

# **Resourced provision for children with a visual impairment**

Admissions criteria and procedures

Children's Services Department  
SEN Service

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## **Introduction**

This document is intended as advice to schools, resourced provision managers/ teachers in charge and professionals who work with children who have special educational needs (SEN) that can be described as a visual impairment (VI).

The resourced provisions for children with a visual impairment are listed in the document *Provision in Hampshire for children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans* (see page 6 for further details). They are all part of a mainstream school and those children admitted will normally have severe visual impairments. The broad aim is that these provisions will allow identified children to access a mainstream curriculum in a supportive environment where their needs are met by staff who understand their difficulties and are able to provide individual programmes of learning. It is anticipated that some of the children should make progress such that they can attend their local mainstream school in due course.

## **Resources**

The funding for resourced provisions is delegated to schools through the schools' funding formula and is based on the number of pupils in the resourced provision. An Agreed Place Number (APN) is established with the headteacher each year and, although minor adjustments may be necessary, major adjustments are avoided as far as possible in order to enable forward planning and to promote stability and retention of specialist staff.

Please see guidance notes for further details which are available on Hampshire County Council's website at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/schools/budgetshares.htm>.

Those children who need access to tactile learning, including Braille, may qualify for additional funding.

The resourced provisions have access to the full range of centrally managed educational support services provided through Hampshire County Council.

## **Management and staffing**

The headteacher and governing body of the school are responsible for spending the budget allocated by the County Council for the resourced provision. However, a qualified teacher within the school will need to be designated as the resource manager or teacher in charge. This teacher will need to have the mandatory qualification for teachers of children with a visual impairment within three years of their appointment; a model job description is available from the team leader for visual impairment in the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service. In the event of this post becoming vacant, the team leader should be notified before the recruitment process is started.

It is a requirement that all teaching and non-teaching staff employed to work in the resourced provision have appropriate expertise, experience and training; all staff should have a commitment to continued professional development. The special educational needs inspector with responsibility for visual impairment and the team leader for visual impairment in the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service will be able to offer advice on this and are also able to offer advice and support concerning recruitment of staff for the resourced provision.

All additional members of the school staff should receive awareness raising training; whole school awareness is necessary because of the emphasis on mainstream inclusion for children admitted to the resourced provision.

It is recommended that **minimum** staffing levels should be:

- 1 full-time teacher (Qualified Teacher of Visually Impaired) with management responsibility for the special provision.
- 2 full-time equivalent learning support assistants : 6 children.

## **Admissions criteria**

These criteria have been produced for school staff and County Council staff in order to establish a shared understanding of the level of need likely to indicate the consideration of a placement at a resourced school.

In considering children's special educational needs, once they are of nursery or school age, access to the curriculum is taken to be a central issue. Most children who are experiencing difficulties which impair their ability to participate in the classroom generally can access the curriculum once they have been provided with some additional special educational provision. This is normally provided from the resources available in school, through delegated funding arrangements for special educational needs or through an EHC plan, together with the support of the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service.

The majority of children with a visual impairment attend a local mainstream school where their learning and mobility needs are met with appropriate support, equipment and adaptations.

### **It is expected that children being considered for admission to resourced provision will:**

- meet the County Council's criteria for statutory assessment of children with a visual impairment, *and*
- have visual difficulties as the primary area of special educational needs, with associated difficulties accessing the curriculum, *and*
- require extensive modification of the curriculum and of materials through which the curriculum is accessed, *and*
- require specialist equipment or tactile media to access the majority of the curriculum, *and*
- require alternative forms of recording for a significant amount of curriculum, *and*
- demonstrate the potential to integrate into the mainstream classroom and access the school curriculum including the national curriculum, with modification as appropriate.

### **Children may also be experiencing, or expected to experience, significant additional difficulties in one or more of the following areas:**

- Learning
- Social functioning

- Emotional development
- Self confidence / self-esteem / motivation
- Mobility and independence.

## **Admissions procedures**

Admission to resourced provision for children with a visual impairment is via Hampshire County Council's SEN Service, often following recommendations of the County Assessment Placement Group (CAPAG) and not through approaches by individuals directly to resourced provision.

1. On completion of a statutory assessment of special educational needs or on the receipt of an annual review, the SEN Service may arrange for the child's provision or placement to be discussed by CAPAG. All referrals for transfer to secondary phase resourced provision will be considered by CAPAG.
2. CAPAG will consider the child's assessed special educational needs having particular regard to the criteria listed in this document.
3. Where placement at resourced provision is considered appropriate, the SEN Service will refer the papers to the nearest resourced provision.
4. The headteacher will respond within ten working days, either saying that a place is available and arrangements for the child's admission will proceed, or that the school feels unable to offer a place. The latter may be the case if the resourced school is full or if the school believes it is unable to meet the child's needs in view of the balance of needs within the current group. Such reasons would need to be clearly outlined. In exceptional circumstances, the school may be required to take a pupil by the SEN Service.
5. The SEN Service will confirm any offer of a place and, once accepted, issue the final EHC plan as appropriate.

## **Provision**

Resourced provision for children with a visual impairment will provide:

1. Daily access to a qualified teacher of visually impaired (QTVI).
2. Access to specialist teaching programmes to meet children's individual communication needs, which can be practised and supported across the curriculum allowing access to the school curriculum.
3. Access to appropriate in-class support.
4. Access to appropriate integration within the main school.
5. A peer group including children experiencing similar needs.
6. A school ethos in which visual and mobility difficulties are accepted, understood and allowed for, but where strengths are challenged and stretched.
7. Access to on-going review and assessment procedures.

8. Access to a range of appropriate technological resources.
9. An environment in which the emotional and social impact of the visual impairment is recognised and managed.
10. A focus for multi-agency involvement and support which includes parents, health services and Children's Services.
11. Written communication and teaching in Braille, where appropriate.
12. Access to regular mobility and orientation training and daily living skills training as appropriate.

## **Exit procedures**

Children's needs do change. Schools with resourced provision have a responsibility to ensure that places are not being filled by children who still have special educational needs but no longer require the high level of specific support available from the resourced provision.

Upon leaving the resourced provision a child would normally be expected to transfer to his/her local school. In some instances there might be grounds to phase the transition moving from the resourced provision, to the main school in which the resourced provision is situated, and then on to the local school. In exceptional circumstances, continuation at the main school, where the resourced provision is located, could be considered with transport provided by the County Council if necessary but in most cases this would be regarded as parental preference and so the County Council would not provide transport.

In most cases children are likely to retain their EHC plan, which will be amended to specify a level of support on their exit from the resourced provision

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for a child in a resourced provision to transfer to a special school.

When a child exits a resourced provision, particularly in the case of a transfer to secondary school, it is the responsibility of the resourced provision to ensure that a transition plan is in place and agreed with the parents and the receiving school.

The Specialist Teacher Advisory Service will be key to the success of any transition arrangements and should be fully involved in the planning process for example in the transition from pre school to primary resourced provision. In the case of children transferring from a secondary school to further education the resourced provision will work with the SEN Service and the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service for Visual Impairment and the receiving college to ensure a smooth transition.

When a child transfers from primary resourced provision to secondary resourced provision the two schools will collaborate to implement an effective transition programme.

If a child is to remain in resourced provision, the County Council will expect to see evidence in the annual review report that the child continues to need the place.

## Further information

List of specialist provision in Hampshire for children and young people with VI

- Please refer to the document *Provision in Hampshire for children and young people with EHC plans* available online at <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-provision-in-hampshire.pdf>

or go to the Local Offer at <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/localoffer>

Hampshire County Council SEN Criteria documents are available at [www.hants.gov.uk/sencriteria](http://www.hants.gov.uk/sencriteria)

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, DfE, 2015 available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

Schools: guide to the 0 to 25 years SEND Code of Practice, DfE, available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings)

If you would like more information please contact the SEN Service, email [enquiries.sen@hants.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.sen@hants.gov.uk).