

Further information about other factors that influence the Sensory Support Service proposals

The purpose of this summary is to provide additional information about wider drivers to service change.

Earlier Diagnosis: Babies are being diagnosed within a few weeks of birth and referred to the Sensory Support Service. This means that children are identified early and known to local area services.

Technology: Significant advances e.g. cochlear implants, magnification applications (apps), dictation technology and screen to speech reading technology enable children and young people (CYP) with a sensory impairment to access the learning environment more easily and further develop independence skills.

Informed choice: Government and local policies empower parents, carers and CYP to make their own choices e.g. where to go to nursery, school or college and which communication approach will ensure they are much more involved in decision making

Increased numbers of CYP in mainstream education: We have seen this trend since 2003 and we want to continue to promote it; through parental choice, targeted support and improving technology to allow greater access to the curriculum

Fewer numbers of young people and adults with sensory impairments entering employment: The Local Offers for supported internships, apprenticeships, traineeships and other post 16 options for young people with sensory impairments across the four areas are being developed and updated to address this reduction. A Local Offer sets out in one place information about the provision that local authorities expect to be available across education, health and social care for CYP with SEND in their area.

National Deaf Children's Society 'Hands Up for Help' campaign is requesting more teachers of the deaf to improve the ratio of deaf CYP on specialist teachers' caseloads. The national average is 1:43; Bristol's ratio is 1:50.3. The campaign is also advocating more say for families in how local provision is developed.

RNIB's 'Into Employment' campaign: Providing employers with the resources to help them be more knowledgeable and confident so they can better recruit and retain blind or partially sighted staff. We will also be challenging employers on the stereotypes of about the types of jobs blind and partially sighted people can do.

RNIB's 'Our Futures' Matter' campaign: Continued work with the Young Vision Alliance to ensure increased habilitation training access, workforce development and specialist curriculum support in line with national standards. Habilitation training involves developing personal mobility, navigation and independent living skills. This starts at home and continues as a child progresses through all the phases of education

More effective and efficient use of resources: In the current climate we need to use all resources more efficiently and apply them more effectively so that all CYP get the support that they need, with the same level of resources being maintained.

More equitable spread of provision across the joint authority areas: Support for CYP and their families can be more flexible and evenly spread across all joint authority areas by improving local offer information and by improving access to the sensory support and third sector services.

Flexible resources to meet individual needs: CYP who require infrequent but intensive support need a flexible Sensory Support Service so that appropriate help can be given to those CYP as well as those who need regular support.

High Needs Block funding pressures: In December 2018, the Department for Education announced additional funding of £100m specifically for SEND provision in existing schools. This took local capital funding to £365m for the period 2018-2019 to 2020-2021. Local authorities are using the funding to create new places, improve facilities as well as funding support for CYP who have SEND. Bristol, BANES, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset councils, along with 80 other local authorities in the UK have over-spent High Needs budgets. However, all four authorities have committed to not reducing any funding for the Sensory Support Service or the number of qualified specialist teacher posts, but we need to make the best use of the resources available and ensure they deliver maximum impact and educational achievement for CYP who have sensory impairments.