

Halton Visually Impaired Service

Children with a Visual Impairment

Children having special educational needs due to difficulties with visual impairment, should be treated as individuals within the learning environment.

What We Do

The Visually Impaired Service provides support for all children with a visual impairment in Halton. Support and guidance is provided to the children, their families and nurseries/schools/further education settings from diagnosis of the visual impairment and continues throughout the child's educational career.

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.

At present the Service operates an open referral system to minimise the risk of a child being disadvantaged by their impairment. This means that parents/carers are able to refer their child and can do this by telephone, email or letter.

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 parents and school 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 'Crafty Catch-Up' coffee afternoons.

How do I get my child's vision checked?

If you feel that your child has visual difficulty an eye tests will help to spot any problems such as long or short sightedness, lazy eyes or squints. As routine screening are no longer carried out in schools, if you have concerns you should make an appointment with an optician for a free NHS eye check. This is free for all children under the age of 16 and those young people under 19 and in full time education.

If a problem is found that can be corrected with glasses, you will be given a prescription and an NHS form to fill in for help towards the cost. If there is a more serious problem which cannot be corrected with glasses the optician may suggest that you take your child to your GP or refer you to a consultant who specialises in eye health.

Who should I speak to if my child has been diagnosed with a visual impairment?

If your child has been diagnosed with a visual impairment and is at nursery or school you should tell your child's nursery manager or the school Senco. If a referral hasn't been made by your consultant to the Visually Impaired Service you should contact us at: Halton Visually Impaired Service, 3rd Floor Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn WA7 2GW.

How is a referral made?

Most referrals to the Visually Impaired Service are made by the Ophthalmologist. Schools and Pre-school groups and parents/carers can also make referrals to the Visually Impaired Service. 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.

Can I get advice or help from anywhere else?

If you look at the sheet called 'Useful Organisations' you will find lots of useful contact details for a number of organisations that can help with advice, resources, filling in forms etc.

Information sheets available to download:

- Encouraging your child to wear glasses
- Information booklet on choosing suitable large print books for your child
- Obtaining Large Print Books
- List of children's books that refer to children who wear glasses, to help prepare or encourage young children to wear their glasses
- Habilitation Service
- Colour Blindness
- Squints
- Pre-Braille Skills

For further information please contact:

Specialist Teacher for Visual Impairment
Halton Visually Impaired Service
3rd Floor Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn WA7 2GW