Attainment of school pupils with a sensory impairment
Call for evidence

Dear Sir/Madam,

South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence related to the enquiry into attainment of school pupils with a sensory impairment.

Our response has been provided by experienced staff from our HI and VI provisions.

Provision within SLC for children and young people with a sensory impairment is as follows:

**Hearing Impairment**
The vast majority of children/young people with a hearing impairment are fully included within their local mainstream establishment. SLC also provides the following specialist provisions.

**Early Years** – There is a dedicated provision for nursery age children within Hamilton School for the Deaf which is a specialist stand alone school.

**Primary and Secondary** – SLC benefits from a reciprocal arrangement with North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) in relation to provision for children and young people with a hearing impairment.

Hamilton School for the Deaf (SLC) as per above is a specialist stand alone school and the curriculum is accessed in BSL.

Calderside Academy HI Unit (SLC) use BSL to enable access to the curriculum and Glencairn Primary School and Dalziel High School (NLC) follow the natural oral approach. Hearing impaired pupils in these establishments are fully included within mainstream classes.

**Peripatetic HI Service**
The Peripatetic HI Service provides support in mainstream for pupils who are hearing impaired.

**Audiologist**
SLC and NLC share the cost of an audiologist.
Hearing Impairment Service Response

- Qualified Teachers of the Deaf (ToD)
- Local Authority commitment to train Teachers of the Deaf
- Minimum signing level for Teachers of the Deaf raised from BSL Level 1 to BSL Level 3
- Local Authority commitment to support further BSL training for Teachers of the Deaf.
- Local Authority commitment to provide CPD for subject specific signs
- Deaf tutor (qualified) working in mainstream schools
- Consider BSL into the curriculum as an option alongside Modern Languages
- Forge links with universities who deliver Deaf Studies courses. Establish a working party with the aim of developing a certificated course in Deaf Studies to be offered as an option in Calderside Academy

Peripatetic Hearing Impairment Service Response

With regard to oral pupils in mainstream schools:

- Access to an educational audiologist to ensure pupils have the appropriate amplification equipment and repairs can be carried out in a timely manner.
- If needed, regular visits from a trained Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) who can give targeted pupil-centred support relevant to age and stage and degree of hearing loss, who has regular training in audiology to update knowledge of equipment being prescribed.
- Close multi-agency working to support pupils’ needs.
- Implementation of appropriate SQA Assessment Arrangements by the school.
- Deaf awareness amongst all staff who are in contact with the pupils.
- Existence of a social peer group (social and mental health and wellbeing).
- Regular visits to Cochlear Implant centres to keep abreast of latest medical procedures (ToD)
- ToD able to attend CPD courses appropriate to pupils being supported by that ToD.
- ToD building and maintaining links with committees/ other professionals/other local authorities.

Visual Impairment

The vast majority of children/young people with a visual impairment are fully included within their local mainstream establishment. SLC also benefits from a reciprocal arrangement with NLC in relation to provision for children and young people with a visual impairment and provides the following specialist service and provisions.

**Early Years** - All pupils who have a visual impairment attending an SLC nursery are supported by the Resource Centre for Visually Impaired Pupils (RCVIP) Early Years Team.

**Primary and Secondary** – The specialist provision at Knowetop Primary School (NLC) and Uddingston Grammar School (SLC) enables visually impaired pupils to be fully included within mainstream classes.

**Peripatetic HI Service** -
The RCVIP peripatetic service provides support in mainstream for pupils who are visually impaired.
Visual Impairment Service Response

- The inclusion of pupils in all matters relating to their education and the support they receive is paramount. Opportunities should be made for pupils to be involved in the planning and provision of the support that they receive. Funding support for the creation of Habilitation worker posts to assist in the development of the pupils’ Skills for Life, Skills for Learning and Skills for Work.

- The importance of strong, effective, productive and efficient partnership working with agencies, out with schools, is essential for planning at all stages, but in particular at key transition points.

- The development of enhanced transition processes, as opposed to the standard primary-secondary liaison activities, for pupils who have a sensory impairment with planning beginning at P5 stage for pupils who will be transferring to a secondary school.

- The continued provision, and commitment to the training, of specialist sensory support within educational establishments. Either for pupils who attend their own local secondary schools or who attend specialist provision.

- A greater awareness is required at the Initial Teacher Education phase of the specialist routes for teachers with regards to Sensory Support.

- Increased funding for the provision and development of ICT and Assistive Technologies for pupils who have a visual impairment, in particular with mobile technologies and tablet devices. In addition the RNIB provides a lending service where devices and equipment can be trialled prior to purchasing.

- The development of the CfE Key Adult role for our own service has been valuable in assisting pupils. The Visual Impairment Team has in place the Key Adult (Visual Impairment) role.

(Excerpt) “There are pupils who receive additional/targeted support from the staff of the Visual Impairment Team. This takes place within the pupils’ wider school lessons and also during the periods allocated for ‘Additional Learning Time’. For all pupils who are supported by the V.I.T. they have a nominated Key Adult (V.I.). This role will be similar to that carried out by the Pupil Support staff who act as Key Adults for the wider school pupils. The rationale behind this structure is that V.I. teachers have specialist knowledge of how to best support pupils who have a visual impairment. It means that our most vulnerable young people, who have a visual impairment, are known well by a member of staff who has, perhaps, a U.G.S. caseload of 2, 3 or 4 pupils. It should be noted that the P.T. Pupil Support remains the Named Person for the pupil who is supported by the V.I.T.” The development of the CfE Key Adult role for our own service has been valuable in assisting pupils. The Visual Impairment Team has in place the Key Adult (Visual Impairment) role.
• Creating opportunities for local authorities to come together, along with those pupils who have a sensory impairment, to share information about good practice and to consider how to improve approaches and services for pupils. (comment from a former pupil).