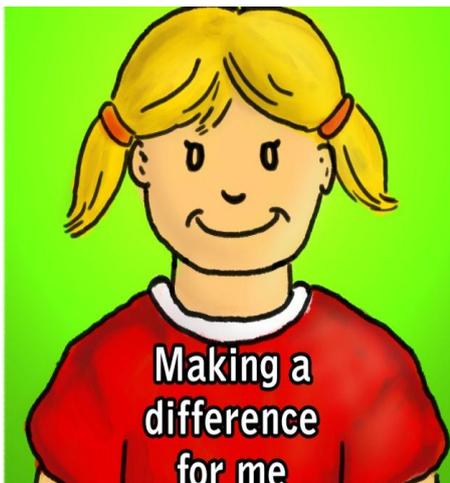


Information for Children/Young People: Brent VI Service



Introduction

This booklet is written for parents of children/young people with vision impairment (VI) and offers information about the services that may be provided by the Vision Impairment (VI) Service as part of their Local Offer. Local Offers vary between local authorities but this is what you should be able to expect from your LA's service.

About the information in this booklet

The booklet is made up of 11 pages.

The support you may receive from the Service can be divided into eight groups called 'Learner outcome categories' and these are illustrated in one signpost image on page 3. The eight outcome categories are the things that you may require to help you to take part in lessons, to be able to do things on your own and to feel included in your setting.

Following this the next 8 pages illustrate each of the eight outcome categories and summarise **What, Why** and **How** the services are delivered to help you to achieve the outcomes. We have included quotes from other children and young people with VI telling us why they think these outcomes are important.

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**Learning to
access**

**Use of
equipment**

**Independence
& negotiation
skills**

Participation

**Meeting
others**

**Getting
around**

**Looking after
him/herself**

**Life after
school**

**Your eight
learner
outcomes**



Learning to access

Outcome description: This means you have the skills to be able to do your school work on your own. For example:

- If you are a print reader you can use your Low Vision Aids (LVA) to help you to read your school work
- If you are a Braille reader you have really good tactile skills to access both Braille and tactile graphics
- You can use your listening skills to help you to access your work
- You can organise your school work, e.g. your folders, files

What we will do:

A specially trained person called a Teacher of Children and Young People with Vision Impairment is responsible for looking after your support and for making sure your teachers know how to help you. They will:

- Carry out an assessment of what you need to access the curriculum
- Work with you and find out what would help you in lessons
- Teach you specific skills, depending on what you need to learn, e.g. Braille, touch typing, IT skills

Why: We want you to have the same access as other children and young people. We think it is important that you learn some specific skills to enable you to do this. This will mean you can:

- Take part in lessons and complete your work on your own
- Select the best way to complete a task that you are doing. E.g. whether to use your LVA, your computer, your Braille skills

“In classes I would have **preferred less support**..... I would have been a lot more independent.” (Young person with VI)

How: We will:

- Talk to your teachers to make sure they know how they can help you
- Support you in lessons, but only if you need it
- Adapt your books and worksheets. E.g. Braille or large print
- Teach you some important skills so that you can take part in lessons on your own and be independent. This might be how to use the computer, screen magnification, speech access, how to touch type

Using equipment

Outcome description: This means you can use equipment to access school work on your own. It also means you are able to choose which equipment to use when. For example when to use:

- Assistive technology
- Standard equipment with accessibility options
- Low vision aids (LVAs)

What we will do:

We will teach you the skills you need to be able to use your assistive technology and equipment on your own. E.g. Tactile skills, listening skills, keyboard shortcuts, speech access. We will teach you how to choose which equipment to use and when.

Why: Having the right equipment is important for you as it helps to give you the same access as other CYP. It provides ways for you to access, record, store and retrieve information independently.

Being able to use assistive technology is even more important when you leave school and move onto college or university and the skills will also help you to get a job. “The best way is to let a student try the technology – trial the different approaches and let them try the different options.” (Young person with VI)

How:

Low Vision Aids

We will make sure:

- We work with you to understand what LVAs you need
- You have the LVAs that you need
- We plan with you to find the best way for you to use your LVAs in school
- You have ongoing LVA training

Assistive Technology

We will make sure:

- We work with you to understand what you need
- You have the equipment you need
- You have a specific training to help you to use your equipment

Independence and Negotiation Skills

Outcome description:

- You are able to explain your vision impairment to other people and tell them what you need to help you and you can say what you want to happen if you want something to change
- You can choose what to do when things don't work out as you expected and you know what steps to take to improve it
- You know where to go to find things out if you need help

What we will do:

Teach you the skills you need so that you can speak for yourself and:

- Explain your vision to others and what you need to help you
- Join in when your teachers are talking about your support
- Be able to choose the best approach to take when things don't work out as you expected
- Know where to find things out for yourself and what choices are available to you

Why:

We think it is important that you learn how to stand up for yourself so that you can explain your vision to others and tell them what you need and what works best for you. Being able to speak up for yourself is even more important when you leave school and go to college or university or, when you start to look for a job. "My teacher was very good at helping me to organise what I wanted to say to my teachers - to prepare for meetings."
(Young person with VI)

How: We will teach you some skills so that you can access the curriculum independently and know how to speak up for yourself.

We will assess what you need to access the curriculum independently and we will work with you to make an individual plan. This may include teaching you some visual, IT, Braille, tactile or multi-sensory skills.

We will help you to recognise your strengths and write a script about your vision impairment to help others understand what you need.

Participation

Outcome description:

- You can take part in all parts of school life and feel included
- You feel confident when mixing with other children and young people and can make and keep friendships
- You can join in activities outside lessons

What we will do:

We will teach you what you need to know to take part in a conversation with your friends and the best ways to join and take part in a group conversation, either with your friends or when you are talking to your teachers or other adults.

Why:

It is important for you to feel included both in and out of the school/setting, to have friends and be able to get on with other children, young people and adults that you meet in a variety of situations.

- It is important that you have the skills to know how to interact and talk to others and that you know what to do/say if someone behaves negatively towards you. Young people told us they want the same things as other children and young people of the same age – to enjoy the same activities and to have friends

How:

By:

- Helping you to think about times with your friends or when you are around your school/setting that you find easy or that you would like to find easier
- Including you in writing a social and emotional well being plan, to support you
- Teaching you the skills to take part in social situations. E.g. how to start a conversation and how to maintain it by asking questions or making responses

Meeting others

Outcome description:

You have opportunities to meet with other children and young people with VI.

You have the opportunity to experience a range of recreational and leisure activities and you have the skills to take part in the activities that you are interested in.

What we will do: We will provide opportunities for you to:

- Meet with other children and young people with VI
- Experience a range of recreational and leisure skills which are appropriate for your age and needs
- We will teach you the skills needed to participate in specific leisure activities suited to you

Why: While you may have lots of fully sighted friends, it can sometimes be rather lonely being the only blind or partially sighted child or young person in a school. It can be helpful to have another group of friends (peers) who are children or young people with VI as it provides the chance for you to share experiences as well as tips and strategies with each other.

- While it is possible to make your sports lessons easier for you to take part in, you may like to try out specialist sports such as goal ball, blind cricket or football. This gives you a chance to meet and make friends with other children and young people with VI
- Meeting and getting along with others is a really useful skill for later in life, which you can do through taking part in sports and clubs
- Young people told us how social media is a good way to keep in contact with or meet new friends

How: By providing:

- Opportunities to meet other children and young people with VI within your area
- Information for you about local/regional/national events for children and young people with VI. E.g. sports and social activities/holidays provided by local and national voluntary organisations
- Sessions to prepare and teach you any skills you might need to take part in the activities

Getting around

Outcome description:

- You have the skills to get around familiar places by yourself
- When you leave school you have the skills to travel on your own
- You are able to meet your friends outside of home
- You know how to get help if you get stuck

What we will do:

We will provide special training called 'mobility training' which will help you to be independent and get around on your own.

Why:

Being able to get around and travel on your own is important when you make the move from school to college/university or when you get a job. It means you can be independent when you become an adult.

We know it is important for you to start learning these skills as early as possible so that you are used to them and you can do them easily - they become 'second nature.'

Young people told us they wished they'd taken their mobility training more seriously when they were at school because they realised how important it was when they went to university.

How:

A specially trained person called a Mobility Officer or Habilitation Specialist will work with you to find out what will help and they will teach you the skills you need. These skills will enable you to move around on your own. This may include:

- Thinking with you about what you need at home or school, or any other place you visit regularly to help you move around
- Teaching you some specific skills e.g. cane skills, bus/train travel, road crossing and routes to and from school, routes around school, safe play or access to your local area

Looking after yourself

Outcome description:

You can look after yourself and carry out everyday living activities that are suitable for your age.

What we will do:

Our Mobility Officer/Habilitation Specialist will work with you to find out what would be helpful. They will plan a programme with you and provide training for you. It could include things like, looking after your money, doing your laundry, personal care, going shopping, cooking meals.

Why:

It is important that you can do the same things as your friends and not rely on other people to do it for you.

It is important that you learn the skills to manage by yourself in preparation for when you leave school and go to college /university – especially if you plan to live away from home.

Although this may all seem a long way ahead, it's important that you learn the skills that you will need while you are still at school.

Young people told us that they wished they had been taught earlier. They thought everyday living skills should be taught from primary school – that way they would become second nature.

How:

By providing:

- An opportunity to think about the everyday living skills that are important to you and be involved in making a plan which will help you
- Individual programmes, which will teach you the skills you need. It may include: shopping, laundry, cooking, personal finances, personal hygiene, shaving and applying makeup, hair care, dressing appropriately for different occasions, information on benefits, bus travel concessions, advice and provision of equipment to help you at home or at school

Life after school

Outcome description:

As you approach the time to move on from school you know what support is available to help you at college/university or in getting a job and how to apply for it.

What we will do:

We will support you at transition to ensure the setting or place you are moving to understand your needs and know how to meet them.

Why:

We think it is important that you plan ahead and that you have the right information to make informed choices; this means you can receive the right support in college or at university and complete your studies and education.

How:

By providing:

- An overview of the type and amount of support you may require at your next setting
- A transition action plan, which says what preparations need to happen. It may include the following:
 - Environmental audit and recommendations
 - Accompanying you on visits to possible settings
 - Mobility programme, to teach you independent travel skills to and from college/university/work
 - Liaison with the Learning Support Department to discuss your needs
 - Everyday living skills training
 - Support at career guidance meetings and events
 - Information and links on Social Care Services, 'Access to Work,' financial support for students, Personal Independence Payment