



Pre-school children who have a sensory impairment and complex needs

A leaflet for professionals

Children & Young People's Services

Durham
County Council



What is the service for children who have a sensory impairment and complex needs?

We are part of County Durham's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team which helps children who have a **visual and/or hearing impairment**. The service for children who have a sensory impairment and complex needs works specifically with children who, as well as having problems using their vision and/or hearing, have other problems which makes learning very difficult for them. These may be physical disabilities which make movement difficult, or perhaps difficulties in communicating and understanding what is happening to them or medical difficulties all of which may impact on the child's development. If the child is experiencing this kind of disability then our service can help.

Where are we?

We work from a base at Belmont CE (Controlled) Primary school, Durham and we work across the whole of County Durham for children and young people from 0-16 or up to 25 years if the young person has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

How to refer a child to us?

Anyone can refer to our service a child who has a sensory impairment and complex needs: doctors, social workers, health visitors or parents themselves. Please talk to the families and seek permission to send in a referral to our service using the contact details at the back of this leaflet. We will then contact the family and keep you informed of our work.

How do we work?

Within our service we have teachers with additional qualifications for working with children with visual and/or hearing impairment. We also have a Senior Specialist Support Worker (SSSW) who has lots of experience working with children with a wide range of needs. When we are working with pre-school children we usually work with the child and parent/carer at home. Sometimes we may be able to use local facilities in a school or health centre nearby which it would be beneficial for your child to use. Following referral from health professionals we will contact the family to introduce our service and explain how we can help.

What do we do?

It is important that we have the relevant information to support our work, so that we understand what the child can do and what they may find difficult. We will work with the child and family to assess their needs, this process of assessment takes time. The Qualified Teacher of Visual Impairment (QTVI) or the Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) or SSSW will discover what she needs to know through playing with the child and introducing activities or experiences which are enjoyable and carefully chosen for the child. All young children learn through play, and that is no less true of children who have physical or sensory difficulties.



The teacher will assess the child's abilities and needs and develop a programme of activities for him/her.

The teacher will support families to access the right educational placement at the appropriate time for the family.

What about the other professionals who are involved?

We aim to link in with the professionals who work with the child such as Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapists to enable us to understand the child's other needs which are supported by these professionals. This helps us provide a shared understanding of the child's needs and helps us co-ordinate our help in the best way for the child and family.

Contact:

**Children and Young People's Services
SEND and Inclusion Service
Sensory and Physical Team**

Belmont CE (Controlled) Primary School
Buckinghamshire Road
Belmont
DH1 2QP

Telephone: **03000 264 530**

Email: **CYPSSensoryteam@durham.gov.uk**