service. **YES**
- b) Multi-disciplinary meetings with health and social care. **YES**
- c) Regular meetings and/or contact with social care. **NO**
- d) Regular meetings and/or contact with health. **YES**
- e) Other (please give details). **NO**

Q15. Who in your LA holds the vision impairment register for children and young people who are blind or partially sighted?

- a) Social care sensory team
- b) Social care children's team
- c) Local society for blind people/sight loss society
- d) Other (please give details). **YES – our team.**

Section 5: VI service staffing

Q16 - Which (if any) of the following qualifications are held by the person with responsibility for strategic management of the VI service? (Please tick all that apply.)

A	Qualified teacher of pupils with vision impairment (QTVI) (i.e. holds the mandatory qualification (MQ) in VI)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	Qualified teacher of the deaf (TOD) (i.e. holds the mandatory qualification (MQ) in HI)	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Qualified teacher of pupils with Multi-sensory Impairment (QTMSI) (i.e. holds the mandatory qualification (MQ) in MSI)	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Other qualifications (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q17a - Please give the numbers of teachers employed directly by the VI service (this includes peripatetic/advisory and school based teachers and VI service manager if s/he has a caseload).

	Number of teachers	Number as full time equivalent (FTE)
QTVI with mandatory qualification (MQ) (VI)	6	3.9
In training for MQ (VI)	2	1.6
Qualified teachers without MQ (VI) who will begin training within 2 years	0	
Qualified teachers without MQ (VI) not in or due to begin training within 2 years	0	
QTMSI with MQ (MSI)	0	
QTVI and QTMSI MQ (holds both qualifications)	0	
QTVI vacancies currently advertised	0	
QTVI vacancies – advertised but no suitable applicants	0	

Q17b. Are any of the above posts on a temporary contract? **NO**

If YES, please give details of number and type of posts.

Q18 - Please give the numbers of teaching assistants (TAs) in your LA who are providing support to pupils with vision impairment (this includes service and school based staff).

Employment arrangements	Number of TAs
Employed and recruited directly by VI service – centrally based/peripatetic	3
Employed and recruited directly by VI service – school based	0
Employed and recruited directly by schools and supported by VI service	0
Employed and recruited directly by schools with no involvement from VI service	0
Other arrangement (please give details)	0

Q19a - Please give details of any other staff employed directly by the VI service (not already included in Q16, Q17 or Q18) and staff who are externally commissioned by the VI service or bought in from another team within the LA.

Type of post	Number of people employed by the VI service	Number of externally commissioned staff	Number bought in from another team in the LA	Total as full time equivalent (FTE)
Resource technicians (for production of accessible materials)				
ICT support technicians				
Dedicated early years staff				
Family support workers				
Mobility/rehabilitation officer				
Mobility/habilitation officer for children	1	0	0	0.71
Admin/secretarial				
Other (please give details)				

Q19b. Are any of the above posts on a temporary contract? **NO**

If YES, please give details of number and type of posts:

Section 5: Proposed future changes to the VI service

Q20 - Are there any plans to lose existing staff posts, or gain additional posts, in the VI service in 2017? **NO**

If YES, please give number of posts that will lost or gained.

Type of post	Number of posts to be lost	Number of posts to be gained
VI/sensory service managers		
QTVIs		
Teaching assistants		
Resource technicians		
ICT support technicians		
Dedicated early years staff		
Family support workers		

Type of post	Number of posts to be lost	Number of posts to be gained
Mobility/rehabilitation/habilitation officer		
Admin/secretarial		
Other (please give details)		

Q21a - Are there any current or proposed reviews of the VI service that will affect the way it is organised, managed or funded (including moving to/from a traded services arrangement), or is likely to affect the way that support for children and young people with VI is provided or funded? **NO**

Q21b - If 'YES':

- Please give details of changes including when these have taken/will take effect.
- Did you/will you be consulting with children, young people and their parents to involve them in decisions about the support available to them? YES/NO
- Did you/will you be giving other stakeholders such as voluntary organisations an opportunity to respond to the review? YES/NO

If you wish to receive further information in regards to this request or wish to submit a Freedom of Information Request please forward your request to info_management@sandwell.gov.uk or Information Management Unit, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 3DE.