



Children's Services

SLS Sensory Impairment

1. Executive Summary

This impact assessment found that there was a need to edit the SI databases and identify race on these to ensure clear information in this area. However, it found that the Bangladeshi community was over represented because of the very high incidence of sensory impairment (SI) within this community which is consistent with the national average for this group. Feedback from a range of service users suggests that the service is seen as effective and supportive. Complaints procedures exist for staff and schools but no complaints on grounds of discrimination have been received.

Background:

The main function of the service is to work with schools to improve their capacity for working with pupils with SI which will include any baby or child with sensory impairment from diagnosis to school leaving age in maintained mainstream and borough special schools. This includes providing in-service training for teachers, teaching assistants and Public Care workers. Schools causing concern or with a serious weakness are deemed a priority and this has been identified as a priority in one category 4 school which has a provision for profoundly deaf children. The service provides for parents and carers of children with SI, particularly working with those with babies and toddlers with SI to empower them to work effectively with their children as they grow and develop. This also enables them to have a good understanding of the way they can help their children reach their potential. The service is available to all schools and pre-school children, identified by hospitals and clinics, meeting the referral criteria. The service also works with parents, particularly those with deaf children, to ensure that they are able to communicate effectively with their child using BSL and /or English. The service also support families in the understanding of the needs of their child with SI through parents groups and also the delivery of a SFSC course for these parents/carers

The service supports the TH Children's Services Strategic and Community Plans. It is subject to the DfES Revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (SEN), the Joint DfES/DOH Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care, the CSIE Index for Inclusion, the National Curriculum and Ofsted Inspection Framework for inclusion, the LEA Preventative Plan, the Council's Equality and Diversity statement, Race Equality Scheme and equality of opportunity legislation including the Race Relations Act and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

2. Data Collection & Consultation

Equalities profiles of service users:

The services has revised the referral form to include diversity monitoring but now needs to revise its collection of information on its data bases

Equalities profiles of staff:

There are 17 members of the SI team the majority of who are white females. There are 2 Bangladeshi male teachers of the deaf, 1 female Bangladeshi teacher of the deaf, 1 female teacher of VI from a dual Asian/ British heritage and 2 female Bangladeshi bilingual instructors, one for HI team and one for VI team. There is one white male teacher of the deaf and a white male deaf BSL tutor. The other staff are white females. The Action plan will identify a more detailed analysis is needed.

Data Sources:

SLS Annual Survey

Evaluation feed-back from training

Feed-back from parental consultation

Research & Consultation carried out:

The SLS annual survey gives feedback on performance to schools every year

Views of Residents:

Written and verbal feedback from a range of service users including parents and carers indicates that the service is effective and supportive.

Internal/external communications:

Schools are made aware of the service through training, brochures and pamphlets, outlining the work of the service, at a range of meetings and forums.

Parents have access to brochures and clinics distribute information when needed

Use of texts and email to deaf clients and staff using BSL and options for Braille users are available.

3. Key Findings

- There is a higher take up of services from the Bangladeshi Community. Research shows that there is a 3.5 x National average occurrence of SI within this community as compared with others which reflect national averages
- Feedback from a range of service users suggests that the service is seen as effective and supportive
- Complaints procedures exist for staff and schools but no complaints on grounds of discrimination have been received
- Staff profile within the whole service does not reflect the population of LBTH
- Referrals from clinics need to be monitored for their ethnicity and changes made to HI and VI databases to include this
- The Deaf/HI team is working across the borough and also now within Schools with Deaf Provisions to support education for deaf children. It is struggling to provide a full service in borough schools due to the demands being put on it by the category 4 School with a Deaf Primary Provision, even though additional funding has recently been given to support this input.

- The VI team is struggling to meet the needs of VI braille-users, particularly within secondary schools with its present staffing levels and does not provide the RNIB recommended level of input of 0.5 ToVI per braille-user per week.
- The service needs to work with London Moving Forward to develop ways to support all ethnic minority groups more effectively and not just those whose first languages are Sylhetti and English.
- Growing need to support families if SI in the communication with their children. For Deaf/HI children: Importance of BSL and English classes for parents, carers and professionals. For VI children: Importance of braille sessions for parents, carers and professionals

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

- The SI team supports a high number of children from birth to school leaving age with a range of needs and demands due to their particular form of Sensory Impairment. Some of the needs are very high and the service is struggling to support all the demands on it. These have been identified within the report.
The Bangladeshi community continues to be over represented within the client group but there continues to be a much higher incidence of SI within this group when compared with the national average.
- Families of very young SI children receive good support and families with Deaf/HI children are able to meet each other and attend weekly groups for support.
- Support to families needs to continue and to include teaching of BSL, English and Braille as needed as well as a SFSC course annually.
- Support to families whose first language is not English or Sylheti needs to be explored in co-operation with a Pan London Group. Changes need to be made to databases to record ethnicity
- Support to braille users needs to be examined in the light of RNIB recommendations
- Support and development of provision for Deaf children in category 4 school needs to continue but support given across all schools in LBTH needs to continue to be provided at agreed levels of support and according to the needs of the pupils and schools. Staffing needs to be closely monitored to ensure its best use.
- Support to SI children will be severely affected if staff have their parking permits withdrawn and the quality and quantity of the service offered will not be as high with the current staffing levels due to time constrictions imposed by use of public transport and the need to transport clients and heavy equipment regularly on visits to school and home.

Action Plan:

Recommendation	Key Activity	Progress milestone
Seek funding for translation of materials, both in written form and spoken versions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Early Support to develop ES material in languages other than English • Seek other funding for translation of material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with ES personnel e.g. Liz Andrews and draw up plan to develop ES material in other relevant languages • Relevant and suitable bid placed for further translation of materials
Work closely with London Moving Forward to ascertain if a cross borough solution is possible to the lack of good quality support in this area in language other than English and Bengali / Sylheti	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend working party and offer input here as to areas needing development 2. Attend cross/pan London conferences and offer information as to developments needed and highlight developments made in our practice with Sylheti speaking staff and families in order to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings attended and discussions and progress highlighted in minutes • Conferences and meetings attended and discussions and progress highlighted in minutes

Recommendation	Key Activity	Progress milestone
	develop this in other languages.	
Support to provision for deaf children in category 4 school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide day to management within school for deaf provision • Support learning of deaf pupils • Support to develop appropriate inclusion of deaf pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supported • Provision documents developed • Support to develop literacy scheme for deaf pupils • Support to develop numeracy of deaf pupils • Evidence of improvement by deaf pupils in both areas • Training to mainstream staff • Staff in both provision and mainstream working together to support needs of deaf children
Develop databases of HI and VI children to show more clearly race of each child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes made and recorded as indicated for each child
Resources and capacity of VI team evaluated to ensure equal opportunities for VI pupils and effective support for braille users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of support and input at secondary level assessed and compared to other like authorities • Level of support needed to support braillists assessed and compared to other like authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information recorded and presented to senior management • Information recorded and presented to senior management
Continue to support training of parents, carers and professionals of SI children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSL classes delivered by BSL tutor both at SLS and in mainstream schools/ provisions • English classes continue for parents of SI children to support their ability to communicate with their children • Braille classes continue to be delivered as needed • SFSC course delivered annually for families of SI children • Weekly support group for parents/carers and soft play session for deaf babies and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued employment of BSL tutor. Success of parents, carers and professionals in BSL, including qualifications, and classes attended • Success of parents, carers and professionals in English, including qualifications, and classes attended • Success of parents, carers and professionals in braille, including qualifications, and classes attended • Parents, carers and professionals attend course and feel more able to support their SI children and discuss their needs more openly. • Group attended and parents feel supported and empowered to support their deaf children