



SEND Support and Provision

Sensory and Physical Needs

Torbay's Guide to the Graduated Response for Inclusion

Sensory impairments can be defined as an impairment that affects a child or young person's ability to access auditory or visual information. Visual and hearing impairments can sometimes be corrected by hearing aids or glasses. When this is not possible, there can be an impact on the child or young person's learning and development.

Sensory impairments can be present at birth or develop over time. A child or young person can have a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) which is a combined visual and hearing impairment and will affect communication and mobility and the child or young person will require specific support.

Physical impairments usually originate from neurological or metabolic causes and can require specific intervention. This can include mobility aids, postural management, or support with self-care skills such as dressing or toileting. Physical impairments are medically diagnosed, and can affect all aspects of daily living, learning and social needs.

Every school, health setting, social worker and community support worker will:

- Have an ethos of inclusivity, where reasonable adjustments are made to support the inclusion of children and young people who have sensory or physical impairments.
- Have staff who understand sensory and/or physical needs or access to professionals who can provide support. This support is available from:
 - Health professionals
 - Advisory Teachers
 - Educational psychologists
 - Outreach services
- Have designated time to make adjustments and have resources that support accessing the curriculum.
- Be skilled at gaining the child's voice and adapting practice to support their needs. The child or young person will be able to identify what they need to be successfully supported.
- Always promote independence for the child or young person.
- Have systems in place to record information that can inform changes of need in the young person and be given time to liaise with colleagues to provide an holistic approach in meeting the child or young person's needs.
- Feel supported in delivering any self-care or intimate care to young people who require support in this area.
- Take a multi-agency approach to supporting children and young people with sensory or visual impairments and consider the family's social care needs.

SEND support strategies or interventions

General advice for all the needs in this category:

- Talk to the child/young person to find out what they feel is best for them
- Consistent routines, provide pictures, symbols or photos to support understanding.
- Multi-sensory approach to learning. This could be in the form of visuals, actions and movement to support learning.
- Small group work when required
- Manage fatigue, not just with rest breaks it could be a movement break/brain break.
- Risk assessment without being risk adverse – young people with physical disabilities can experience some risk taking.
- Promote independence
- Accommodate equipment for posture. There needs to be adequate space within the classroom to use and access equipment easily.

- Reasonable adjustments to the environment and facilities – ramps, handles, height adjustable furniture, technology
- Adapted resources – scissors, writing equipment, wobble cushions, writing slopes
- Flexible delivery of the curriculum. This can include pre and post teaching of new subjects, chunking information.
- Prompts for organisation for the child which will support their independence, for example prompt sheets on desks or on bags of what the young person requires.
- Additional time for processing, learning and responding to instructions and requests.
- Opportunities to develop social and emotional relationships.
- Movement breaks
- Supervision at unstructured times when required.
- Ensure that, in conjunction with health professionals, any individual health care plan is maintained and arrangements for any specific training from health professionals are put in place, this can include epilepsy, bladder and bowel, gastrostomy feeding, diabetes, manual handling for example.

Physical Needs

- Use the Child and Family Health Devon website to gain information on:
 - Balance
 - Walking difficulties
 - Normal movement in babies
 - Playing in different positions
 - Fatigue
 - Developmental milestones
 - Fine motor development
 - Functional skills
 - Posture
- Mobilisation around school. Review if access to classrooms could be easier; time to move to different areas of the school.
- Leaving lessons before or after peers to avoid busy corridors.
- Access arrangements: are there stairs, ramps, heavy doors?
- Avoiding falls, considering trip hazards, moving between different surfaces.
- Risk assessment without being risk adverse; children and young people can attempt things for themselves.
- Changing and intimate care environment needs to be appropriate, consider the disposal of sanitary products, does there need to be an area for changing or can toileting take place in the toilet.
- School-based manual handling training can be provided by the physiotherapy team.

- Daily tasks such as dressing, toileting and eating and changing for PE needs to be considered. Does the young person need access to different dining facilities?
- Play. All types of play can be beneficial for supporting co-ordination, balance, fine and gross motor skills. Ideas on different play activities can be found on the Children and Family Health Devon website. If there is a therapy programme in place, then discuss play opportunities to support the therapy with the Physiotherapist.
- Access to activities that support gross and fine motor development can be found on the Children and Family Health Devon Website.
- Classroom equipment and tools should be adapted to so that a child/ young person can access learning more easily; for example tablet/laptop for recording information instead of writing.

Hearing impairment

- Follow programmes delivered by the hearing impairment (HI) advisory team. Referrals are usually suggested by the audiology service, advice for the HI service is available on the local offer. [Torbay hearing support service - Torbay Council](#)
- Positioning in class, please consider if the impairment is on the left or right and position the child/young person accordingly.
- Accessing learning: Can learning be presented differently with more visual prompts?
- Social opportunities are important; support the child/young person in unstructured times.
- Background noise can be distracting so be aware of any environmental noises.

Visual Impairment

- Visual Impairment Advisory Teacher is available for advice. Referrals can be made directly or generated through the ophthalmology service when the child/young person has appointments. [Visual impairment service - Torbay Council](#)
- The Habilitation service supports a child or young person who has a visual impairment with a range of skills which includes mobility, self-care skills, independent living skills. Referral is made through the MASH referral and the Children with Disability Team.
- Positioning in the classroom; a child with a visual impairment should ideally sit at the front of the class.
- Lighting, consider if the sun shines in a window at certain times of the day. If the lighting in the class is causing glare, some lights can have a flicker which a child/young person with a visual impairment might find distracting.
- Adaptions to text – can text be made bigger to make it easier to read?
- Use of technology which can include laptops, iPad. They can be linked to the class whiteboard to allow the young person to access the class learning and digital books. The Advisory teacher for Visual Impairment will be able to advise and support with this.
- Use of coloured paper/overlays
- Audio descriptions and immersive readers (with headphones) can support when there is a high emphasis on reading text.

- Awareness of reflections and glare: Some laminating pouches can add glare to a document therefore using matt pouches will reduce that glare.

Sensory Difficulties

Sensory integration is based on the concept of how the brain organises and interprets sensory information. Sensory-based interventions are activities that occur in the child/ young person's natural environment and aim to have an effect on self-regulation, attention or behavioural organisation.

Utilise the Children and Family Health Devon website amongst others to consider sensory differences for each of the senses below:

- Tactile
- Movement (planning and balance)
- Auditory
- Visual
- Taste
- Olfactory

Children and young people can have needs in more than one area of the Code of Practice and therefore it is important to consider the other toolkits:

- Neurodiversity
- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction

It is understood that some children and young people will have restrictive eating behaviours associated with their sensory needs, therefore advice can be sought from the Neurodiversity toolkit.

Suggestions for the SENCO

- Have up-to-date information from all agencies and support plans that are in place. This information can be gained during multi-agency education meetings. If a child or young person has attended appointments, then ask for copies of the clinic letters and recommendations. By having regular meetings with parents, school will be fully informed of any changes. Having regular ISP/IEP's will provide a plan, do, review, cycle. When other agencies are part of this cycle, outcomes and recommendations can be made which can reflect a child/young person's need.
- Understand when the child is ready to learn and have strategies they need to support their preparedness. Some children may need time before learning to organise themselves, move into a position that they are comfortable with and they may require breaks between learning.
- Consider timetables and the transitions that have to be managed. If there are many transitions, a child may have to follow a rigid routine with each transition. Is there any way

transitions can be reduced? If there are multiple transitions, a child/young person with physical disabilities may become fatigued with changes of rooms.

- Consider the science class environment – dangers, seating, moving around. This is relevant for many disabilities, but can the environment be more spacious for wheelchair users or those who have canes for visual impairments? There can be many trip hazards in some classroom environments.
- Use enabling language when writing documents and reports.
- Use information from national associations' websites.
- Seek support from primary outreach services: [Outreach Services - Torbay Council](#)
- Seek support from your educational psychology service as they can provide relevant training to support children with disabilities in accessing education.
- Habilitation will support with environmental advice, orientation and mobility development and independent living skills for students with visual impairment.
- The Visual Impairment advisory teacher provides advice regarding accessing the curriculum and classroom management for students with visual impairments.
- Provide time to observe the child/young person to monitor the impact of interventions as part of the plan, do, review, cycle.
- There should be plans in place for those with disabilities on an evacuation plan in emergency situations.
- Training is available from services mentioned in this document as well as physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Use the Children and Family Health Devon website resources to support your understanding of physical disabilities.
- For any complex health conditions ensure SENCO has confidence in being able to contact and discuss with relevant health professionals at Children and Family Health Devon on 0330 024 5321 or email chfd.DevonSPA@nhs.net.
- The team around the pupil meetings/handovers for transitions to the next year group are just as important as enhanced transitions as part of phase transfers. It is important to share information with the child/young person's next teacher/tutor. They will have a wealth of information to offer on what has worked for them.

Habilitation training programmes and advice including:

- Habilitation provide specific assessment
- Advice for parents and professionals
- Visual impairment specific orientation strategies
- Safe movement and travel including public transport
- Age-appropriate independent living skills
- Equipment recommendations for practical subjects
- Environmental advice for setting
- Staff training
- Peer awareness training

Transitions

- Enhanced transitions between schools and year groups are especially important for this area of need as often the diagnosis will be specific to the individual and often advice is being updated as needs may change.
- Ensure choice and independence for the child/young person, ask them what works for them, what support do they require.
- Where possible provide a continuation of support already in place, this will support any transition and provide familiarity for the child/young person.
- Transition fairs and events of choices available when moving into adulthood will allow the young person to explore their own aspirations.
- Travel training (specialist provision and habilitation)
- Physio/Occupational Therapy access to adult services (individual to the young person)
- Ready Steady Go document for moving into adulthood.

Assessment tools

- Colour screening
- IGF (information Gathering Form) – Occupational Therapy will send out to complement information on the referral
- Occupational Therapy Sensory Pathway Booklet with diary sheets
- If you have concerns regarding a medical need for a child/young person you can contact Children and Family Health Devon on 0330 024 5321 or email chfd.DevonSPA@nhs.net and they will be able to support you in the next steps.

Service offer or referral pathway

- Visual impairment and hearing impairment advisory teacher support is usually requested at identification of need.
- Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Child And Mental Health Services advice can be accessed through the SPA and Children and Family Health Devon. Schools will be asked to follow guidance before referral.
- Mayfield outreach can be requested if you require support with physical and sensory needs. [Outreach Services - Torbay Council](#)

Resources and referrals

- Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD) websites provide resources to support physical and sensory needs for all ages.

- [Occupational Therapy - Children and Family Health \(childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk\)](http://childrenandfamilyhealthdevon.nhs.uk)
Provides Early Years toolkit, advice and resources.
- [Children's physiotherapy - Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust](#) – information provided on referrals.
- [Physical & Sensory \(SEN Early Years Resources\) | Torbay FIS Directory](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.
For more information please contact EHCP@torbay.gov.uk.
