



Sensory Impairment

A Glossary of terms of reference used

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The South East Regional Partnership (SERSEN) takes a national lead in matters of Sensory Impairment (SI) for children and young people.

The working party from the SI sub group who researched and compiled this glossary came from Local Authorities support services, specialist schools, Primary Care Trusts and Community Health colleagues and the National Deaf Children's Society. We would like to thank all those who contributed.

The glossary is available in pdf form, as a whole document or in specialist sections, on the SERSEN website: www.sersen.uk.net
Any feedback would be appreciated.

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Sensory Impaired Specific Glossary

Introduction

The lack of a common language is one of the main difficulties in working together. This can result in confusion for all involved. This glossary has been produced for parents/carers and practitioners from different backgrounds working together in order to promote and facilitate communication and understanding.

The glossary seeks to do this by:

- Explaining core concepts and definitions which are commonly confused or misunderstood
- Bringing together and explaining overlap between different words that are used by different agencies to explain similar things
- Providing a starting point for considering how terminology is used appropriately and where you could reduce use of jargon and acronyms

The glossary is not:

- Aiming to reduce all differences in vocabulary
- A resource for finding out about all specialist services or terms

Many of the definitions have been taken from existing publications.

We hope it is helpful to bring them together in one document.

Section One

Special Educational Needs and Disability - General Glossary

Acute

This is when there is an abrupt onset of a disease. Often it is of short duration.

Annual Review

The review of a statement of special educational needs that an LA must make within 12 months of making a statement or of the previous review. The child's parents or carer, a teacher responsible for the provision of the child's education and a representative of the LA must be invited to attend.

Aphasia

Literally, this means 'without speech'. A language disorder resulting from brain damage, which affects a person's ability to produce or understand grammatical and semantic structure; also, dysphasia, which means malfunctioning.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder/Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD, ADD) **www.ADHD.org.uk**

This refers to young people whose behaviour appears to be impulsive, overactive and/or inattentive to an extent that is unusual for their developmental age and is a hindrance to their social and educational success.

Aspergers Syndrome www.nas.org.uk

Impairment in the development of social relationships, communication skills and imagination. Pupils often demonstrate a rather limited awareness of the intentions or moods of others and have difficulty transferring skills or coping with change.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) www.nas.org.uk

Autistic Spectrum Disorder is a relatively new term that recognises there are a number of sub-groups within the spectrum of autism. Children with autistic spectrum disorder find it difficult to:

- Understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication.
- Understand social behaviour – which affects their ability to interact with children and adults.
- Think and behave flexibly – which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities.

Children with ASD cover the full range of ability and the severity of their impairment varies widely. Some pupils also have learning disabilities or other difficulties, making diagnosis difficult.

Children with Asperger's syndrome should be recorded in this category. These pupils share the same triad of impairments but have higher intellectual abilities and their language development is different from the majority of children with autism.

Cerebral Palsy (CP) www.scope.org.uk

A group of movement disorders resulting from damage to the developing brain. The extent of motor impairment varies widely. Vision, hearing, speech articulation and intellectual functioning may be affected.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

A team of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses and family therapists that assess and treat children and young people with mental health difficulties/issues.

Chronic

This is an ongoing, persistent condition in a disease

Complex Needs

Where there is more than one significant area of need.

Congenital

Present at birth

CT Scan

This is a scan which looks at the hard parts of the body i.e. bones

Deaf

Children with a hearing impairment range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf. They cover the whole ability range. For educational purposes, children are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum. A number of children with a hearing impairment may also have an additional disability or learning difficulty. Hearing loss may be because of conductive or sensori-neural problems and can be measured on a decibel scale. Four categories are generally used: mild, moderate, severe and profound. Some pupils with a significant loss communicate through sign instead of, or as well as, speech.

Deterioration

This means it is getting worse

Diagnosis

This is the identification of a disease by looking at the symptoms

Disapplication

Removal or lifting of a programme of study, attainment target, assessment or any other component of the National Curriculum, or any combination of these through relevant regulations.

Down Syndrome

www.downsided.org

www.down-syndrome.info

People with Down syndrome have 47 instead of 46 chromosomes. This results in disruption of the growth of the embryo and a degree of developmental delay in the child.

Dysfluency

An expressive language problem when speech is disjointed.

Dyslexia (Specific Learning Difficulties or SpLD) www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

A term used to refer to a different way of learning that can cause problems with words read, words spelt, words pronounced, words written and the association of meanings with words. It can cause problems in acquiring literacy competence.

Dyspraxia (developmental co-ordination disorder or DSD)

Difficulty in the planning and co-ordination of motor tasks. There is a wide variation of difficulties from fine motor skills affecting handwriting and drawing to gross motor skills with problems in PE and games or with the planning and co-ordination of speech. Self confidence, social relationships and behaviour can also be affected.

Early Support

<http://www.earlysupport.org.uk/>

Early Support is the central government mechanism to improve the quality, consistency and coordination of services for young disabled children and their families across England.

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties/Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development (EBD/BESD)

Refers to children and young people whose emotions and behaviour are presenting significant hindrance to their social and educational success.

Echolalia

When speech patterns or parts of them are echoed back automatically without understanding or relevance.

Educational Psychologist (EP)

Educational Psychologists visit schools and nurseries, working with teachers and parents, to assist children's learning and behaviour, assess psychological development and educational needs.

Elective Mutism

Refusal to speak, except in certain situations. The underlying causes are psychiatric or emotional.

Expressive Language

The way that a child combines words to formulate phrases and longer utterances.

Genetic Counselling

Advice on inherited disorders and disabilities.

Global Developmental delay

All children have recognised milestones of development in different areas of development, for example, physical skills, communication skills, cognitive skills, social skills. If a child does not meet these milestones within the expected norms, they are described as having a global developmental delay. This can be a mild delay (i.e. Just outside the norms for a child of that age) or more severe.

Inclusion

Educating children with special educational needs and disability together with children without special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible, and ensuring that children with special educational needs engage in a range of activities of the school together with children who do not have special educational needs.

Independent school

A school not maintained by a local authority, and which is registered under section 70 of the Education Act 1944. Section 189 of the Education Act 1993 sets out the conditions under which an independent school may be approved by the Secretary of State as being suitable for the admission of children with statements of special needs.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A working document recording key short-term targets and strategies for an individual pupil that are different from and additional to those in place for the rest of the group or class.

Language Delay/Disorder

Language Delay: Child's language appears like that of a younger child but follows normal patterns of development.

Language Disorder: Language is delayed and does not follow expected developmental patterns.

Linguistic skills

Skills relating to language

Local Authority (LA)

This was previously known as the LEA (Local Educational Authority). It is the body responsible for maintained schools and distribution of funding in their area. They are responsible for carrying out statutory assessments of special educational needs when requested and for maintaining statements of special educational needs when issued.

MRI Scan

This is a scan which uses magnetic resonance imaging to look at the "soft" tissues of the body

Maintained school

Any local authority school or special school funded from the government.

Metabolic

The metabolism refers to chemical changes in the body. Metabolic is something which exhibits or relates to the metabolism.

Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)

www.mencap.org.uk www.bild.org.uk

Children with moderate learning difficulties have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.

Modification

Amendment or alteration of a programme of study, attainment target, assessment or any other component of the National Curriculum in order to give a child access to that area of the Curriculum. (See also Disapplication.)

Multi-Agency

Involving professionals from more than one agency.

Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)

Children with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deafblind but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities but their complex needs mean that it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities. Children with multi-sensory impairment have much greater difficulties in accessing the curriculum and the environment than those with a single sensory impairment. They have difficulties in perception, communication and in the acquisition of information. Incidental learning is limited. The combination can result in high anxiety and multi-sensory deprivation. Children need teaching approaches that make good use of their residual hearing and vision, together with their other senses. They may need alternative means of communication.

Named Person

The person whom the LA must identify when sending the parents a final version of a statement. The Named Person, who should usually be identified in cooperation with the parents, must be someone who can give the parents information and advice about their child's special educational needs. He or she may be appointed at the start of the assessment process and can then attend meetings with parents and encourage parental participation throughout the process. The Named Person should normally be independent of the LA and may be someone from a voluntary organisation or parent partnership scheme.

Non-verbal I.Q.

Aspects of intelligence not dependent on linguistic skills. For example, spatial abilities.

Note in lieu

A note issued to the child's parents and school when, following a statutory assessment, the LA decide not to make a statement. The note should describe the child's special educational needs, explain why the LA will not make a statement and make recommendations about appropriate provision for the child. All the advice received during the assessment should be attached to the note sent to the parents and, with their consent, should also be sent to the child's school.

Occupational Therapist (OT)

Occupational Therapists work in hospitals, schools, community clinics and in the home, advising on equipment and/or adaptations to support learning/social development.

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education

Non-ministerial government departments established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England and Wales respectively. Their professional arm is formed by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

Outreach Workers

Outreach Workers visit and support children, young people and families at home or in school.

Paediatricians

Doctors who specialise in the development and care of children and who are based in hospitals and community clinics.

Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists work in various settings, including schools and at home, providing advice and treatment for children and young people with physical difficulties to help them achieve maximum independence.

Percentile

A score attained in a test that compares the child with its age group. The average is 50, so 75th percentile would mean that the child was scoring better than 75% of the population.

Peripatetic teacher (or specialist, advisory, or support teacher)

A teacher with specific expertise who visits homes and educational settings and is employed by the LA to give appropriate specialist advice and support.

Phonetics

The science that studies the characteristics of human sound making.

Phonics

Using the sounds of the letters of the alphabet to help reading.

Physical Disability (PD)

There is a wide range of disabilities covering the whole ability range. Some children and young people are able to access the curriculum and learn effectively without additional educational provision. They have a disability but do not have a special educational need. For others, the impact on their education may be severe. In the same way, a medical diagnosis does not necessarily mean that a pupil has SEN. It depends on the impact the condition has on their educational needs. (See SEN Code of Practice 7.64 ref: DfES 581/2001).

Portage

A planned approach to home-based, pre-school education for children with developmental delay, disabilities or any other special educational needs. Portage began in Portage, Wisconsin, USA and there is now an extensive Portage network in the UK, which is overseen by the National Portage Association.

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)

Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, children and young people have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Children and young people require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some children and young people communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language. Their attainments are likely to remain in the early P scale range (P1-P4) throughout their school careers (that is below level 1 of the National Curriculum).

Prognosis

This is the suggested outcome

Progressive

This describes a condition which will go through a series of stages as it develops. It often suggests a condition which will not improve.

Provision Mapping/Management

Provision mapping/management is a management tool providing a clear overview of the SEN provision and allocation of resources in the school.

Psychologist

A psychologist assists children and families when behaviour becomes a problem. For instance, they may advise on eating or sleeping disorders, behaviour difficulties or the management of aggression.

Raw Score

The actual score in a test, which is not referenced against any criteria.

Respite Care

Short-term breaks for parents/carers to give a break from caring responsibilities and provide social opportunities for children with disabilities.

School Action

When a class or subject teacher identify that a pupil has special educational needs they provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual curriculum and strategies. An IEP will usually be written

School Action Plus

When the class or subject teacher and the SENCo are provided with advice or support from outside specialists. At this stage of action, alternative interventions additional and different strategies to those provided for the pupil through school action can be put in place. The SENCo usually takes the lead, although day-to-day provision continues to be the responsibility of the class or subject teacher. A new IEP will usually be written.

Sequencing

Putting things in a particular order.

SEN Code of Practice

A legal document from the Department for Education and Skills (2001) that describes a graduated response to recognising and then supporting pupils with SEN, with the school intervening as described under school action and school action plus.

SEN & Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

An independent tribunal set up by Act of Parliament for determining appeals by parents against local authority (LA) about children's special educational needs, where parents cannot reach agreement with the LA. SENDIST also considers parents' claims of disability discrimination in schools.

Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)

www.mencap.org.uk **www.bild.org.uk**

Children with severe learning difficulties have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and coordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills. Pupils with severe learning difficulties will need support in all areas of the curriculum. They may also require teaching of self-help, independence and social skills. Their attainments may be within the upper P scale range (P4-P8) for much of their school careers (that is below level 1 of the National Curriculum).

Social Workers

Social Workers can advise about services available and assess children, young people and families needs for support, including respite and short term care. They may work as part of a specialist disability team.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Refers to any difficulty a child or young person may have that affects their educational achievement or behaviour in school.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

The member of staff at schools and Early Years settings who has responsibility for coordinating SEN provision within that setting.

Special School

A school that makes specialist educational provision for pupils with special educational needs and is approved by the Secretary of State under section 188 of the Education Act 1993.

Speech and Language Difficulties

www.afasic.org.uk www.ican.org.uk

A range of processing difficulties that can be observed in the acquisition of language and communication.

Speech and Language Therapist (S<)

A S< gives specialist assessment, advice and treatment for language, communication and feeding difficulties.

Statement

A legal document produced by local authorities following multi-agency assessment and contributions from parents or carers, specifying the precise nature of the pupil's assessed difficulties and educational needs, and the special or additional provision that should be made in order to meet that child/young person's needs. Statements must then be reviewed at least annually.

Statutory Assessment

A statutory assessment is a detailed investigation to identify what a child/young person's special educational needs are and what special help is needed. A statutory assessment is only necessary if the school or early years setting cannot provide all the help needed by the child/young person. A statutory assessment can be requested by the family.

Syndrome www.cafamily.org.uk

A condition which is identified by a group of common characteristics

Syntax

The sequencing of words so that they make sense. The system of rules that describe the way words combine to form sentences.

Teaching Assistant (TA)

This is an adult who helps a teacher in the classroom. They will be given planned guidance as to how best to support the learning of a child or a group of children in a classroom. Can also be known as a Learning Support Assistant (LSA)

Transition Plan (TP)

A plan that should form part of the annual review in Year 9 and any subsequent annual review. The purpose of the plan is to draw together information in order to plan coherently for the young person's transition to adult life.

Verbal Intelligence (Verbal I.Q.)

Aspects of intelligence that depend on linguistic skills or knowledge.

Visual Cues

Using all possible visual information in a situation. For example, watching peoples' faces, using pictures in a reading book.

Section Two

Section 2

Multi Sensory Impairment (MSI) :

References:

Sense

www.sense.org.uk

Early Support booklet – ‘Information for Parents Multi-sensory impairment’

dfes@prolog.uk.com

Deafblind Perspectives

www.tr.wou.edu/tr/dbp

Project Salute

www.projectsalute.net

Be-Active Box

www.playworks.co.uk

Lilli Nielsen

www.lilliworks.com

Acquired deafblindness

A combination of visual and hearing impairment which occurs or impacts after the development of a first language

Be-active box (see also Lilli Nielsen Little room)

A 3-sided wooden box with a Perspex lid from which toys and objects can be hung to provide a small, consistent environment within which the child can move, play and explore independently with minimum distractions

Body signs

See **touch cues** and **tactile signing**

BSL Interpreter

An interpreter who interprets from spoken English to British Sign Language (BSL) and BSL into spoken English (voice over). The interpreter may use Visual Frame (signing within a limited space appropriate to the needs of the deafblind person's vision) or Hands On/Co-Active tactile signing (see below).

Co-active / hands on signing (see also tactile signing)

Deafblind children or young people may use co-active or 'hands on' signing, which involves placing their hands under the hands of the adult to receive information (receptive) or placing their hands over the hands of the adult to give information (expressive)

Communication Support Personnel

People trained to provide appropriate communication support such as BSL Interpreter, Communication Support Worker, Relay Interpreter, Communicator Guide, Note Taker

Congenital deafblindness

A significant sight and hearing loss from birth (or in the period immediately following birth) which results in the child having difficulty in communication, access to information and mobility

Communicator Guide

A trained person who works one to one with deafblind and dual sensory impaired individuals providing support in the areas of communication, access to information and mobility

Communication Support Worker

Provides communication support to pupils/students in educational settings.

Deafblind

Deafblindness a unique disability sometimes known as dual sensory impairment or multi-sensory impairment which involves a combination of vision and hearing loss which creates a unique pattern of learning difficulties causing the child or young person to experience challenges in mobility, communication and access to information

Deafblind manual alphabet

It is a system of finger spelling on the hand of a deafblind person.

Intervenor

A trained person who provides individual support for a deafblind child or young person to facilitate effective communication and the receipt of clear information, enabling them to take advantage of learning and social experiences to gain a greater access to the environment

Joint reference (see mutual tactile attention)

When a child is involved with an activity / object with another person with both attending to the same activity / object

Lilli Nielsen – Little room

A small space or 'little room' which is designed to give blind children the opportunity to learn about space and to reach for objects

Multi-sensory impaired (MSI)

An individual may not have a combined clinical diagnosis of visual and hearing loss, but presents as having substantial developmental delay in responding to sensory stimuli.

Mutual tactile attention

Involves joint attention and sharing of an activity or object through mutual touch, encourages social interaction and communicative reciprocity

Note taker

A person who takes notes at meetings or in educational settings for deaf or deafblind people.

Object of reference (or object cue)

An object or part of an object used to refer to a person, place, object or activity which is used to provide a concrete means of supporting understanding, conversational interactions and language development

P level

A method of assessment used for those working below the National Curriculum level

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

A method of using picture symbols to facilitate communication

Relay Interpreter

An interpreter who may be deaf who relays from a group interpreter to an individual deafblind person, using visual frame signing or Hands on sign.

Resonance board

A hollow resonating platform to help the child perceive sound as vibration – any movement on the board produces amplified sound and matched vibration, can be used to develop exploration, body awareness and early communication skills

Sensory integration

Sensory systems work together to gather and process information, the main systems are; vision, hearing and tactile / proprioception (awareness of the position in space and of the relation to the rest of the body). If any of these systems cannot function efficiently (either separately or together), it directly affects the ability to interact successfully with the world around us – this is referred to as ***Sensory integration dysfunction***

Sensory integration exercises

These are exercises designed to stimulate the senses to work together and are intended to reduce sensory disturbances related to touch, movement and gravity

Sensory room

A purpose built room containing interactive sensory equipment which makes use of music, lighting and vibration to stimulate the use of the senses and encourage exploration

Tactile timetable

A communication system that involves the presentation of three-dimensional symbols (objects) or textured symbols to represent a sequence of events or activities

Tactual (tactile or haptic perception)

Use of touch to gain information

Teacher for deafblind / MSI pupils

Teacher with the specific mandatory qualification for working with deafblind or MSI children / young people

Tactile signing

Signing approach based on a standard manual signing system (e.g. BSL) in which the child's hands are placed under the hands of the adult in order to receive signs and over the hands of the adult to give signs – enables manual signing to be accessed by those children or young people who have insufficient vision to access visual signing

Touch cues

A touch made in a consistent manner directly on the body to communicate with the child, can be used for a variety of communicative purposes (i.e. greet, praise, inform or request)

Section Three

Section 3

Hearing Impairment/ Deafness

Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR)

This is one of two tests used to screen newborn baby's hearing. AABR is a test used to measure auditory function and threshold of hearing. Sticky sensors are placed on the babies' forehead and behind each ear. Soft, lightweight headphones are put over the baby's ears and some clicking sounds are played. The computer records electrical potentials from the nerve of hearing in response to sound.

Acoustics

The science of sound. Often refers to the quality of the sound environment.

Acoustic feedback

The whistle sound a hearing aid makes if it is not seated in the ear. The sound from the aid feeds back through the aid microphone. It can be caused by a poorly fitting ear mould or "glue ear".

Acquired hearing loss

Hearing loss that was not present at birth but developed later, either during childhood or adulthood.

Aetiology

The causes of deafness.

Amplification

To make something louder.

Atresia

Blockage of the nasal passages.

Audiogram

A chart used to record the results of some hearing tests. It shows you how loud a sound has to be, and at what frequency, before your child can hear it, with or without a hearing aid.

Audiologist

A person qualified in assessing hearing loss and fitting hearing aids.

Audiology

The study of hearing.

Audiometer

A machine that generates sound at an accurate level of loudness (decibels) and at specific frequencies (Hertz). It is used to perform a pure-tone audiometry hearing test.

Auditory canal

The pathway which starts at the outer ear and ends at the eardrum.

Auditory Neuropathy/Auditory Dys-synchrony

This is identified by auditory evoked potential (ABR) being absent, but otoacoustic emissions (OAE) being present. There is evidence to suggest visual support is beneficial to aid communication. However it is important to consider each child's actual level of functioning when considering the support plan.

Auditory-Oral

An auditory-oral approach encourages the development of listening skills and spoken language through the use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and radio aids to maximise the use of the residual hearing an individual has.

Auditory Processing Disorders (A.P.D)

Many children who seem to have normal hearing and who have passed as having normal hearing after routine testing, may still have difficulty with listening and attending in a variety of situations.

Auditory Training Unit (ATU)

An amplifier which can be used for individual sessions when high quality amplification is needed. It can sometimes be called a **speech trainer**.

Auditory Verbal Therapy

This is an approach which aims to enable the development of spoken language through listening. It uses sound as the primary channel for learning and gaining meaning from the environment.

Bone Anchored Hearing Aid (BAHA)

A hearing aid implanted into the mastoid bone behind the ear.

Bilateral hearing loss

A hearing loss in both ears.

Bone conduction

The transmission of sound to the cochlear through the vibrating bones of the skull.

Bone conductor

A conductor must be in contact with the bone behind the ear. It vibrates and delivers sound directly to the inner ear (cochlea), bypassing the middle ear.

British Sign Language (BSL)

It is a visual language using hand shapes, facial expressions, gestures and body language to communicate. An independent and complete language with a unique vocabulary, it has a structure and grammar different from that of written and spoken English. BSL does not use spoken language. It has developed regional dialects.

BTE

A hearing aid worn behind the ear. It can also be known as a **post aural** hearing aid.

Cholesteatoma

Progressive, abnormal growth of skin in the middle ear. It usually requires surgery.

Classroom acoustics

How sounds travel and are heard in a classroom. Good classroom acoustics are achieved by a low level of background noise and low reverberation time.

Cochlea

The snail-like part of the inner ear, which changes sound vibrations into electric type pulses that are carried to the brain.

Cochlear implant

It is an aid to hearing, but is not a hearing aid. It requires an operation to insert electrodes into the cochlea. A microphone and speech processor are worn externally. The auditory nerve is stimulated by modified electrical signals causing the brain to perceive the stimulus as a sensation of sound.

Communication Support Worker (CSW)

A person trained to facilitate communication for deaf students in the classroom or lecture room. They interpret the curriculum in BSL, ensuring the pupils have full understanding.

Congenital hearing loss

Hearing loss that is thought to have been present at birth, or associated with the birth process, or to have developed in the first few days of life.

Conductive hearing loss (also known as “glue” ear)

This is the most common cause of hearing loss. It is generally not a permanent hearing loss but there is a chance that it can be permanent. It means that sounds cannot pass efficiently through the outer and middle ear to the cochlea and auditory nerve. It is most often caused by fluid building up in the middle ear.

Conference microphone

This can be used in conjunction with a radio aid (FM) transmitter to aid group discussion.

Cued Speech

Cued Speech is a simple sound-based system that uses eight hand shapes in four different positions (cues), together with natural mouth movement of speech. Some words which sound different to hearing people, can look very similar when they are lip read by deaf people e.g. ‘pat’ and ‘bat’. Cued Speech is visual and the cues are placed near the mouth to help make every sound and word clear. It can be used with sign language or to complement an oral approach.

Deaf community

Deaf people who share a common history, their own culture and their own language – BSL. The Deaf community is very similar to other minority communities.

Decibel

The decibel (**dB**) is used to measure sound level, and it is also widely used in electronics, signals and communication. The dB is a logarithmic unit used to describe a level of sound.

- **dBA** – sound meters are usually fitted with a filter whose response to frequency is a bit like that of the human ear. If the "A weighting filter" is used, the sound pressure level is given in units of **dB(A)** or **dBA**. Sound pressure level on the dBA scale is easy to measure and is therefore widely used.
- **dBHL**
Sound measured through headphones on an audiometer to establish the hearing level
- **dB SPL**
The basic measure of sound level. Used to calibrate audiometers and for measuring hearing aid output. Correction factors are added to make dBHL (decibel hearing level) which audiograms are recorded in.

Direct audio input

This allows you to connect hearing aids or cochlear implants directly to other audio equipment e.g. a radio aid, computer, personal CD player. It provides a direct and high quality sound for hearing aid wearer.

Distraction testing

This has largely been replaced by Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA), but may still be used by Community Audiology, Health Visitors or if VRA results are not conclusive.

It is mainly used with babies in the 6 – 8 month range, but can be applied with older babies and infants. The response required is for the baby to turn/locate the source of a sound. The sounds are from the low, mid and high frequency range.

Eardrum (Tympanic Membrane)

The thin membrane at the end of the ear canal. It vibrates, helping sound to travel along the ear.

Ear mould

A small piece of plastic that fits into the ear and holds the tubing of a hearing aid in place in the ear canal. The tubing transfers the sounds from the hearing aid into the ear.

Eustachian tube

A tube that connects the pharynx to the middle ear allowing for equalisation of pressure across the eardrum.

ENT

Ears, nose and throat.

ENT consultant

A doctor who specialises in diseases of the ears, nose, throat, head and neck and who performs relevant surgery and may be responsible for the general medical assessments of the child.

Finger spelling

This is a technique where each letter of the alphabet is given a sign using hand positions. Words can then be spelt using these signs. It is generally used alongside BSL, often for signing names, places or words that do not have signs.

Frequency

This relates to the pitch of sounds (from low to high). The speech frequency range is from 250 Hz to 4000 Hz.

Gain

The amount a sound is amplified above the hearing threshold when passed through a hearing aid.

Glue ear

An accumulation of fluid in the middle ear cavity which commonly occurs in children with colds or after ear infections. The hearing loss is temporary, usually mild to moderate and can affect one or both ears and can fluctuate.

Grommets

Plastic tubes inserted into a child's eardrum as a treatment for glue ear.

Hearing aid

An electronic device that amplifies sound signals. They come in various shapes and types and may be worn on the body, behind the ear or in the ear. They have controls that allow the hearing aid to be set to match your child's level of deafness.

High frequency hearing loss

This is a hearing loss where the person has particular difficulty hearing the high frequency range of sounds e.g. in speech, s, f, th.

Impression

This is the model of the shape of the ear which is used to make the ear mould.

Interpreter

This is a person with a very high level of signing skills who can interpret spoken English into BSL or vice versa.

ITE

In the ear hearing aid.

Lip reading

This is the ability to read lip patterns and is used with spoken language. A good understanding of language and the context is needed for lip reading.

Loop system

A wire loop which goes around a public room or hall enabling a hearing aid wearer to use their appropriate hearing aid setting to listen to a speaker more clearly.

Loudness Discomfort Level (LDL)

The lowest signal level which is judged to be uncomfortably loud. The measurement is usually done with pure tones at audiometric frequencies via headphones in each ear.

Low frequency hearing loss

This is a hearing loss where the person has particular difficulty hearing the low frequency range of sounds e.g. in speech, b, d, g.

Makaton

This is a language programme that uses signs from British Sign Language together with unique makaton signs to provide basic communication and to develop language and literacy skills for deaf children with severe communication and learning disabilities. Grammatical signs are taken from Signed English.

Mild hearing loss

A hearing loss ranging from 20 to 40 dBHL

Mixed hearing loss

This is a hearing loss combining both conductive and sensori-neural elements

Moderate hearing loss

A hearing loss ranging from 41 to 70 dBHL

Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP).

All newborn babies now receive a hearing screen in the first few weeks of life. This allows babies who have a hearing loss to be identified early. It is a quick and simple test to check the hearing of newborn babies. If the screening test doesn't show a clear response from a baby's ears it does not necessarily mean the baby has a hearing loss. The parents will be asked to bring the baby back for further tests. The two types of test that are being used for neonatal screening tests are the Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) and Automated Auditory Brainstem response (AABR).

Otitis Media (OM)

Acute infection of the middle ear. It is not necessarily associated with the condition otitis media with effusion (OME) or glue ear.

Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE)

This is one of two tests used to screen newborn baby's hearing. If there is normal cochlear function, the outer hair cells of the cochlear vibrate and produce sound that can be recorded in the ear canal in response to click stimuli. It is a short, simple and non-invasive test. A small soft tipped earpiece is placed in the outer part of the baby's ear, which sends a clicking sound down the ear.

Otoscope

A light torch used to view the condition of the ear canal and ear drum.

Paget Gorman signed speech

This was devised for deaf children and is used with speech to help them understand the structure of English language. It is mainly used with children who have speech and language processing difficulties.

Profound hearing loss

A hearing loss 95 dBHL or greater

Pure Tone Audiometry (PTA)

Technique used for measuring hearing accurately across a range of frequencies using either insert or headphones

Radio aid (also known as a FM system)

This consists of a transmitter (worn by the speaker) and receiver (worn by the hearing aid wearer). Sounds picked up by the transmitter are transmitted directly to the receiver, giving greater clarity to the speaker's voice.

Recruitment

A term used to describe the physical discomfort arising from loud noise, which occurs when the range of hearing has been narrowed due to sensori-neural hearing loss.

Reverberation

This is when a sound bounces off hard surfaces and creates echoes around the room or seems louder. This makes listening conditions more difficult for deaf children.

Sensori-neural hearing loss

This is caused by a fault in the inner ear or auditory nerve. Commonly this is because the hair cells of the cochlea are not working properly. Sensori-neural hearing loss is permanent.

Severe hearing loss

A hearing loss ranging from 71 to 95 dBHL

Signalong

Signalong is a form of Sign Supported English. The signs are mostly based on BSL and are used in spoken word order. It is intended to support spoken language. It was originally devised for children (and adults) who have language difficulties associated with learning disabilities and autism. It is sometimes used with deaf children who have not developed a spoken language, but use some gestures.

Sign bilingualism

This describes an approach that encourages the learning and using of two languages at the same time: a sign language and a spoken or written language. In Britain this is English (or the home spoken language) and BSL

Signed English (SE)

This is an exact representation of the English language through the use of signs, where a sign is used for every spoken word. It is not a language like BSL, but has been designed as a teaching tool to be used at the same time as spoken English.

Sign Supported English (SSE)

This uses the signs from BSL, but in English word order. Not every word is signed and some grammatical information has to be picked up by listening and/or lip reading. It is not a language like BSL.

Sound field systems

These help to improve the listening experience for all children in a classroom by ensuring the sound quality is consistent everywhere in the room. Speakers are placed around the room. The teacher wears a transmitter when speaking to the class.

Speech discrimination test

This test checks a child's ability to hear words at different listening levels. It helps to assess the quietest level a child can hear without visual information.

Teaching Assistant (TA)

This is an adult who helps a teacher in the classroom. They will be given planned guidance as to how best to support the learning of a child or a group of children in a classroom. Can also be known as a Learning Support Assistant (LSA)

Threshold of hearing

The minimum level of sound that can be perceived by an individual.

Total Communication (TC)

This is a philosophy for educating children combining a variety of techniques from a variety of approaches, both signed and spoken.

Tympanic membrane

See Ear drum

Tympanometry

This is the test used to check how well the moving parts of the middle ear are working. If the eardrum is not moving freely then there is likely to be fluid or another blockage in the middle ear.

Unilateral hearing loss (also known as monaural or non functioning ear – NFE)

Hearing is normal in one ear, but the other ear has some degree of hearing loss. An individual with a unilateral hearing loss is considered to be normally hearing, but may experience some difficulty with locating sound, particularly if there is background noise.

Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA)

Sounds of different frequencies and loudness are played through speakers. Turning towards a sound the child is rewarded with a visual display such as the lighting up of a toy or a puppet. This test can check the full range of hearing, but does not give specific information about each ear. It can sometimes be carried out using small insert earphones which helps give better information about what each ear can hear.

Section Four

Visual Impairment (VI)

Accessible format

Text produced to be accessible for people with visual impairment, e.g. large print, Braille, tape, etc.

Accommodation

The ability of the lens to change shape to focus on objects at different distances.

Albinism

Associated with a lack of pigment (colour) in skin, hair and eyes. May mean that tinted spectacles are needed to maintain best comfortable vision. Albinism is associated with nystagmus and problems with binocular vision.

Alternating squint

A squint in which either eye fixes alternatively (see squint).

Amblyopia

Sometimes called 'lazy' eye, refers to an eye (or eyes) with reduced vision which cannot be corrected with spectacles. Amblyopia is usually caused as a result of lack of stimulation of eyesight due to an eye turn (strabismus/squint), unequal focus or cloudiness in the eye, so it is most likely that only one eye will be affected.

Anterior chamber

The space in the front portion of the eye, in front of the iris. It is filled with aqueous fluid.

Aqueous

A nutritive fluid which passes from the back portion of the eye to the anterior chamber, escaping by the Canal of Schlemm.

Astigmatism

An irregular shaped cornea. Vision is distorted because light rays do not meet at a single focal point. Very few eyes are perfect spheres so astigmatism is quite common.

Atropine

A drug administered in the form of drops to children and adults to enlarge the pupil of the eye and enable examination of the back of the eye. Its effects may not fully wear off for 12 days.

Behaviourisms

Stereotypical behaviours common to many people with severe visual impairment, e.g. rocking, eye poking, (see blindisms).

Bilateral

Both sided, affecting both eyes

Binocular Vision

When both eyes work together at the same time; it enables depth perception.

Blindisms

Behaviours associated with people who are blind (see behaviourisms).

Blindness

Very low vision, ranging from no vision to less than 3/60 (see Snellen) or corresponding field loss in the better eye. A person is defined as legally blind if they are "so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eye sight is essential".

Braille

A tactile form of reading made up of raised dots on a page, which constitute a code corresponding to letters or words. (A Brailist is someone who uses Braille and a Brailler is the machine which is used to write Braille).

Canal of Schlemm

A circular vein in the outer coating of the eye, providing outlet for the aqueous fluid.

Cardiff cards

Used to measure visual acuity in babies or children with special needs: pictures of decreasing contrast.

CCTV (closed circuit television)

Not a security feature, but a magnifying camera which can enlarge things on a monitor screen so that people with visual impairment can access text. Some are portable and can store images from the board or at a distance, to be viewed on screen.

Central vision

What can be seen in colour and detail with the macula, when looking straight at the target.

Cerebral Visual Impairment (Cortical Visual Impairment)

Usually result from damage to parts of the visual cortex in the brain and may involve specific problems.

CF

Counts fingers. Always followed by a distance, indicating at which distance a child with minimum vision can distinguish the number of fingers held up.

Clinical Visual Assessment

Assessment of visual acuity and sometimes other functions of vision undertaken in clinical conditions.

CNS

Central nervous system

Coloboma

A congenital gap in the development of the eye.

Colour Blindness (Colour Confusion)

Not being able to distinguish certain colours from each other (commonly red/green or blue/green).

Concomitant squint

One in which the squinting eye has full range of movement.

Cones

The cells in the retina responsible for detailed colour vision in daylight.

Congenital

A word describing any condition present at birth..

Conjunctiva

The thin transparent membrane covering the inner surfaces of the eyelid and the outer surface of the front of the eyeball.

Conjunctivitis

Infection and swelling of the conjunctiva. It is highly infectious.

Contact lens

An artificial lens constructed to fit directly on to the eyeball, to correct sight.

Contrast Sensitivity

The ability to distinguish different shades of grey from each other.

Convergent squint

One in which the squinting eye is turned inwards.

Cornea

The anterior one-sixth of the outer coat of the eye, which should be totally transparent.

Corrected vision

The best visual acuity obtained wearing prescribed glasses. This figure is always used in clinical assessment, unless otherwise stated.

Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment

Visual impairment caused by malfunction of the brain, when the eyes may be functioning normally.

Dioptre

Unit of measurement of refractive power, used in prescribing glasses.

Diplopia

Double vision (This is usually temporary in children).

Distance vision

The ability to distinguish clearly objects in the distance.

Divergent squint

One in which the squinting eye turns outwards.

Eccentric Vision

The practice of using peripheral vision to replace lost central vision. This usually involves turning the head at an unusual angle.

Echolalia

A tendency to repeat what has been said, without understanding. Very common in the development of children with severe visual impairment

Educationally blind

Not having enough sight to be able to access the curriculum without very significant adaptations (e.g. Braille).

Field of Vision

The total area that can be seen around you without shifting your gaze; detailed central vision as well as peripheral vision.

Fixation, fixing

The ability to fix the gaze on a target in order to see it.

Floaters

Small particles which move freely in the aqueous.

Focal Point

The point of the retina where light rays meet and gives the most detailed vision; an object is in focus when it is being seen most clearly.

Font

Style and size of print. The most suitable font for people with visual difficulties is widely considered to be Arial. (This document is printed in Arial) The size required is individual to the person's impairment.

Functional Blindness

Vision so severely reduced that a person is unable to function visually and has to use other senses.

Functional Vision

The ability to use eyesight in everyday conditions.

Functional Visual Assessment

Visual assessment which assesses how someone uses their vision in practical situations.

Fundus

The background of the interior of the eye. Examination of this gives the ophthalmologist valuable information about the condition of the eye.

Genetic

A condition which is hereditary.

Glare

The reflection of light which can disable children with light sensitivity.

Glaucoma

Damage to the optic nerve generally associated with a build-up of pressure inside the eye.

Hemianopia

Blindness in half the field of vision. Usually homonymous (same side in each eye), but can be bitemporal (the two outer halves are affected) or binasal (the two inner sides are affected).

Hypermetropia (Long-sightedness)

Things seen more clearly in the distance than close up.

Hyperplasia

Excessive formation of tissue.

Hypoplasia

Defective formation of tissue.

Intra-ocular pressure

The pressure within the eye, maintained by the aqueous and vitreous fluids.

Intra-uterine

Prenatal - what happened in the womb.

Large Print

Enlarged print to enable those with reduced vision to read.

Lens

The natural lens inside the eye which bends the light rays to focus on the macula or an artificial lens, e.g. in glasses, which helps to achieve this.

Light Adaptation

The ability of the eye to allow in more or less light and process changes of light and dark.

Light Perception (LP)

The ability to distinguish light from dark.

Logmar

A method of measuring visual acuity which is considered more accurate than Snellen, in which $0.0 = 6/6$, normal vision (see Snellen). $3/60 = 1.3$.

Long cane

Long canes (or guide canes) are used as mobility aids. They are moved from side to side at ground level to alert someone who is blind to possible obstacles in front.

Long Sighted

see Hypermetropia.

Low Vision

Reduced vision: officially visual acuity between 6/60 and 3/60 (registrable as partial sight).

Low Vision Aids (LVAs)

Aids, such as magnifiers, that improve a person's functional vision; often training is needed for such aids to be used efficiently.

Macula

A small circle of cells on the retina which form the area of fine detailed sight.

Mobility (& Orientation)

Training to develop orientation skills and independent movement, which may include use of a cane.

Mobility Officer (see Rehabilitation Officer)

A mobility officer is someone trained in teaching mobility skills to people with severe visual impairments (not necessarily to children or those with additional disabilities). They encourage people with a visual impairment to move around more independently.

Monocular Vision

Vision with one eye only. This is not considered to be a visual impairment, but a child may need to learn to compensate.

Moon

A form of reading by touch, which looks more like print letters than Braille. It uses curves and straight lines.

MRI scan

A scan using magnetic resonance imaging instead of X-rays to map different parts of the body. Often used to determine whether sight is affected by brain damage.

Multi-disabled with visual impairment (MDVI)

A rather loose term to describe all those with visual impairment as a significant component of their complex learning and physical needs.

Multi-Sensory Environments/Rooms

Rooms where vision and other senses are stimulated by special equipment. They can be used to enhance vision or to stimulate other senses.

Myopia

Things seen more clearly close up than in the distance; the opposite of hypermetropia.

"N" print scale

A test for near vision, which indicates the smallest size print which can comfortably be read. (Roughly equivalent to font size, but not the same).

Near vision

The ability to perceive distinctly objects at reading distance.

Nystagmus

An involuntary 'wobble' movement of the eyes from side to side or round and round.

Object of Reference

An object, or part of an object, used to refer to a person, place, object or activity which is used to provide a concrete means of supporting understanding, conversational interactions and language development. Often used by people who are deafblind or have MDVI.

Occlusion

The same as patching, or covering one eye briefly to measure the acuity of the other.

Ophthalmologists

An ophthalmologist is a doctor based in a hospital who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of eye defects and diseases. They have special qualifications and experience in eye disorders and in treating them with appropriate medicine and surgery.

Optic chiasma

The crossing of the fibres of the optic nerves on the lower surface of the brain. This is where the impulses are sorted to be passed to the brain to be processed into vision. Difficulties in this area would result in reduced eye sight or poor visual processing.

Optician

An optician is trained to dispense and adjust spectacles and other optical aids. Ophthalmic opticians also carry out sight testing and prescribe spectacles, although young children with MSI are more likely to be assessed at a specialist clinic.

Optometrist

An optometrist performs eye sight tests and examinations to detect eye disease or abnormalities. S/he also prescribes and fits corrective lenses and advises about visual problems.

Orthoptist

An orthoptist is a health professional who specialises in the treatment of correcting vision by non-surgical measures (especially by exercises to strengthen the eye muscles). S/he also performs eye sight tests. Orthoptists usually work with children.

Paediatric Ophthalmologist

An ophthalmologist who specialises in children's eye diseases.

Partial Sight

Reduced vision: officially visual acuity between 6/60 and 3/60 (registrable as partial sight).

Patching

Covering the better eye regularly for a period of time, to develop the sight in the other (lazy) eye and prevent amblyopia.

Peripheral Vision

Everything that we see around us at the edge of our vision, outside our detailed central vision.

Photophobia

Extreme sensitivity to light.

Preferential looking

A method of testing vision in young or non-communicating children, by presenting a patterned image at the same time as a plain and judging which the child looks at.

Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD))

Used to describe people whose physical and learning needs are profound and complex and communication extremely limited.

Pupil

The "hole" in the iris through which light passes into the eye.

Refraction

The process by which the eyes are measured for long or short sight or astigmatism.

Refractive Error

A defect of the eye that prevents light rays being brought to focus exactly on the retina (such as long or short sight); correctable in most cases with lenses.

Rehabilitation Officer.

A professional usually attached to a social services team, who is qualified to teach mobility and orientation and independence skills to people who have lost their sight.

Repetitive Behaviours

Habit forming actions, e.g. rocking, twirling, etc. common to children with visual impairment and considered to be due to be caused by under-stimulation.

Retina

The thin inner lining of the eye which receives the images and transmits them to the brain via the optic nerve.

Rods

The cells in the retina responsible for perceiving movement in peripheral vision and in dim light.

Sclera

The white of the eye.

Short Sight (Near Sight in US)

See Myopia.

Sighted Guide Technique

The recognised way of guiding someone with little or no sight.

Snellen

A clinical measurement of functional vision obtained by reading or matching letters on a chart. Vision is recorded as a fraction, e.g. 6/6 = normal vision, 6/60 = the person has to be 6 metres away in order to see what someone with normal vision could see at 60 metres. Less than 3/60 is considered to be legally blind.

Squint

Sometimes called an eye 'turn', where both eyes point in different directions due to muscle imbalance.

Stereopsis

See binocular vision

Strabismus

See squint.

Symbol cane

A short cane carried as a signal of visual impairment.

Tracking

The ability to follow a moving object with the eyes: this is tested when the subject has his/ her head still. Some children with restricted eye movement learn to track by moving their head.

Tunnel Vision

Loss of peripheral vision, causing vision to be restricted to a narrow central field.

Unilateral

On one side only/ in one eye only.

Visual Acuity

A measure of the ability to see fine detail; often called central vision.

Visual Evoked Response (VER) testing

Standard clinical protocol for the investigation of visual pathway function in both adults and children, in which responses to patterns are measured from electrodes attached to the head.

Visual Impairment

Sometimes taken to mean all forms of reduced vision, including blindness. Sometimes means low vision.

Visual Perception

The ability to give meaning and understanding to what has been seen (not just to see it).

Visual processing

The ability to make sense of visual images.

Vitreous

Transparent, colourless mass of soft material filling the eyeball behind the lens