**Wirral Sensory Service**

**Early Years Policy for children with visually impairment**

**Introduction**

The team aim to work with 0–5-year-old children, in collaboration with their parents and other relevant professionals, in the home setting and/or in the early years setting.

This early intervention is vital to stimulating the child’s vision and to enable a holistic approach to be taken to sensory stimulation.

Parents/carers will also be supported by the team, through provision of advice on practical approaches and equipment to use, where appropriate. Pertinent information will also be shared with other professionals regarding the needs of the child.

All the children on the caseload from 0 – 5 years old are the responsibility of a QTVI (qualified teacher of children with visual impairments). The teacher has the overview and is responsible for the co-ordination of support, report writing, devising programmes and attending meetings; however, the direct support and implementation of the programmes, within the home and/or early years setting could also be carried out by a teaching assistant from the team.

**Procedure**

The child will be referred to the team, via the referral procedure applicable to all children.

The Team Leader for Children with Visual Impairments will make an initial visit to meet the parents/carers. At this visit, information will be conveyed to the parents/carers about the Service and how the teamwork with children in the early years. The Team Leader will offer support and guidance; and reassure the parents/carers. Consent will also be sought to enable the free flow of pertinent, confidential information between relevant professionals.

A further visit will be arranged, to enable the Qualified Teacher of Children with Visual Impairments and the teaching assistant who will work with the child to visit the family.

At an early stage in the support of the child, information will be provided to the parent/carer in an appropriate format about the roles of other professionals that may be involved with the child, how services might be accessed and other useful contacts, the services available from voluntary organisations.

**Direct support**

The QTVI will devise an appropriate programme of support for the child and will liaise with the named teaching assistant regarding its implementation. The programme will have full regard to the particular early learning goals being developed and to the Developmental Journal for Babies and Young Children.

The support is monitored through ongoing discussion between QTVI and the teaching assistant, and a short summary will be written at the end of each visit by the specialist teaching assistant and kept in the relevant section of the pupils electronic file.

The QTVI will also monitor the effectiveness of provision by visiting the family as appropriate.

**Transition to the foundation stage**

In the term prior to the child’s entry into reception, the QTVI will liaise with the school regarding the child’s visual needs and a transition report will be produced.

If appropriate delivery of training to the whole school staff on the child’s visual needs, together with environmental audit and recommendations and visits to the school by the child, will be completed.

Following transition, the team will continue to support the child according to their visual needs, and during this phase when the child has settled in the NATSiP criteria will be reviewed.