



**RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF
DEAFBLIND/MULTI-SENSORY
IMPAIRED PUPILS**

**EFFECTIVE WORKING
WITH
TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN
SCHOOLS**

JUNE 2012

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GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations have been adopted in the main body of the text:

AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication
BSL	British Sign Language
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSW	Communication Support Worker
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LA	Local Authority
NBS	Newborn Screening
NDCS	National Deaf Children's Society
NOI	National Organisation of Intervenors
O&M Specialist	Orientation and Mobility Specialist
QTMSI	Qualified Teacher of the Multi-Sensory Impaired
QTVI	Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired
RCE	Regional Centre of Expertise
RNIB	Royal National Institute of Blind People
SaLT	Speech and Language Therapist
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SSE	Sign Supported English
SSW	Sign Support Worker
TA	Teaching Assistant
TAC	Team Around the Child

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1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE

The purpose of this guidance is to help schools ensure there is effective support from teaching assistants (TAs) for pupils who are deafblind/multi-sensory impaired.

Effective working with TAs should:

- raise the achievement of deafblind pupils narrowing any attainment gap with other children;
- enable the inclusion of deafblind pupils in school activities;
- encourage co-dependent/independent learning.

The guidance reflects findings from research commissioned by the Department of Education into the work of TAs and reviews by Ofsted and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (Scotland).

2. DESCRIPTIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

2.1 Deafblind/multi-sensory impaired

Pupils who are deafblind/multi-sensory impaired range from those mildly affected to those who are profoundly deaf and visually impaired. The children cover the whole ability range.

For educational purposes, pupils are described as a 'heterogeneous group of children who may suffer from varying degrees of visual and hearing impairment, perhaps combined with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, which can cause severe communication, developmental and educational problems'. (DES Policy Statement 1989)

In functional terms deafblind/multi-sensory impaired children and young people may include those with:

- Mild to profound auditory impairment and visual impairment;

- Mild to profound auditory and visual impairments and other significant disabilities;
- Central processing problems of vision and hearing;
- Progressive sensory impairments;
- Visual impairments and a possible loss of auditory processing mechanisms - associated with a physical disability or cognitive disability and communication delay.

Multi-sensory impairment (MSI) is a functional term that is frequently used alongside or interchangeably with deafblindness by educationalists, teachers and families because it communicates more effectively the impact of deafblindness.

For brevity, the term MSI will be adopted throughout the body of the text to represent deafblindness/mult-sensory impairment.

What is rarely acknowledged is that hearing and vision loss, whether congenital or acquired, can also affect the use of other key senses. These include proprioception and vestibular function. A child's development can be affected by poor balance and reduced mobility, as well as under-sensitivity or oversensitivity to touch and/or an impaired sense of smell.

A range of conditions can lead to MSI¹. There is no single or main cause. The most commonly recognised causes in recent years are prematurity, CHARGE syndrome and Usher syndrome. There are many other conditions, a number of which are genetic, which are extremely rare; fortunately these are being identified more frequently than in the past. Understanding the full implications of diagnosis can really support the child's learning and development.

¹ Evidence based overview of ophthalmic disorders in deaf children: a literature update Ontology & Neurology 27:S1-S24@2006

2.2 Teaching Assistants, Learning Support Assistants, Intervenor² and Communication Support Workers

There is a range of titles used to describe adults who provide additional learning support to pupils with MSI. The title used depends on the school or local authority (LA) practice. The most commonly used is teaching assistant (TA) although an increasing number of schools are using the title learning support assistant (LSA) to reflect that the focus of the job is on learning. TA will be used within this guidance to cover LSA.

The term TA refers to a very wide range of staff roles. However the role is described by the school or LA, it must be recognised that the person undertaking this job is performing a *specialist* function³. To provide effective support to a pupil with MSI it is essential that both initial and on-going training are provided.

The term Intervenor is commonly used for a *trained* adult who works with a child or young person with MSI, whether in mainstream school, resourced provision or a special school⁴.

For the purposes of this document the term TA will be used interchangeably with Intervenor to describe an adult who is employed to support the learning, social and emotional development and access to the curriculum of pupils with MSI. A communication support worker (CSW) similarly falls within this broad description but also has a specific role as a professional who generally provides bilingual communication support to pupils with hearing impairment.

The focus of the guidance is on staff working in mainstream settings.

² http://www.sense.org.uk/about_us/our_services/children/intervenor_dvd

³ www.education.gov.uk/schools/careers/traininganddevelopment/staff

⁴ Shared World - Different Experiences QCA 1999

3. IMPLICATIONS OF MULTI-SENSORY IMPAIRMENT ON LEARNING: THE NEED FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

'Whatever the teaching setting, LSAs or Intervenors can contribute much to the evaluation of individual learning programmes...can play a vital role in enabling deafblind pupils to assess and evaluate their own progress by enabling them to record activities and reflect on their work'.

(Shared World – Different Experiences QCA)

'There is clear evidence that there is a positive effect on pupils' progress where teaching assistants are effectively trained to deliver specific support programmes, alongside well-planned lessons..... We do know that the most effective deployment of teaching assistants is still patchy.

(London Institute of Education – published by Department for Education and Skills 2009)

'Members of the wider workforce who were well trained and deployed appropriately made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when they provided intervention for specific groups or individuals'.

(Workforce Reform in Schools - has it made a difference? Ofsted 2010)

3.1 The need for support

Pupils with MSI cover the whole range of ability. However, if their unique educational needs are to be met and they are to achieve their potential, adjustments need to be made to mainstream approaches to education which depend on teaching and learning taking place through the main senses of sight and hearing.

All schools are now expected:

- to 'narrow the gap' between different groups of learners in their schools, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disabled pupils and others who do not have SEND;
- to be proactive in providing for any known barriers that might impede pupils' smooth personal and educational development and progress. Under the Equality Act (2010) there is a clear duty placed on schools (and others) to ensure that pupils have access to the support they need to overcome barriers to their learning and inclusion and to monitor carefully how effective they are in enabling access and inclusion for all.

3.2 Barriers to multi-sensory impaired pupils' development

The TA, who has undertaken specialist training, can make an important contribution in helping pupils with MSI overcome barriers that can impede development in many ways:

- **Progress in learning** - learners with MSI do not have the same access to information or the incidental learning as their hearing/sighted peers. They will need direct teaching methods, adapted materials and equipment and more time to receive and respond to information and ideas.
- **Communication skills** - communication is the key, not only to maintaining attainment at school, but for social inclusion and wellbeing.

Despite early identification of a hearing/vision loss, children whose MSI is congenital almost always enter school with delayed communication and/or language skills.

If the pupil's mode of communication involves alternative and augmentative communication systems, touch and object cues and/or Braille, school life can be isolating: taking part in class becomes much harder and conversation will need to 'planned for' rather than happen spontaneously.

When a deaf child begins to lose vision, or a visually impaired child begins to lose hearing in their school years, new,

compensatory approaches will need to be adopted to support learning:

- If the pupil's preferred language is signed, the new limited visual frame and use of tactile modes may leave their peers and teachers unable to communicate fluently.
- If a child has a visual impairment, using hearing will have been vital, not just for learning, but for having friends and being able to join in social settings.
- If a child loses sight and hearing as a result of a traumatic incident or illness, an immediate programme of very specific support will be needed to create an effective learning environment.
- **Self esteem and confidence** - staying positive about achievements can be a challenge where making friends and an active social life are hard to establish. In fact, success can often feel a long way off when much of the child's effort goes into trying to keep up with the academic pace of a mainstream classroom.

Hearing and vision aids and other technology help the pupil to participate more effectively and have made a huge difference to access. The technology alone cannot however reduce the feelings of exhaustion.

TAs/Intervenors can play a vital role in minimising these barriers to learning, social development and inclusion in a range of ways which are described in detail in the next section.

CASE STUDY

Supporting emotional wellbeing

S is a Y9 girl with Usher Type 1. She is profoundly deaf and has bilateral cochlear implants. S has reduced visual acuity and visual fields and wears glasses as she has myopic astigmatism.

S is a naturally quiet girl and has struggled to make friends, especially as her parents do not encourage her to maintain friendships outside school. Recently S has found that her peers are losing interest in maintaining her friendship and she is becoming more and more isolated.

The TA who works with S has set up a social skills group at the school, comprising other students who have social difficulties. The group meets once a fortnight and the students take part in various activities which require them to work together and communicate. Each student has also had to give a presentation about 'Myself'. S thoroughly enjoyed doing this, especially as the other students were fascinated to learn about the cochlear implants and radio aid. For the first time in months she appeared to have some confidence.

In addition to the planned activities, the TA gives the group time to discuss various topics from the PSHE curriculum. S would not have the confidence to discuss topics such as drugs, alcohol and sex within a whole class setting, but within this small group she has been able to ask questions and put forward her opinions.

By identifying a need and taking this initiative the TA has been extremely effective in supporting S's social and emotional development.

Bristol Sensory Support Service

4. TEACHING ASSISTANTS: ROLE, DUTIES, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDINGS

4.1 Role

The TA role is practical, one-to one and 'hands on' involving close working with the pupil. The work is focused on ensuring the objectives of the pupil's personal education plan or individual education plan (IEP) are being implemented. This includes ensuring

that pupils gain full access to formal classroom teaching and learning and can maximise everyday experiences and opportunities for incidental learning. It requires high order communication skills and the ability to support independence and safe movement through active exploration of the environment. Personal qualities are also very important and a patient and insightful approach to children is essential.

A qualified teacher of MSI children (QTMSI) would normally advise and support school staff, including class or subject teachers, parents and carers in implementing such interventions and in identifying next steps for the pupil. Other colleagues from Sensory Support Services – in particular the teachers of the deaf and visually impaired and mobility officer – would also be involved. For some children a range of therapists (SaLT, Physio and Occupational) will offer programme advice/support.

The allocation of learning support time to a pupil will generally be linked to a detailed assessment of need, the challenges facing the pupil, and the IEP or personal learning plan. Regular evaluation of the impact of the support should be in place and be centred on outcomes relating to the child's personal and learning targets.

CASE STUDY

Supporting complex communication issues, developing independence and social and academic success

M is a boy of 9 in year 4 of a mainstream school with a HI resource base. He has CHARGE syndrome. He wears 2 hearing aids and uses a radio aid. He has had 2 cleft palette repairs which have not been completely successful and more surgery is planned to improve things for him. He has a significant vision impairment and wears prescription glasses for his distance vision and colobomas.

M sees himself very much as a speech user but is also proficient at BSL as his parents are deaf. They are very happy for him to choose voice over sign as his first language and his school's resource base offers an aural approach. However his speech is not always clear - particularly for unfamiliar people.

The introduction of M's TA (Intervenor) has transformed his experience of school and his attainment. He was extremely frustrated in his early years school setting and found settling down very hard. Having his Intervenor, who is a level 3 signer, has changed all that. He is 'another child'. He manages himself, is calm, sets himself very high standards and is doing very well in school. His difficulties with spoken communication still affect him, as making himself understood is hard at times. His Intervenor discretely (very discretely at times) uses BSL signs to support him in class. They get on brilliantly and, as he doesn't really want any 'support', she is able to play that role too!

Because of M's poor vision and balance issues, concerns about his safety used to limit his chance to go out independently at break time. In spite of this, the work that he has done with the Intervenor means that now, in spite of his poor sight and balance, he can go out to play with friends and be supervised in the usual way. His confidence has soared.

The TA was appointed with BSL level 3 and was experienced with children before she started. She then trained as an Intervenor.

Preparation for learning

The Intervenor who support child B and child M meet with teaching staff on a weekly basis to prepare for the week's lessons, look at resources for any modification needs and identify key vocabulary. Consultation also takes place with the SaLT.

Child B and child M have twice weekly pre/post-teaching sessions with their Intervenor where the key words are written, put in context and learnt about.

B and M, who use this method, understand how this way of working is supporting them. The pre-preparation allows them to participate and get ahead ... enabling them to make a contribution and to be openly praised for their learning.

Surrey CC

4.2 Specific Duties

The model job descriptions provided in Appendix 1 outline some of the specific duties a trained specialist TA/Intervenor can undertake. The duties and activities should be matched to the specific needs of the child or young person. In this process:

- the QTMSI should be consulted;
- the training commitments outlined;
- the wide range of staff in the team (TAC) should be acknowledged.

A trained TA can support a range of functions:

- **Planning**
 - contribute to the planning and preparation of learning activities;
 - devise clearly structured activities that interest, motivate and advance learning;
 - support the inclusion of the pupil in the learning activities and in interaction with peers.
- **Preparation of resources and materials**
 - contribute to the selection and preparation of resources;
 - adapt materials and activities to the pupil's needs.
- **Monitoring**
 - Monitor responses to activities and modify the approach accordingly;

- monitor progress in order to provide focused support and feedback;
 - support the evaluation of progress using a range of assessment techniques;
 - contribute to maintaining records.
- **Assessment**
 - support the teacher's contribution to annual reviews and IEPs;
 - contribute to, but not lead, both formal and informal assessment processes.
- **Supporting the learning environment**
 - enhancement and expansion of communication (e.g. increase vocabulary, topics for conversations, and communicative skills);
 - use of communication techniques appropriate for the individual (e.g. environmental cues, touch cues, object cues, calendar systems, adaptive sign language, tactile signing, alternative and augmentative communication systems, Braille);
 - make adaptations for auditory needs (noise, positioning, etc.);
 - make adaptations for visual needs (contrast, lighting, positioning, etc.);
 - implement the use of appropriate mobility devices (as directed by the O&M specialist) and create routes;
 - promote the use of a sighted guide, trailing, and protective techniques as directed by the O&M specialist.

- **Management of equipment and technology**

Understand and or maintain (if required):

- amplification, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices;
- spectacles, low vision devices, and prostheses;
- augmentative communication devices, word boards and speech output devices.

- **Developing independence**

- understand the importance of enabling the pupil to become an increasingly co-dependent and independent learner;
- support the planning that will ensure this will happen.

- **Social skills and being a confident learner**

- after school clubs, access to social and leisure activities and the community (where appropriate);
- look out for other peer group activities;
- be alert to joint working and Deafblind Guidance⁵ for additional support out of school.

CASE STUDY

Interpreting the needs of a highly complex child and ensuring her on-going wellbeing

⁵ LAC(DH)(2009)6 Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults

B is a girl of 9 in year 4 at her mainstream school with an aural HI resource base. She has no diagnosis for her condition but has severe visual impairment with a limited field of vision (central), profound hearing loss in the right and a moderate loss in the left ear and acute dyspraxia. She requires therapy from a range of professionals who come to school. Recently it has been confirmed that her vision has deteriorated.

B is supported by a TA (Intervenor) who supports her in a variety of ways:

- differentiating the curriculum;
- managing the therapy support so B doesn't miss too many classes on a regular basis;
- encouraging B to use her large kit of equipment, which includes a CCTV and laptop, and helping to set it up;
- supporting social interaction, including break time and lunch time (risk assessed for the possibility of tripping and or falling).

B uses very direct language with classmates and has recently begun to want to physically take hold of them when she is with them. This behaviour is new and, after some observation, it was thought to be a consequence of deterioration in her sight. Her TA/Intervenor has discussed this in school and, with the help of the specialist MSI teacher, a new programme of support is being developed to meet her needs in relation to her reducing vision.

Role playing exercises are being developed to help B understand what effect her actions are having on the other children and to help her to adapt her behaviour to ensure harmony in school and with friends. The outcomes are slowly beginning to show. The TA has played a key role as she has knowledge about, and an understanding of, the complexity of this girl's needs through working closely with her.

This behaviour, that shows B's lack of awareness of others' body language and a desire to control the topic of conversation, could have been labelled 'challenging' and difficult to manage but, instead, she is being supported to accommodate to the changes in her vision and learn new ways of being with her friends and teachers that do not jeopardise relationships.

Positive action was taken immediately and B is being supported.

Preparation for learning

The Intervenors who support child B and child M meet with teaching staff on a weekly basis to prepare for the week's lessons, look at resources for any modification needs and identify key vocabulary. Consultation also takes place with the SaLT.

Child B and child M have twice weekly pre/post-teaching sessions with their Intervenors where the key words are written, put in context and learnt about.

B and M, who use this method, understand how this way of working is supporting them. The pre-preparation allows them to participate and get ahead ... enabling them to make a contribution and to be openly praised for their learning.

Surrey CC

The balance of the TA's support activities will be determined by the annual review, where appropriate, IEP target setting and next steps for the pupil. Consideration will also need to be given to time allocated for in-class support, small group and withdrawal support, preparation of material, and liaison and planning with teachers and other professionals supporting the pupil.

CASE STUDY

Supporting specialist training and support network; peer awareness; team working across education, family and social care

E is a Y2 pupil in a mainstream school who is a Braille reader. She has 2 cochlear implants and uses spoken language as her key communication method, backed up by signs and other tactile approaches where appropriate.

She is supported by an Intervenor who receives training from the local advisory service from a QTMSI. She regularly meets with other Intervenor in a training group to share ideas and concerns. Training is embedded into practice by joint visits. For example, training on mobility might be followed up by a joint visit with a mobility specialist.

The team working with the pupil includes the Intervenor, class teacher, educational audiologist, mobility specialist, QTMSI, QTVI, home Intervenor, social worker, as well, of course, as the family. This group meets regularly to discuss issues between all settings and set joint goals.

The Intervenor uses vision technology (e.g. close circuit television), the cochlear implants and a radio system, a Braille, and more. Working together the team have developed interesting teaching approaches such as ways of helping a blind pupil to use Ling sounds for sound testing (without pictures), a scheme similar to Kidtrax for helping to develop spoken language without using books, and deciding on the order of brailled letters and sounds to be taught in relation to the pupil's perception of sounds.

Hertfordshire County Council

A significant proportion of pupils with MSI in mainstream settings are pupils who have started school with either a hearing or visual impairment but because of a progressive condition are facing a second loss in their other major sense. The support from specialist TAs for such pupils will therefore need to be adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.

In the case of deaf pupils who use sign language to communicate and require signed support to access the curriculum, a CSW or sign language interpreter will already be assigned to support them. They may work from spoken English to British Sign Language (BSL) and/or Sign Supported English (SSE). If a pupil with Usher syndrome⁶ is supported in this way, as the child's vision changes staff in communication support roles will require additional and specific training to meet the changing needs of the pupil which will increasingly require them to use touch.

The specialist TAs who work with visually impaired pupils face a similar challenge in adapting to the changing needs of a child with VI who is adapting to a reducing ability to hear. For any child in their school years facing such a change in their life it is crucial that all staff members are able to extend their own skills to successfully continue to perform their role.

The QTMSI should be brought in to advise.

4.3 Skills and understandings required

TAs who work with pupils with MSI fall into the 'specialist' category of support staff and have a very specific role with an individual pupil. The attributes required will differ according to the school, age of pupil and specific needs identified. For any appointment it is essential to determine:

- the starting point for the TA in terms of the skills, experience and other attributes which must be evidenced and demonstrated on the application form and at interview;
- the TAs developmental needs in terms of initial and on-going training, and other support needed to develop sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills to be able to effectively support the pupil with MSI.

⁶ 3 percent to 6 percent of all childhood deafness <http://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/ussher-syndrome>

Specialist MSI staff should be able to advise schools on the person specification and the questions to ask to test whether a candidate meets the person specification and/or has the potential to succeed with training.

5. ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING SUPPORT

'Members of the workforce who were well trained and deployed appropriately made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when they provided intervention to specific groups or individuals.'
..... *'When teaching assistants provided general support in class, they made less of a difference to pupils' learning'.*
(Ofsted Workforce Reform in Schools 2010)

5.1 Measures to support effective TA practice

There are a number of measures the school leadership should have in place to ensure the TA provides effective support for pupils with MSI. They include:

- a commitment to an immediate and on-going professional development programme;
- appropriate deployment;
- ensuring clarity and understanding of the roles of those involved in the pupil's education;
- agreeing targets and intended outcomes for the pupil and evaluating the impact of support and interventions;
- good collaborative planning and communication between teachers and TAs;

- effective partnership working ensuring the use of consistent approaches;
- giving TAs clear professional status and holding them accountable for their work.

5.2 Clarity of roles

The TA is part of a wider team supporting the pupil's learning and well-being and it is important to be clear about respective roles of staff.

The **TA's** support is focused on improving the access of the pupil to teaching by providing access to clear information and supporting learning. The TA will be involved in some direct teaching – always under the guidance of the QTMSI/class or subject teacher.

The **class or subject teacher** is responsible for the overall teaching and learning of the pupil. This includes planning the TA's role in lessons and ensuring lesson plans are clear about outcomes. The teachers, in liaison with SENCO, TA and QTMSI will:

- agree when and how one to one support in class will be provided;
- agree to the most effective physical position;
- agree when the pupil might be withdrawn from a lesson for additional/group support, including the objectives for such withdrawal;
- agree whether pre-lesson or post-lesson support is required;
- be involved in the evaluation of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of the support provided to the child, monitoring progress towards targets and outcomes.

The **specialist teacher (QTMSI)** will be able to provide support and training to the TA and teaching staff and advise on all areas of the pupil's development. The QTMSI will:

- undertake specialist assessments and elucidate the implications for setting learning objectives and support strategies;
- advise on how pupils can access all learning activities;
- advise on the use and maintenance of equipment;
- lead on planning;
- advise on the outcomes that may reasonably be expected for the individual pupil with MSI when support is sustained and developed effectively over time;
- offer training and coaching and advice;
- play a role within joint working (education, health and social care).

CASE STUDY

The value of early diagnosis and intensive intervention

'A' is a 3 year old pre-schooler who has Usher type 1. Her hearing loss was identified through NBS and the sensory support team was alerted immediately. Support is provided in a local authority (LA) nursery and in her home. At approximately 13 months she had sequential cochlear implants. She has no additional needs - either physical or cognitive.

She has an experienced Intervenor providing 15 hrs support over 3 days. During that time she attends a LA Nursery, uses the sensory facilities in a special school and has support at home. She continues to receive the same level of support throughout the holidays as well - at home.

The Intervenor is one of two assistants that are involved with A, so there is back up for absence or holidays. They were trained on the Sense/Northampton University accredited course. The MSI advisory teacher for the authority is one of the staff teaching that course and she also refreshes the Intervenor's training.

The MSI advisory teacher develops A's programme with the SaLT and mobility officer. She supports and monitors the work on a 3 weekly basis.

At 3 years A has several hundred signs, speaks fluently and conversationally. She enjoys imaginative play and extending her vocabulary. She is developing the tactile skills in preparation for learning Braille. She is hitting almost all the milestones for her age and is preparing to go into a mainstream school that has an Hearing Impaired base.

Early positive intervention has given this child a flying start. The skilled, trained and experienced Intervenor, working as part of an active, knowledgeable LA team, gained the confidence of A's mother who may have felt some reluctance to allow such an intensive programme to be put in place with such a small child. The on-going commitment of the LA team has ensured that A has the best possible chance of fulfilling her undoubted educational potential.

Suffolk CC - Sensory and Communication Service

5.3 Clarity of outcomes and evaluation

Clarity of outcomes and evaluation is concerned with what the support is meant to achieve and whether it is working.

The effective deployment and ultimate success of any additional support provided will be directly linked to:

- how clearly the priority learning needs of the pupil(s) and next steps have been identified and defined;
- how well these have been shared with and understood by those responsible for the pupil's learning;

- how the time available and the activities carried out in it are related to these priority needs.

The quality of targets set in the pupil's annual review and/or IEP or personalised learning plan are crucial in securing effective deployment of available support to the pupil.

5.4 Communication and planning

Support from the TA should be discussed at the time of the pupil's entry to the school or at such time as the pupil's function changes. The views of parents should always be taken into account. Agreement should be reached on how:

- the support available to the pupil and the school will be used;
- the impact of the support will be reviewed;
- the specialist sensory support staff, QTMSI, and others will plan together;
- the support staff and school staff will be trained;
- parents will be included and valued.

Measures the school can take to facilitate communication, planning and working include:

- enabling teachers and the TA to make time to discuss lessons and the pupil's participation before/after the school day;
- enabling the teacher and TA the time to work together to evaluate pupil progress and participation, plan and review short and medium term curricular plans and the pupil's objectives and targets;
- ensuring the TA is invited to attend meetings where there are issues of relevance to him/her;

- supporting TAs to take responsibility for planning and reviewing some specific learning opportunities, ensuring they have the necessary training, knowledge and skills to do this.

5.5 Partnership working with parents and other agencies

The school can support effective working relationships with other people involved in the pupil's education by:

- being clear about the respective roles and responsibilities of the TA, teacher and SENCO for liaising with parents and other professionals supporting the pupils;
- ensuring that where the TA is asked to liaise with parents and other professionals from outside the school:
 - this is overseen by the teacher/year teacher and/or SENCO,
 - the TA is given time to record that contact, and
 - information is passed to relevant school staff;
- ensuring the TA has the opportunity to meet to discuss pupil issues and give feedback to relevant people. Because MSI is complex and highly individual it is probable that a number of professionals from education, social care and health will provide advice, either regularly or occasionally, to support the pupil and meet with staff to share information. A 'Team around the Child' (TAC)⁷ approach may be adopted and the TA has a key role in contributing to and being part of that group.

CASE STUDY

Supporting a child with complex multi-sensory impairment in a mainstream classroom and joint working with social care to provide a total package of support for the child and family

⁷ 'The Team Around the Child (TAC) and the lead professional: A guide for practitioners'

J is an 8 year old boy who has CHARGE syndrome. He has a coloboma in each eye, a left squint and nystagmus, hearing impairment and has difficulties swallowing.

J attends a mainstream junior school with a sign language resource. He has a high level of need in the key area of sensory integration.

J uses BSL within a visual frame and has stopped wearing his hearing aids. He is now trialling a bone conduction aid. His spoken language has begun to decrease in use and clarity. His sensory integration needs are a priority and require a very flexible approach to be taken to the way that he learns.

A programme of activities, designed to support his sensory integration needs, runs alongside his classroom experiences and time in the resource base. This additional support, on his proprioception in particular, is helping him to develop his ability to pause, coordinate, balance, move around more confidently and concentrate.

He has TA support in school from two Sign Support Workers (SSWs), one of whom is deaf herself. They undertake the activities to support both his sensory needs and his work in the classroom. It is their skilled support working on sensory integration that is helping him to build strategies to understand his needs more effectively and pre-empt situations arising when he feels uncomfortable. This positive outcome has assisted him to successfully take part in the classroom learning and achieve.

J's need for support does not end in school; it extends to his home where he receives assistance from an Intervenor who also uses BSL to support his communication. She is able to accompany J to swim and walk and develop a social life, while allowing his very supportive family to have some time together.

Both SSW's are supported by an excellent team in school, which has had experience of MSI before. The team itself has specialist support from an experienced QTMSI who works for the county service. In addition, the school is committed to professional development of staff and has supported a teacher to refresh and renew her skills (RCE course, Sense and NATSIP).

Surrey CC

5.6 Continuing Professional Development

The TA's development needs will need to be identified and supported and continually reviewed. They will require support and guidance on appropriate strategies that are specific to the needs and objectives of the individual pupils.

Measures the school can take to support CPD include:

- planned induction for the TA, involving QTMSIs, followed by regular review meetings;
- enrolment on specialist accredited training: Intervenor training course⁸;
- providing support to attend other relevant externally provided courses leading to accreditation/qualifications e.g. BSL, Braille, AAC;
- enabling the TA to network with other colleagues performing the same role e.g. attendance at the annual training day run by the NOI⁹;

⁸ 'Supporting learners who are deaf/blind (MSI)' University of Northampton/Sense www.northampton.ac.uk/info
www.sense.org.uk

⁹ National Organisation of Intervenors, a membership organisation open to anyone working as an Intervenor with a deafblind child <http://intervenor.blogspot.co.uk>

- ensuring that the TA has clear objectives or performance management targets and opportunities for regular discussion about work and professional development needs;
- providing the TA with feedback on their performance including feedback from classroom observations;
- providing training for the class or subject teacher on how to work effectively with TAs and meeting the individual needs of pupils with MSI.

Where training needs are identified, there should be a clear timescale indicated by the school and service as to when the training will take place, how the impact of that training will be evaluated and when certain skills will be in place.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: JOB DESCRIPTIONS/PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

1.1 Job Description and Person Specification 1	
Job Title: Intervenor	Team: SEN Support Services (SENSS) Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)
Service: Children Young People and Families	Grade: Grade to be established
Hours: 37 hours a week (1.0 FTE) Pro rata 39 weeks	Post No: New
Job Type:	Responsible to: Head of SEN Support Services, Specialist Team Manager (HI), Consultant Advisory Teacher (MSI)
Work Location: Countywide	Budget responsibilities: None

Graded as G9: term time only: 44/52

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE: NJC for Local Government Services

- *TERM TIME ONLY – 39 week per academic year.*
- *LEAVE ENTITLEMENT – 5.12 weeks (5.41 after 5 years)*

Intervenors are appointed to the Hearing Support Service, SENSS and may be asked to work in a number of different settings around the county.

The Specialist Team Manager will deploy Intervenor according to the location of Deafblind/MSI children and young people, either on a short or long term basis.

The appointment is to the staff of SENSS, Special Educational Needs Support Service, and you are responsible, on matters directly concerned with your specific role supporting the Deafblind/MSI child, to the Specialist Team Manager (HI) through the Consultant Advisory Teacher (MSI) attached to the Service. Whilst within a school you will be directly responsible to the Head teacher of the school or other designated teacher and will be expected to carry out the duties detailed below.

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To advise staff and support children and young people who are Deafblind/MSI to achieve full access to learning within the Early Years/school curriculum. This will include enabling the Deafblind/MSI child or young person's full inclusion into the wider experiences of the educational setting within which they are placed, whilst promoting, at all times, their independence.

- An Intervenor works under the guidance of the Consultant Advisory Teacher providing direct advice, support, care and supervision skills to children and young people who are Deafblind/MSI.
- Individual support to a Deafblind/MSI child or young person is provided to facilitate effective communication and the receipt of clear information. The Intervenor enables the child or young person to take advantage of learning and social experiences and to gain greater access to the learning environment.

MAIN DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

To use specialist skills to meet the needs of the Deafblind/MSI child or young person, working in close co-operation with other professionals and the family. The Intervenor's role concerns assistance with all areas of learning including:

- To advise teachers and support staff on appropriate strategies for supporting the Deafblind/MSI pupil's learning and communication and to empower them to employ these within their overall teaching approaches.
- To contribute to planning appropriate programmes of support in conjunction with the Consultant Advisory Teacher (MSI) and teachers/therapists working in a Team Around the Child approach with the Deafblind/MSI child or young person.
- To work in partnership with parents following a family centred approach, contributing to positive liaison between home and school.
- To support, up skill, develop and encourage mainstream or specialist Teaching Assistants to take on the role of supporting the Deafblind/MSI child or young person and the increased responsibility associated with this support.
- To provide opportunities for the Deafblind/MSI child or young person to gain access to the curriculum, working with the specialist teachers, therapists or supporting professionals to set appropriate learning targets.
- To use specialist skills to assist in the implementation of a programme of sensory stimulation, developing use of residual hearing and vision where appropriate.
- To assist the teacher by adapting/differentiating materials to meet the needs of the individual pupil.
- Where appropriate, to provide 1:1 support for the Deafblind/MSI child when withdrawn from a group or class to follow programmes of support devised by other professionals.
- To assist in the development of an effective communication system for the Deafblind/MSI child or young person using an agreed approach.

- To promote independence through a range of activities e.g. feeding, personal care, mobility.
- To provide opportunities for the Deafblind/MSI child to explore the environment and enable him/her to make choices and decisions.
- To provide appropriate opportunities and motivation for social interaction.
- To actively promote the voice of the Deafblind/MSI child or young person.
- To promote the inclusion and acceptance of all pupils. For some this may mean acting as a communicator giving clear information to enable the Deafblind/MSI child or young person to benefit from participation with peers.
- To assist with the organisation and supervision of group curricular activities outside the classroom e.g. educational visits, swimming.
- To maintain records as directed, monitoring and reporting on the Deafblind/MSI child or young person's progress to a designated teacher.
- To communicate/attend meetings with teachers, parents and other supporting professionals.

General Duties:

- To maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job, participate in appropriate training activities and encourage and support staff in their development and training.
- To undertake such other duties, training and/or hours of work as may be reasonably required and which are consistent with the general level of responsibility of this job.

- To undertake Health and Safety duties commensurate with the post and/or as detailed in the Directorate's Health and Safety Policy.
- To follow Manual Handling guidelines as directed.
- To be involved in personal care and hygiene.
- To actively promote awareness and practice of equal opportunities in all aspects of the role.

ADMINISTRATIVE FOCUS

- Maintain records and reports as required by the Consultant Advisory Teacher (Multi-Sensory Impairment) and settings within which the MSI child or young person is placed.
- Maintain school liaison records, if required.
- Inform Resource Base Coordinators of any absence from work, promptly.

QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

- A good general standard of education (5 GCSEs including English and Mathematics).
- Experience of working with and supporting children and young people with special educational needs.
- Experience of working with and supporting children with Special Educational Needs specific to the area of Sensory Impairment.
- Suitably qualified in working with CYP with HI, VI or MSI or willing to attend training regarding specific difficulties associated with Multi-Sensory Impairment.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY

- For a named Deafblind/MSI child [or group of children] with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or

who are undergoing Statutory Assessment or who may have short term needs and require only interim support.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

- Designated Mentor [new staff only]
- Consultant Advisory Teacher for MSI
- Specialist Therapists
- Resource Base Coordinator
- Head Teacher / Lead professional EY settings
- Resource Base Teacher(s)
- Specialist Team Manager (SEN Support Services)

PRINCIPAL CONTACTS

- Children with Special Educational Needs
- Their families
- Other Support staff
- Resource Base Teacher
- Resource Base Coordinator
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Head teacher of visited schools
- Specialist Team Manager (HI)

SPECIAL CONDITIONS (if applicable)

If negotiated with individual appointees:

- Additional remuneration for a LA recognised qualification or agreed equivalent.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Add as appropriate

1.2 Job Description and Person Specification 2

Job Title: Intervenor, Multi-Sensory Impairment Specification	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Educational Achievements, Qualifications, Training and Knowledge	Willing to attend training on the role of an Intervenor.	Training / qualification in working with children and young people with MSI e.g. Intervenor training
	Willing to attain specialist qualifications in Sign / Braille (including pre-Braille)	Knowledge of Total Communication approaches. CACDP BSL 1 or 2, Makaton or Sign-a-long Qualification in Braille
	A good general standard of education, including 5 GCSE's or their equivalent	GCSE English and Mathematics (Grade A - C)
	Knowledge and understanding of child development Knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs	Knowledge and understanding of child development and an awareness of the effects of MSI on the process Knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs and HI, VI or Deafblind/MSI in particular
	Willing to undertake recommended Health and Safety training	Awareness of Health and Safety Issues. Safeguarding training. Recent training in Manual Handling.
	Evidence of successful professional development.	Evidence of recent training or involvement in educational activities
Experience	The ability to adapt and devise activities and materials.	Experience of differentiating / adapting programmes of study to meet individual learning needs
	Experience of working with children and young people in an inclusive educational or community setting	Experience of working with sensory impaired children and young people (HI, VI or Deafblind/MSI) Experience of supporting families of children and young people with special needs. Experience of supporting children and young people with disabilities in an inclusive educational or community setting

Experience	Experience of working as part of a team	Experience of preparing and delivering INSET to a variety of educational and/or voluntary agencies, supported by appropriate material, handouts etc.
Job related aptitudes and skills	<p>The ability to work effectively with parents and families.</p> <p>The ability to work closely with a child or young person, developing a positive relationship.</p> <p>The ability to develop and encourage independence in a child or young person</p>	
	<p>Excellent communication skills and an ability to establish a good working relationship with :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child or young person, encouraging their independence • SENSS colleagues • Teachers, TA's and other supporting professionals 	
	<p>Ability to produce clear and succinct records and reports on children and young people supported</p> <p>Analytical ability to summarise and collate recorded information to determine key issues</p>	Experience in writing clear and succinct records and reports using MS Word / Macros
	<p>Ability to work as an effective member of a team, under instruction and with initiative.</p> <p>Ability to meet deadlines, confidently and competently applying knowledge and skills required from training</p>	Experience of working in a team
	<p>Ability to work unsupervised when required responding decisively to meet the need of the Deafblind/MSI child or young person</p>	Experience of working unsupervised

Job related aptitudes and skills	The ability to mentor and contribute to the training of TA's / colleagues working with the Deafblind/MSI child or young person	
	The confidence and ability to use ICT to support young people with SEN	Knowledge of specific ICT used to support young people with SEN The ability to use ICT to support the administrative functions of the post.
Personal Qualities	Personable, organised and good at making positive relationships	A sense of humour
	Enthusiastic, warm and a good communicator and listener Ability to maintain confidentiality	Creative and problem solving
	Punctual and reliable	Willingness to maintain personal and professional development.
	Ability to work flexibly to achieve team objectives	Willingness to try out new ideas
	Positive approach to working with children and young people with an understanding of family focused working and a Team Around the Child approach	Energetic and enthusiastic
Special Requirements	Satisfactory enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.	
	A willingness to work in a range of settings across county and ability to travel as required	Flexibility to travel as required
Physical	Physically fit and energetic	Good all round physical fitness and stamina
Equal Opportunities	Commitment to, and understanding of, the principles of Equal Opportunities for all, in employment and the delivery of services	Undertaken recent and relevant training on the principles of equal opportunities

1.3 Job Description and Person Specification 3

Junior School - Intervenor

Job Purpose

Working under the guidance of the class teacher and SENCO to provide direct support within the educational setting to a child who is MSI and ensure optimum access to the environment and whole school curriculum.

Supporting the child's learning and overall development and encouraging the achievement of their full potential.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Implementing the curriculum

- Primary responsibility to provide direct one-to-one support to the child with MSI throughout all or part of the school day. Support will be provided during group work, whole class activities and on an individual basis
- Ensuring appropriate presentation of information and activities with regard to the child's sensory impairments and individual learning style
- Differentiation and preparation of resources with regard to the child's sensory impairments and individual learning style
- Supporting and reinforcing development of concepts, employing pre- learning and post-learning strategies
- Employing strategies to check the child's understanding
- Assist the child in anticipating events, which may include use of visual timetable, mini routines and developing objects of reference
- Implement the students IEP targets, perhaps using instructional modifications and techniques developed by professionals working with the child
- Provide opportunities for tactile exploration and direct learning

Social and emotional wellbeing

- Recognising, acknowledging and supporting the child in developing his or her compensatory strategies
- Providing materials, activities and feedback to help the child understand the effects of his/her actions
- Encouraging and facilitating independence and providing opportunities to make choices and decisions (maintaining a sense of control, self-determination)
- Facilitating the development of functional skills
- Promoting social and emotional well-being
- Supporting positive interactions with others and teaching acceptable strategies

Communication

- Developing a relationship with the child which allows a clear understanding of his/her communication strategies
- Become proficient in the child's individual communication methods and strategies
- Using augmentative and alternative communication modes appropriate to the child
- To possess a level of communication to effectively model progressive stages of language development as required by the child. This may, for example, include holding qualifications in BSL at a level in advance of the child's current ability

Medical, health and personal care

- Supporting the development of motor skills, independent mobility and orientation
- Implementing individual programmes devised by involved therapists, with appropriate training and supervision
- Meeting medical, health and personal care needs, with appropriate training and supervision
- Effective use of assistive devices, IT and other specialist equipment with appropriate training and supervision

Planning and monitoring progress

- Identification of the child's personal learning style and pace to enable motivation of the child as an active learner
- Participate in the assessment of the child, this may include progress reports, data collection and other documentation to monitor progress
- Keep a daily log of information about the child and his/her activities
- Input towards planning the IEP and at Annual Review

Collaborative working

- Working under the direction and supervision of the class teacher, SENCO and specialist teachers involved with the child
- Work co-operatively with parents/carers and a variety of involved professionals
- Maintain ongoing communication with the family

Professional development

- To undergo initial training and then be involved in ongoing CPD
- To undertake any recommended in-service training wherever possible

Other Duties and Responsibilities:

- To receive information about the children in complete confidence
- To be aware of the school Behaviour policy when managing children's behaviour
- To be part of the school team working towards the aims and objectives of the School Development Plan
- To conform to the school dress code
- To perform any task reasonably asked by the Head Teacher or Class teacher

1.4 Job Description and Person Specification 4

Junior School – Intervenor (with BSL)

Job Purpose:

Working under the guidance of the class teacher and Inclusion Manager/SENCO to provide support in the educational setting to a child with Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) and ensure optimum access to the environment and whole school curriculum.

Supporting the child's learning and overall development and encouraging the achievement of their full potential.

Essential Skills:

- BSL Level 3 (or post Level 2 working towards Level 3 qualification)
- Intervenor qualification or equivalent or willingness to train

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

Communication

- BSL Level 3 (or working towards) to facilitate communication and model language
- Must be an independent communicator
- Develop a relationship with the child which allows a clear understanding of his communication strategies and become proficient in the child's communication methods and strategies

Implementing the curriculum

- Primary responsibility to provide direct one-to-one support to the child with MSI throughout all or part of the school day. Support will be provided during group work, whole class activities and on an individual basis

- Ensuring appropriate presentation of information and activities with regard to the child's sensory impairments and individual learning style
- Differentiation and preparation of resources with regard to the child's sensory impairments and individual learning style
- Supporting and reinforcing development of concepts, employing pre-learning and post-learning strategies
- Employing strategies to check the child's understanding
- Assist the child in anticipating events, which may include use of visual timetable, mini routines and developing objects of reference
- Implement the child's IEP targets, perhaps using instructional modifications and techniques developed by professionals working with the child
- Provide opportunities for tactile exploration and direct learning

Social and emotional wellbeing

- Recognising, acknowledging and supporting the child in developing his or her compensatory strategies
- Providing materials, activities and feedback to help the child understand the effects of his/her actions
- Encouraging and facilitating independence and providing opportunities to make choices and decisions (maintaining a sense of control, self-determination)
- Facilitating the development of functional skills
- Promoting social and emotional well-being
- Supporting positive interactions with others and teaching acceptable strategies

Medical, health and personal care

- Supporting the development of motor skills, independent mobility and orientation
- Implementing individual programmes devised by involved therapists, with appropriate training and supervision
- Meeting medical, health and personal care needs, with appropriate training and supervision

- Effective use of assistive devices, IT and other specialist equipment with appropriate training and supervision
- Supervision and support at lunchtime and in the playground

Planning and monitoring progress

- Identification of the child's personal learning style and pace to enable motivation of the child as an active learner
- Participate in the assessment of the child, this may include progress reports, data collection and other documentation to monitor progress
- Keep a daily log of information about the child and his/her activities
- Input towards planning the IEP and at Annual Review

Collaborative working

- Working under the direction and supervision of the class teacher, Inclusion Manager/SENCO and specialist teachers involved with the child
- Work co-operatively with parents/carers and a variety of involved professionals
- Maintain ongoing communication with the family

Professional development

- To undergo initial training and then be involved in ongoing CPD
- To undertake any recommended in-service training wherever possible

Other Duties and Responsibilities:

- To receive information about the children in complete confidence
- To be aware of the school Behaviour policy when managing children's behaviour
- To be part of the school team working towards the aims and objectives of the School Development Plan
- To conform to the school dress code

- To perform any task reasonably asked by the Head Teacher or Class teacher

APPENDIX 2: TRAINING PROVIDERS

Some Sensory Support Services offer coaching support and training for specialist TAs. Schools are advised to consult their local service for details.

Some national organisations offer training. They include:

On Line Inset www.sentrain.net offers an online certificated course (non-accredited) which involves 15-20 hours specialist tutor-led learning, including face to face training. Contact support@onlineinset.net 01273 507007

Face to Face 2 Day MSI

Face to face presentation of the online course above delivered by a Sense specialist and a local NATSIP local authority partner. Commissioned from Sense via Joanna Bassett: joanna.bassett@sense.org.uk 01372 840306

Sense Intervenor (MSI) 5 Day Course – Non-Accredited Option

Contact: Sam Cook sam.cook@sense.org.uk 01778 382244 Jenny Fletcher jenny.fletcher@sense.org.uk 07980 606951

Intervenor (MSI): Level 4 (1st year degree level 120 pts) – A Level entry requirements

Sense Intervenor (MSI): Level 4 – Accredited option

5 day specialist tutor led learning face-to-face plus self-paced study.

Accredited by University of Northampton. 20 CATS points which can be used towards CHESL to accumulate 120 CATS points towards other awards e.g. Foundation Degree, HLTA. Contact: Sam Cook

sam.cook@sense.org.uk 01778 382244 jenny.fletcher@sense.org.uk 07980 606951

Continuing Education/Social Care

Deafblind Studies: Cert and Diploma. Contact: Gerard Swan 0845 4561036 coordinator@deafblindstudies.org.uk

The **Signature** website: www.signature.org.uk gives details of the Level 3 Certificate in Learning Support for Communication Support Workers giving details of training centres around the country that offer this course.

APPENDIX 3: EVALUATION FOR NatSIP

EFFECTIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN SCHOOLS

Introduction

NatSIP is committed to the pursuit of excellence in its work to improve outcomes for children and young people with sensory impairment. To this end, NatSIP routinely evaluates and reports upon its initiatives. ***Your support in the completion and return of this brief evaluation questionnaire would therefore be very much appreciated.***

The questionnaire form is split into two parts. Part A concerns ***initial feedback*** on the publication before any of the guidance is put into action. This can be returned soon after receipt and consideration of the document. Part B, a ***longer term evaluation***, focuses on feedback with regard to any particular uses that have been made of the guidance and can be returned as and when any such applications have been completed.



Lindsey J Rousseau
NatSIP Facilitator

Email: lindsey.rousseau@natsip.org.uk
Mobile: 07711 030711

EFFECTIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN SCHOOLS

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE – MSI PART A – INITIAL FEEDBACK

Your name:	Organisation:
Role in organisation:	
Email:	

Having considered the document:

1. How helpful do you think this publication is likely to be as a resource for use in schools? Please rate by highlighting the appropriate number:

*Little/no
value*

*Considerable
value*

1

2

3

4

Please comment if you have any general observations about the resource.

2. Are there any particular aspects of the guidance you would like to introduce or put into practice in due course? If so, please summarise:

Thank you for your time and support

Please return to: Bob Denman **Email:** bob.denman@natsip.org.uk

Postal address: Rookmead, Main Road, Wellow, Isle of Wight, PO41 0SZ

EFFECTIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN SCHOOLS

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE – MSI PART B – LONGER TERM EVALUATION

Your name:	Organisation:
Role in organisation:	
Email:	

If you have introduced or put into practice any aspect of the guidance:

1. Describe briefly what was done:

2. If you are able to, please comment on any outcomes (e.g. any evaluation of training sessions delivered; any feedback on impact upon classroom practice; any feedback from pupils etc):

Please repeat if you are reporting on more than one application:

1. Describe briefly what was done:

2. If you are able to, please comment on any outcomes

Thank you for your time and support

Please return to: Bob Denman **Email:** bob.denman@natsip.org.uk

Postal address: Rookmead, Main Road, Wellow, Isle of Wight, PO41 0SZ