

# Halton Visually Impaired Service

## Visually Impaired Service

The Visually Impaired Service supports visually impaired children and young people from 0-25 years living in Halton. Working together with school staff, professionals and parents, we provide specialist educational support for children and young people who have a medically diagnosed visual impairment.

## What We Do

Support may take different forms, ranging from a minimal support to enable a child to succeed in school, to frequent and regular support for those with profound visual impairments.

Our range of help varies with individual need and can include:

- Pre-school visiting at home.
- Support to children in nurseries and early years settings.
- Support to children in mainstream schools.
- Support to children in specialist schools.
- Support to young people in further education.
- Support to parents, families, teachers and support staff.
- Modification and preparation of specialist materials.
- Liaison with all professionals including medical and health professionals, social workers and therapists.
- Mobility and Independence training.
- Awareness raising and training.
- Parent/carer coffee mornings, family after school activities, VI child/young person outings.

## Did you know that ...?

Vision is our most powerful sense. It provides instant access to information and helps us to understand the world around us. Most teaching and learning approaches take vision for granted. Shared aims, high expectations and forward planning are the key ingredients of successful provision.

## What types of information and advice do you give?

We provide information and advice on how to: adapt the curriculum.  
Adapt learning materials into large print and Braille etc.  
Make settings more accessible by highlighting steps etc.  
Organise your classroom to ensure best seating position, lighting etc.

Ensure successful transitions between placements.  
Promote social inclusion. Develop peer group awareness. Identify objectives for school support plans.

## What can you provide?

We can provide support to children from the moment they are identified as visually impaired.

On-going support and advice to families and carers.

Advice and training to early years staff, teachers and teaching assistants.

Assessment and on-going monitoring of how the child is using their vision.

Guidance on the implications and effects of reduced vision and practical strategies which help.

Teaching specialist skills such as Braille, and mobility & orientation.

Adapting textbooks into modified large print for children who cannot access normal size print.

Loan of large print Oxford Reading Tree books

Advice and training on the use of access technology and low vision aids, and the loan of some specialist equipment.

Advice and assessment for the statutory assessment process and annual reviews.

## What are the criteria for referring a child?

- A diagnosed eye condition. This diagnosis must be from an ophthalmologist.
- Registration as sight impaired or severely sight impaired (used to be called registered partially sighted or registered blind).
- Visual acuity (with glasses if worn) recorded as 6/18 or worse in the better eye. The higher the second number the worse the vision.

The following do not meet the criteria:

- Monocular vision where sight is within normal limits in the good eye, and stable
- Squints
- Poor tracking skills
- Colour deficiency
- Visual perceptual difficulties
- Lack of binocular (or 3D) vision

## How is a referral made?

Most referrals to the Visually Impaired Service are referred by health professionals very soon after diagnosis. Schools, pre-school groups and parents/carers can also make referrals to the Visually Impaired Service. We only work with those who have a medically diagnosed visual impairment. Referrals can be made by phone, email or on the appropriate referral forms accompanied by a

signed parent/carer consent form. Referrals should contain medical information about the child's eye condition and vision.

## What should be done before making a referral?

School staff with concerns should share their observations with parents so they can seek medical advice. Parents should be advised to take their child to visit their GP or optician for a full eye health check. This is free for all children under the age of 16 and those young people under 19 and in full time education.

Make sure you have parental consent before referring a pupil.

## Information sheets available to download:

- Visually Impaired Service leaflet
- Encouraging your child/pupil to wear glasses
- Information booklet on choosing suitable large print books
- List of children's books that are about, or refer to, children who wear glasses, to help prepare or encourage children to wear their glasses
- Pre-braille skills at home
- Information leaflets about squints and colour deficiency (others eye condition information available by contacting the Visually Impaired Service)
- Guidelines for modifying pupils work and VI guidelines in class
- VI Risk Assessment
- VI organisation contact details such as Action for Blind People/RNIB, Blind Children's Society etc.
- Symptoms which may indicate a visual impairment doc
- Referral process chart

### **For further information please contact:**

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