

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 003544
Date 3 May 2019

Habilitation Services for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment.

Request:

Please can you provide answers to the following questions regarding the local authority's provision of habilitation services for children and young people (CYP) with **vision impairment** only. By habilitation we mean support and training in orientation, mobility and independent living skills.

Service delivery

1. a) How are habilitation services commissioned? (Please indicate the option that applies):

How are habilitation services commissioned	Please tick the option that applies
A local authority department is commissioned to deliver the service (please go to question 1b)	
An external organisation is commissioned to deliver the service (please state the name of the organisation)	✓ Guide Dogs UK
Services are spot purchased	
Other (please state)	
This service is not commissioned (please indicate what alternative support is provided instead)	

- b) If the service is commissioned to be delivered in-house, which department is responsible for delivering the service? (Please indicate the option that applies):

Department	Please tick the option that applies
Children and Family Social Care Services	
Education (Sensory Team)	
Education (General)	
Adult Social Care	
Other (please state)	

- c) Between financial years 2016/17 and 2018/19 have there been any changes to how habilitation services are commissioned? (For example, has the service changed from being internally to externally commissioned, or has the local authority department responsible for delivering the service changed.)

No

If 'Yes', please provide further details:

- d) Are there plans to change how habilitation services are commissioned in 2019/20? (For example, are there plans to change from an internally to an externally commissioned service or, will the local authority department responsible for delivering the service change.)

Yes

If 'Yes', please provide further details:

The existing contract is for 3 days per week and ends in October 2019. The retender will change to 39 weeks per year instead of 48 weeks per year provision. This is as a result of a consultation with CYP and families who asked for predominantly term time support with some out of term time access. We found that when we offered appointments in holiday periods, the take-up was disappointing. It also means that supervision and lone worker policies are more in line with our normal working practices.

Also, it reflects a need to make cost savings as since the original contract was agreed the market day rate for the service is projected to increase by 32% whereas the available budget has only had a small percentage increase. The changes should mean that if the projected increases are accurate, we can sustain the 3 day per week provision of habilitation service whilst absorbing some of the costs.

- e) If 'Yes' to c) and/or d), were parents and stakeholders engaged with when the changes were made, or are there plans to engage with stakeholders? (Please select all that apply):

Stakeholder	Engaged with when changes were made (c)		Plans to engage with on future changes (d)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Parents/carers	✓			
CYP with vision impairment	✓			
Internal staff	✓			
General public		✓		
Voluntary sector		✓		
Schools and Education Settings		✓	✓	
Other (please state)				

Comments:

2. What was/is the allocated budget for the delivery of habilitation services for the following financial years (please provide like for like budget data, if this is not possible please indicate why):

Financial year	Total budget
2016/17	£18,000
2017/18	£18,000
2018/19	£18,000
2019/20	£18,000

Comments:

3. a) Please indicate whether habilitation support is provided to the following age groups:

CYP group	Yes	No	If 'No', please outline what alternative support is available
0-4 (Early Years)	✓		
5-11 (Primary School)	✓		
12-16 (Secondary School)	✓		
17-19 (College)	✓		
19-25	✓		

- b) Please indicate what habilitation support is available to CYP in each age category. Please note that this does not mean that every child will receive this support, but that the local authority provides or commissions this support (please select all that apply):

Type of support	0-4 (Early Years)	5-11 (Primary school)	12-16 (Secondary school)	17-19 (College)	19-25
To family and carers (inc. those in 'looked after' settings)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent living skills (in the home)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Early Movement skills	✓	✓			
Long cane training in public Spaces (such as on the pavement, on public transport, high street, shopping areas etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Learning of routes between home and education setting		✓	✓	✓	✓
Transitions, as learners move between key education settings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long cane training in an education setting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Route planning in an education setting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other (please state)					

- c) Between financial years 2016/17 and 2018/19, were there any changes to the habilitation support available to any of the following age groups? (If 'Yes', please provide further details of the changes and the reasoning why):

CYP group	Yes	No	If 'Yes', further detail / why
0-4 (Early Years)		✓	
5-11 (Primary school)		✓	
12-16 (Secondary school)		✓	
17-19 (College)		✓	
19-25		✓	

- d) Are there plans to change the habilitation support available to any of the following age groups in 2019/20? (If 'Yes', please provide further details of the changes and the reasoning why):

CYP group	Yes	No	Unknown	If 'Yes', further detail / why
0-4 (Early Years)		✓		

5-11 (Primary school)		✓		
12-16 (Secondary school)		✓		
17-19 (College)		✓		
19-25		✓		

- e) If Yes to c) and/or d), were parents and stakeholders engaged with when the changes were made, or are there plans to engage with stakeholders? (Please select all that apply):

Stakeholder	Engaged with when changes were made (c)		Plans to engage with on future changes (d)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Parents/carers				
CYP with vision impairment				
Internal staff				
General public				
Voluntary sector				
Schools and Education Settings				
Other (please state)				

Comments:

4. Please provide information on the structure of the team responsible for delivering habilitation services to CYP with vision impairment:

Position/role	Number of staff (FTE) delivering habilitation support in the following financial years		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Habilitation Manager			
Senior Habilitation Officer			
Habilitation Officer	✓	✓	✓
Habilitation Assistant			
Other (please state)			

Comments:

The service is delivered by a Qualified and Registered Habilitation Specialist in coordination with the Team Leader of the Visual Impairment Team who is a Qualified Teacher of Visually Impaired.

Eligibility for habilitation support

5. What is the eligibility criteria for a CYP to access habilitation support? (Please indicate as many as apply):

Eligibility criteria	Yes	No
The CYP must have an Education and Health Care Plan to access habilitation support		✓
The CYP must be registered as severely sight impaired to access habilitation support		✓
The CYP must be registered as sight impaired to access habilitation support		✓
Other (please state if 'Yes')	✓	

Comments:

Children and young people have to have a medically diagnosed eye condition and meet the criteria for support as determined by the habilitation specialist in discussion with the Team Leader Vision Team. They must meet the criteria for support with reference to the NatSIP Eligibility Criteria for Habilitation and be resident in the council tax boundaries of Wolverhampton and or attending an educational setting in Wolverhampton and in the case of independent schools and further education establishments have agreed a service level agreement or fees for the service to be delivered. In most cases the CYP will already be known to the VI team.

Referrals and assessment

6. Please indicate where referrals for an initial assessment of habilitation needs are accepted from. (Please select as many as apply):

Profession	Yes	No
Medical professionals	✓	
Qualified Teachers of Children with Vision Impairment (QTVIs)	✓	
Parents/carers	✓	
Young people	✓	
Other (please state)	✓	

Comments:

The initial referral will be dealt with by the Team Leader Vision Team and in discussion with the Habilitation Specialist a decision made as to whether the CYP would be eligible for an assessment based on the previously mentioned criteria above. As mentioned previously, in most cases a hab referral is not a stand alone referral as the CYP will already be known to the VI team and this explains the low number of new referrals for hab assessment.

7. Please indicate who the initial assessment of habilitation needs is conducted in partnership with. (Please select the option that applies for each category):

Stakeholder	Always	Never	Sometimes
QTVI	✓		
Other education professionals (please state which education professionals)			✓ setting staff, Educational Psychologists.
Parents/carers	✓		
It is not conducted in partnership			
Other (please state)			✓ therapy staff e.g. occupational therapist

Comments:

8. a) Is the progress of the CYP receiving habilitation support monitored?
Yes
- b) If 'Yes', if needs are not being met as assessed are the habilitation needs of the CYP reassessed?
Yes

If 'Yes', please provide an overview of the process and attach a copy of any relevant policies.

Comments:

If a CYP is found to have habilitation needs, targets are devised by the habilitation specialist and where appropriate with the CYP, their parents/carers and or supporting staff in education, to meet these needs. These targets are informally reviewed on an ongoing basis and formally reviewed twice each academic year, with new targets or revisions to targets provided as required.

Some children and young people who are making progress and have good levels of independence are monitored in line with eligibility criteria and may move down, up or off caseload as their needs require.

Demand

9. How many CYP were referred for an initial assessment of habilitation needs and how many received habilitation support in the following financial years:

Financial year	Number of CYP with VI referred for an initial assessment of habilitation needs	Number of CYP with VI who received habilitation support
2016/17	5	41
2017/18	7	40
2018/19	6	35

Comments: