

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM – 16th January 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

SENSORY SERVICE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Schools Forum on the Sensory Service

1.2 Children and young people on active caseloads for the Sensory Service

Hearing Impairment caseload	Vision Impairment caseload
306	240

There are 16 children with multi-sensory impairment who are seen by the Vision and Hearing Support Teams.

Total pupils = 530 (306+240-16)

(figures from November 2023)

Does not include new referrals under assessment

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Wirral has 530 children and young people with a significant vision/hearing impairment (0-19 years) who access the Sensory Service. They are all assessed using the National Eligibility Criteria for intervention and must have a clinically diagnosed impairment. This Criteria can be found on the SEND Local Offer. The aim of the Service is to deliver early intervention from birth and then to support pupils more heavily in KS1 and 2. This is to develop independence skills in KS3 and 4 in preparation for adulthood.

2.2 Out of local authority area provision (OLA) – 4 pupils

- (i) New referral from a Wirral family who have recently adopted an OLA child who presently attends the Royal School for the Blind (year 7)
- (ii) Another pupil is placed at the Royal School for the Blind in Liverpool (year 14).
- (iii) Another pupil is placed at St Vincent's School for the Blind in Liverpool (year

9).

(iv) One pupil who has a hearing impairment and communicates only through British Sign Language is attending secondary provision at the Royal School for the Deaf in Derby (year 11)

It is projected that there will be 3 OLA pupils in September 2024

Targeted interventions

2.3 There are 54 children who receive targeted interventions involving a combination of Teacher, Specialist Teaching Assistant and Habilitation Officer. These interventions range from full time support for those using braille or sign language to access the curriculum. There is also a variety of specialist support which may include direct teaching of specialist skills, training for school staff, adaptation and curriculum access and the provision of extra curricular activities.

Monitored pupils receive assessments, reports and advice in line with the Eligibility Framework.

Deaf Resourced Provision (RP)

3.0 There is no longer a RP at Townfield Academy school. The Service reviewed need on the Wirral and as a consequence schools were asked for expressions of interest in the summer term of 2023, six schools showed an interest. Greenleas Primary school was successful, and two children started at the new RP in September 2023. Early Years data projects that the numbers at the RP will continue to grow to seven or eight children in the next 4 years. The intention is also to develop a Key Stage 1 assessment procedure which would expect to add one or two children a year to the RP. Having recently received a cochlear implant they would typically require high levels of intervention before they could return successfully to their original school where they would remain on role.

3.1 All of the staffing for the RP will be provided by the Sensory Service. Place funding of 6k will be allocated to the Service budget every year (at present 4 x 6k). Additional staffing cost will be provided through the EHCP mechanism.

4.0 Funding for the Sensory Service has not risen in line with pay rises and pension rises in the last eight years and for the first time has created a shortfall in the staffing budget in 2023-24. It has been agreed to review the 2024-25 budget to address the shortfall.

5.1 Staffing comparison since 2015

	2015	2020	2023
Teacher of the Deaf	4.8	4.8	4.6
Teacher of the V.I.	4.0	4.0	4.0
Specialist TA HI	5.5	4.2	4.3
Specialist TA VI	6.1	5.5	6.1

Habilitation Officer	1.0	1.0	1.0
Manager	1.0	1.0	1.0
Total	22.4	19.9	21.0

All figures are total full-time equivalents.

5.2 Resourced Provision staffing

Additional staffing required for the RP and presently in place.

	2015*	2020*	2023 Greenleas
Teacher of the Deaf	1.0	1.0	0
Specialist TA H.I.	5.0	4.0	1.0

All figures are total full-time equivalents.

* Previous RP school

5.3 Additional Specialist funded or part funded by the Sensory Service

(i) One specialist TA on a temporary contact has joined the Hearing Support Team to help staff the RP.

(ii) One specialist TA on a temporary contract has joined the Vision Support Team to help with high support needs. This is partially offset with a 0.5 TA vacancy.

(iii) additional staff

	2015	2020	2023
Deaf Tutor for British Sign Language Tuition (iv)	0.6	0.6	0.6
Highly Specialised SaLT for Deaf (v)	0.8	0.8	0.8

(iv) The Deaf Tutor provides direct sign language training from a deaf person to pupils in settings and British Sign Language accredited courses for families and settings staff.

(v) SaLT is joint funded by Health (0.6fte) and the Sensory Service (0.2fte).

5.5 Specialist Teacher ratio comparisons

Wirral HI pupils (October 2023) 306, 4.6 ToDs = 67:1

Cride survey 2022/23, for England,

“each visiting ToD had a theoretical average caseload of 64 deaf children”

Wirra VI pupils (October 2023) 240, 4 QTVIs = 60:1

Northwest Heads of Service Benchmarking data (October 2023), Average 65:1

6.0 Referral Data

Vision Support Team

	2023-2024*	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Year Total	19	42	40	34	24	33	56

Hearing Support Team

	2023-2024*	2022-2023	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Year Total	27	29	36	15	35	49	79

* only the autumn term 2023

6.1 As is typical with low incidence data, there is a large variance in numbers. The numbers also do not indicate severity of need. The impact of the Covid years can be detected with lower numbers from 2019 to 2021. The Service responds within 2 working days to new referrals. This is a strength of the Service which has been commented on by schools and parents.

7.0 The Service has relocated and is now working out of Claremount Specialist Sports College.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Forum notes the report

Peter Davies, Head of Sensory Service