



Cambridgeshire and Peterborough  
Clinical Commissioning Group



Cambridgeshire  
County Council

Parents and carers, children and young people, local authority, health, early years, schools, further education, voluntary and community sector providers and commissioners working together to raise understanding and improve outcomes for children and young people with additional and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

# **Visual impairment**

## **Understanding needs and what to do**

Part of the Cambridgeshire  
**Local Offer**  
**‘One front door to information on  
‘education, health and care provision’**

# Contents

Introduction

Our vision

Broad categories of needs

What are visual impairment needs?

What does the data tell us?

0-5 years: First concerns – universal provision

0-5 years: Additional needs – targeted provision

0-5 years: Complex and severe needs – specialist provision

Inclusion in schools and settings

5-16 years: First concerns – universal provision

5-16 years: Additional needs – targeted provision

5-16 years: Complex and severe needs – specialist provision

16-25 years: Identifying and supporting needs

16-25 years: planning ahead

Transfer to adult services

Assessment

Special Educational Needs

Wider Support

Transitions

Training and support for professionals

Parent carer programmes

And finally

We appreciate your comments about what is good about this resource and what could be improved. Please contact the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategic Development Manager, Teresa Grady at [teresa.grady@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.grady@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

# Introduction

## A Local Offer

The Visual Impairment offer is part of the wider Cambridgeshire Local Offer ([www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)). It sets out information on provision for vulnerable groups including those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 0-25 years.

We are committed to providing easy access to information for parents, carers and professionals who may not be specialist in this field. All Local Authorities are required to produce their Local Offer. A Local Offer has two main purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children and young people with SEN, parents, carers and service providers in its development and review.

We have included the services with whom the child and family may come in contact in health; the local authority; early years settings; schools; Further Education (FE); training; employment and the voluntary and community sector. This is to ensure children and young people and their families can experience a 'joined up' approach placing them at the centre of planning and decision making.

We describe how needs are first identified and how they can be supported by providers of universal services. Further information is included on access and eligibility to specialist provision; assessments; wider support for the family and transition into adulthood.

The Visual Impairment offer is being developed with support from young people; parents and carers and partners across services. It remains open to development in response to changing needs and dialogue with all interested parties.

# Our vision

The outcomes that we want for all children and young people are set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Commissioning Strategy](#).

They are:

- Being happy, confident and healthy.
- Having friends and a peer group
- Being ready for and doing well at school
- Having a job and able to pursue interests
- Being as independent as possible, and supported to have choices
- Being safe

**‘ We want children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) to achieve well in their early years, at school and in college; find employment, lead happy and fulfilling lives; and have choice and control over their support.’**

Our commissioning approach is focused around three important features. These are:

- **personalisation** (the child and the family being equal partners in all that we plan and do),
- **integration** (the local authority services, health, social care, educational settings and the voluntary and community sector working effectively together), and
- **localism** (ensuring that high quality provision is designed and delivered locally).

Other strategies that are closely linked are:

- [Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Strategy](#)
- **Think Family** – [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/thinkfamily](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/thinkfamily)
- [Accelerating Achievement Strategy](#)
- [Transforming Lives \(Adult Social Care\)](#)
- [Building Family Resilience \(Looked After Children Strategy\)](#)

These documents can all be found on [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/families](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/families)

## How can parents, carers and young people get involved with strategic planning of provision?

If you would like to 'have your say' and become more involved in reviewing and developing provision for children and young people with additional and special educational needs and disability (including speech, language and communication needs), please see information on forthcoming **events and workshops for parent carers** on our Local Offer events page. We include reports from these events and what has happened as a result on the [Developing the local offer page](#). You can also leave comments and queries on the Local Offer webpages at [localoffer@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Governance

Provision for visual impairment is always under review and being developed. The governance of this is through the **Children and Families Joint Commissioning Board** and the **SEND Performance and Commissioning Board**.

The accuracy of the information on sensory impairment provision published in this resource; and the timely response to comments from parents; carers; young people; partners from health; early years; schools; further education; employment and the voluntary and community sector is managed through the **Local Offer Working Group**. Membership of this group includes representatives from Pinpoint parent carer forum; Health Designated Clinical Officer (DCO); Local Authority Special Educational Needs (SEND) Specialist Services; SEND Strategy and Commissioning; SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS); and the Family Information Service.

# Broad categories of needs

Children and young people with additional and special educational needs and disability are all individuals with their own set of strengths and difficulties. They do not fit into boxes. It can be useful, nevertheless, in terms of identifying the type of support that will best meet their needs to talk about four broad categories of need. Below are the four categories of needs referred to in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 (2015):

## **Communication and Interaction**

Including:

Speech Language and Communication;  
Autistic Spectrum

## **Cognition and Learning**

Including :

Moderate Learning Difficulties;  
Severe Learning Difficulties;  
Profound and Multiple Difficulties;  
Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia;  
dyscalculia; developmental co-ordination disorder

## **Social Emotional and Mental Health**

Including:

Withdrawal and isolation; Challenging disruptive or disturbing behaviour;  
Mental health needs such as anxiety, depression, self-harming, eating disorders;  
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD);  
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);  
Attachment disorder

## **Sensory**

Including:

Vision impairment  
Hearing impairment

**It is important to note that children may have needs in more than one area.**

# What do we mean by Sensory Impairment?

Sensory impairment is when one or more of your senses e.g. sight or hearing is reduced or damaged. Many sensory impaired children have sight or hearing loss from birth but some acquire it later on.

There are three very distinct groups within sensory impairment:

- Visually impaired people – they have a medically diagnosed eye condition that cannot be fully corrected by wearing glasses;
- Hearing impaired people – they are unable to hear sounds either totally or partially;
- Deafblind people – they have a combination of both hearing and sight impairment but not necessarily a total loss of one or both senses. The terms dual sensory impaired and deafblind are generally accepted as inter-changeable.

## What are visual impairment needs?

Visual Impairment is a medically diagnosed sight loss that cannot be fully corrected by using glasses or contact lenses. A person does not have to have total loss of vision to be visually impaired. This loss may be described as mild, moderate, severe or profound.

### Mild Vision Loss.

This is when your child's visual loss is better than 0.5 LogMAR or 6/18 Snellen/Kay. This means a child can identify pictures or read letters equivalent to the fourth line on an optician's eye chart.

After a formal diagnosis the Sensory Support VI Team will provide information for schools and parents on how best to support your child. Active ongoing involvement from a QTVI may not be necessary.

### Moderate Vision Loss.

This is when your child's visual loss is within the range of 0.5-0.7 LogMAR or 6/18-6/36 Snellen/Kay. This means a child can identify pictures or read letters equivalent to the third line on an optician's eye chart.

After a formal diagnosis the Sensory Support VI Team will provide information for schools and parents on how best to support your child. Active ongoing involvement from a QTVI would be discussed and agreed with you.

### Severe Vision Loss.

This is when your child's visual loss is within the range of 0.8-1.2 LogMAR or 6/36-6/60 Snellen/Kay. This means a child can identify pictures or read letters equivalent to the second line on an optician's eye chart.

After a formal diagnosis the Sensory Support VI Team will provide information for schools and parents on how best to support your child. Active ongoing involvement from a QTVI would be discussed and agreed with you. Your child may also be supported by the VI team mobility Specialist and Touch-typing tutor when appropriate

### Profound Vision Loss

This is when your child's visual loss is 1.3 LogMAR 6/60 Snellen/Kay or worse. These children would need to come closer than 6 metres to identify the top line on an eye chart and may need to use braille as their main form of access to literacy.

After formal diagnosis by a National Health specialist the Sensory Support VI team will provide information for schools and parents on how to best support your child/young person. Active involvement from a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired to provide advice on tactile access to learning if necessary with pre-braille/braille teaching would be agreed and discussed with you.

Vision is the one sense that integrates all the other senses to provide us with accurate information at a glance. Having a visual impairment is a barrier to learning which can also affect early development, achievement, attitude and behaviour.



## Information Technology Support

In some cases your Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired may discuss an application for an ICT assessment with you. This could involve a request through the Statutory Assessment Review process to the Local Authority's Educational IT department for funding specialist equipment e.g. a CCTV magnifier; a laptop with magnification software, an electronic braille. The Service aims to enable visually impaired pupils to have access on equal terms to curriculum experiences and opportunities to ensure effective working arrangements with the Local Authority, schools, other agencies and parents/carers, to fully assess and meet the needs of this diverse minority group and to promote inclusion by ensuring visually impaired pupils can be educated, wherever possible in a local placement appropriate to their needs.

### Social and Emotional needs of visually impaired pupils.

The Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired will work with children/young people on an ongoing basis to assess their social and emotional needs through discussion and using an assessment called "Support for Me". The outcome of this assessment may then be used to introduce a short programme of work to support the identified needs. The targets are always discussed with the child/young person, you and school staff.

## What does the data tell us?

To help understand the provision needed for children and young people of Cambridgeshire with visual impairment, partners in the local authority, health and parent representatives jointly looked at information available from the school census data; Chi Mat; LAIT; RAISEonline. They have studied 1) trends and 2) compared the outcomes for children and young people with national and statistical neighbours.

Cambridgeshire	All Pupils		Visual Impairment	
	Cams	England	Cams	England
Cohort (2014/15 academic year) Source. January 2015 school census and DfE SFR 16/2015	82,130	8,438,145	102	10,840
Percentage of C/YP with a Statement/EHCP Source. January 2015 school census and DfE SFR 25/2015	2,848 (3.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>State Funded Schools: 1.6%</li><li>All Schools: 2.8%</li></ul>	57 (55.9%)	3,450 (31.8%)

Percentage that are LAC (LA LAC placed in any LA) Source. DfE LAIT and ICS	0.4%	0.6%	
Achievement at KS2 compared to hearing/sighted peers  L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths DfE SFR 47/2015 and internal Cambridgeshire pupil results data	Combined Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths outcomes in Cambridgeshire (78% L4+) are 2ppt below the level seen nationally (80%); performance in Cambridgeshire rose by 2ppt compared with a 1ppt rise nationally.		In 2015, the performance of children with Visual Impairments improved rising to 50% but it is still 11ppt below the level of their peers nationally (an 8ppt rise to 61%). <i>Note that pupil numbers are very small and that outcomes in 2014 were suppressed due to the very small cohort size.</i>
Achievement at KS4 compared to hearing/sighted peers  5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths DfE SFR 01/2016 and internal Cambridgeshire pupil results data	The proportion of Cambridgeshire pupils achieving 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths (59%) is above the level seen nationally in state funded schools <sup>1</sup> (57%); performance in Cambridgeshire rose by 3ppt compared with no change nationally.		In 2015, the performance of children with Visual Impairments improved (33%) but it is still 12ppt below the level of their peers nationally (a 1ppt rise to 45%). <i>Note that pupil numbers are very small and that outcomes in 2014 were suppressed due to the very small cohort size.</i>
NEET figures compared to national figures (2014) Source. DfE LA Data Matrix	2014: 16-18 year olds: 3.6%	2014: 16-18 year olds: 4.7%	
Absence percentages for school age pupils (2014/15 academic year) • Primary Phase  • Secondary Phase Source. DfE LA Data Matrix, DfE SFR 10/2016 and ICS	4.0	4.0	8.3%
	5.2	5.3	8.1%

## What are the challenges?

- Increase in numbers of children/young people being diagnosed with sensory impairments
- Increase in number of younger referrals with higher needs i.e. who have a profound visual loss or need to use Braille instead of print.
- Supporting students up to the age of 25 instead of 16/19.
- Recruitment of specialist teachers who hold the mandatory qualification.

## 0-5 years

### First concerns – universal provision

Some children have obvious difficulties with their vision from a very young age. It is often a parent or family member who will be the first person to realise that there is a difficulty. They may be concerned that their child is not developing visual skills as others the same age or in a similar way to older siblings.

#### When should there be concerns?

In young children, the following are all possible warning signs that something is wrong:

- having little interest in looking at faces, lights and moving objects at close range
- inflamed, watery or constantly moving eyes
- reacts unusually to bright light
- appears uninterested in looking at toys
- unusual looking eyes
- not follow moving objects
- bringing things close to their eyes when looking
- poor hand/eye coordination
- inability to pick out detail in pictures

#### Who can parents talk to about concerns?

If parents have concerns about their child's vision they can talk to health professionals in the local area with whom they are in contact such as the child's:

- Health visitor
- GP
- Children's Centre worker
- Childminder or play group practitioner.
- Teacher in nursery class

Local contact details for the above can be found in the Local Offer by typing in the provision and postcode [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

Health Visitors; children centre workers; early years practitioners and teachers in nursery classes, provide for all children. This is called **universal provision**. All providers of universal provision are required to make reasonable adaptations to ensure their provision is accessible. To do this they will listen, and respond, to parents' concerns and aspirations. They will observe the child over time and, with the family, make plans to address and overcome the child's difficulties.

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16

They can support and advise parents and carers in a variety of ways and signpost to additional help in the community.

Two very important checks that health visitors, children centre workers; early years practitioners and teachers in nursery classes will refer to are:

- **The Two Year Old Health Check and Record**
- **The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**

These checks will indicate if the child is developing and learning in-line with their peers. If it is possible that there are underlying issues such as a hearing impairment, the parent will be advised to take their child for tests.

The two checks are now referred to as the Integrated 2 Year Old Review in Cambridgeshire. Integrating health and education reviews gives a more complete picture of the child through drawing together the detailed knowledge of how the child is learning and developing day to day at their educational setting with the expertise of the child's health visitor at the health review, along with parents' views and concerns about their child's progress. The checks are carried out separately but the findings are looked at together and a package of any follow up support required for family can be delivered by multiple agencies, depending on the needs identified.

The **Two Year Old Health Check and Record** and the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile** describe the next 'step' to be reached by the child and what actions need to be taken by all to help the child to get there. The actions required will vary from child to child depending on their particular needs. The impact of these actions will be monitored.

Children who are thought to have a visual problem can be assessed by an orthoptist and paediatric ophthalmologist (eye doctor), who work closely with the visual impairment team. Assessments involve a check of the child's vision, test for squint (eye turn), eye movements & how the eyes work together, as well as a check for glasses, the health of the front and back of the eye, and when possible, an assessment of their field of vision and 3-D vision. Patients may be referred by their GP, paediatrician, health visitor, optometrist (optician) or other health care professional.

If the child is medically diagnosed with a visual loss they will be referred to the Sensory Support Service, Visual Impairment Team by the eye clinic staff. A Teacher of the Visually Impaired will then contact the family.

**Parent and carers**

Your child’s Teacher of the Visually Impaired, health visitor, GP, Early Years provider, or school will be able to signpost you to further information and support in the local area such as from **voluntary and community parent support groups**. Information can be found on the Cambridgeshire Local Offer at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

**What type of adaptations and differentiation are helpful for children with a visual impairment?**

The Visual Impairment Team will advise and support parents/carers and any professionals working with your child.

Here are some examples of what they might do:

- adapt materials so that the child can see them more easily
- ensure seating position is right
- advise on good lighting
- support to create an appropriate clutter free environment
- recommend on allowing extra time for activities

Below are links to some useful guidance and resources on visual impairment that should inform practice in early years settings.

Guidance and tools for Early Years	How to find
Developmental Journal for babies and children with visual impairment	<a href="http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk">www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk</a>
Blind Children UK	<a href="http://www.blindchildrenuk.org">www.blindchildrenuk.org</a>
Royal National Institute for the Blind	<a href="http://www.rnib.org.uk">www.rnib.org.uk</a>
Positive Eye	<a href="http://www.positiveeye.co.uk">www.positiveeye.co.uk</a>

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16

If difficulties persist, despite high quality universal provision, such as above, the Health Visitor; children's centre worker; Early Years practitioners or teacher in nursery classes may suggest that the child requires some **targeted provision** to address additional needs.

## 0-5 years

### Additional needs – targeted provision

Young children with a permanent visual loss may receive targeted provision. The Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired works with parents and professionals working to identify suitable next steps matched to the needs of the child and family. Before and after measures will be taken to check that the support has been effective and that the child is making progress.

The support we offer may include:

- Putting parents at the centre of their child's learning.
- Helping parents/cares and professionals to have high expectations of the educational standards that visually impaired children and young people can achieve.
- Assessment and ongoing monitoring of how the child is using their vision
- Teaching specialist skills such as pre-braille.
- Practical ways in which parents can help early development and learning
- Advice and support on toys and equipment

Parents and carers should also be informed about

- local support groups
- ways to help their child at home

## 0-5 years

# Complex and severe needs – specialist provision

Most young children and young people who have a sensory impairment will, over time, respond to the type of high quality teaching and developmental support that the professionals in the community working with them (e.g. Health Visitor, GP, Children's Centre, Early Years Provider or class teacher) offer to all children and young people as part of their universal offer. A small number of young children, however, with more complex, severe and enduring needs will require additional highly **Specialist Support**. These children are likely to have **Special Educational Needs and disability (SEND)**

Specialist provision is determined by the child's individual needs. It may be delivered one to one or a part of a group with children with similar needs. It is not necessarily continuous. There may be breaks in which the impact is reviewed before another period of support.

The adaptation and support expected at universal level will continue when children receive specialist support.

Further specialist advice and support is available from the health service and/or the local authority. Please use the links below to find out more about their offer; eligibility; contact details and access route. Services are expected to work together in a joined up way with the child and family at the heart of planning action.

- [Local Authority SEND Specialist Services Visual Impairment Team](#)
- [Local Authority SEND Specialist Services Team](#)
- [Children's Disability Team](#)

For information on services provided by Cambridgeshire County Council, please visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

- [National Health Service \(NHS\) Ophthalmology Team](#)
- [National Health Service \(NHS\) Speech and Language Therapy Team](#)
- [Community Paediatrician](#)

For information on health services, please visit [www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk](http://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk) or [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

If you would prefer to speak to someone you can contact:

- Chris Porter (Business Support Officer) on 01480 373 434 for visual impairment queries
- Hayley Askew (Business Support Officer) on 01223 728 124 for hearing impairment queries

Children and families with higher level of need may be eligible for support in the home

## **Support in the home**

Children and families with the highest level of need may be eligible for support in the home. The family of a child with visual impairment and other complex needs, may be offered home visits from the Local Authority SEND Specialist Services, this includes Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired.



# Inclusion in schools

Schools are expected to provide an inclusive environment for all children, including those with sensory needs. They must make adaptations to ensure children and young people find their schools accessible. The Department of Education (DfE) [‘The Equality Act: Advice and Guidance for Schools’](#) clearly sets out these requirements.



With additional actions (provision) in place in mainstream schools tailored to the needs of individual children and young people and with outside advice from health and local authority services provided as and when needed, it is expected that most children and young people with visual impairment will have their needs appropriately met in their local mainstream school. Other than in exceptional circumstance this is usually the preferred option for the child or young person.

In the minority of cases where the child or young person's needs are significant and there are other highly complex needs, alternative placements at an Enhanced Resource Centre (ERC) or special school may be considered.

For information on Cambridgeshire's special schools including contact details; eligibility and offer please use the link below.

- [Enhanced Resource Centres](#)
- [Special Schools](#)

Details of local schools can be found on:  
[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/familiesdirectory](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/familiesdirectory)

## 5-16 years

### First concerns – universal provision

Sometimes, a child's needs do not begin to show until the child starts school or even later on in secondary school. Parents may feel that their child is struggling or does not respond in the same way as others their own age, or the school may observe signs of difficulties. Does the child:

- Have swollen, inflamed, watery or constantly moving eyes?
- Rub the eyes excessively?
- React unusually to bright light?
- Complain of pain or discomfort around the eyes?

### When should there be concerns?

The following things might be signs of visual impairment in a child or young person: Do they:

- Have more difficulties with reading and writing than you would expect?
- Cover one eye while reading?
- Have an unusual head tilt?
- Hold reading materials at an unusually close distance?
- Take more time than you would expect to complete visual tasks?
- Appear clumsy or awkward with poor hand-eye co-ordination?

### Who can parents or a young person talk to and what will they do?

If a young person or a parent carer of a school-age child has concerns they should talk to the class teacher or subject teacher. Other professionals they could approach include their GP; school nurse; a local parent support group or voluntary and community organisations such as Blind Children UK ([www.blindchildrenuk.org](http://www.blindchildrenuk.org)) and Camsight.

We have included local contact details for the above in the Local Offer directory which can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/localofferdirectory](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/localofferdirectory)

Parents know their children best, and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by the children and young people themselves.

All those who work with children and young people need to be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early by identifying and removing barriers to learning and development. They can support and advice parents and carers in a variety of ways and signpost to additional help in the community.

Parents and carers will be invited to give permission for information about their child to be shared between health and education professionals so that a common understanding and approach to their needs is adopted.

Schools are well-placed to observe children day-to-day and identify early signs of possible vision needs that are impacting on their achievements. Schools are required to track the learning and development of all children/young people. Careful tracking will show if the child is developing and learning in line with their peers. This enables schools to set realistic, but challenging, goals with the child against national expectations. Some important stages that schools will measure against are:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- Phonics Screening Check (Year 1)
- Key Stage 1 Assessments (Year 2)
- Key Stage 2 SATS (Year 6)
- GCSE and other qualifications at Key Stage 4. (Year 11)

Between these stages, schools will carefully monitor if the child is on track by looking at:

- Termly whole school tracking of attainment in subjects.
- Termly attendance data
- Fixed term exclusions
- Life skills such as participation, self-esteem; independence

## What will they do?

Professionals in the local community can help the child or young person and the family address and overcome difficulties. They will listen and respond to the parent's, child's or young person's concerns. They may also signpost to other support and advice if necessary.

If the parent speaks first to their GP, they may suggest that the parent allows them to share information with the school or setting (or they can share it themselves) so that a more holistic picture can be captured and consistent support planned.

### **Parent and carers**

If you have concerns, your child's school or GP will be able to signpost you to further information and support in the local area such as from **voluntary and community parent support groups**. Information can be found on the Cambridgeshire Local Offer at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

## **Universal provision in schools**

The provision that is available to all children in schools and other educational settings is called **universal provision**. Schools are required to create a teaching and learning environment that enables all children to access learning, participate fully in the life of the school and community and develop the wider skills needed to for adult life. They are expected to have an appropriate level of expertise to support children with additional visual impairment needs and remove barriers to learning. This will require making adaptation to teaching and learning. The adaptations required will vary from child to child and over time, depending on their particular needs.

High quality teaching is expected in all schools. High quality teaching is important for all children and young people but it is essential for those with additional and special educational needs.

High quality teaching can be recognised by:

- Highly focused lesson design with sharp objectives;
- High demands of pupil involvement and engagement with their learning; High levels of interaction for all children/young people;
- Appropriate use of teacher questioning, modelling and explaining;
- An emphasis on learning through dialogue, with regular opportunities for children/young people to talk both individually and in groups;
- An expectation that children/young people will accept responsibility for their own learning and work independently;
- Regular use of encouragement and authentic praise to engage and motivate children/young people.

Information on how individual schools identify and meet the needs of children and young people with visual impairment, can be found on their website. Each school must publish this information. It is known as the **School's Information Report**.

The local authority have worked with schools to create a tool-kit to help them prepare and test the quality of their Schools Information Report.

[View the local offer tool-kit for schools](#)

## Guidance and resources for school-age children

There are a wide range of excellent resources available to schools and other partners to develop understanding, knowledge and skills that will best support children and young people with visual impairment needs. Below are some useful websites and links that should inform practice in schools.

Guidance and tools for schools and settings	How to find out more
Blind Children UK	<a href="http://www.blindchildrenuk.org">www.blindchildrenuk.org</a>
Royal National Society for the Blind	<a href="http://www.rnib.org.uk">www.rnib.org.uk</a>
Positive Eye	<a href="http://www.positiveeye.co.uk">www.positiveeye.co.uk</a>

Here are some examples of the resources available:

- Books for leisure
- Books for the classroom
- Classroom resources
- Electronic textbooks
- National Curriculum Guide 2014
- RNIB Bookshare - Free accessible textbooks and images.
- Using technology to promote independent learning

## Tops tips for workforce in schools and other settings

Strategies to support children and young people with visual impairment will need to be used on a daily basis to ensure that high quality teaching is fully accessible. These should be discussed with the child or young person and personalised. Below are some examples frequently recommended by children and young people and those who work with or support them.

Strategies to support visual impairment include
Use good quality print that it is well contrasted and stands out clearly on the paper.
Never ask a pupil with a visual impairment to share learning materials
Make sure they are positioned in class so they can access the whiteboard, skill demonstration etc.
Use only black or dark pens on a clean whiteboard to ensure maximum contrast.
Minimise glare – e.g. from windows, from reflected light on whiteboards.
Use precise language, specific instructions and talk through what you are putting on the whiteboard.
Remember that visual tasks may take longer to complete and pupils may tire more easily.
Ensure your classroom is kept tidy and free from obstacles e.g. bags left on the floor.
Keep a consistent classroom layout.
Display important notices, posters etc. at the pupil's eye level, or e-mail them/give a copy to the pupil.

Each child or young person with visual impairment has different strengths and needs. Below are some actions that are typically taken by staff in schools. It is not intended that they are all used all the time. The actions should be discussed regularly with the child or young person in context of the particular learning situation.

1. Listen carefully to parents, carers, children and young people.
2. Encourage good communication between home, setting and all professionals involved.
3. Plan and review progress together with all parties clear about what part they can play.
4. Check that there is consistent high quality teaching in place in the classroom/s that is differentiated and made accessible for the child or young person.
5. Ensure that all staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of the visually impaired child and are confident in how to support them.

The following practical suggestions aim to help mainstream teachers ensure that all children, and especially those who have a visual impairment, can access information and learn effectively in their setting.

Pupils who have slightly reduced vision will benefit from the following:

<b>Actions to remove barriers to learning</b>	✓
Use good quality print, which is word processed (not handwritten) and dark so that it is well contrasted and stands out clearly on the paper.	
Never ask them to share a book, handout or worksheet – give them their own copy	
Make sure (discreetly) they are positioned in class so they can be “close to the action” – e.g. whiteboard, TV, skill demonstration.	
Use only black or dark pens on a clean whiteboard to ensure maximum contrast.	
Minimise glare – e.g. from windows, from reflected light on whiteboards.	
Use precise language, specific instructions and talk through what you are putting on the whiteboard.	
Ensure your classroom is kept tidy and free from obstacles e.g. bags left on the floor.	
Keep a consistent classroom layout.	
Display important notices, posters etc. at the pupil’s eye level, or e-mail them/give a copy to the pupil.	

**Jean Gross Checklists and Resources for SENCOs and Teachers**

[http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9781138891715/Beating\\_Bureaucracy\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9781138891715/Beating_Bureaucracy_Toolkit.pdf)

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16

If difficulties persist despite high quality teaching and suitable adaptations to remove barriers to learning being consistently in place (as above), the school may suggest that the child or young person requires some **Targeted Provision**.

It is important that all those who work with children and young people are alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. We recognise that parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by the children and young people themselves. Schools are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify signs of possible visual impairment.

The school may suggest that parents visit their GP who may then refer the child to the hospital eye clinic.

## 5-16 years

### Additional needs – targeted provision

Sometimes a child of school-age does not make expected developmental or learning progress despite high quality universal provision from the school or setting or health service (the type of provision that is available for all children). If a parent or carer is concerned about their child's progress they can talk to the child's class or subject teacher, school nurse or GP surgery about additional actions (targeted provision) that they might be able to offer or are aware is available in the local area.

These children may not have Special Educational Needs (SEN) but, for a range of reasons, are performing at a level a little below their peers. The school will first check that high quality universal provision is consistently in place. They will then consider, carefully targeted 'catch-up' actions. Provision is usually over limited period of time, but may be revisited in stepped stages.

The adaptations and support expected at **universal** level will **continue** when children receive **targeted** provision



It is important that the actions (targeted provision) address a specific outcome for the child or young person; are time-limited; and that 'before' and 'after' measurements are taken to check that the actions have been effective and that the child is making progress.

Practitioners in schools and parent carers are well placed to observe the child in different situations and notice what they are good at, what they find difficult and what support works best.

If the parent the carer is already in contact with a professional from health or education that person may suggest that they allow them to share information with the school or setting (or shares it themselves) so that an all-round picture can be captured and appropriate learning support arranged.

In most cases, carefully targeted provision over a period of time will enable a child to 'catch-up' with their peers. Their progress should be monitored to ensure progress is sustained.

Parents and carers should also be informed about

- local support groups
- ways to help their child at home

Consultation and advice is available from the Local Authority to schools from **SEND Services** and the **Learning Directorate** to develop targeted programmes

More information on services available can be found on

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether)

## 5-16 years

# Complex and severe needs – specialist provision

A small number of children with more severe, complex and enduring visual impairment will require additional highly specialist actions (provision) These children are likely to have **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

Specialist action (provision) is determined by the child's individual needs. It may be delivered one to one or as part of a group with children with similar needs. It is not necessarily continuous. There may be breaks in which the impact is reviewed before another period of support.

The adaptations and support expected at **universal** level will **continue** when children receive **specialist** support

Schools can offer some types of specialist action (provision). Sometimes schools cluster together to share knowledge, expertise and delivery of specialist programmes.

The school will first check that high quality universal provision is consistently in place. They will then consider what further actions to put in place (specialist provision). Specialist provision is usually given over a limited period of time, but may be revisited in stepped stages.

It is important that actions address a specific outcome for the child; are time-limited; and that 'before' and 'after' measurements are taken to check that the actions have been effective and that the child is making progress.

Further advice and support with specialist actions (provision) is available from health services and the local authority for those children who meet the thresholds.

The Visual Impairment Team determines level of support using a "caseload weighting document as a guide. The document can be viewed at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/visionsupport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/visionsupport)

If you would prefer to speak to someone you can contact Chris Porter, Business Support Officer on 01480 373 434

- [\*\*Children's Social Care Disability Service\*\*](#)

Information on Local Authority services can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

- [\*\*National Health Service \(NHS\) Community Paediatric Service\*\*](#)

Information on Health services can be found at [www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk](http://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk)

In some cases, where the thresholds are met community paediatricians will provide a medical assessment for children identified in school age as having a significant learning difficulty to explore whether there is a medical or genetic reason for their difficulties. They do not usually offer ongoing advice and support.

In most cases, children and young people in receipt of specialist provision that is delivered with efficacy (in the way it was designed to be delivered) and reviewed and updated regularly, will make accelerated progress. Their progress should be monitored by schools to ensure it is sustained. For a minority of children and young people who do not make expected progress, further assessments may be necessary to fully understand the complexity of their needs. Please see the section on assessment for more information. (page 32)

A resource to support conversations between parent and teacher

<p><b>Early Concerns</b> The parents, young person or teacher have noticed that .....</p>	<p><b>What will the teacher do in the classroom?</b> In the classroom the teacher will ensure that.....</p>
<p>Visual impairment</p>	
<p><b>Support and interventions</b></p> <p>Over the next (<i>number of weeks</i>) the teacher will deliver (or oversee the delivery) of ....</p> <p>This is so that (<i>name</i>) will then be able to.....</p> <p>We will meet again on (<i>date</i>) to measure progress and plan next steps</p>	<p><b>Home</b></p> <p>To support this at home parents could.....</p>

## 16-25 years

# Identifying and supporting needs

Although it might be expected that most visual impairment needs are picked up at an earlier age, this is not always the case. Professionals working in the 16 -25 years age range should consider the possibility of 'hidden'; 'missed' or 'newly emerging' special educational needs.

### When should there be concerns?

Young people starting Further Education (FE); employment or training, or who are preparing for a placement at one of these, are individuals with different strengths and needs. They will develop the new skills they need at different rates. The following, however, should be considered as warning signs if difficulties persist despite good transition and induction support.

Examples of behaviour that might indicate underlying visual difficulties include:

- Have more difficulties with accessing print than you would expect?
- Have an unusual head tilt?
- Hold reading materials at an unusually close distance?
- Take more time than you would expect to complete visual tasks?
- Appear clumsy or awkward with poor hand-eye co-ordination?

Young people with a diagnosed visual loss in this age range may continue to be monitored by the Sensory Support Service depending on their level of need. Below is a caseload weighting guide to help to determine the level of support that may be offered.

The Visual Impairment Team determines level of support using a "caseload weighting document as a guide. The document can be viewed at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/visionsupport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/visionsupport)

### Who can a young adult talk to if they want advice and support?

If a young adult has concerns they can talk to any of the professionals with whom they are already in contact e.g.

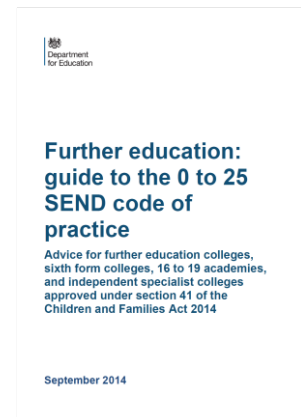
- GP
- Tutor at Further Education institute
- Voluntary and community support groups

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16

- Manager at the young adult's place of work or apprenticeship

## Further Education Institutions

The government has produced general guidance for Further Education institutions and all those who work with young adults 16-25 with Special Educational Needs and disability and their families should have regard to.



## Planning ahead

Useful guidance and resources are available for young people 16 years and over with additional and special educational needs to help make decisions and plan ahead.

### Moving On

The Local Authority has produced a list of post-16 courses available to children with SEND.

[Moving On – Options for school leavers with additional needs.](#)

The booklet is available on [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/preparingforadulthood](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/preparingforadulthood)

### The Papworth Trust

The Papworth Trust has useful information for teenagers, adults and their families with additional needs. For more information visit: [www.papworthtrust.org.uk](http://www.papworthtrust.org.uk)

## Transfer to adult services

Most children with visual impairment, will have their needs addressed appropriately in their younger years and will not need continuing support from adult services. Early intervention is essential. It has been proven that if the right support is received at the right time this will have the best impact on achievements in adult life. For young people, however, with the most significant and enduring needs the following teams will become involved:

### Preparing for Adulthood Additional Needs team

The local authority **Preparation for Adulthood Additional Needs team** will become involved when the young person is in Year 9 (14 years) if they have a level of enduring

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16

special educational needs and disability that will require support in adulthood. Referrals may be made to the Learning Disability Service.

Information on the team, the support they can provide and eligibility can be found on the [local offer web pages](#).

**The Learning Disability Partnership Young Adults Team (LPDYA)** is a countywide team, which supports people with a learning disability to lead as full and independent a life as possible. The team is part of the wider Learning Disability Partnership that brings together social care and health professionals in integrated teams.

Further information can be found at:

[http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/custom\\_scripts/fid/fid\\_details.aspx?ID=138704](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/custom_scripts/fid/fid_details.aspx?ID=138704)

### **Adult Social Care**

When a young person with a visual impairment reaches 18 years old and they have a level of enduring special educational needs and disability that meets eligibility criteria for support in adulthood, they will transfer to adult services.

For information on the adult specialist services for visually impaired people please go to [http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20165/disability\\_and\\_sensory\\_loss/588/disability\\_services/3](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20165/disability_and_sensory_loss/588/disability_services/3)

# Assessment

## An Integrated Approach

Parents are encouraged to share any concerns about their child's visual development with the professionals with whom they are in contact e.g. the Health Visitor, GP, child's early years setting or school. With the parent, they can identify and address emerging needs and put in appropriate support to overcome difficulties without waiting for a formal diagnosis.

In the age-linked sections in this resource (0-5 years; 5-16 years; 16- 25 years) we have described how professionals working in universal services such as schools, early years settings and Further Education are expected to use early screening and assessment tools to identify needs. The use of screening and assessment tools should always be accompanied by actions to address the identified needs. Parents, carers, children and young people need to be fully involved in the process. Pre and post measures should be taken so that progress can be measured and next steps planned.

It is only when the child or young person's has not responded as expected to consistent high-quality actions (targeted and specialist) provided in schools, early years settings or Further Education and their needs remains severe, that they are likely to require further more specialist assessment. In these cases, the professionals and parent carers should discuss involving one of more of the following services if they have not already been involved.

Below are some of the assessments that are likely to pick up early signs of emerging visual needs.

### **0-5 years**

Vision tests carried out by an eye clinic following a referral from a GP or Health Visitor. A referral to the Visual Impairment Team where necessary for functional visual assessments in the home environment home by a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired.

### **5-16 years**

Concerns about a child's vision may be flagged up by parents, school staff and other professionals. In the first instance, advice should be sought from the GP. If appropriate a referral will be made to the local hospital eye clinic who will refer to the Visual Impairment Team where necessary for functional visual assessments in school e.g. McClure reading test for children; classroom observations by a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired.

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16



## **16-25 years**

Concerns about a young person's vision may be flagged up by the young person themselves, parents and other professionals. In the first instance advice should be sought from the GP. If appropriate a referral will be made to the local hospital eye clinic, who will refer to the Visual Impairment Team if appropriate.

## **Assessing additional, complex needs**

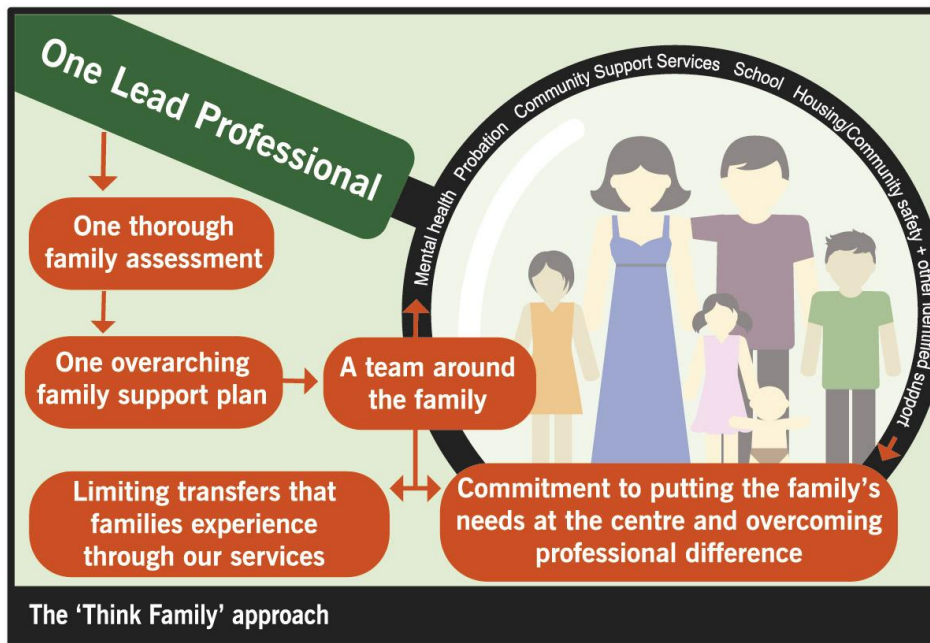
If the needs of the child and family are seen to be significant and there are other unmet complex needs, an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** is the appropriate route to bring together the support of various services around the child and family.

### **What is an Early Help Assessment (EHA)?**

An **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** is a way of gathering information to assess the needs and plan responses for children and young people and their families. Any professional with whom the family is in contact such as the GP, Health Visitor; early years setting or school staff may initiate an Early Help Assessment. The **Think Family** approach underpins this way of working. It ensures that any professionals involved work, in a joined-up way, with the child and family at the centre. A 'lead professional' is identified.

### **Think Family**

The Think Family approach is being embedded across all local authority Children and Family services and Health services for those who work with children, young people and their families. If the needs of the child and family are seen to be significant and there are other unmet complex needs, an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** is the appropriate route to bring together the support of various services around the child and family.



## Early Support 0-5 years.

In the most significant, complex cases and probably life enduring cases in the 0-5 age range the Early Help Assessment may immediately progress to assessment and support through the **Early Support 0-5 years programme**. Children and families with the highest level of need, will be supported by a team of specialist who will work with the whole family to assess and meet need over time. This may include home visits from the Local Authority **SEND Specialist Services Practitioners**.

For more information on Early Support 0-5 years please see

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/early-support](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/early-support)

# Special Educational Needs

## A Graduated Approach

Visual impairment is one of the recognised areas of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) identified by the [SEND Code of Practice 0-25 \(2014\)](#). It sits within the larger area of sensory impairment. This does not mean that all children and young people who present with visual impairment have special educational needs – but it may be the case.

A child or young adult is said to have special educational needs if they require provision that is additional to or different from that available to others of a similar age despite high quality teaching and support that is differentiated and personalised. Support for learning difficulties may be required when children and young people learn at a slower pace than their peers, even with appropriate differentiation.

If it is suspected that a child or young person has (or may have) special educational needs then the parents and child or young person will be invited by the professionals whom they see regularly (such as the health visitor, early years provide, class or subject teacher or college tutor) to meet to plan how they will work together to reach the goals to which they aspire. Alternatively parents or a young person with concerns can approach any of the professional with whom they are in contact. The child or young person's strengths as well as difficulties will be taken into account and supported. The local authority has prepared a list of recommended early assessment or screening tools to help identify needs and plan what needs to happen. View [recommended assessments for schools](#) on [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

If a child or young person will need provision additional or different to that which is available to their peers then they will be placed on **SEND Support**. A cycle of 'Assess, Plan, Do, and Review' will be started. Decision will be made together and actions shared. The length and regularity of the cycle depends on the needs of the child and family or young person at the time. This is called the graduated approach in the **SEND Code of Practice 0-25 (2014)**. Children and young people and their parent carers will be central to this process. Most children and young people on SEND Support will make accelerated progress and will not always need to receive SEND Support. A very small number of children and young people who have severe and complex needs and who do not, over time, respond to additional support and actions, may need an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan. Parent carers or young people who would like more information should speak to any professional with whom they are in regular contact and who is currently delivering SEND Support to the child or young person. e.g. a class or subject teacher; early years practitioner

A working guide. Latest update 6.12.16

or tutor in Further Education. Further information on eligibility for an assessment for an Education, Health and Care assessment can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ehcplan](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ehcplan) or by contacting the SEND Information and Advice Service (SENDIASS) on 01223 699 214.

The table below show the role of schools (or other educational settings) and other professionals from health and the local authority, work together to support children with speech, language and communication special educational needs.

## Roles: Health, Local Authority, schools and settings

	Roles		
	School or setting	Local authority	Health
	<i>Early Years Settings Mainstream Schools and Academies Special Schools Hospital Schools Independent School Further Education Training Apprenticeship</i>	<i>SEND Specialist Services Children's Centres Locality Teams Looked After Children Statutory Assessment and Resourcing Team (StART) Disability Social Care</i>	<i>Speech and Language Therapists Occupational Therapists Paediatric Service Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</i>
<b>Universal</b>  All children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Identification and response to SEND</li> <li>• High quality teaching;</li> <li>• Adaptations to remove barriers to learning (Equality Act 2010)</li> <li>• An inclusive environment and ethos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training opportunities for early years settings, schools, colleges and Further Education from specialist services</li> <li>• Advice and signposting from SEND Specialist Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice and signposting to parents and young people from school nurses, Health Visitors, and GPs</li> </ul>
<b>SEND Support</b>  Children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) but not an Education, Health and Care plan.	<b>As above and also:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child/young person and family centred 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' using structured approaches to conversations.</li> <li>• Short term intervention programmes aimed at helping the child/young person catch up with their peers.</li> <li>• Medium and longer term intervention programmes to address specific needs.</li> </ul>	<b>As above and also:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and advice on evidence based practice and interventions to meet the needs of children and young people and their families who meet thresholds for involvement.</li> </ul>	<b>As above and also:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training opportunities in for schools colleges and parents</li> <li>• Personalised interventions to meet the needs of children and young people and their families who meet thresholds for involvement</li> </ul>

<p><b>Education Health and Care (EHC) plans</b></p> <p>Children and young people with statutory provision - specified in a EHC plan</p>	<p><b>As above and also:</b></p> <p>Joined up working with the child/ young person, family and all professional partners to ensure delivery and monitoring of the EHC plan</p>	<p><b>As above and also:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joined up working with the child/young person, family and all professional partners to ensure delivery and monitoring of the EHC plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>As above and also:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joined up working with the child/young person, family and all professional partners to ensure delivery and monitoring of the EHC plan</li> </ul>
---	--	--	--

# Wider support

Parents and carers have told us that it is very important to know what wider support is available for their child and the family. They stressed the value of being put in contact with other parents of children with special educational needs and disability as early as possible. This included drop in coffee mornings at the nursery, school or clinic and events held by local parent forums and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).

A full description of provision for children with additional and additional or special educational needs and/or disability is published in the Cambridgeshire Local Offer which can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send) Some examples of provision from the local authority, Health, social care and voluntary agencies are listed below.

If you have any queries about the support available please do not hesitate to contact the provider or phone the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service on 01223 699 214.

## Parent to parent support

Parents tell us that meeting other parents of children with special educational needs or disability to talk with can be invaluable. Any professionals who are in contact with the family e.g. via a school or early years setting; GP surgery; or at the point of diagnosis in a speech and language clinic, should check that the parent knows how to get in contact with other parents or support groups in the area.

### Pinpoint


Pinpoint is a Cambridgeshire charity supporting and informing parents of children with special educational needs, disabilities or additional needs. It is run for parents by parents. Pinpoint holds regular events and meetings for parents of children of all ages with any disability or additional need, including visual impairment. Parents can get involved in shaping services and developing information for parents, as well as meet other parents in a similar situation.

	01480 499 043
@	<a href="mailto:information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk">information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk</a>
W	<a href="http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk">www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk</a>

## Contact a Family


Contact a Family is a national charity for families with disabled children.

They provide information, advice and support and bring families together so they can support each other.

	0808 808 3555
@	<a href="mailto:helpline@cafamily.org.uk">helpline@cafamily.org.uk</a> Local contact: <a href="mailto:eastofengland@cafamily.org.uk">eastofengland@cafamily.org.uk</a>
W	<a href="http://www.cafamily.org.uk/">http://www.cafamily.org.uk/</a>

## Parent Partnership Service providing Cambridgeshire's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

SENDIASS offer confidential and impartial advice and support to make sure that parents, carers and young people get information and guidance on SEND matters, eligibility and entitlements.

	01223 699 214
@	<a href="mailto:pps@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">pps@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>
W	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/pps">www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/pps</a>

## Local social care short break offer

The Disabled Children's Early Help Team supports disabled children and young people to develop the skills to Prepare for Adulthood, to access community activities, to increase independence skills and to do enjoyable activities away from their main carers. This is achieved through an allocation of early help funding that can be used for agreed activities or support. These activities or support will provide the carer with a short break.

For more information on short breaks please see the Cambridgeshire Short Break Duty Statement on [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/short-breaks](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/short-breaks) or contact the Disabled Children's Early Help team on 01480 379 800 or email [dceh@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:dceh@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## Activities and groups for children and young people

The following websites and groups can provide information on activities, support and events across Cambridgeshire for children and young people with additional needs or disabilities including autism:

Who/ What	Contact details
Visual Impairment Team	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/visionsupport">www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/visionsupport</a>
Societies, Clubs and Information Point (SCIP)	 <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/scip">www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/scip</a> Email: <a href="mailto:scip@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">scip@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>  : 01480 379 827
Pinpoint	 <a href="http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk">www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk</a> Email: <a href="mailto:information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk">information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk</a>  : 01480 499 043
Cambs.net	 <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.net">www.cambridgeshire.net</a>

## Children's Centres

If parents/carers are worried about their child and think that they are not developing in the same way as children of a similar age, they can speak to a health visitor or family worker at a local Children's Centre. Further information, addresses and contact details can be found at [www.cambridgeshirechildrenscentres.org.uk/](http://www.cambridgeshirechildrenscentres.org.uk/)

### Children's Centres may offer the following:

- health services – midwives and health visitors
- family support services – trained staff who can support, advise and provide information
- family events and activities
- early years education/child care and advice about costs
- employment, training and benefits advice
- information for parents/carers and families



Information on venues and contact details is available at local Children’s Centres or on [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenscentres](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenscentres)

## Benefits and other financial help

Parents and carers of a child with special educational needs and disability, including speech, language and communication needs may be entitled to benefits to help with the extra costs as a result of their needs. These include the Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (for over 16s), Carer’s Allowance and Child Tax Credit.

Gov.uk ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) contains up-to-date information about all welfare benefits.

Contact a Family offer benefits advice & information on conditions & support groups - [www.cafamily.org.uk/](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/).

## Independent living and housing

### Housing and independent living

Supported housing is managed by District Councils; support provided varies between schemes. General information is available from the relevant district council.

Who	What	Contact details
Cambridgeshire County Council	General information on housing and links to district councils	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/careandsupport">www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/careandsupport</a>
Cambridgeshire County Council	General information on housing for young people	<a href="http://www.youthoria.org">www.youthoria.org</a>

## Living near Local Authority borders

Families living near Local Authority borders may find that some services will be provided by one Local Authority and other services by another. The Cambridgeshire Local Offer at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send) will be the ‘front door’ into information from Education, Health and Social Care in Cambridgeshire and other Local Authorities from which children and

young people from Cambridge with SEND and their families can access support. The Local Offer Directory allows you to search for information by topic or location. By putting in a home postcode parents (or professionals on their behalf) can access this information. If parents would prefer to speak to someone please phone the Families and Childcare Information helpline on 0345 045 1360

Professionals working with a family who is receiving support from more than one Local Authority must ensure that communication channels are clarified and agreed between the family and other professionals. A **lead professional** should be identified who can coordinate the work of those involved. The lead professional could be an Early Years practitioner, Health Visitor, School SENCo, Speech and Language Therapist, a chosen advocate of the family or any other professional with whom the family is in regular contact. This person may change over time and any changeover should be planned in advance so that families do not have to repeat the same information and so that there is no loss of continuity.

# Transitions

## Preparing for times of change

Transitions (times of significant change) can be difficult for all children and young people but can be especially so for those special educational needs and disability including visual impairment. The professionals working alongside the child or young person and their family will identify ongoing and new needs prior to the transition and ensure support arrangements are in place.

Below are some points of change that will need special consideration:

- into Reception
- into Key Stage One
- from primary to secondary school
- into Key Stage Four
- into further education
- to a new teacher or support professional
- to a new school
- to independent living
- to training or employment
- to adult services

We have listened to children and young people with special educational needs, including visual impairment and their families and those who work with and support them. They recommend the following guidance at times of change of phase of education:

- prepare well in advance, even several years beforehand for a move to further education, training or employment
- ensure that parents and young people have enough information to make informed choices
- ensure information on strengths, difficulties and effective support is shared in advance with all those who will be contact with the child or young person
- plan the first weeks following change very carefully and ensure the child or young person has a 'buddy' and named member of staff or work colleague to support them any issues that may arise.
- ensure channels of communication with parents are agreed e.g. home-school booklet, email contact, mobiles. Pre-empt and address any possible difficulties that might be foreseen due the child or young person's particular type of needs.
- Use structured approaches to conversations with children, young people and families – as part of excellent communication at all times.

### **Transition support for children and young people with a visual impairment**

At different stages in your child's life additional support and guidance is available for your child and you. The aim is that we work with you and the school/setting to navigate challenging times such as moving from home to a pre-school setting. We call these transition periods and use a grid as a guide for support. The Sensory Support Team will support you, your child and your child's school/setting through transition periods.

Other times of transition, or change that will need careful consideration and possibly specialist support include:

- moving to a new home
- moving in or out of hospital care
- moving in or out of Looked After care
- through a change in family circumstance
- through bereavement

Parents and young people are invited to discuss these changes with the professionals who they are most in contact with (e.g. the visitor, GP, school nurse, children's centre worker, early years setting or school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) or college learning support

staff). They will work alongside the child or young person and family to plan actions to help them through the changes. They will also be able to signpost to any other specialist support where relevant. Information on specialist support at these of change can be found on the Cambridgeshire Local Offer [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send)

For information on transition events run by Pinpoint please see their website [www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](http://www.pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) or contact them by email at [information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](mailto:information@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk) or telephone 01480 499 043.

Further information on preparation for adulthood and transition to post 16 education, employment and training can be found in the section 16- 25 years.

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/preparingforadulthood](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/preparingforadulthood)

# Training and support for professionals

## The workforce in the local authority

With the help of parents, carers and professional partners, the local authority have developed a set of [Additional and Special Educational Needs and Disability Competencies](#) (the knowledge and skills expected of the local authority workforce who work with children, young people and families) These are reflected in the local authority induction programme for new staff and in continuing professional development. In addition, services organise in-house and external training tailored to the needs of their service e.g. Social Care, Locality Teams, Looked After Children and SEND Specialist Services.

## The workforce in schools, early years, Further Education (FE) and other settings

The local authority **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Specialist Services** provide a range of professional services for children and young people and families in a wide variety of educational and community settings. A multi-professional service (consisting of psychologists and educational professionals) offer schools and settings a bespoke approach to removing barriers to learning (including academic, social and emotional barriers).

Additionally SEND Specialist Services, offer a range of packages that schools and settings can commission. They work collaboratively with schools, drawing upon theory and research of 'what works' to develop an understanding of complex situations. The current offer can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether)

Further information about the support to schools and settings from SEND services can be obtained by contacting the numbers below:

East Cambs and Fenland area	01353 612 802
Huntingdon area	01480 373 470
South Cambs and City area	01223 728 311

The local authority **Learning Directorate** offer courses, conferences and briefings around whole school improvements. A number of these have a specific focus on improving provision for children and young people with additional and special educational needs and disability. The current offer can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether)

# And finally

This document is intended as an initial guide to provision for visual impairment needs in Cambridgeshire. For further information and wider topics relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability, we invite you to refer to the Cambridgeshire County Council website [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send) or if you would prefer to speak to someone, please see the contact details in the box below.

We welcome your thoughts and comments on provision for Cambridgeshire children and young people with visual impairment and their families. We are keen for young people, parents, carers and professionals across services to become involved in decision making about current and future provision. To find out some of the many ways to get involved please go to [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/send) or contact one of the services at the end of this section.

We look forward to hearing from you

We appreciate your comments about what is good about this resource and what could be improved. Please contact the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategic Development Manager, Teresa Grady at [teresa.grady@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:teresa.grady@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)