

Visual Impairment (VI) Team

We provide specialist teaching and support for children and young people who have a significant visual impairment (VI). Our teachers have experience of mainstream and special schools and early years settings, and all have the mandatory specialist teaching qualification for children with visual impairment. We can also provide mobility and independence (Habilitation) training by a qualified rehabilitation officer.

Who we work with:

We aim to promote inclusion and the achievement of the best possible educational and other outcomes, including preparation for adulthood. We work with:

- Families of newly diagnosed babies and children with visual impairment (including close liaison with the Portage service and Health Visitors)
- Early years settings
- Mainstream schools
- Special schools for severe learning difficulties: we offer a package of support and training to promote better outcomes for pupils with complex needs including visual impairment
- Colleges of Further Education

We also work with a wide range of others such as voluntary organisations, health professionals, social care teams, and rehabilitation officers.

The services we provide:

All of our core and statutory work is provided free to schools and early years settings. Support for students in colleges of further education and independent schools is available for purchase (contact details on back page).

We offer specialist advice and teaching relating to:

1: Adaptation of educational materials:

- Braille, large print, tactile diagrams etc
- Advice on downloading electronic books and resources

2: Mobility and Independent Living Skills

(Habilitation): Our team includes a qualified specialist mobility officer for one day a week under contract from Herefordshire Vision Links:

- Specialist assessment and training in mobility, independent travel and daily living skills
- Provision of related equipment – e.g. long canes, liquid level indicator, talking scales
- Registration as sight impaired

3: Specialist technology: as far as possible we encourage the use of everyday mainstream technology which pupils are likely to encounter in the ‘outside world’:

- Accessibility and ‘ease of access’ facilities built into modern computers and tablets including iPad (speech output, dictation, magnifier and specialist apps)
- Touch typing

- Screen reading and magnification software
- Access to interactive whiteboards
- Hand-held and/or desk-top magnifiers
- Braille writers and embossers
- Tactile diagram production
- Speech-enabled equipment (e.g. thermometer, scales, calculator)
- Short-term trial loans e.g. writing slopes, reading stands, handheld magnifiers

4: Advice on access arrangements for internal and external examinations and assessments including SATs and GCSEs

5: Contribution to EHC needs assessment (statutory assessment), annual reviews and individual programmes of work - especially regarding the identification of outcomes and the provision required to achieve them

6: Advice on adaptations to buildings to improve accessibility

How to access the service:

Children are usually referred to us by the hospital eye unit, but occasionally schools or other professionals may need to make a referral. Our referral form can be downloaded from our website, or contact us for an initial discussion (contact details below). N.B. If a visual impairment is suspected, an assessment should be sought initially from the appropriate NHS Trust.

Contact us:

VI Team, Additional Needs Service
Plough Lane Offices
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0LE

- **Telephone:** 01432 260877
- **Email:** viteam@herefordshire.gov.uk
- **Web:** www.herefordshire.gov.uk/viteam

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please contact us.