

ANNUAL REPORT 2025 -2026

Specialist Inclusion Support Service

SENSORY AND PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT TEAM (SPI)

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1. STAFFING Structure 2025-2026

Hearing Impairment	Vision Impairment
We work with children and young people referred to the team who have a diagnosed hearing loss and are most likely to have been fitted with hearing equipment by an audiology clinic. We work with children and young people from birth until leaving school.	We work with children who have a significant medically identified vision impairment which has an impact on their access to education
Multi-Sensory Impairment	**Physical Disability**
We work with children who have dual sensory loss (hearing and vision) which combined affects a child's communication, mobility (orientation) and ability to gain information. The team also supports children whose additional needs have impacted upon their development and who require a similar type of specialist support.	We work with children who have a long term medically defined physical disability which has an impact on their access to the curriculum and their ability to be involved in school life. We provide support to improve access to buildings and facilities and to ensure pupils can access the curriculum. We support their social and emotional well-being.

Current Snapshot of staffing

Total Staff	Total FTE	Vacancies
14	10.9 FTE	0

Staffing

Specialist Area	FTE	Number of Staff	Vacancies
Team Manager / Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	1.0	1	0
Assistant Team Manager / Qualified Teacher for Multi-Sensory Impairment	0.7	1	0
Qualified Teachers of the Deaf (including Educational Audiology provision)	1.7	3	0
Qualified Teachers for Vision Impairment	1.6	2	0
Specialist Teachers for Physical Disabilities	1.6	2	0
Inclusion Support Practitioners (including Audiology Technician)	4.3	6	0

Total	10.9 FTE	14	0

Key workforce strengths 2025/2026

"Excellent knowledge and advice, good communication and working with individual pupils." School respondent in survey.

- Full staffing establishment maintained throughout the year.
- No vacancies across specialist teaching or support teams, although a retirement notification has created a future planning vacancy opportunity for the following academic year.
- Specialist expertise retained, across Hearing Impairment, Vision Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment and Physical Disability services.
- Continued provision of Educational Audiology / Audiology support from Audiology Technician.
- Continued professional developmental opportunities across team
- Auditory Verbal Therapist – Foundation Stage gained
- Leadership capacity maintained through Team Manager and Assistant Team Manager roles whilst also retaining direct specialist caseload responsibilities.

Workforce Risks and Priorities for 2026/2027

Priorities:

- Replacement of 0.5 FTE Inclusion Support Practitioner Capacity

Although the service currently reports no vacant posts, 0.5 FTE Inclusion Support Practitioner capacity was not filled due to the SISS Review process.

- Recruitment of 1.0 FTE Teacher of Vision Impairment

To be deployed when the teacher retires in October 2026, this means supporting training costs for the redeployment of another SISS teacher in light of the current SISS consultation.

- Continued development of Auditory Verbal Therapist (AVT) Capacity

After the successful completion of AVT foundation stage last year, work was undertaken with children and the AVT Certified course begun. Following disruption to national AVT training provision, an alternative provider has been secured, and training will recommence in September 2026.

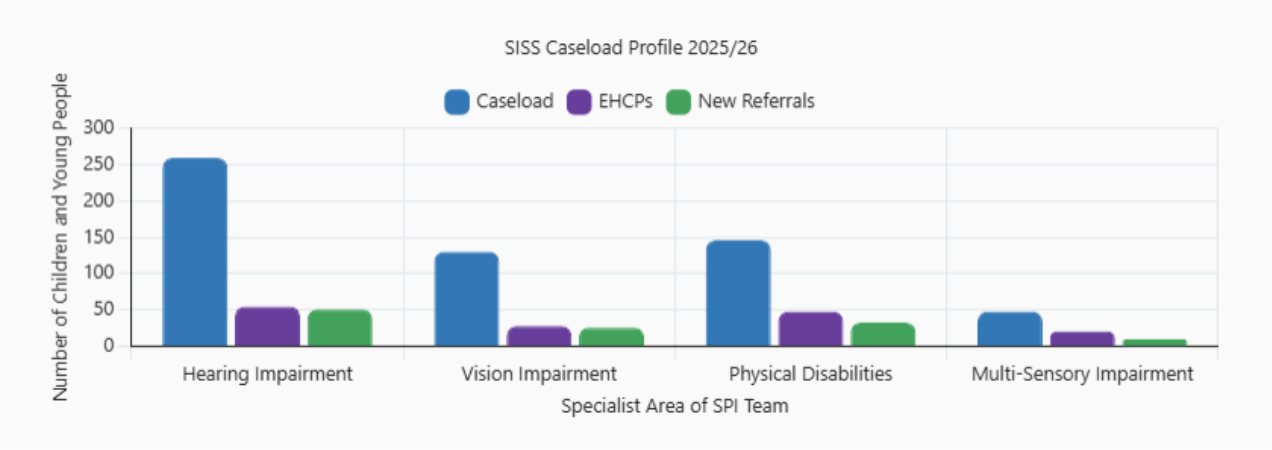
“Over the past year, I have seen first-hand the incredibly positive impact that AVT has had on our nursery pupil's development and progress. The specialist support

provided by the AVT Teacher and Inclusion Support Practitioner, alongside the parent has been invaluable, enabling the child to make significant progress in his listening, communication, confidence, and overall engagement with learning. The teacher's expertise is exceptional, and their advice, guidance, and practical strategies have been instrumental in helping us support him effectively within the classroom. Their ongoing collaboration and willingness to share their extensive knowledge have empowered both staff and family, ensuring a consistent approach that has enabled him to thrive. The progress he has made simply would not have been possible without their expert input, and I cannot overstate how much we value their continued support and dedication. We are looking forward to their continued support next year as we have another child coming to join us with a hearing impairment, so their services will be extremely beneficial and invaluable. Nursery Teacher of Child L, July 2026

1. CASELOAD INFORMATION

The SPI Team supported 583 children and young people during 2025/26, maintaining specialist provision across four impairment pathways while responding to increased referral activity.

Despite a reduction in overall caseload and EHCP numbers, new referrals rose by 7% (until 03/07/2026), with increasing complex needs, demonstrating continued demand for specialist expertise and the service's role in delivering early intervention, statutory support and inclusive educational outcomes across Solihull.

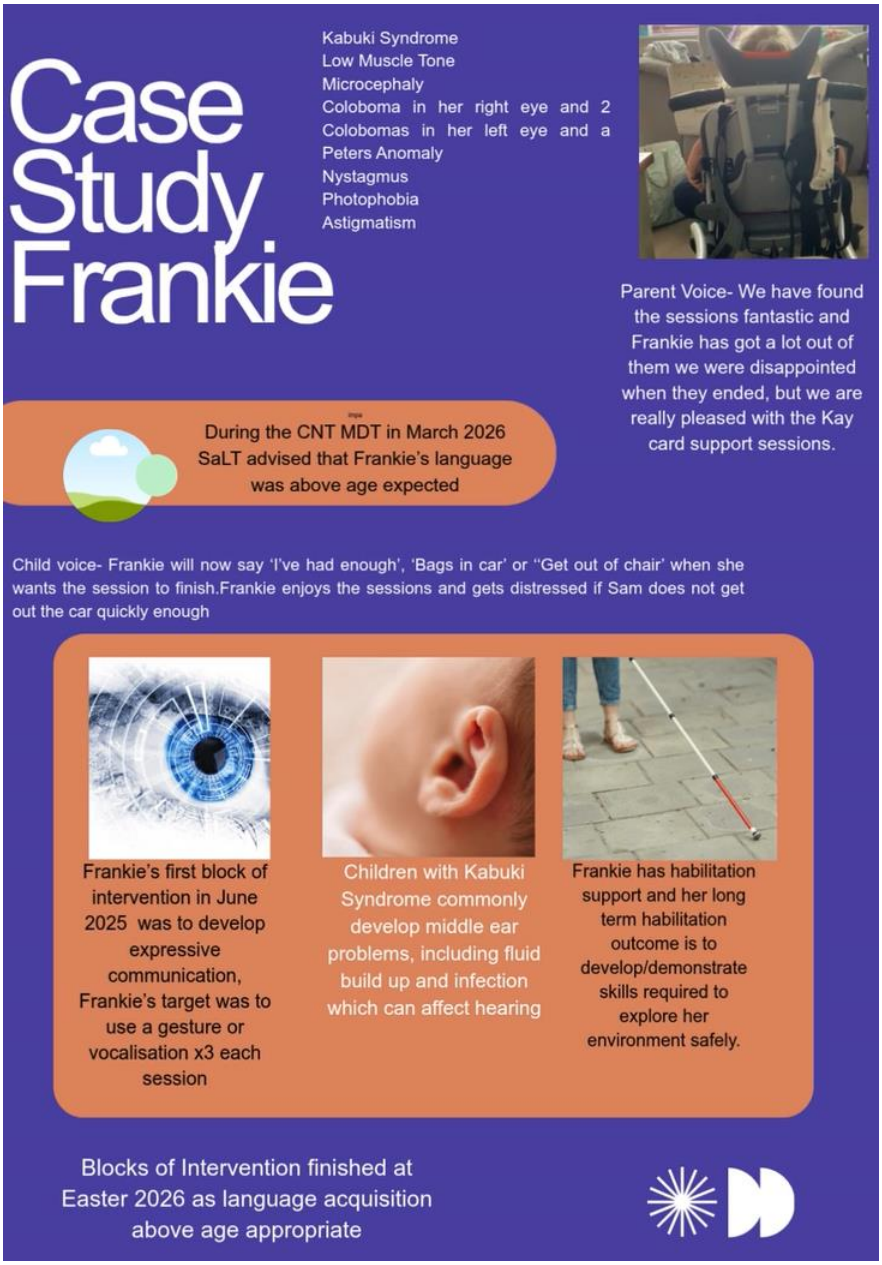


"A point of contact in a complex system, who has advocated for my child's needs." Parent quote from survey.

- **Hearing Impairment (HI)** remained the largest area of provision, accounting for 44% of the total service caseload.
- HI caseload referrals declined this year from 62 – 52 including one referral being declined because they did not meet threshold. However, the service continued to provide support to a significant number of referred children and young people across settings – including those with increasing complexities and higher hearing threshold losses.
- **Vision Impairment (VI)** was the only service area to experience growth in both caseload and referrals.
- New referrals increased by **62.5% this year[16 to 26]**, indicating growing demand for specialist vision support and intervention.
- Habilitation commissioning continues to be undertaken to strengthen service offer one day per week, also two individual child bespoke contracts are being monitored for outcomes.
- **Overall the Physical Disability (PD) service** caseload remained stable.
- Referrals increased by **74% this year [19 to 33]**, representing the largest referral increase across the specialist pathways.
- This suggests continued demand for specialist assessment, access support and advice for children and young people with physical disabilities.

- **Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)** remained the smallest, most highly specialist area of provision.

MSI Case Study.mp4



- Although caseload referrals reduced compared to last year, the team continued to deliver specialist support to children and young people with some of the most complex sensory needs.
- The Complex Needs Team (CNT) have had some of the most complex cases to date with the team continuing to work together (Speech and Language Therapist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, QTMSI and Pediatrician) to meet the holistic needs of all the CYP referred to the service.

2. KEY WHOLE TEAM DEVELOPMENTS

Throughout 2025/26, the Sensory and Physical Impairment team have continued to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement, actively seeking new ways to strengthen outcomes for children and young people whilst enhancing support for families.

Recognising that effective support extends beyond direct intervention, the team has continued to broaden its reach through a proactive programme of family engagement, information sharing and innovation – cross working with Early Years at transitional events, Library links[1], Community venues such as Fire Station, through the successful delivery of specialist groups such as Little OWLLS, Little Listeners and Physical Fun Time[2], enhanced online resources via Padlet[3], and the exploration of new assistive technologies including live captioning[4], the service has strengthened its capacity to empower families, children and young people, improve access to information and promote inclusive practice across educational settings.



"The team has been an integral part of my son's care." Parent, from survey.

[1] See appendix 1
[2] See Appendix 2
[3] See Appendix 3
[4] See Appendix 2

Triage Panels and Multi-Disciplinary working

Case study – Equipment Triage 3

June 2026

Child R– attending mainstream primary school

Why equipment?

EHCP Status: Yes (diagnosis and needs identified – Muscular Dystrophy)

- *Significantly reduced mobility, postural support*
- Access to appropriate toileting
- Requirement for adult supervision:
  - Within the classroom
  - During toileting
  - On the playground
- Requirement for **full-time 1:1 support** to access learning and achieve potential
- Supports inclusion despite complex needs to remain in mainstream

The case demonstrates how the Triage Panel has supported evolving needs over time while ensuring appropriate use of previously allocated funding.

PEN PORTRAIT

R has a diagnosis of congenital muscular dystrophy of the LMNA type – life limiting and life-threatening condition which is progressive!

Challenges / Difficulties Identified

- **Reduced mobility and physical deterioration** impacting independence and ability to access toileting
- **Ongoing safety risks** requiring constant adult supervision for movement, toileting, and playtimes
- **Significant barriers to accessing learning** without full-time 1:1 adult support
- **Need for specialist postural support**, with risk of discomfort and reduced engagement without appropriate seating, standing, hoisting/sling
- **Limited school resources and funding shortfall**, restricting ability to meet needs through existing provision Despite funding has also be gained via Continuing Health Care (CHC)

Financial Context

Support in Place

- 1:1 support school and CHC

School Funding vs Cost

- Notional SEN funding: £6,000
- Top-up funding (Band 2C)
- Deficit in 2023 so funding was agreed to purchase requested items
- May 2026 – total request was for £XXX.XX less underspend from 2023, revised to £XXX.XX for payment to meet needs.

Timeline of Key events

19/06/2023 – initial consideration via EHCP route – referred to triage panel that was set up to action

19/09/2023 – Funding Application at Triage panel – agreed – toilet seat reducer, folding hoist, Wombat chair2, standing frame (Lecky)

Late 2023/early 2024 – Folding Mobile Hoist was not purchased as equipment from Family Hub (hoist) was redistributed to meet needs at time

13/05/2026 – 2nd Triage Panel request – returning because of ongoing and evolving needs – new hoist for meeting standing frame needs and sling for toileting. A review of previous application and funding was made, and an adjustment payment was agreed for the equipment to be purchased to meet R's needs and keep him in a mainstream setting enabling inclusive practice, safe manual handling and dignity. The decision reflected good financial governance and a proportionate response to changing needs over time.

Panel Considerations and Learning from the Case - The request met all panel criteria for High Needs equipment funding

- The school had demonstrated a significant funding shortfall despite appropriate use of existing resources, professional evidence that the equipment being essential to maintain R safely in an educational setting – mainstream provision.
- Triage panel pathway was effective as an alternative EHCP escalation and offered timely intervention to meet ongoing needs from those who understood condition awareness and equipment need.
- Triage Panel was able to historic funding allocation and adjust accordingly
- Panel was able to ensure a more valued for money approach and accountability while supporting schools and children/young persons.

Other home equipment:

Leckey Mygo standing frame

Wombat chair at home

Awaiting SMBC OT assessment with birdie hoist for home use

Case study –
Sensory and Physical Team June 2026
Child R– attending mainstream primary school

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Pen Portrait

R has a diagnosis of congenital muscular dystrophy which is progressive and life-limiting condition. There has been considerable physical changes this year. R has weak muscles, is a wheelchair user and has to work hard to keep both neck and body upright.

PD Team involvement

- Moving and handling training for key members of staff.
- Hoist training for all staff involved with moving and handling.
- An ICT assessment and equipment was recommended and trialled, during the trial the equipment was adapted as his physical needs changed. This is continuing to be monitored closely and adapted.
- A block of intervention from the ISP in the PD team took place for 8 weeks to build on touch typing skills and an alternative word processing programme.
- Voice to text continues to be explored with R alongside the typing and AAC will need to be considered in the future.
- Regular contact was made between physiotherapy and occupational therapy in order to coordinate consistent support and advice, this included joint visits.
- Hoist and sling assessment arranged for suitable equipment to be used in school .
- Joint work with the physiotherapist to go over the transfers and the use of specialist equipment with school staff.
- The Manual Handling Risk Assessment plan was updated and shared with all parties. This plan includes safer systems of working to support personal care needs. This will continue to be reviewed regularly as R's needs change.
- Ongoing advice and future planning for the school timetable to accomodate access to specialist groups such as Red Boots and Acorns and manage fatigue.
- Attendance at Annual Review and TAF meetings.

Challenges/ Difficulties Identified

- **Reduced mobility and physical deterioration -** impacting on independence and ability to access all areas of school including toileting.
- **Fatigue** - this impacts on learning.
- **Ongoing safety risks -** requiring constant adult supervision for movement, toileting, access to learning and social times.
- **Significant barriers to access learning -** requiring fulltime 1-1 support and a medical care assistant as part of his Continuing Health Care Package.

Pupil Voice:

"I love playing with my friends and like coming to school. I want to do things on my own as much as I can in class"

Impact of PD involvement :

- Using IT has given an alternative to recording work alongside handwriting and helps to reduce fatigue.
- Safe working practice for all manual handling transfers.
- Adaptations in place for R to access the curriculum and PE.
- Advice, given for planning school trips, including risk assesments.

Parents Comments:

"This has been a tough year as there has been a lot of physical changes for R . I just want to make sure he is safe in school and his independence is encouraged. I feel the pieces are starting to fall in place and really happy with the support that is in place."

3. Training

Training and Workforce Development
During 2025/26, the SPI Team delivered specialist training across Hearing Impairment, Vision Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment and Physical Disability, supporting teachers, teaching assistants, SENCOs, leaders, therapists and early years practitioners.

Reach

- 64 staff attended Hearing Impairment training.
- 33 nursery children participated in Deaf Awareness activities.
- 5 health professionals attended Cortical Vision Impairment training.
- 2 specialist early years practitioners attended Multi-Sensory Impairment training.
- Physical Disability training included moving and handling, hoist training and Cerebral Palsy awareness.

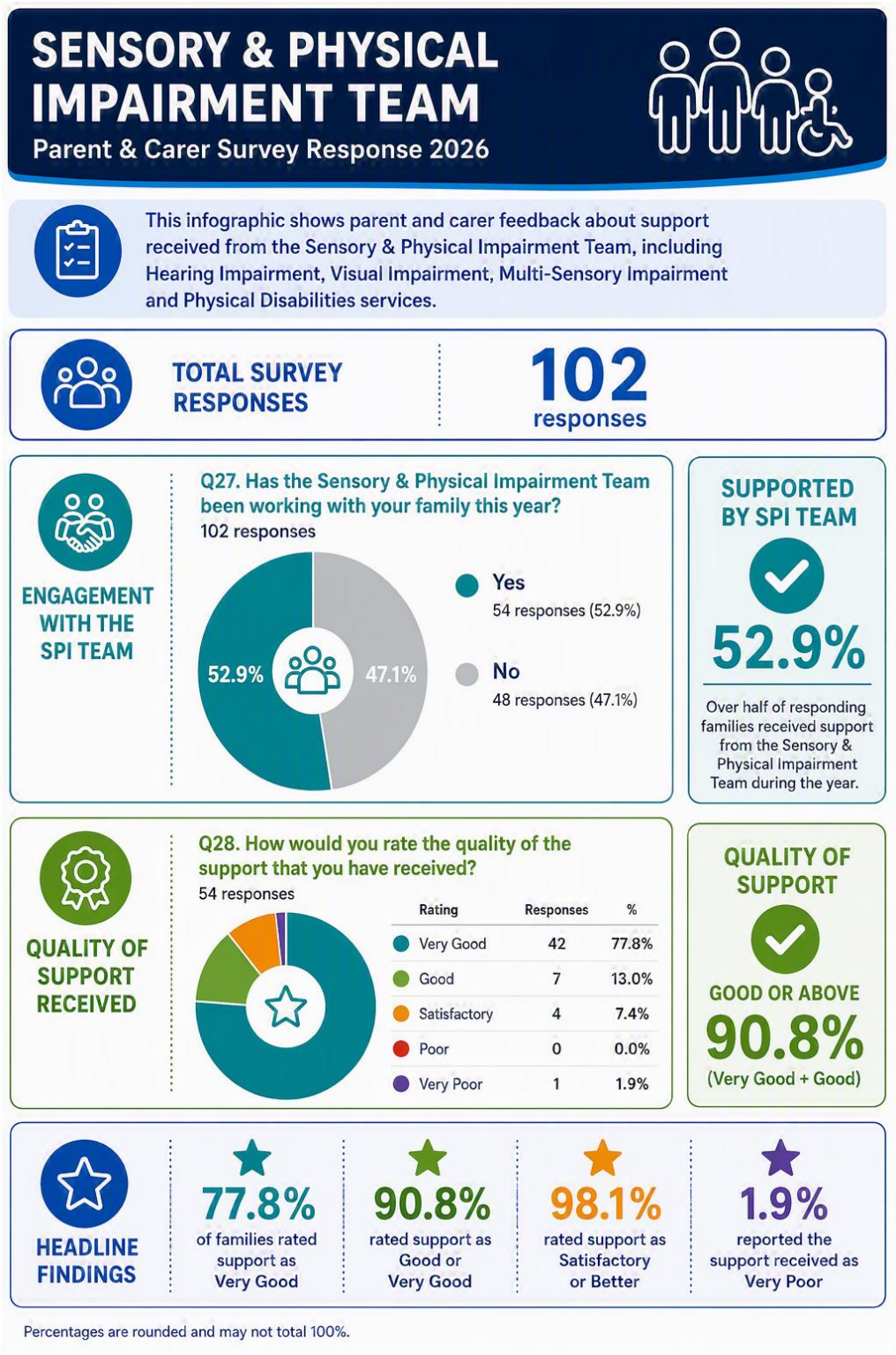
Impact
Participants reported increased confidence in supporting children and young people with sensory and physical needs:

- Hearing Impairment: **69% increase**
- Cortical Vision Impairment: **74% increase**
- Multi-Sensory Impairment: **confidence increased from 8/10 to 9.5/10**

Feedback from training and survey results
"The whole school training was great and really helped inform the whole school."
"They have supported me professionally answering questions and providing advice."
Training strengthened staff confidence, understanding of specialist needs and inclusive practice across educational settings.

4. KEY OUTCOMES AND SERVICE IMPACT

SURVEY FEEDBACK - Parent and Carer Survey responses:



What families valued most about the support received

- Families consistently highlighted the value of having a trusted practitioner who understands their child's needs and remains a consistent source of support over time. Long-term relationships were recognised as particularly important during key transitions, helping to build trust, reduce anxiety and provide continuity for families navigating complex systems.

> *"Had the same person since youngster was 1 year old."* Parent Survey
>
> *"Consistent person providing support."* Parent Survey

- Parents reported significant improvements in their children's confidence, wellbeing, engagement in learning, independence and overall educational experience. Many described the support as transformative, helping children access education more successfully and participate more fully in school life.

> *"My son is a changed child."* Parent Survey
>
> *"Without the support of the SPI team, we do not believe our son would have developed the confidence and enjoyment of school that he has today."* Parent Survey

- Families highly valued the team's specialist expertise and advocacy. Parents recognised the vital role practitioners played in ensuring schools understood and implemented appropriate strategies, adjustments and resources, enabling children and young people to access education on an equitable basis. They particularly valued the team's work alongside schools to monitor provision, support transitions and ensure recommendations were implemented effectively.

> *"Without my son's QTVI, my son wouldn't be able to access education in the way that he does."* Parent Survey
>
> *"A point of contact in a complex system, who has advocated for my child's needs."* Parent Survey

- Feedback also demonstrated that the impact of the service extends beyond the child. Families spoke positively about the guidance, advice, communication and emotional

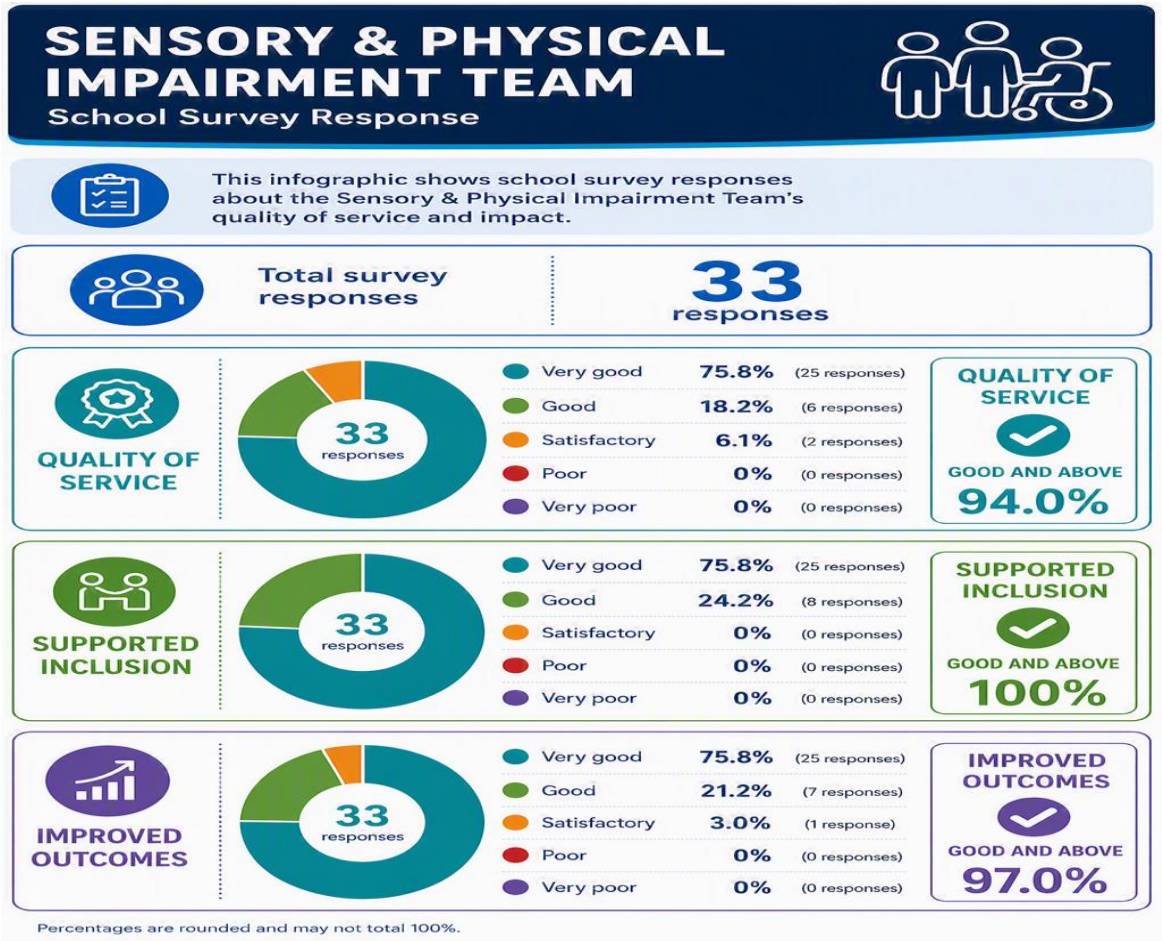
support they received, helping them better understand and meet their child's needs while navigating often complex systems. Parents frequently reported feeling informed, listened to and empowered as a result of the support provided.

- The professionalism, compassion and dedication of staff were recurring themes throughout the feedback. Parents described team members as approachable, knowledgeable and genuinely committed to improving outcomes for children and young people. Many felt staff consistently went above and beyond in supporting both educational progress and emotional wellbeing.

"The level of care and support the team provides goes above and beyond every single time." Parent Survey

"Support, kindness and guidance." Parent Survey

What Schools Valued Most About the Support Received



Feedback from schools consistently highlighted the value of the SPI Team's specialist expertise, responsiveness and collaborative approach. Schools reported that the service provides knowledge and support beyond that typically available within mainstream settings, helping children and young people with sensory and physical impairments to access education and participate fully in school life.

Schools particularly valued:

- Specialist advice on adapting learning environments, accessibility, equipment, medical needs and inclusive practice.
- Practical, personalised recommendations that could be implemented immediately to improve outcomes.
- Regular monitoring visits, detailed reports and ongoing communication with staff and families.
- Training and workforce development that increased staff knowledge

Survey quotes from schools – July 2026

"Expertise above what school can offer."

"They have responded immediately to difficulties with hearing equipment."

“They have been invaluable and he would not have made the progress he has without them."

“She has championed the child's needs and rights and advocated for our school in a way that no one else had done previously and I will be forever grateful for her support and guidance.” School SENCo/Senior Leader.

June 2026

Improvement suggestions

Overall, feedback from both parents and schools was overwhelmingly positive, with the majority of respondents expressing high levels of satisfaction with the quality, expertise and impact of the support provided by the SPI Team. Where suggestions for improvement were identified, these focused primarily on increasing service capacity to meet growing demand, enabling more frequent contact, visits and access to specialist support. A smaller number of respondents suggested enhancing monitoring of the implementation of recommendations within educational settings, providing further opportunities to observe interventions and

develop staff practice, increasing support around independence and life skills, and continuing to strengthen multi-agency collaboration to ensure a coordinated approach around children, young people and their families. Importantly, feedback focused largely on extending and enhancing an already highly valued service, rather than concerns regarding the quality or effectiveness of the support provided

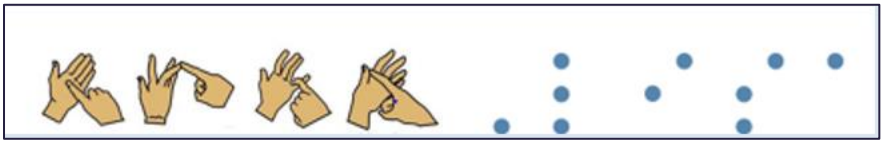
Feedback from both parents and schools demonstrates consistently high levels of service delivery with the Sensory and Physical Impairment (SPI) Team and highlights the significant positive impact of the service on children, young people, families and educational settings. Stakeholders value the team's specialist expertise, responsiveness, advocacy, consistency of support and collaborative approach, recognising the service as a critical contributor to improved access, inclusion, participation and outcomes. Importantly, suggestions for improvement were largely focused on enhancing communication, increasing engagement opportunities and expanding capacity, rather than concerns about the quality or effectiveness of the support provided.

This reflects a highly regarded service that is delivering strong outcomes and is viewed as an essential partner by both families and schools.

Overall, the feedback indicates that the SPI Team is delivering a highly valued and effective service, with future development focused on building capacity, strengthening communication to meet growing demand and sustain positive outcomes.

This is a great service." School respondent in July survey 2026

Team Manager: *Lisa Irving*



Date: 14th July 2026

APPENDIX ONE – 'strengthening growth'



1.Community Engagement and Early Language Development

Inclusive Story and Rhyme Time Partnership with Solihull Libraries

During 2025/26, the Specialist Inclusion Support Service continued to strengthen its community engagement offer through a successful partnership with Solihull Libraries at Hobbs Moat Library. The collaboration was established in response to a request from the Library Manager back in 2024/2025, who sought specialist support to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of Story and Rhyme Time sessions for local families.

Initially developed as a pilot programme, it was agreed that three sessions would be delivered across the academic year—one in each of the autumn, spring and summer terms—with the impact reviewed following delivery. The sessions have been supported by the Hearing Impairment Team staff and have proved highly successful, attracting between 8 and 18 pre-school children at each event, including children who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

Each 30-minute session is carefully designed to promote communication, language development and inclusion. Sessions begin with British Sign Language (BSL) activities linked to the chosen story by librarian, followed by an interactive storytelling experience and a programme of familiar nursery rhymes. This approach enables children and families to engage with language and communication through a variety of accessible and enjoyable learning opportunities.

A range of popular children's books have been featured throughout the year, including *Peace at Last*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *The Gruffalo*, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, *The Three Little Pigs* and *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*. To extend learning beyond the sessions, families are provided with bespoke BSL resources, enabling children to practise and reinforce their signing skills at home.

Feedback from library staff and families has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents have reported that children enthusiastically use and revisit the signs they have learned, supporting the development of communication skills beyond the library environment. The sessions have also provided an opportunity to raise awareness of deafness, promote inclusive communication and strengthen community understanding of BSL.

The success of the programme demonstrates the value of partnership working in extending the reach of specialist services beyond educational settings. Solihull Libraries has expressed a strong commitment to continuing and further developing this collaboration approach in the coming academic year, providing additional opportunities for families to access inclusive, community-based support.

Impact: The partnership has successfully broadened access to inclusive early language experiences, promoted the use of British Sign Language within the community, and strengthened engagement with families of young children through enjoyable, accessible and highly valued sessions.

2. Educational Engagement and Transition



Year 6 Transition Session for Hearing-Impaired Pupils

Attendance: 5 pupils attended

A transition support session was delivered online for Year 6 pupils with hearing impairment to support their preparation for secondary school – 5 attended. The session focused on building confidence and resilience, addressing concerns about transition, developing friendship-building skills, and helping pupils understand how to settle successfully into a new school environment.

All five pupils actively engaged throughout the session, contributing either verbally or via the chat function. Pupils openly shared their concerns about moving to secondary school and demonstrated effective problem-solving skills by discussing challenges and identifying practical strategies together. The use of visual resources and interactive activities supported accessibility, participation and sustained engagement.

Pupil feedback was highly positive and highlighted the value of discussing friendships, emotional wellbeing and practical approaches to managing change.

Comments included:

"I liked the bit about making friends, telling them how you are feeling and how to make friends."

"It really helped."

"What I found useful was the ways of how to make new friends and how to settle in."

Feedback indicated that pupils felt reassured about the transition process and gained increased confidence in their ability to establish friendships and adapt to their new school environment.

Key Outcomes

- Five pupils with hearing impairment received targeted transition support.
- Increased confidence and preparedness for secondary school.
- Improved understanding of friendship-building and social integration strategies.
- Enhanced emotional wellbeing through opportunities to discuss feelings and concerns.
- Positive peer interaction and mutual support through collaborative discussion.
- Increased awareness of practical strategies to support a successful transition.

Next Steps:

To further strengthen delivery in future years, consideration will be given to:

- Delivering the session earlier within the academic year.
- Hosting sessions within a secondary school setting where possible to increase familiarity with an environment akin to secondary school.
- Reinstating a two-session model to allow additional time for discussion, reflection and relationship building.
- Reviewing joining arrangements and communication processes to maximise attendance and accessibility.

Overall Impact

The session made a positive contribution to supporting pupils with hearing impairment as they prepared for the next stage of their education. Through targeted discussion, peer support and practical guidance, participants developed greater confidence, resilience and readiness for secondary school. Pupil feedback demonstrated that the session was both valued and impactful, particularly in helping pupils understand how to make new friends, express their feelings and settle successfully into a new school community.

3. Night Travel Independence Programme

Supporting Independent Travel in Low Light Conditions

Reduced daylight hours during the autumn and winter months can present additional challenges for children and young people with a vision impairment. Lower light levels during morning and evening travel may affect visibility, orientation, confidence and independent mobility when travelling to and from school.

To address this, a Qualified Habilitation Specialist from Guide Dogs, contracted one day per week, delivered a targeted Night Travel Independence Programme during the autumn term. The programme was delivered to a cohort of secondary-aged pupils with vision impairment and consisted of hourly sessions, after school hours, delivered over a four-week period.

The sessions focused on developing practical mobility skills and strategies to support safe and confident travel in low-light conditions. Pupils were provided with opportunities to practise navigation and road safety techniques within familiar local environments, enabling them to apply learning directly to their everyday journeys.

The programme aimed to:

- Enhance confidence when travelling independently during periods of reduced visibility.
- Develop practical road safety and orientation skills.
- Increase awareness of environmental hazards associated with low-light conditions.
- Support greater independence in preparation for adulthood.
- Provide reassurance to families regarding safe travel arrangements.

Feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted both the practical benefits of the programme and its impact on confidence and independence.

One parent commented:

"The sessions provided valuable opportunities to practise road safety skills in environments that are familiar and relevant to daily travel. The programme helped to develop confidence, independence and awareness of how to travel safely in low-light conditions. As parents, it was reassuring to see increased confidence and

independence as a result of the specialist support provided. We were grateful for the opportunity to take part in the programme."

Impact

The programme has demonstrated positive outcomes for participating pupils and families, including:

- Increased confidence in independent travel.
- Improved practical road safety skills.
- Greater understanding of strategies for navigating in reduced lighting conditions.
- Enhanced preparation for independent adulthood.
- Increased parental confidence in their child's ability to travel safely.

This initiative reflects the service's commitment to promoting independence, inclusion and positive outcomes for children and young people with vision impairment, whilst ensuring that pupils have access to specialist support that enables them to participate fully in education and community life.



Appendix TWO - Case study Showcase

Case Study: Transforming Outcomes Through Specialist Hearing Support and Auditory Verbal Therapy



Child Profile

Child L (aged 4 years) was identified with a hearing loss following a prolonged and complex hearing journey. Although concerns regarding hearing were present from birth, amplification was not provided initially. By July 2025 at 3years old, bilateral hearing aids were fitted and a point of referral to the HI team. Child L presented significant delays in speech, listening, language, communication and social interaction.

Starting Point: Key Needs Identified

Communication

- Speech largely unintelligible
- Predominantly jargon-like vocalisations
- Only parents consistently understood him
- Frequent communication breakdowns

Listening Skills

- Reduced listening awareness
- Heavy reliance on visual cues
- Difficulty following verbal instructions
- Limited response to environmental sounds

Social & Emotional Development

- Preferred solitary play
- Difficulty sharing and interacting with peers
- Frustration when communication broke down
- Physical responses during social interactions

Family Concerns

- Anxiety regarding hearing aid use
- Concerns about nursery placement
- Uncertainty about future communication outcomes

Specialist Intervention Provided

From September 2025 onwards, Child L received a highly specialised package of support delivered through the Specialist Hearing Impairment Team.

Intervention Included

☑ Qualified Teacher of the Deaf with Foundation Certificate in Auditory Verbal Therapy - Lisa – Championing Auditory Verbal Therapy in Local Authority Services | Auditory Verbal

☑ Weekly specialist intervention sessions
☑ Parent coaching and family support
☑ Hearing aid management and monitoring
☑ Nursery staff training
☑ Whole-setting deaf awareness training
☑ Ongoing target setting and progress monitoring
☑ Upskilling of Specialist Inclusion Support staff

Significant Achievement

From Refusal to Consistent Hearing Aid Use

One of the earliest successes was supporting Child L to transition from refusing amplification to using hearing aids confidently throughout the day.

Outcome Achieved

☑ Consistent hearing aid wear at nursery
☑ Consistent hearing aid wear at home
☑ Understanding of the purpose of hearing aids
☑ Meaningful auditory access to speech and language

This provided the critical foundation for language and communication development.

Listening and Auditory Development

Progress in Listening and Audition

One of the most significant areas of progress has been Child L's development as a listener.

Starting Point

- Limited listening awareness.
- Relied heavily on visual information.
- Difficulty following spoken instructions.
- Reduced response to environmental sounds.

Current Position

☑ Completes Ling Sound Identification tasks
☑ Detects, discriminates and identifies speech sounds
☑ Identifies listening errors and self-corrects
☑ Responds consistently to environmental sounds
☑ Follows one and two-step auditory instructions

- ☑ Demonstrates developing auditory memory
- ☑ Uses listening in problem-solving activities
- ☑ Shows increased attention to speech and communication

Speech and Language Development

Transformation in Communication

The impact of specialist intervention on speech and language has been substantial.

Starting Point:

- One recognisable/intelligible word.
- Predominantly jargon-like speech.
- Frequent communication breakdowns.
- Significant frustration due to being misunderstood.

Current Position:

- ☑ Uses meaningful spontaneous language
- ☑ Regularly uses functional 2–3-word utterances
- ☑ Emerging 3–4-word phrases
- ☑ Uses language to:
  - Request
  - Comment
  - Seeking help
  - Participate in conversations
- ☑ Answers simple questions with significantly reduced adult scaffolding
- ☑ Emerging use of pronouns and conversational turn-taking
- ☑ Improved speech intelligibility

Examples include:

- "Not me." “Eat it”
- "I not like cornflakes."
- "Help him." “I have knife” “Me not like sharp knife”
- "Let me do it."
- "Open the door, XXXX”

Social Communication and Emotional Development

Progress has extended beyond listening and language.

Before

- Solitary play
- Difficulty sharing
- Rarely sought help
- Physical responses during interactions
- Limited peer engagement

Now

- ☑ Developing friendships
- ☑ Improved interactions with staff and peers
- ☑ Participates in shared activities
- ☑ Uses spoken language to gain attention
- ☑ Improved turn-taking
- ☑ Shares experiences with trusted adults
- ☑ Increasing confidence during free-flow play
- ☑ Enjoys collaborative learning

A third-party observation highlighted:

The excellent rapport established during intervention between child L and practitioner.

"Motivated and engaged throughout the 50-minute session and appeared to enjoy all the activities."

Staff have observed reductions in frustration and physical behaviours as his communication skills have increased.

Confidence and Wellbeing

A notable outcome has been the significant increase in Child L's confidence.

Staff Report:

- ☑ Arrives confidently
- ☑ Joins activities willingly
- ☑ Seeks participation
- ☑ Shares experiences
- ☑ Demonstrates pride in success
- ☑ Retains and builds upon previously learned skills

The nurturing nursery environment, combined with specialist support, has enabled Child L to take increasing risks with communication and develop confidence in using listening and spoken language.

Voice of Stakeholders

Parental Voice

Dad - "You have made such a difference to my child's speech and his social skills."
Mum - "Having help has enabled him to hear better and respond with fuller sentences compared to single words. His behaviour has improved, frustration levels are lower and he has become toilet trained. You have taught him well."

Education Setting Voice

Teacher - "They have been invaluable and he would not have made the progress he has without them."
Specialist Inclusion Practitioner - "The introduction of the Auditory Verbal Therapy approach has enabled Child L to thrive and understand the power of his speech within his learning environment."

Child's Voice "I like cornflakes, monkey racing and stories."

Professional Observation

Independent observation highlighted:

- ★ Excellent rapport between practitioner and child
- ★ Highly engaging intervention
- ★ Motivated participation throughout a 50-minute session
- ★ Clear aims and objectives
- ★ Strong evidence of measurable progress

Impact of Specialist Service Intervention

Contributing Factors to Success

Key Elements

- ☑ Consistent hearing aid use
- ☑ Teacher of the Deaf specialist input
- ☑ Auditory Verbal Therapy
- ☑ Parent coaching
- ☑ Skilled modelling of language
- ☑ Staff training
- ☑ Targeted listening and language intervention
- ☑ multi-agency collaboration

Strategic Learning

Importance of Continuing Workforce Development

The case study also highlights the importance of sustained staff development. Continued investment in specialist training would:

- ❖ Improve consistency of communication approaches

- ❖ Maximize the impact of intervention
- ❖ Improve outcomes for deaf children
- ❖ Build sustainable inclusive practice
- ❖ Increase practitioner confidence
- ❖ Safeguard specialist AVT-informed practice

Impact Summary

Child L's journey demonstrates the significant impact specialist hearing support and Auditory Verbal Therapy can have on a young child with hearing loss.

In less than a year he has progressed from:

- ❌ Minimal intelligible speech
- ❌ Hearing aid refusal
- ❌ Limited listening skills
- ❌ Poor social communication
- ❌ Frustration and communication breakdown

To:

- ☑ Consistent hearing aid use
- ☑ Active listening
- ☑ Sound detection and discrimination
- ☑ Functional 3–4-word phrases
- ☑ Friendship development
- ☑ Social participation
- ☑ Improved confidence
- ☑ Increased readiness for learning

Conclusion

Child L's journey demonstrates the transformational impact of specialist hearing support and Auditory Verbal Therapy-informed practice.
Despite experiencing delayed access to amplification and limited early access to speech sounds, Child L has made substantial progress within a relatively short timeframe. Outcomes have been evidenced across communication, listening, social interaction, emotional wellbeing and educational participation.
This case study provides a powerful example of how evidence-informed specialist practice, parent partnership, workforce development and multi-agency collaboration can significantly improve outcomes for children with hearing loss.

Recommendation
Continued AVT-informed support and ongoing specialist workforce training should remain a priority to sustain and extend positive outcomes for children and young people with hearing loss.

Live Captions in Schools [HI team]



Thanks to 121 Captions for the image.

Background/Context

This initiative focuses on promoting the use of Live Captions in secondary schools, inspired by the Action for Captions campaign.

• A pilot was carried out during the Autumn Term 2025 in a Solihull secondary school with three Year 8 students (one with bilateral cochlear implants and two with hearing aids), all of whom use assistive listening technology.

• All three students reported difficulties fully understanding teachers in lessons, particularly when assistive devices were not used effectively (e.g. incorrect microphone muting/unmuting).

Following research on available technology at the time, Phonak Roger Neck Loops trialed to explore improving caption clarity where teachers move around classrooms and distance reduces signal quality.

Action for Captions Initiative

Action for Captions is a UK-based campaign led by the Sound Waves Foundation that promotes the use of live captioning in education. It aims to make spoken language visible in classrooms through speech-to-text technology, improving access to learning for deaf pupils and a wide range of other learners, while encouraging schools to adopt simple, often free, captioning tools.

Link for further information: Action for Captions | SoundWavesFoundation

Interventions applied and current plan

• Students were consulted prior to rollout and chose an inclusive approach (captions on classroom boards) rather than individual devices (laptops or iPads).

• Caption training delivered on 18th December 2025 to eight members of staff to build whole-school capacity.

Training included:

• Use of Windows 11 Live Captions (allowing captions to remain visible when switching

screens).

• Use of built-in PowerPoint captions during lessons.

• Practical set-up and implementation opportunities for staff.

Live captions were trialed:

• Without assistive technology (free-field setup).

• With assistive technology (Roger On + Neck Loop).

• From January 2026, captions have been implemented in select lessons. The students have decided which subjects they prefer to trial this in (RE, History, English, Geography).

• Ongoing exploration of alternative speech-to-text devices from Rubi Audiology (starting from £19.99 up to £149 identified following liaison with a technology consultant from the Ewing Foundation, a deaf technology charity).

This will ensure that children and young people who do not use assistive listening technology in classrooms will be able to benefit from clearer captions.

Future planning:

• Trial new device within the hearing team (Speech to Text Adapter - BHTR | Rubi Audiology Ltd)

• Develop and distribute a Live Captions awareness **poster** across secondary schools in the borough in September 2026.

Challenges Overcome

• Variability in staff use of assistive listening technology affecting student access.

• Technical challenges when teachers move around classrooms, reducing caption accuracy due to weaker audio input.

• Additional equipment (Neck Loops) perceived negatively by students due to:

- Extra responsibility to carry/manage additional equipment
- Increased visibility and potential stigma

• Ensuring staff confidence with new caption technologies and software updates (e.g. Windows 11).

• Limitations identified for certain curriculum areas such as Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), where live captions may be less accurate in non-English languages, do not provide translation, and may reduce opportunities for developing key listening skills, although they may still support vocabulary recognition.

Outcomes Achieved

• Positive student feedback since implementation (January 2026 onwards).

• Increased accessibility and inclusion through use of captions displayed for the whole class.

• Improved staff awareness and skills in using captioning tools.

• Adoption beyond the classroom:

- Headteacher using captions in assemblies

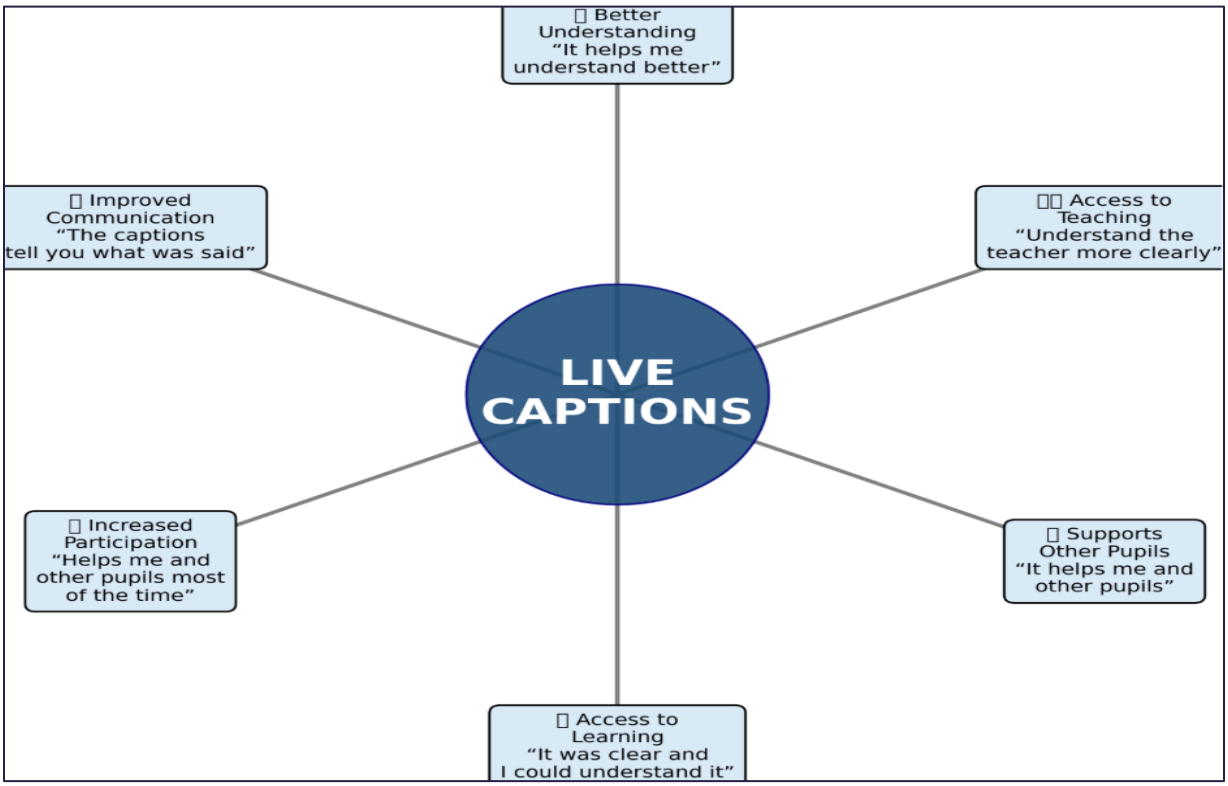
- Exploration of captioning for MS Teams assemblies across classrooms (with guidance provided on individual classroom activation of captions).

• Captions supporting wider literacy skills (reading accuracy, speed, spelling, and vocabulary development).

• Alignment with existing practice of caption activation on video/audio materials in lessons (YouTube videos and films).

CYP Comments/Reaction

- Students reported that captions have been beneficial in supporting understanding in some lessons.



- Preference for whole-class captions rather than individual devices due to inclusivity and reduced stigma.
- Positive engagement with the technology over time.
- Better student/ teacher relationships.
- Teacher needs to speak clearly.

Some ongoing challenges remain:

- Difficulty capturing peer contributions, particularly from across the classroom.

- Suggestions include staff repeating responses or using microphones to improve caption accuracy.

Additional Notes

• Captioning systems can adapt to frequently used or specialised vocabulary over time (particularly AI-based systems), though accuracy improves with consistent use and clear audio input.

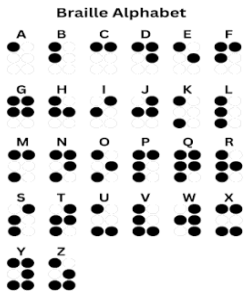
• Further work is needed to optimise capture of classroom discussion and subject-specific terminology.

Name of person completing case study HI (1): VT

Date completed: 1st July 2026

Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment [VI team]





Context/background:

- Child F is registered as Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and has a diagnosis of retinal dystrophy, which affects the function of the retina and results in reduced vision. They also have high hypermetropia (long-sightedness), left esotropia (an inward turn of the left eye) and nystagmus (involuntary eye movements), all of which impact visual clarity and efficiency.
- Child F experiences photophobia (light sensitivity) and has a possible diagnosis of Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI), which may affect how visual information is processed and interpreted by the brain.
- Child F currently accesses text in 60-point bold font and needs to be approximately 16 times closer than their peers to view the same level of detail at distance.
- Child F is in Year 2 at their local mainstream primary school. They are supported on a part-time basis by a 1:1 teaching assistant and receive weekly specialist input from both a QTVI and an ISP.

Interventions:

- The Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI) supports pupils to access their education through 11 outcome areas. Further information can be found at: https://media.rnib.org.uk/documents/CFVI_2025_English_APDF.pdf
- Child F receives three weekly interventions focusing on braille literacy, sensory development and the use of assistive technology, supporting progress within CFVI Areas 2, 4, 7 & 8.
- Child F receives ongoing input from a Qualified Habilitation Specialist, focusing on safe navigation, long cane skills, the use of tactile maps for orientation, and the development of independent living skills, supporting progress within CFVI Areas 5 & 6.

Outcomes/next steps:

- Child F is now a confident user of uncontracted braille and can write fluently using a Perkins Brailler. They are beginning to use a small range of contracted braille signs, including 'and', 'the' and 'for', and can accurately record numbers in braille.

- They have recently started using an iPad and are developing independence in navigating between applications and adjusting basic accessibility and device settings.
- They have also made good progress in developing auditory awareness and listening skills, using sound cues to support orientation and mobility outdoors. They have also continued to develop effective long cane techniques to navigate the school environment safely.
- Child F has strengthened their tactile discrimination skills through activities involving the recognition of different coins. They have also developed greater independence in everyday living tasks, including safe pouring using a liquid level indicator and spreading food items.
- Currently, it remains unclear whether braille will become Child F's primary literacy medium. Therefore, next year, they will begin learning touch-typing alongside continuing to develop their braille skills, providing an additional method for recording work and accessing written information.

Child F views:

When asked, “What things have you enjoyed about your visits from the SISS SPI team?”, ***“Learning the different (contracted) symbols for braille, like ‘for’; how to use (Google) Maps on the iPad; and learning to use my cane on the stairs.”***

Views of family:

Mum stated, “We feel XXX has come a long way since learning braille. They enjoy learning the skill and as a family we know how much it will benefit them as they get older. The tech support given allows XXX’s knowledge of technology to widen which contributes to their learning in many ways. XXX having habilitation support is hugely important to their everyday life. It allows them to navigate and grow more confident with their surroundings. XXX enjoys learning through the support they receive, and we see the benefits of it each week.”

Name of person completing case study VI: AS/LJ

Date completed: 1st July 2026

APPENDIX THREE

Padlet Pages

- Little Listeners (HI)
- Little OWLLS (MSI)
- Physical Fun Time (PD)
- Physical Disability Page
- Vision Impairment Page
- Audiology Professional Page (internal use)

