
Quality Standards for Sensory Support Services in England

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Preface



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The standards are grouped into four domains, with associated standards within each.

In Summer 2023, following the launch of the *Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment* (CFVI) in 2022, Appendix 2 was added to illustrate how the standards map across to the CFVI and vice versa.

1. Introduction

These quality standards replace those published by NatSIP in 2009.

The standards have been updated to take account of changes in education policy and, in particular, the Ofsted/CQC handbook for the inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities¹ published in April 2016.

The standards have been grouped under four quality domains. The first three domains are based on the evidence inspectors will gather to answer three primary questions relating to the quality of arrangements for supporting children and young people with SEND². The three questions are:

- A. How effectively does a local area identify children and young people with SEND? When evaluating effectiveness, the inspection team will be considering
 - (i) the timeliness of the identification and
 - (ii) the quality of identification and assessment information
- B. How effectively the needs of children and young people are assessed and are met
- C. How effectively are local arrangements improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND

In making judgements relating to these primary questions the inspectors will be considering leadership, joint commissioning, the local offer and improvements planning. These standards therefore include a fourth quality domain related to **the effectiveness of leadership and management**.

For each of the three primary areas, the inspection handbook lists the factors that inspectors will take into account when evaluating the quality of local arrangements. The standards in this document under each domain are largely based on these factors. Excerpts from the inspection handbook are given in an appendix to help understand the rationale for the standards for sensory support services set out in this publication.

Self- Evaluation

It is expected that a local area will have a thorough understanding of its effectiveness in fulfilling its responsibilities. However, Ofsted and the CQC do not require the production of a self-evaluation document in a particular format. These standards provide sensory services with a framework for self- evaluation based on some of the key areas the inspection team will be considering when forming a judgement on the quality of local arrangements to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

NatSIP has also produced a quality improvement pack to support services in evaluating their provision. This is available on the NatSIP Website.³

Please note: In this document, we use the word *parents* to include both parents and carers.

These standards are for education sensory support services. The Ofsted/CQC inspection of local area arrangements also considers the quality of health services. Local multi-agency forums for meeting the needs of children and young people with a sensory impairment e.g. Children's Hearing Services Working Groups (CHSWGs) will therefore need to consider how well their arrangements meet the inspection criteria.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-guidance-for-inspectors>

² See paragraph 85 of the inspection handbook

³ <https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/supporting-si-workforce/quality-improvement-standards>

2. The standards and key requirements

Domain A: Effective identification of need

QS A1: Services will support the timely identification and assessment of a child or young person with sensory impairment

Requirements to meet the standard:

- A1i Information is given to parents, schools and early year's settings on the possible signs of a permanent or temporary hearing and/or vision loss and what to do if this is suspected.
- A1ii For all referrals of children with sensory impairment not received through the newborn hearing screening programme, the service will contact families and (where relevant) education settings within **five working days** of a notification of a diagnosis of a sensory loss. The timing of the first visit is to be agreed with the parent/setting and would normally be undertaken within ten working days of the notification. The visit will:
- explain what support is available to access education
 - explain the sensory loss and its implications
 - (where relevant) explain to the education setting what it can do to ensure the child or young person is included and makes progress
 - answer any questions parents and staff in the education setting have.
- A1iii In the case of families of babies diagnosed with a hearing loss by the newborn hearing screening programme, the service will contact them within **two working days**⁴ of the referral.⁵ This initial contact will inform parents about the support offered by the service and how they can help their child or young person and answer any questions the family may have. The timing of the first visit is to be agreed with the parent and would normally be undertaken within ten working days of the referral.
- A1iv Following referral of a child or young person with sensory impairment, having received consent from parents, an assessment of his/her needs is undertaken by a qualified specialist teacher for hearing, vision or multi-sensory impairment. An MSI assessment may require the involvement of more than one, and sometimes all three, specialist teaching professions. The timing of the initial assessment will be determined in consultation with parents and would usually be undertaken within at least **three working weeks** of notification of diagnosis.
- A1v Where a child or young person is not making progress in line with other children or young people and/or it is clear that they experience difficulties in particular areas of development despite receiving appropriate support and interventions, specialist assessments undertaken by teachers with the mandatory qualification are used promptly. A written report should normally be provided within **ten working days** of the assessment which describes the assessment results in a way that can be clearly understood by parents, and suggests strategies for addressing any difficulties the child or young person is experiencing.
- A1vi Where a child or young person is starting in a new education setting or adult service, the service will provide information on their assessed needs within four working weeks of the new educational setting being allocated to the child or young person or adult service being provided.

⁴ Taken from the government's quality standards for the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (2010). See : https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/422755/NHSP_Quality_Standards_September_2010.pdf

⁵ Note: multi-agency pathways should ensure there is a prompt referral to the education service following diagnosis by health professionals.

- A1vii The progress of the child or young person is monitored to ensure the assessment information is up to date. Service protocols are in place to ensure relevant specialist assessments are used on an ongoing basis to ensure the child or young person is making good progress. The service ensures that effective use is made of information from audiologists or other health professionals and also from national assessments.
- A1viii Specialist teachers make an effective contribution to Education, Health and Care needs assessments in accordance with the NatSIP guidance Better Assessment, Better Plans, Better Outcomes⁶ and do so within the required timescales.

QS A2: Information provided by identification and assessments carried out by the service ensures an understanding of the child or young person's needs, identifies targets for his/her progress and supports the planning and review of the effectiveness of teaching and the help and support they require

Requirements:

- A2i Specialist assessments where appropriate (both standardised and non-standardised) and an analysis of attainment and progress are used to:
- identify needs and any gaps in the child or young person's learning and development
 - establish a baseline set challenging but realistic targets with particular focus on developing language and literacy and promoting access to the curriculum and independence in learning
 - identify the support/provision required to address the needs and meet targets
 - identify the reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the child or young person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage when accessing teaching and learning or participating fully in the life of the education setting
 - monitor progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and other education, health and social care support provided
 - identify areas which require further exploration by other professionals.
- A2ii Education providers are given clear written and verbal explanation of the assessment and what it means in terms of the child or young person's strengths and needs and the steps they will have to take to ensure the child or young person has access to teaching and learning and makes progress.
- A2iii The service supports the use of small step assessments and/or P levels to monitor progress of those children and young people with significant additional learning needs. Expectations of such learners are high and are informed by an understanding of how their other needs can impact on learning and progress.

⁶ <https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/workstreams-and-groups/2-supporting-the-implementation-of-the-send-reforms/2a-ehc-plans/498-better-assessments-better-plans-better-outcomes-guidance-updated-and-published>

QS A3: Arrangements are in place by the service to demonstrate that it has supported the effective identification of the child or young person's needs

Requirements:

- A3i The service can show that it keeps accurate records of the:
- number, age, gender and ethnicity of children and young people with sensory impairment
 - the specific needs of each child or young person and the assessments undertaken
 - timescales for contacting the family and completing of assessments from the point of confirmation of a sensory impairment
 - how assessment has supported and intervention strategies.
- A3ii As well as identifying the individual needs of children and young people, the service provides an overview of their needs to inform commissioning decisions (including any joint commissioning between education, health and social care) and strategic developments such as the local offer and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

Domain B: The effectiveness of the service in assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with a sensory impairment

QS B1: There are thresholds and eligibility criteria for supporting children and young people with sensory impairment that are clear and applied in a transparent way, reflecting level of needs, including the need for early intervention to prevent children falling behind, while also ensuring there is a prompt response where limited progress is being made

Requirements:

- B1i Eligibility criteria and thresholds for support are shared with, and reviewed with, parents and young people and education establishments and are easy to access through the local offer.
- B1ii There is a clear understanding of what early years settings, mainstream and special schools and post 16 providers are expected to provide for learners with sensory impairment. This information should be easily accessed through the local offer.

QS B2: The service ensures that the child or young person and his/her parents are fully involved in their assessment, ongoing monitoring and review

Requirements:

- B2i Children, young people and their parents are given their own explanation of the assessment and what it means in terms of family support for the child or young person, the support available from others and the next steps. The report should be jargon-free and clear, age-appropriate, written and oral, or where required signed. This should be provided within 10 working days of the assessment.
- B2ii Support is given to education settings and local authority statutory assessment staff to enable children or young people with a sensory impairment to:
- articulate their needs and identify the barriers and problems they face in accessing teaching and learning, making progress and feeling socially included
 - be involved in agreeing the support required to meet needs, targets and improve outcomes.
- B2iii Parents are enabled to:
- become fully involved in the assessment and articulate the needs of their child and identify the barriers and problems faced in accessing teaching and learning, making progress and feeling socially included in their education setting
 - identify and agree the support required to meet needs, achieve targets and improve outcomes.

QS B3: The service works well with the child or young person's early years setting, mainstream school, special school or college and other professionals during their assessment

Requirements:

- B3i There are clear protocols for multi-disciplinary and multi-agency assessments of children and young people with a sensory impairment setting out clearly roles and responsibilities.
- B3ii The service can produce evidence of an effective contribution to multi-agency and multi-disciplinary assessments that has resulted in a holistic assessment of the child or young person's needs for the purposes of early intervention (such as use of the Common Assessment Framework and the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle) and statutory Education, Health and Care needs assessment.
- B3iii There is regular information exchange between the education service and health services about how well the child or young person is functioning to inform adjustments to their hearing or vision equipment or other technologies.

- B3iv The annual survey of users' views demonstrates high levels of satisfaction with the service's contribution to statutory Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans and the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2015).⁷
- B3v There are clear pathways in place for referring children and young people for specialist mental health assessment, and/or specialist social care assessment if issues with social and emotional wellbeing become apparent.

QS B4: The service provides effective support to families and education establishments in meeting assessed needs

Requirements:

- B4i The service can provide specialist staff who have the necessary training, qualifications and experience of supporting parents with babies and young children to ensure good progress in meeting early years developmental milestones.
- B4ii The service can provide specialist staff with the training, knowledge and experience to support children and young people:
- in different education settings and phases of education to ensure access to the curriculum
 - with additional needs such as those where English is a second language and those with additional complex needs in local special schools
 - who are using an increasing diverse range of access technologies.
- B4iii At the point of transfer of a child or young person to a new education establishment, the service can demonstrate that the establishment has a clear understanding of the learners needs and how to ensure a successful transition.
- B4iv The service can demonstrate how it has improved the capacity of education establishments to meet the needs of children and young people with sensory impairment.

QS B5: The service can demonstrate that children and young people are fully satisfied that their needs are being met and their outcomes have improved

Requirements:

- B5i The service regularly collects the views of children and young people and can demonstrate how their views have informed service planning and practice.
- B5ii The service can demonstrate that children and young people:
- are involved in identifying, planning and reviewing the support and access arrangements that they need on a day to day basis and long term.
 - have a full understanding of their targets and are fully involved with target setting and attend the reviews of their Education, Health and Care plan or the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle of support set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2015).⁸
 - have the confidence and opportunity to let staff know if they have not understood what has been said or taught.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

QS B6: The service can demonstrate that parents have high levels of satisfaction that the service is meeting their child's needs and helping them to make good progress

Requirements:

B6i By conducting regular surveys of parents views the service can demonstrate:

- how their views have informed service planning and practice.
- high levels of satisfaction with the service's support.

B6ii The service's records show that working with education settings good links with home are developed to ensure parents:

- receive regular up to date and accessible information on the support their child is receiving and their progress.
- know how they can contribute to their child's learning.

Domain C: The effectiveness of the service in improving outcomes for children and young people with a sensory impairment

QS C1: The service can demonstrate it is making an effective contribution to ensure that the child or young person's needs are being met and their outcomes are improving

This is one of the most critical standards and the key requirements related to this standard have been grouped under four sub-headings:

1. Those that relate to progress and attainment outcomes.
2. Those that relate to social and emotional development outcomes.
3. Those that relate to post-16 outcomes.
4. Those that relate to key aspects of the work of the service that contribute to positive outcomes, that are not covered in other sections.

Requirements that relate to progress and attainment outcomes

- C1i The service regularly and rigorously monitors progress and has data showing that the progress of children and young people with sensory impairment is age-appropriate and at least in line with other learners of similar ability, and that they make good progress relative to their starting point and that any attainment gaps are narrowed.
- C1ii There is an expectation that progress is age-appropriate in line with other learners of similar ability, and, for learners with complex needs, it is commensurate with their sensory impairment and their additional learning needs.
- C1iii Progress is evaluated using national assessment data as well as teacher assessment and specialist assessments. The service participates in the NatSIP national outcomes benchmarking exercise to compare its outcomes with national benchmarks.

Requirements that relate to social and emotional development outcomes

- C1iv The service has records to demonstrate the impact of its support to educational settings and parents on children and young people in relation to:
- developing social skills, having good levels of self-esteem and a positive self-identity
 - having the opportunity to take responsibility for managing their own sensory impairment
 - developing emotional literacy skills and the ability and confidence to identify and communicate their emotions and needs.
- C1v Children and young people with sensory impairment are given opportunities to meet peers with sensory impairment on a regular basis and have access to role models with sensory impairment.
- C1vi The service provides effective support to schools to ensure Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) lessons are planned and adapted to enable access for children and young people with sensory impairment so that they are able to develop a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and choices.
- C1vii Data shows that the number of school days lost by children and young people with sensory impairment through exclusion and other absences is in line with or no worse than that for all children and young people.

Requirements that relate to post 16 outcomes

- C1viii The service's records show that it works with schools to ensure that:
- young people with a sensory impairment are positive and ambitious about what they can achieve after leaving school. They are encouraged to think about careers and apply to courses that are most suited to developing their potential and independence.
 - the profile of post-school destinations of young people with a sensory impairment is similar to that of all students. Data on post-16 destinations of school leavers shows that the proportion of young people with sensory impairment in full-time education or in employment and training is similar to that of other students.
- C1ix The service's records shows that it works with schools to ensure young people with sensory impairment, and their parents, are fully informed at the appropriate time of post-school options and of the support, services and schemes available to enable young people with a sensory impairment to attend further education colleges and universities, join an apprenticeship scheme or access work (e.g. Access to Work or Disabled Students Allowance).
- C1x The service works with schools and colleges to ensure there are effective transition arrangements in place for young people with a sensory impairment aged 14+ years. This should include assessing the young person's need for support to help overcome potential barriers, providing information on options, relevant work experience, full student engagement, transition visits and liaison with the future education setting or employer.
- C1xi The service ensures that young people are aware of their right, under the Care Act 2014, to a transition assessment to address their social care needs.

Other requirements relating to key aspects of the work of the service that contribute to positive outcomes

- C1xii The service's records can demonstrate that specialist support, advice and training to class and/or subject teachers and teaching assistants has resulted in:
- effective teaching and learning
 - reasonable adjustments being made to create good learning environments
 - children and young people with sensory impairment feeling included and participating in the life of the education setting.
- C1xiii The service's records show that children and young people with sensory impairment have access to up-to-date technology from an early age that is effectively managed, to improve their ability to participate in life at home and in their education setting ,and access teaching and learning in formal and informal settings.

Domain D: Leadership and management

QS D1: Leaders demonstrate an ambitious vision for children and young people with a sensory impairment, they have high expectations for what all children and young people with sensory impairment can achieve and ensure high standards of support provision and care for children and young people

Requirements:

- D1i Leaders articulate and support high expectations for children or young people with a sensory impairment and a commitment to ensuring that any attainment gaps are closed. This vision is reflected in the work of staff and their job descriptions and goals.
- D1ii Service performance reporting includes progress data collected for all children or young people with a sensory impairment (such as through the NatSIP Outcomes Benchmarking exercise). The data is interrogated and reported to service managers.

QS D2: Leaders improve staff practice in supporting parents and education establishments in the assessment of need and the teaching and learning of children and young people with sensory impairment through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development

Requirements:

- D2i Managers should have the necessary qualifications, knowledge and skills related to the teaching and learning of children and young people with a sensory impairment and be able to:
- guide and monitor staff performance
 - work with staff who work directly with children and young people with hearing, vision and multi-sensory impairments to develop performance measures, and make sure that standards and improvement targets are in place for key processes
 - ensure that appropriate training and development opportunities are provided to all staff so that they maintain high levels of specialist knowledge and make effective use of developing technologies, new research and methodologies
 - ensure that all staff have appropriate specialist qualifications and the necessary personal skills to deliver effective services which promote positive outcomes and progress.

QS D3: Leaders evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement

Requirements:

- D3i Children and young people with sensory impairment, their parents, schools, early years settings, further education colleges, health and social care services are fully involved in the development of services.
- D3ii Partnerships and networks in education, health, social care and voluntary agencies are reviewed and evaluated to inform future improvements.
- D3iii Evaluations of service delivery are reported to stakeholders, inform developments, and help improve practice.

QS D4: Leaders ensure that high quality support is provided to education establishments so that children and young people with a sensory impairment are provided with learning programmes or a curriculum that has suitable breadth, depth and relevance. This should meet any relevant statutory requirements and ensure that children and young people with sensory impairment get a good start to their formal education, are well prepared for the next stage of their education and eventually for post-education, training or employment.

Requirements:

- D4i Leaders deliver guidance and mentoring to support good practice and delivery of training to settings to ensure positive outcomes for all children and young people with sensory impairment on the caseload.
- D4ii Staff are informed of developments in the curriculum to ensure high quality advice and support to parents, schools and settings.

QS D5: Leaders promote equality and diversity. There is a focus on those children and young people most at risk of not making good levels of progress (e.g. those with additional or complex needs, in families on low income, and in families where English is an additional language).

Requirements:

- D5i Leaders ensure that the service policies enable teachers of sensory impairment to advise on reasonable adjustments and equal access to the curriculum.
- D5ii Leaders ensure that the service has policy and practice resources to support progress for all children and young people. Where children and young people are not making the expected progress, discussions are held with settings and interventions are delivered and carefully monitored. Referrals are made to other agencies if appropriate.
- D5iii Leaders ensure that staff are able to support children and young people with sensory impairment with a wide range of needs and abilities, ensuring a range of appropriate skills in the workforce (e.g. British Sign Language, Braille skills, etc.).

Appendix 1 – Excerpts from the Inspection Handbook

Excerpts from Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Publication: *The handbook for the inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities*⁹ (2016)

Inspectors' planning and preparation

5. In planning for the inspection, the lead Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and the CQC inspector will consider all available evidence to develop an initial picture of the local area's performance in fulfilling its responsibilities. The lead HMI and CQC inspector will develop initial hypotheses and key lines of enquiry informed by analysing:
- outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities in national assessments
 - attendance and exclusion information
 - data relating to the identification of special educational needs at special educational needs support and education, health and care (EHC) plan levels
 - information about the destinations after leaving school, including about young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - performance towards meeting expected timescales for statutory assessment
 - inspection reports for the local area, its services and providers
 - the published local offer
 - the local authority short break statement
 - schools' and nurseries' published special educational needs information reports
 - the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA)
 - the joint health and well-being strategy
 - special educational needs and disability strategic plans devised and used by the local area
 - the level of appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (Health and Social Care Chamber) (Special Educational Needs and Disability), including cases resolved prior to tribunal hearing
 - complaints to Ofsted and CQC
 - any relevant serious case reviews and their outcomes
 - performance information published by the DfE and DoH
 - commissioning and performance data on delivery:
 - of healthy child programme (previous 12 months)
 - of school nursing service (previous 12 months)
 - on neonatal screening programme
 - on 0–25 services for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy (to include commissioned care pathways and specialist arrangements for children with SEND).

⁹ See:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1115350/LA_SEND_inspection_handbook.pdf
We note that this document has been replaced by later versions, most recently in 2023. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook/area-send-inspections-framework-and-handbook>

The lead HMI and CQC inspector should also review additional information such as:

- any evaluation from service users and how these have influenced commissioning and changes to service delivery
- data about initial and health review assessments for children looked after who have or who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pathways for referrals to health services for assessment, including CAMHS, therapies, child development centres and associated performance data
- statistics on health attendance and input into EHC assessment and review meetings
- specifications for local area services, including those for young people aged between 16 to 25
- guidelines on transfer of responsibility.

Evaluation schedule

81. To make their judgement about the effectiveness of the local area, inspectors will gather evidence to answer three primary questions:

Question A: How effectively does the local area identify children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Question B: How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Question C: How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

82. In gathering evidence and making judgements for questions A to C, several crucial aspects will inform the inspectors' evaluations. These include:

- the leadership of provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities across the local area
- the impact of joint commissioning
- the local arrangements, including the local offer and how well leaders understand the local area
- how the local area uses the intelligence gathered from evaluation of its effectiveness to plan for and lead future improvement.

83. Inspectors will assess the quality and impact of joint commissioning arrangements between partners, including through the local strategic needs assessment and well-being strategies. In assessing partners' work, inspectors will review how efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable this is in improving outcomes for children and young people.

Question A: How effectively does the local area identify children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

84. In order to assess how well the local area identifies children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, inspectors should take account of the following aspects:

- timeliness
- the quality of identification and assessment information – spanning the 0 to 25 age range.

Timeliness

85. To evaluate the timeliness of identification of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, inspectors should take into account:
- when potential needs were raised with the local area by the young person, parents and carers or teachers or other staff working with the young person, and the efficiency and appropriateness of the response
 - appropriate monitoring arrangements to ensure assessment information remains up to date
 - the effectiveness of routine assessment of educational attainment and progress, including the application of national assessment arrangements
 - how social care needs of children and young people are identified and assessed
 - the effectiveness of the use of information from early health checks and health screening programmes
 - performance towards meeting expected timescales for EHC needs assessments, including for conversion of existing statements of special educational needs to EHC plans
 - the timing of assessments in preparation for a child or young person's move from one provider to another, or into adult services
 - how school census data is used to identify possible inconsistencies in identification of needs.

Quality of identification

86. In order to assess the quality of identification and assessment information, inspectors should take into account evidence that the information has been used for:
- establishing a baseline for setting targets for progress and improvement towards meeting education, health and social care support or therapy needs
 - informing joint commissioning, predicting the need for services and putting in place provision that meets the needs of children and young people
 - informing planning for effective teaching and other education, health and social care support or therapy
 - evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and other education, health and social care support or therapy provided.

Reporting on the effectiveness of identification of need

87. In arriving at the judgement about how effectively the local area identifies children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, inspectors must report on key aspects of effective identification as they relate to:
- children and young people being considered or assessed for, or having, EHC plans
 - children and young people being considered or assessed for, or in receipt of, special educational needs and disability support
 - the thoroughness of the area's understanding of the views of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their parents and carers
 - the thoroughness of the area's understanding of the views of parents, carers and young people as part of the identification process
 - the extent to which the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the whole local area are identified, irrespective of individuals' characteristics and circumstances, and that this identification is rigorously and routinely reviewed.

88. This evaluation will also report on the quality and sufficiency of the information on which the local area has evaluated its own effectiveness in identifying children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Question B: How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

89. In order to evaluate how effectively the local area assesses and meets needs, inspectors should take account of the following aspects:
- engagement and co-production with children and young people, and their parents and carers
 - effectiveness of coordination of assessment between agencies in joint commissioning – clear roles, responsibilities and accountability of partners in assessing and meeting needs
 - satisfaction of parents and carers/satisfaction of children and young people
 - the suitability of EHC plan, (including where relevant alignment with child in need and child protection plans)
 - the local offer, including its development, accessibility and currency
 - that planning is appropriate to meet the needs of children and young people receiving special educational needs and/or disability support.

Engagement and co-production with children and young people, parents and carers

90. Inspectors should evaluate how well the local area engages with children and young people in the identification, assessment and provision of their needs. Inspectors will gather information about how well children and young people understand their needs and how involved they are in setting targets for their own progress. In talking to children and young people, inspectors will test the extent to which they have co-ownership of both the process and decisions that affect how their needs are met.
91. Inspectors will also gather views of parents and carers about how successfully the local area provides the necessary information and support to help parents and carers engage in assessing and meeting their children's needs. Inspectors should evaluate the effectiveness of their involvement in the identification of needs, review how well they understand their children's needs and are involved in setting targets for progress.
92. Inspectors should also take into account the use of impartial information and advice and support services, including advocacy where appropriate, to support children and young people's needs.
93. Inspectors should confirm that the local area has robust procedures for protecting sensitive information when sharing this across agencies. Procedures used by the local area for sharing information should meet statutory requirements and government guidance.

Effectiveness of local arrangements

94. Crucial to evaluating the work of the local area in assessing and meeting needs is the effectiveness of inter-agency working for the identification of special educational needs and disability support and EHC needs assessments. Inspectors should gather evidence about the coordination of assessment between agencies, their roles and responsibilities and how they assure accountability across the local area. Inspectors should evaluate how education, health and social care services work together in the best interests of children and young people and minimise unnecessary duplication. Inspectors will consider how effectively assessment and reviews are coordinated, especially at each stage of the young person's transition towards adulthood.

Satisfaction of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities that their needs are being met and their outcomes are improving

95. Inspectors will gather views of children and young people during inspection. Inspectors will want to hear about how well the children and young people are listened to and their aspirations heard and the extent to which disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs feel that outcomes in their lives are improving. Inspectors will consider information from other sources, including complaints that have been made to Ofsted and CQC over time, appeals to the First-Tier Tribunal (Health and Social Care Chamber) (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and any relevant serious case reviews.
96. Inspectors will also take into account children and young people's access to and the effectiveness of impartial information, advice and support services, and advocacy where appropriate.

Question C: How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

97. In order to assess how well the local area improves outcomes, inspectors should take account of the following aspects in their evaluation:
- outcomes – across education, health and care
 - leaders' assessment of the effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people.¹⁰

Outcomes

98. In order to assess how well the local area supports and improves outcomes for disabled children and young people, inspectors will review evidence for a wide range of outcomes for both health and care, as well as academic achievement. Inspectors will review evidence for how well the local area prepares young people for adulthood as detailed in the Code of Practice. This includes their preparedness for:
- higher education/employment
 - independent living
 - participation in society
 - being as healthy as possible in adult life.
99. Inspectors should examine how securely progress towards these outcomes is based on high expectations and aspirations taking into account the age and needs of the individual children and young people.

¹⁰ The term 'leaders' refers to those responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of services to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This also includes children, young people parents and carers as co-producers for improving outcomes in the local area.

100. In making their evaluations, inspectors will take into account evidence of:
- the rigour of the assessment of individual starting points
 - the thoroughness of understanding of the young person's special educational need and/or disability
 - the impact of teaching and other education, health and social care support or therapy
 - the use of national assessment comparative data, where available, to set targets and evaluate outcomes, and that the data shows progress at or above expected levels for the young person's age and starting point
 - the rigour of moderation in the evaluation of progress made
 - the regularity and effectiveness of reviews of progress
 - whether the young person, and their parent/carer, as appropriate, is involved in the co-production of targets and reviews of progress
 - whether destinations match aspirations and achievements
 - the extent to which the range of outcomes matches the diversity of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - the application of thresholds and eligibility criteria and their clarity and consistency to ensure equity and transparency of service delivery
 - availability of services at universal, targeted and specialist levels as identified in the early help and local offer
 - commissioning of education for students who have high levels of need.
101. Inspectors should review information about the effectiveness of the local area's approaches to improving outcomes. Inspectors should review evidence about:
- early intervention
 - personal budgets
 - short-break care
 - out-of-area placements
 - transition arrangements between services and providers
 - jointly commissioned specialist educational, medical and therapeutic services
 - the use of advisory and advocacy services to support children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their parents and carers
 - the thoroughness of the local area's understanding of the views of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their parents and carers.

Reporting on the effectiveness of improving outcomes

102. Inspectors must report on the above aspects as they relate to:

- children and young people being considered or assessed for or having EHC plans
- children and young people who are being considered or assessed for, or receiving, special educational needs and/or disability support
- the extent to which the local area meets the needs and improves the outcomes of different groups of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the extent to which their needs are met and outcomes improved is rigorously and routinely reviewed
- the range of ways by which the local area meets children and young people's needs, including the effectiveness of early intervention, personal budgets, short-break care, the use of specialist support, therapeutic and health professionals and the published local offer.

Leaders' assessment of the effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people

103. Inspectors must examine how leaders across the local area examine the quality and sufficiency of the information on which the local area has evaluated its own effectiveness in meeting the needs and improving the outcomes of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors should also report where the local area does not have a sufficient understanding, for example of the needs of particular groups of children and young people.

104. When reporting, inspectors should identify areas of strength and areas where improvements need to be made, including any urgent priority areas for improvement.

Appendix 2 - Mapping the standards to and from the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment

This appendix was written in Summer 2023, following the launch of the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI) in 2022.

It is intended to illustrate how the standards map across to the CFVI and vice versa.

It is not intended as a prescriptive appendix but rather illustrates how closely the two pieces of work and standards in education align. It is intended to support your work and enable you to adapt over time your service standards and delivery plans to include and reflect the CFVI as much as is appropriate.

Quality Standards	CFVI
Domain A: Effective identification of need	
General observations on Domain A:	While all 11 areas of the CFVI implicitly support this domain, Area 1: Facilitating an Inclusive World emphasises the need to recognise and understand the holistic yet individual needs of the child or young person. [A3]
QS A1: Services will support the timely identification and assessment of a child or young person with sensory impairment.	The CFVI emphasises the need to support a child or young person’s development “by providing an appropriate learning environment and providing appropriate support and development” (CFVI, p.5). This provision will arise from timely identification and assessment. [A1]
QS A2: Information provided by identification and assessments carried out by the service ensures an understanding of the child or young person’s needs, identifies targets for his/her progress and supports the planning and review of the effectiveness of teaching and the help and support they require.	The use of the framework can provide a clear understanding of outcomes and assist in target setting. [A2]
QS A3: Arrangements are in place by the service to demonstrate that it has supported the effective identification of the child or young person’s needs.	The CFVI identifies the additional specialist skills a child or young person needs to develop during their time in education. [A3]

Quality Standards	CFVI
Domain B: The effectiveness of the service in assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with a sensory impairment	
<p>QS B1: There are thresholds and eligibility criteria for supporting children and young people with sensory impairment that are clear and applied in a transparent way, reflecting level of needs, including the need for early intervention to prevent children falling behind, while also ensuring there is a prompt response where limited progress is being made.</p>	<p>The framework acknowledges the need for support levels to be informed by eligibility criteria and professional judgement. [B1]</p>
<p>QS B2: The service ensures that the child or young person and his/her families are fully involved in their assessment, ongoing monitoring and review.</p>	<p>The framework can be used to enable families, children and young people to understand the pathways of support. Area 1 emphasises the need to ensure families are empowered and knowledgeable, whilst personal agency and self-advocacy for children and young people underpins the framework and is detailed more specifically in Areas 9 and 11. [B2]</p>
<p>QS B3: The service works well with the child or young person’s early years setting, mainstream school, special school or college and other professionals during their assessment.</p>	<p>Collaborative working with teaching professionals underpins the CFVI (pp. 10-12). It recognises that the specialist curriculum framework and the school national curriculum overlap and are not independent of one another. [B3]</p>
<p>QS B4: The service provides effective support to families and education establishments in meeting assessed needs.</p>	<p>The CFVI is designed to help ensure the needs of children and young people are being met across all outcome areas. [B4]</p>
<p>QS B5: The service can demonstrate that children and young people are fully satisfied that their needs are being met and their outcomes have improved.</p>	<p>The emphasis in the framework (particularly in Areas 9 and 11) on developing self-advocacy when working with children and young people recognises the need for them to be able to voice their opinions on whether their needs and outcomes are met. [B5]</p>
<p>QS B6: The service can demonstrate that families have high levels of satisfaction that the service is meeting their child’s needs and helping them to make good progress.</p>	<p>The framework recommends (Area 1) the need for VI professionals to ensure families are both knowledgeable and empowered about their child’s vision impairment. It can be used to enable families to understand pathways of support and gives them a common language with which to express opinions about their child’s education in special skills. [B9]</p>

Quality Standards	CFVI
Domain C: The effectiveness of the service in improving outcomes for children and young people with a sensory impairment	
QS C1: The service can demonstrate it is making an effective contribution to ensure that the child or young person's needs are being met and their outcomes are improving.	The 11 Areas of the CFVI provide services with the opportunity to amend and map existing outcomes against suggested interventions or develop new outcomes. [C1]

Quality Standards	CFVI
Domain D: Leadership and Management	

Quality Standards	CFVI
<p>Domain D: Leadership and Management</p>	
<p>QS D1: Leaders demonstrate an ambitious vision for children and young people with a sensory impairment, they have high expectations for what all children and young people with sensory impairment can achieve and ensure high standards of support provision and care for children and young people.</p>	<p>The framework defines specialist skills development and best practice support for children and young people (0-25) with vision impairment. It emphasises the importance of high expectations and teaching of new skills and that these skills should be led by specialist qualified practitioners e.g. QTVIs and habilitation specialists. [D1]</p>
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Quality Standards	CFVI
<p>Domain D: Leadership and Management</p>	
<p>QS D2: Leaders improve staff practice in supporting families and education establishments in the assessment of need and the teaching and learning of children and young people with sensory impairment through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development.</p>	<p>The framework outlines relevant teaching and learning interventions for children and young people with vision impairment (0-25). The areas within the CFVI and their associated interventions may assist in providing a focus for professional development. [D2]</p>
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Quality Standards	CFVI
<p>Domain D: Leadership and Management</p>	
<p>QS D3: Leaders evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through robust self assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement.</p>	<p>As specialists embed the CFVI within practice it will be another tool against which outcomes for children and young people with vision impairment can be measured. Empowering key stakeholders such as families (Area 1) will help to ensure that those with whom services work feel that they have a voice and can express their views. [D3]</p>
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Quality Standards	CFVI
<p>Domain D: Leadership and Management</p>	
<p>QS D4: Leaders ensure that high quality support is provided to education establishments so that children and young people with a sensory impairment are provided with learning programmes or a curriculum that has suitable breadth, depth and relevance. This should meet any relevant statutory requirements and ensure that children and young people with sensory impairment get a good start to their formal education, are well prepared for the next stage of their education and eventually for post-education, training or employment.</p>	<p>The framework outlines a relevant curriculum for children and young people with a vision impairment (0-25). Area 11 recognises both the importance of supporting children and young people to prepare for their lives after compulsory education and the need to ensure that everything is in place for children and young people to have a successful transition into adulthood [D4].</p>

Quality Standards	CFVI
<p>Domain D: Leadership and Management</p>	
<p>QS D5: Leaders promote equality and diversity. There is a focus on those children and young people most at risk of not making good levels of progress (e.g. those with additional or complex needs, in families on low income, and in families where English is an additional language).</p>	<p>The framework is designed to meet the needs of the full cohort of children and young people with VI, including those with additional or complex needs. A central aim of the framework, as a specialist curriculum framework, is to promote progress through special skills teaching/intervention. [D5]</p>

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