

# A PLACE TO START - WORKING WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON WITH A SENSORY IMPAIRMENT

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Date: February 2018

## Introduction

This document forms part of the Mainstream Training Pack.

Other documents in the Mainstream Training Pack suite include:

- A place to start – Top 10 Tips<sup>1</sup>
- Advice and checklist for technology<sup>2</sup>
- Hearing impairment case study<sup>3</sup>
- Visual impairment case study<sup>4</sup>
- Multi-sensory impairment case study<sup>5</sup>

Planned additions to this pack for 2018 include:

- Accessibility plans
- Examples of quality-first teaching

## Purpose

The purpose of the Mainstream Training Pack is to improve the confidence and basic skills of mainstream or special school staff who are working with children and young people with a sensory impairment. The advice in this pack does not replace the advice and support your local sensory support team will provide.

In addition to your specialist sensory support team being your first port of call, it is vital you speak to the young people involved in order to find out what they find most useful and supportive. In the meantime, this quick reference checklist and guide is here to help you check some of the basics.

## Add details of your specialist sensory impairment team here...

Role	Name	Email or Phone number
Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (ToD)		
Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment (QTVI)		
Qualified Teacher of Multi- sensory Impairment (QTMSI)		

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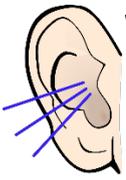
<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/mainstream-training-pack/1319-getting-started-teaching-pupils-who-have-sensory-impairment>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/mainstream-training-pack/easy-access-technology>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/mainstream-training-pack/1394-hearing-impairment-case-study>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/mainstream-training-pack/1395-vision-impairment-case-study>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/mainstream-training-pack/1396-multi-sensory-impairment-case-study>



## Working with a child or young person with a hearing impairment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. General environmental considerations

- Is the listening environment in the classroom good? Is there minimal pupil/background noise? Your Teacher of the Deaf should provide you with a list of what makes a good listening environment.
- Is the pupil sitting in a good position in relation to the main speaker? (Does the pupil have an aided/better side?). Please note – it is not always best to sit right at the front as this can make lip reading more difficult due to the angle.
- It is also important to consider the fall and direction of natural and artificial light. You should not stand with light behind you, either from a window or interactive whiteboard as it makes it very hard to lip read.

### 2. Resources including equipment

A child or young person with a hearing loss may have some of the following pieces of equipment. Equipment may be funded and provided by a range of sources: the local sensory impairment team will provide support and advice on their use. Knowing what equipment you have in the room and how it works can help the lessons run more smoothly.

- Hearing Aids** – A hearing aid is a digital processor that amplifies speech amongst everyday environment sounds and makes them louder. Some achieve this through boosting the sound coming into the ear and some do this by transmitting vibrations to the skull; and some do this through the use of implants inside the inner ear.
- Cochlear Implants** – A cochlear implant is a type of hearing aid that converts sound into electrical signals. Cochlear implants are for children who would gain limited or no benefit from conventional hearing aids. Instead of simply making sounds louder, the cochlear implant provides a sensation of speech which is manipulated and represented as small electrical stimuli within the cochlea. The auditory system is then trained to interpret these as speech.
- Radio Aid System** - A radio aid works by making the sound the deaf child or young person needs to hear, such as the teacher's voice, clearer in relation to unwanted background noise. A radio aid system consists of a transmitter microphone, worn by a teacher for example, that sends a wireless signal to a receiver worn by the student. It is important to mute the radio aid if you are not directly talking to the child with a hearing loss.
- Soundfield System** – This uses loudspeakers that are fitted in a classroom and are linked to a microphone worn by the teacher. This allows the teacher's voice to be heard more clearly over the general noise of a classroom for the benefit of all the pupils.

### 3. Curriculum Delivery

As well as using the relevant equipment and resources, and checking the environment, some simple strategies to support the delivery of the curriculum can help.

- Gain the student's attention before important information is given.
- Keep background noise to a minimum.
- Keep speech at a natural speed.
- Always face the student when speaking and keep hands away from mouth.
- Do not limit use of rich and varied language – trying to stick to short words and restricted vocabulary can limit natural speech patterns and full meaning.
- Allow more thinking time. Do not expect the deaf student to be able to listen and copy from the board at the same time. It is impossible to lip read, listen and look at the board at the same time.
- Model and teach active listening along with signals for when careful listening is required.
- Repeat contributions from other students – their voices may be softer and speech less clear.
- Occasionally check that oral information/instructions have been understood by asking open questions - not just asking if they understood.
- Write key or new vocabulary on board particularly for teaching introductions and conclusions to lessons.
- Divide listening time into short chunks.
- Use visual aids to support understanding.



## Working with a child or young person with a vision impairment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. General environmental considerations

- Is the environment in the classroom good? Your Vision Impairment teacher should provide you with a list of what makes a good visual environment.
- Is there good lighting? And is it coming from the appropriate side/direction? E.g. does the teacher have his or her back to the window?
- Is the pupil sitting in a good position to use his/her equipment and to see visual information?
- Does he or she have better vision on one side? Is he or she seated accordingly?
- Are all non-technical adaptations in place? E.g. enlarged work materials if applicable.

### 2. Resources and equipment

A child or young person with a vision impairment may have some of the following pieces of equipment which may have been provided and set up by the local sensory impairment team. Knowing the equipment you have in the room and how it works can help the lessons run more smoothly and enable the young person to have optimum access.

- Non-technical resources such as appropriately enlarged materials. Your Vision Impairment team can provide exact advice on the required size, font and colour of font and background.
- Access to auditory resources as applicable.
- Mobility aids.
- Laptops are predominantly used to improve visual access by providing enlarged text, screen reading software, access to interactive whiteboard images and work, touch typing.
- iPads and tablets have multiple uses. Mainstream uses include access to text books, reading material, magnified calculators and interactive whiteboards. Other uses include visual stimulation and visual skill development.
- Electronic Braille Machines – having learnt to Braille on a Perkins, many students will progress to an electronic Braille machine which has a refreshable Braille display and which functions as a mini-computer, saving work and providing access to the internet in some models.

### 3. Curriculum Delivery

As well as using the relevant equipment and resources, and checking the environment, some simple strategies to support the delivery of the curriculum can help:

- Take advice from specialist teams related to font style and size.
- Give as many first hand 'real' multi-sensory experiences as possible.
- Try out different paper/Smartboard colours to try to find best contrast.
- Avoid shiny surfaces which may reflect light and cause dazzle.
- Short spells of visual activity should be interspersed with less demanding activities.
- Children/young people with a vision impairment should have their own copy of materials.
- Avoid unnecessary copying from the board.
- Where copying is required provide copies of board work printed out at the appropriate print size.
- Always use verbal explanations when demonstrating to the class. Read out aloud as you write on the board.
- Address the student by name.



## Working with a child or young person with a multi-sensory impairment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. General environmental considerations

Your Qualified Teacher for Multi-sensory Impairment should provide you with a list of what makes a good visual, auditory and communicative environment for the MSI child in your class.

- Is there good lighting?
- Is there any concern about glare or reflection? On the desk, interactive whiteboard, resources, equipment?
- Is the child in the correct seating position? – See your QTMSI for individual advice
- Is work modified appropriately?
- Consider background noise and vibration.
- Consider classroom acoustics.

### 2. Resources/Equipment

A child or young person with a multisensory impairment may have some of the following pieces of equipment which may have been provided and set up by the local sensory impairment team with involvement from other professionals. Knowing the equipment you have in the room and how it works can help the lessons run more smoothly and enable the young person to have optimum access.

- Support from an intervenor, if one is present, is crucial to enable access to the curriculum.
- Use of non-technical adaptations such as enlarged paper resources, individual objects of reference, personal timetable systems etc.
- Use of mobility aids.
- iPads and tablets and apps have numerous uses. They are predominantly used to improve access to near and distant visual information. This may include textbooks and interactive whiteboards in mainstream classrooms. In special schools this may be to provide visual stimulation and early visual skills development.
- Use of sensory equipment and strategies – such as following a sensory diet as part of the daily routine and using ‘fiddle’ toys as necessary.
- Switch Access - Single message switches may be used for gaining attention or stepped message switches for scaffolding interaction to experience the two way aspect of communication. These are usually issued in liaison with Speech and Language Therapists.
- Vibrating speakers and other devices e.g. Apple Watch. Speakers that can be stuck to surfaces to make the whole surface vibrate, effectively turning sounds into tactile vibrations that can be felt. Devices like the Apple Watch can aid and improve independence and mobility with the correct support and training.

### 3. Curriculum Delivery

As well as using the relevant equipment and resources, and checking the environment, some simple strategies to support the delivery of the curriculum can help:

- Minimise unwanted distractions (auditory, visual, tactile, vestibular and olfactory).
- Provide a tidy, well organised classroom with clear labelling of resources.
- Use a personal signifier to identify yourself.
- Remember all behaviour is communication. What is the young person telling you?
- Use of appropriate communication methods at all times.
- Pace communication to allow for processing time.
- Use routine and consistency to support understanding.
- Provide real life learning with real objects and experiences whenever possible. They need to learn directly as incidental learning is not possible.
- Pre-teaching and reviewing the task will take account of the learner processing information at a different rate.
- Break any tasks into manageable chunks and allow the child or young person to have sensory breaks as applicable. A sensory break may be a calming or rousing activity, as per their sensory diet, which enables the child or young person to regulate their senses and continue to work on focused tasks.

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