



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Paper

Paper 76/14

21 May 2014

NIAR 334-14

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Services for Children with Visual Impairment

1. Summary

Visual impairment is defined as sight loss that cannot be fully corrected using glasses or contact lenses. It is estimated that 2 million people in the UK live with visual impairment. Of these, approximately 365,000 are registered as blind or partially sighted.¹

The education contexts for the provision of visual impairment services are becoming increasingly divergent in the four UK countries since education has been devolved.² Although policies vary across the United Kingdom common themes are emerging across the four countries; the Royal National Institute of Blind People stresses the importance of:

- Developing alternatives to statements of special educational need, building on person-centred planning approaches.
- Bringing together education, health and social care provision through integrated planning and commissioning of services.
- Planning for children and young people from birth through to 25 years of age to improve transitions.
- Focusing on outcomes for children, rather than inputs, which requires evaluation of the impact of services.
- Better experiences for children and their families based on greater choice and control.

The system of referral and services provided varies not only between the various jurisdictions but *within* jurisdictions. There have been a variety of benchmarking exercises carried out in the respective countries, but the variety of methodologies adopted makes comparison challenging.

Responses from government officials suggest that waiting time, subsequent to referral, for visual impairment support is approximately 2 weeks in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The situation with regard to waiting time is less clear in England and Wales.

The Education and Training Inspectorate reported on the provision for pupils with visual impairment in mainstream schools in 2012. The report indicated that provision in Northern Ireland is of a very good standard overall.³

¹ NHS Website: Available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/Visual-impairment/Pages/Introduction.aspx

² RNIB (2013) *Children and young people RNIB Evidence-based review* London

³ The Education and Training Inspectorate (2012) *Report Evaluation on the Provision for Pupils with Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools*: ETI

2. Northern Ireland

2.1. System of Referral

The system of referral varies across the five Education & Library Boards (ELBs). The Southern Education and Library Board and the Eastern Education and Library Board only accept referrals from their Special Education Department **or** from medical professionals. It is argued that this policy ensures that a child who is referred has a diagnosed Visual Impairment (VI) and meets criteria for support from the Visual Impairment Service.⁴

The Belfast Education and Library Board; North Eastern Education and Library Board and the South Eastern Education and Library Board operate an open referral process. In addition to the referring agents mentioned above these boards also accept referrals from a variety of other sources including:

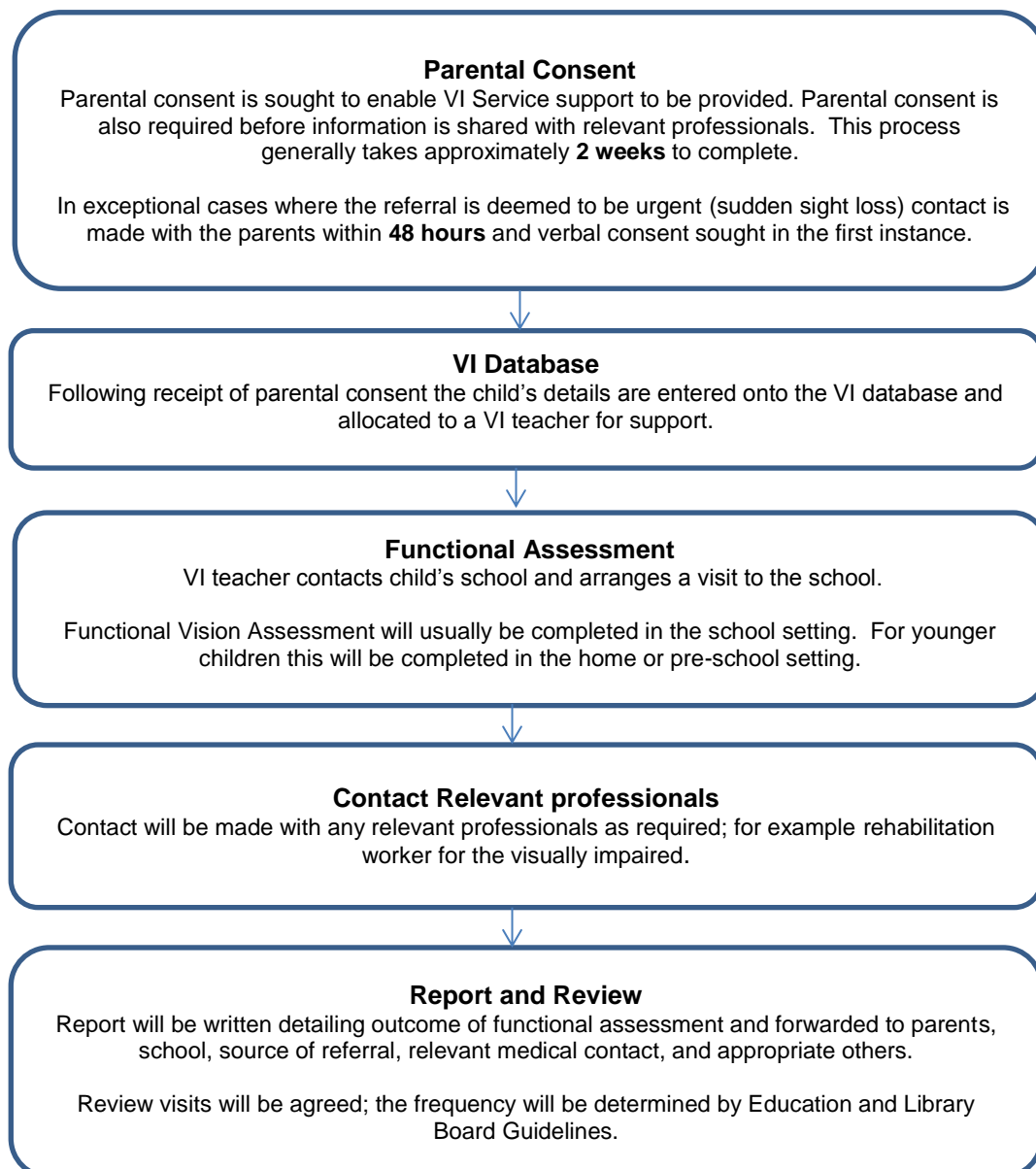
- parents
- schools
- social workers
- rehabilitation officers
- educational psychologists
- health visitors
- school nurses
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- SENSE

It should be noted that while three of the Boards accept referrals from a broader variety of sources (listed above) they will not provide support to the school until confirmation of VI has been received from medical professionals.

Following referral to the Visual Impairment Service the procedures outlined in Figure 1 are followed across all ELBs.⁵

⁴ Information provided by VI Support Services Northern Ireland

⁵ Information provided by the Department of Education

Figure 1: Referral Procedure

2.2. Waiting Times

There are no waiting lists; speed of response is largely dictated by the time it takes to receive parental consent and clinical information. Where a referral arrives during school holidays, time-scales are, of necessity, longer. The Department of Education states that in particular situations where multi-agency support is required timeframes may vary.⁶

⁶ Information provided by the Department of Education

2.3. Nature of Services Provided

The Department of Education indicates that the nature and level of provision is determined by the specific individual needs of each child at any given time. Frequency of contact, from annual monitoring to more regular input, is primarily dependent upon the nature and severity of the child's functional vision and is in accordance with agreed inter-board support guidelines.

It is worth noting that the level of support may increase/decrease at various stages throughout the child's education and may be influenced by factors such as:

- Ability to cope in academic, emotional, independence and organisational terms
- Absence of a classroom assistant / a new classroom assistant
- Additional difficulties and / or developmental delay
- Family circumstances
- Introduction of assistive technology
- Involvement of other support services
- New referrals
- Staff/pupil ratio
- Sudden onset and /or fluctuating or deteriorating conditions
- VI caseload and staffing levels

2.3.1. The Visual Impairment Service Pre-school Support

The Visual Impairment Service (VIS) works in partnership with parents to provide appropriate visual stimulation activities. They give advice on suitable toys and resources appropriate to age and needs of child. Advice is also available regarding development of independence, mobility and pre-braille skills. The VIS also supports parents when seeking Nursery school placements.

2.3.2. The Visual Impairment Service Schools Support

The VIS advises schools on:

- the educational implications of eye conditions
- appropriate learning & teaching materials
- specialist resources, equipment and assistive technology
- access to the NI curriculum
- Education/Intervention Plans

- special arrangements for examinations and assessments
- use of multi-sensory room (Special Schools)

The VIS also performs Visual Functioning Assessments and provides Assistive Technology. The organisation delivers training for teachers and classroom assistants and provides careers advice for students. VIS staff complete Environmental Audits and support pupils teaching Braille and Moon. They also deliver training in the use of specialist equipment.

The Department of Education points out that teachers of visually impaired children meet on a termly basis. At these meetings teachers share good practice, undertake relevant training and meet with relevant professionals. The meetings are said to contribute to the consistency of service provision for children with VI across the 5 Education and Library Boards and ensures that staff are kept up to date with developments in this area.

Teachers also liaise with a range of medical professionals and may, for example, attend Paediatric Low Vision Clinics or be involved in Multi-Disciplinary Vision Assessment Clinics for children with additional needs.⁷

2.4. Assembly Questions

Ministerial responses to Northern Ireland Assembly Written Questions can be found in Appendix 1.

2.5. Benchmarking of Service Provision

The Department of Education states that the individual Education and Library Board (ELB) services for the visually impaired children are not in a position to compare themselves to each other.⁸

However, as part of the evaluation process within each Board, questionnaires may be sent to schools receiving VI support to evaluate the quality of the service and resultant outcomes for the pupils involved. The feedback is used to inform future planning and development of the Service.⁹

Some ELBs collate examination data for pupils who are supported by the Service on a termly or more frequent basis. Doing so enables them to monitor and analyse progress of the pupils concerned. Board Services also have a Service Development Plan which is monitored on a regular basis. It is argued that this helps staff to identify areas of success and others requiring further development.¹⁰

⁷ As above

⁸ As above

⁹ As above

¹⁰ Information provided by the Department of Education

The Department of Education comments that formal benchmarking of results between schools may not be considered to be desirable or workable in relation to VI Services. This is because *advice* regarding *access* issues surrounding assessment, rather than the *teaching of subject content*, is the most common support provided. Indeed, added value in this instance may be acknowledged by a child, young person, teacher and/or parent, if not necessarily in any quantifiable manner.

The Department of Education states that, for many of these children, success is measured in terms of emotional and social progress. This can be indicated by the acquisition of independence and social skills.¹¹

The Education and Training Inspectorate reported on the provision for pupils with visual impairment in mainstream schools in 2012. The report indicated that provision in Northern Ireland is of a very good standard overall.¹²

3. Scotland

3.1. Referral and Waiting Time

Local government in Scotland comprises 32 local authorities, responsible for the provision of a range of public services. Each local authority is governed by a council, which is independent of central government. State schools are owned and operated by the local authorities, which act as Education Authorities.¹³

Education Scotland explains that the referral process for visually impaired children varies across the 32 education authorities in Scotland. However, referrals mainly come through the National Health Service (NHS), either from community paediatricians or from eye services in hospitals. In some cases, referrals come from schools or early years establishments, such as nurseries.¹⁴

Waiting times also vary across Scotland's local authorities. However, Education Scotland indicates that the time period between referral and service provision is usually less than two weeks.

3.2. Services

Education services for visually impaired children differ across Scotland depending on the education authority. Factors which influence the choice of provision include:

- the nature and severity of the visual impairment
- the level of support the child will require

¹¹ Information provided by the Department of Education

¹² The Education and Training Inspectorate (2012) Report Evaluation on the Provision for Pupils with Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools : ETI

¹³ Scottish Government website: Available at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/localg

¹⁴ Information provided by Education Scotland

- parental choice
- services available within the local authority

Some children attend their local mainstream school and receive support from a peripatetic (travelling) teacher of the visually impaired. Others attend a specialist unit within mainstream schools or a special school. Scotland has one grant aided special school for visually impaired: The Royal Blind School in Edinburgh (see section 3.4).¹⁵

Education Scotland indicates that children with visual impairment should be assessed by a mobility specialist, sometimes called a habilitation specialist. Again, habilitation services vary across local authorities.

3.3. Service Provision Example: Aberdeenshire Council

Due to the variety of service provision for visually impaired students across Scotland's local authorities it may be useful to exemplify by outlining the services available in a particular administrative area; Aberdeenshire Council.

The Sensory Support Service is a peripatetic teaching service, consisting of the Vision Support Service and the Hearing Support Service, based in Westhill Academy. Teachers travel throughout Aberdeenshire to support pupils, mainly in their local schools, but also in pre-schools or in the family home.¹⁶

Referrals to the Sensory Support Service (SSS) can be made by parents, teachers and other professionals, but only with the consent of the parent. After referral, the Sensory Support Service reports a minimal waiting time for the delivery of services; a short delay can result from the practicalities of organising a visit from one of the practitioners.

A member of the Vision Support (VS) Team carries out an initial assessment to determine the level and type of support required. This is followed by a written report; a copy of which goes to parents.

3.3.1. Intervention

Three levels of support are provided, depending on the needs of the child.

Stage 1: The Sensory Support Service is consulted on how to support a pupil with a visual impairment but any actions required are carried out by school staff.

The visual support teacher:

- Advises the Head Teacher about reasonable adjustments to the school environment
- Suggests strategies for the class/subject teacher to implement

¹⁵ As above

¹⁶ Aberdeenshire Council (2007) *Working Together to Support Sensory Impairment* Aberdeen: Aberdeenshire Council

- Provides vision awareness for staff and pupils
- Provides specialist resources and advice on their use
- Contacts the school annually to monitor the pupil's progress

Stage 2: The school staff work in collaboration with the Sensory Support Service. The support teacher provides regular support on a termly, monthly or weekly basis (depending on the child's level of need). There may also be input from a mobility officer for a short period.

Stage 3: The Sensory Support Service provides support on a full time basis in collaboration with other agencies. Pupils requiring this level of support have significant impairments. One to one support is provided in the form of a teacher, communicator or auxiliary.

3.4. The Royal Blind School Edinburgh

The Royal Blind School works in partnership with local authorities to deliver programmes to support pupils with visual impairment. This includes making provisions for those who attend the school and those attending mainstream or special schools across the United Kingdom.

3.4.1. Short Term Placements at the Royal Blind School

Pupils attending other schools can attend the Royal Blind School for periods which may range from one day to several months, as appropriate. As well as giving children access to services it presents young people the opportunity to socialise with other pupils who are visually impaired.

3.5. Service Benchmarking: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education

Education Scotland states that service benchmarking is provided by the inspection system. Since 2006, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) has inspected approximately 15 schools and units making provision for children and young people with visual impairments.

In general, inspectors found that the schools and units were performing with *important strengths* or better in meeting the learning needs of those with visual impairments. HMIE identified some examples of *very good and outstanding* practice. The work of visiting teachers for those with visual impairment was mentioned as a major strength in reports on mainstream schools.

Some aspects for development were recommended for some schools and units for the visually impaired. However, Education Scotland reports that children and young people with visual impairment are very well supported by the various services in almost all

schools, units and centres across Scotland. The Royal Blind School in Edinburgh was inspected during May 2014 and the report will be published in August 2014.

4. England

4.1. Services and Referral

Similarly to Scotland, access to services differs across the country. In some places the local authority (LA) provides services directly, while in others this is contracted out to local and national voluntary organisations. This leads to variations in how referrals are made and how assessments are undertaken as well as in what services are made available.

A 2013 benchmarking report indicated that 89% of LAs use the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) criteria (or a modified version) to determine eligibility for VI service support. The NatSIP criteria combine levels of need with professional assessment and can be viewed at the following URL:

http://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/component/docman/doc_download/193-iec-vision-impairment-version-2?Itemid=64

However, a small number of LAs use a pupil's level of visual acuity (VA) as the only criterion for eligibility for specialist VI support. The report argues that this risks excluding children with good VA but with other types of visual difficulty.¹⁷

The Assembly research paper *Visual Impairment and Educational Attainment* (NIAR 335-14) explains the concept of visual acuity in greater detail.

The Child Health Promotion Programme published in April 2008, and updated in 2009, recommends that all children aged between four and five years should be screened for visual impairment by an orthoptist-led service. There is an 18-week referral to treatment target which applies to consultant led treatment.

Data on waiting times for children's ophthalmic services was not available at the time of writing, although some statistics, including total numbers of eye tests carried out for children (0-15) and students (16-18) can be on the Health and Social Care Information Centre website at:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB11233>

4.2. Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

The current special educational needs code of practice provides detail of provision for children with sensory needs. It states that children with these needs may require some of the following:

- flexible teaching arrangements

¹⁷ Keil (2014) *Local authority Vision Impairment education service provision for blind and partially sighted children and young people*: Report on findings from RNIB FOI requests 2013

- appropriate lighting
- adaptations to the physical environment of the school
- adaptations to school policies and procedures
- access to alternative forms of communication
- access to low vision aids
- regular and frequent access to specialist support

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice is available at the following URL:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-sen-code-of-practice

In 2013 the Department for Education and Department of Health began consulting on a new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The results of the consultation are currently being analysed.

4.3. Parliamentary Questions

Appendix 2 details Parliamentary Questions with reference to visual impairment services.

4.4. Benchmarking¹⁸

In 2013 Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) sent a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to all 152 local authorities (LAs) in England. The LAs were asked about current and future education provision for children with vision impairment (VI). The aim of the FOI request was to benchmark existing provision in each LA against future policy decisions. The report concludes that many VI services have been adversely affected by public sector cuts.

The full report can be accessed at the following URL:

<http://dl.groovygecko.net/anon.groovy/clients/rnib/FOI-education.doc>

Some of the findings of the benchmarking exercise include:

- Almost 25,700 blind and partially sighted children and young people were on VI service caseloads in 2013.
 - This is over 12,500 more than the number of pupils recorded by Department for Education as having vision impairment as their primary or secondary SEN.

¹⁸ Keil (2014) *Local authority Vision Impairment education service provision for blind and partially sighted children and young people*: Report on findings from RNIB FOI requests 2013

- Since April 2011, 25 LAs (17%) have reduced or withdrawn specialist VI service support for certain groups of children and young people.
 - The two groups most affected are pupils with complex needs in special schools, and children whose level of vision impairment is no longer considered to be of sufficient severity to meet the criteria for VI service support.

5. Wales

5.1. System of Referral

The Education Act 1996 places the duty on local authorities (LAs) to provide suitable education for all pupils, including those who have a Special Educational Need (SEN). The SEN Code of Practice for Wales offers practical advice to LAs, schools, early years settings and others in carrying out their statutory duties to identify, assess, refer and make provision for children with SEN.¹⁹ It is worth noting that VI is not synonymous with SEN. The SEN Code of practice can be found at the following URL:

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/special-education-needs-code-of-practice/?lang=en>

Coordination between the local VI service (Qualified Teacher in Visually Impairment or QTVI), Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and class teacher takes place to identify the learning support needs.

The Department stresses that any learners with VI and their parents are pro-actively engaged at all stages of the planning and review processes. This also applies to professionals from other agencies and voluntary sector organisations that have an involvement with the learner. Personalised approaches, based on individual assessments are planned and implemented '*promptly*' and monitored and reviewed '*regularly*'.

Where learners with VI continue to not make expected progress, alternative and more intensive approaches should be employed and referral to other specialised services should be considered.

5.2. Waiting Times Associated with Service Provision

The Welsh Government does not hold data specifically for services for school children with visual impairment however it does have waiting times data for "ophthalmology".²⁰

Below is a link to the referral to treatment waiting times data table which shows the ophthalmology data: <https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/v/UF9>

¹⁹ Information provided by the Department for Education and Skills

²⁰ Information provided by the Department for Education and Skills

5.3. Nature of Services Available

The Department for Education and Skills states that improving services for people with poor eye health and sight loss has been high on the agenda in Wales ever since devolution.

Together for Health: Eye Health Care – Delivery Plan for Wales 2013-2018 sets out a range of key actions to improve the eye health of all children and adults in Wales.

A link to the Delivery Plan is below:

http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/strategies/eye_plan/?lang=en

Some of the key actions relevant to children and young people outlined in the Delivery Plan for Wales 2013-2018 are listed below.

Welsh Government commits to:

- Work with Health Boards, special schools, nurses and optometrists to develop a service to ensure children in special schools are offered an annual sight test in school.
- Develop national, external quality assurance for vision screening in mainstream schools including monitoring of uptake and outcomes and standards of training for nurses and assistants.
- Work with the orthoptic lead for children's vision screening to improve the quality of children's screening - including reviewing training, equipment and monitoring in light of national standards.

5.4. Benchmarking of Service Provision

In 2012 a research project entitled '*A clear vision*' – eye care for children and young people in special schools in Wales was undertaken. The report concludes that the eye care of pupils in special schools is being neglected.

The report's key findings are:

- Over one third of pupils have never had a sight test
- Only 6% of pupils have visual problems recorded in their Statement of Special Educational Need as a primary or secondary need. However, this project found that one in five pupils have a visual impairment that is likely to impact on their education.
- Over 50% of all pupils need spectacles, whereas only 30% had previously had them prescribed. Some children without glasses have high levels of long or short sight.

- The study suggests that at least one fifth of pupils with low vision could have normal vision with spectacles

The project report can be found at the following URL:

www.vision2020uk.org.uk/core_files/A_clear_vision_E_.pdf

Appendix 1: Northern Ireland Assembly Written Questions

AQW 30245/11-15

Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley 27/01/2014

(DUP - Fermanagh and South Tyrone)

Question: To ask the Minister of Education to outline the timescale for a cross-departmental review into the provision of habitation services in blind and visually impaired children and young people.

Answer: As part of the Action Plan 2014-2016 contained in the Royal National Institute of the Blind's Vision Strategy for the north of Ireland, Visually Impaired sector organisations have agreed to pursue a statutory review of habilitation services for blind and partially sighted children including referral pathways.

AQW 25022/11-15

Mr Chris Hazzard 27/01/2014

(SF - South Down)

Question: To ask the Minister of Education what consideration he has given to the introduction of a dedicated habilitation service within the education sector for young people who are partially sighted or blind.

Answer: My response to AQW 25021/11-15 outlined my Department's current policy with regard to children and young people with a visual impairment.

At present, the Department of Education has no plans to introduce a dedicated habilitation service for children and young people with a visual impairment.

AQW 25021/11-15

Mr Chris Hazzard 04/07/2013

(SF - South Down)

Question: To ask the Minister of Education what consideration he has given to a cross sectoral review, in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on services to blind and partially sighted children and young people.

Answer: At present the Department of Education's (DE's) policy focus regarding children and young people (CYP) with a visual impairment (VI) is on implementing the policies already in place for raising standards and tackling barriers that CYP with a VI may face in fully accessing the curriculum.

To this end, DE continues to support the Royal National Institute of the Blind's (RNIB's) Vision Strategy for the north of Ireland through membership of the Vision Strategy Steering Group. This Group is made up of members from across the Health, Social Care and Education spectrums.

In practical terms, this involved the formation of four Priority Action Groups (PAGs) tasked with meeting the priorities arising from the Strategy. PAG 3 deals specifically with Education and Employment and includes representation from DE, the Department for Employment and Learning, Education and Library Boards (ELBs), Health and Social Care, the special school sector, voluntary organisations and service users.

In light of the above policy approach, I do not consider it necessary, at this stage, to undertake a cross sectoral review specifically with DHSSPS.

AQW 24728/11-15

Mr Chris Hazzard 26/06/2013

(SF - South Down)

Question: To ask the Minister of Education whether he is aware of any link between poor eyesight and educational underachievement.

Answer: While my Department has not carried out any specific detailed research into a link between poor eyesight and educational underachievement it remains committed to raising levels of attainment for all pupils, including those with a visual impairment (VI). I was therefore pleased to note the endorsement of the support being offered to pupils with a VI in the Education and Training Inspectorate's "Report of an Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with a Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools in Northern Ireland", published in 2012, which found provision for VI in mainstream schools to be very good. The report also found that the Education and Library Board's (ELBs) provided a very good standard of support to those with a VI.

Each child with a VI has unique needs and teachers of children with a VI will provide tailored advice to meet the pupil's individual learning needs so that the curriculum can be fully accessed.

Where a visual impairment prevents a child from fully accessing the curriculum, ELBs will address this through the statutory assessment and statementing process.

AQW 24727/11-15

Mr Chris Hazzard 26/06/2013

(SF - South Down)

Question: To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures his Department takes to assess pupils' eyesight at primary and post-primary level.

Answer: In line with national guidelines, all children in Northern Ireland, between the age of 4 and 5 years, undergo vision screening. Therefore, all children in Primary 1 are offered a vision screening test by School Nurses. In addition all "movement-in" children from Primary 2 to Primary 7, with no previous vision recorded on the Child Health Surveillance system (CHS), are also offered this vision screening test.

The vision screening service is carried out primarily to detect children with amblyopia, a form of cerebral visual impairment, and is orthoptic led within Secondary Care.

A screening service is not provided for post primary children. If there is any concern about a child's eyes or vision after the P1 vision screening, whether at primary or post primary level in school then the GP should be contacted or an eye test arranged with an Optometrist.

AQW 7448/11-15

Mr Alex Easton 01/02/2012

(DUP - North Down)

Question: To ask the Minister of Education to outline his Department's strategy for helping children who are blind with reading skills.

Answer: My Department has a range of policies in place to enable every child to learn to read. These include the school improvement strategy, the literacy and numeracy strategy and the revised curriculum and its assessment arrangements.

I recognise that pupils who are blind or have a visual impairment need additional support with their reading. That is why my Department is continuing to support the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) Vision Strategy.

In support of the Vision Strategy, my Department is providing funding for the Regional Vision Resource Base (RVRB) at the Fortwilliam Centre, Belfast, which I was delighted to open back in June 2011.

I was pleased to note that the Education and Training Inspectorate’s “Report of an Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with a Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools in Northern Ireland”, published on 2 February 2012, found provision for visual impairment in mainstream schools to be very good. The report also found that the ELBs provided a very good standard of VI support.

Appendix 2: Parliamentary Questions: Visual Impairment Service Provision

The following recent PQ responses set out general position in England with regard to prevention and treatment of visual impairment:

Visual Impairment: Children

Mr Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department holds on the proportion of children aged 4 and 5 years who have received screening for visual defects since 1 April 2013; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure such screening is provided universally across England in line with the recommendations of the UK National Screening Committee. [193330]

Dr Poulter: Data on the number of children aged four to five years who have received screening for visual defects since 1 April 2013 is not held centrally.

On 21 November 2013 the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) recommended that all children between four to five years of age should continue to be screened for vision defects by an orthoptist led service. Vision defects include amblyopia, refractive error and strabismus. The UK NSC agreed that more work was needed to improve the consistency and quality of current services. The Programme Director for the UK NSC is working with the Department to consider how to inform and guide best practice across England.

[HC Den 27 Mar 2014 c371W]

Health: Ophthalmology

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to tackle avoidable visual impairment. [HL3160]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Earl Howe) (Con): Early detection is essential to tackling avoidable visual impairment. A range of treatment and services is in place in the National Health Service to deal with the key causes of avoidable visual impairment. The provision of free sight tests for children, older people and those at risk of eye disease remains central to our plans; with 12.3 million NHS sight tests provided in England in 2012-13. A comprehensive programme of diabetic retinopathy screening in England has ensured that in the 12 months up to March 2013, 99% of people with diabetes were offered screening. The NHS continues to provide a range of successful treatment for cataracts, wet age related macular degeneration and glaucoma. The Public Health Outcomes Framework for 2013-16 will include an indicator on avoidable visual impairment. This will support commissioners in planning eye care services for local populations.

[HC Deb 7 Nov 2013 WA70]