



# Making childhood equal

The need to increase habilitation support for children and young people with vision impairment.

A report by Thomas Pocklington Trust  
and Guide Dogs  
September 2020

# Case study, Oashia, aged 9

Nine-year-old Oashia may have no sight at all but that isn't stopping her leading a full and active life, including taking part in both horse-riding and gymnastics.

Oashia was born with optic nerve hypoplasia, which means her optic nerves did not grow properly. She has no sight at all in one eye, and virtually none in the other, apart from seeing light if a bright light is shone directly into her eye.

Oashia's Habilitation Specialist, Helen, has been working with the family for nearly five years. Firstly at school during term time only, but now every week, including during the school holidays. Penny, Oashia's great-aunt, who has parental responsibility for her says: "Helen has been a lifesaver. She's taught me so much, as well as Oashia."

Helen has taught Oashia how to prepare simple meals, such as sandwiches, and has helped make their home more accessible – for example, marking the microwave

controls with a tactile marker so Oashia can make her own porridge. Helen has taught Oashia how to use her long cane so she can get around her school on her own and she's now also learning the route from their home to the local shop.

"The biggest difference I've seen in Oashia is her confidence and self-esteem," says Helen. "She rightly takes such pride in her independence, while keeping herself safe and calmly working out what to do if things change around her."



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# Executive summary

Children and young people with vision impairment are being denied access to their childhood. Our latest research reveals that large numbers are not being referred for the vital habilitation support they may require.



“

Habilitation ensures that children and young people have strong foundation skills, taught in the early years to empower and enable them to aim high in life and accomplish what they want to achieve.

”

Guide Dogs Habilitation Services Manager

In April 2019 Thomas Pocklington Trust sent a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to all local authorities in England asking about their habilitation provision. A total of 131 responses were received, three were from consortiums made up of a number of local authorities that have pooled resources to deliver one habilitation provision. Therefore, a total of 141 local authorities are represented. Not all local authorities responded to every question. Together with Guide Dogs, we have analysed the responses to produce this report.

Our research has uncovered a fractured and confusing system that we believe is failing to address significant amounts of unmet need. While most local authorities claim to provide habilitation services, there is a picture of little uniformity across the country

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**Every professional wants the best for children with sight loss – but lack of funding, staff, understanding and procedure gets in the way. When people are able to work together, we see fantastic results.**

”

Guide Dogs Habilitation Services Manager

with the number of children with vision impairment receiving habilitation support varying greatly.

Vision impairment in children and young people is a low incidence high need disability. There are around 22,995 children with vision impairment between 0 and 16 living in England<sup>[1]</sup>. So much of our learning is visual it is clear that having or developing a sight condition as a child or young person can have real impact on development.

We know that children and young people with vision impairment are at risk of poor outcomes across a range of emotional and social wellbeing indicators<sup>[2]</sup>. It is therefore vital that they receive support from Habilitation Specialists, in conjunction with Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment (QTVI) to ensure they have the skills and resources needed to thrive in education and at home.

Habilitation teaches a child or young person how to learn independent living skills for the first time. It is defined as involving ‘one-to-one training for children and young people with a vision impairment. Starting from their existing skills, it aims to develop their skills, it aims to develop this personal mobility, navigation and independent living skills. At whatever age the training is started, the overriding goal is to maximise the child or young person’s independence’<sup>[3]</sup>.

[1] Sight loss data tool [www.rnib.org.uk/datatool](http://www.rnib.org.uk/datatool)

[2] Harris J and Lord C (2016) Mental health of children with vision impairment at 11 years of age. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* 774-779

[3] <https://habilitationviuk.org.uk/what-is-habilitation/>

The positive impact of habilitation is immense. It can unlock the potential of children and young people with vision impairment, giving them development strategies to build their social and emotional resilience. It can help them understand and navigate the world around them whilst supporting them to be physically more mobile.

It also makes financial sense. Research carried out by economists NEF Consulting, for Guide Dogs, examined our habilitation service provided in Northern Ireland. This is similar to the services provided across the UK. It shows that for every £1 spent £7.13 is created in social value. While some of the value relates to parents, the majority of value is based on children and young people themselves. It found that the habilitation service creates £5.72 (for every £1 spent) solely from children's outcomes<sup>[4]</sup>.

These outcomes include a positive impact in the child's emotional wellbeing, physical health, independence, safety, and their knowledge and skills.

Yet our research supports evidence that has long suggested that this life changing service can be tough to access.

“

**The confidence that Hannah gained within a very short space of time was incredible! Whilst she still has a long way to go to be as independent as her peers, when she had regular input her confidence grew massively, which as parents was a delight to see. She knew it too, which just gave her even more confidence to keep trying new things with her habilitation specialist.”**

Kim, Hannah's mum

“

**I can do a lot more without help. I don't always hold on to someone, I use my cane now.”<sup>[4]</sup>**

“

**[I] just never expected to be going outside by myself and now I am.”<sup>[4]</sup>**

“

**I actually make my own sandwiches now... I wash the dishes at home now too, I didn't use to.”<sup>[4]</sup>**

[4] NEF Consulting (2018) Social Return on Investment of the Guide Dogs' habilitation service at Jordanstown School



# Key findings

'Making Childhood Equal' explores the provision of habilitation support across England and sets out clear recommendations for the Government and local authorities to act to ensure that every child with vision impairment has access to timely habilitation support.

- The number of children and young people in receipt of habilitation in many local authorities is tiny. **Almost a third (33 per cent)** supported **less than 10** children or young people over a 12-month period, and over half (**53 per cent**) supported **20** or less.
- Local authorities deliver very different levels of services. For example, one local authority provided habilitation support to **3%** of the children and young people with vision impairment in their area, and another provided this service to **47%**. This lack of uniformity in service levels is a picture we found reflected across the country.
- Local authorities are less likely to offer habilitation support for older young people (16+) than any other group. The referral methods for pre-school children are often inadequate, leaving gaps at both ends of the system.
- **A fifth (20 per cent)** of habilitation services only allow referrals from either a QTVI or medical professional.
- Many local authorities have restrictive eligibility criteria in place. Thirteen per cent said that the young person must have a serious sight impairment to access habilitation, and eight per cent said that they must have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is worrying as **80 per cent** of children and young people with a vision impairment do not have an EHCP<sup>[5]</sup>.

Guide Dogs and Thomas Pocklington Trust are calling on the Government to:

1. Strengthen the SEND Code of Practice so that there is a clear duty for all local authorities to assess and provide ongoing habilitation support for all children and young people with vision impairment when they require it.
2. Review and endorse the Quality Standards Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment.
3. Make funding for low incidence high need services available through the Higher Needs Funding allocation.

We are also calling on local authorities to:

1. Deliver the local habilitation service in line with the Quality Standards: Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment.
2. Deliver a habilitation service that assesses and meets the needs of all children and young people with vision impairment as and when they require it, including at key transition points, by a qualified Habilitation Specialist.
3. Ensure habilitation services are adequately funded and resourced to meet the needs of local children and young people. To do this, local authorities must keep records on the habilitation service, to understand the number of children and young people requiring habilitation each year.
4. Provide young people in college and Higher Education (HE) with habilitation if they have been assessed as having that need. Colleges and other HE providers should not be required to buy in habilitation support.

[5] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2019>

# Making childhood equal: the role of habilitation support

Every child and young person has to learn strategies, tricks, tips and ways to maximise their independence, adding to their repertoire of skills as they grow.

A child who can see typically develops through watching and imitating what family members and other people do in everyday situations. They practise and adapt their newly acquired skills until they become automatic and confident.

Children and young people with vision impairment need to develop strategies to learn these everyday skills, e.g. walking, jumping, dressing, making drinks, cooking, using public transport etc.

“

I've had medical professionals ask me 'why on earth would you provide habilitation to a baby?' A child with sight learns how to move by copying, or because they see something across the room that they want to get to. A baby who is blind won't learn like this – they will stay still on their backs because that's where they feel safe, secure and happy. The chances of a blind baby crawling without intervention is basically zero. This means their muscle tone will be poor and they won't go through the appropriate developmental stages.

”

Guide Dogs Habilitation  
Specialist



“

We learn so much through copying, mimicking and observing, so children with sight loss need to learn life skills in an individualised way, taught appropriate to their specific needs. Concept development is crucial at all ages as so much of learning is through vision: you do not know what you don't know and as we grow our world continues to get bigger. A child learns by interacting and actively engaging with the world around them and habilitation helps them understand the world around them and bring it to life in a safe and age appropriate way.

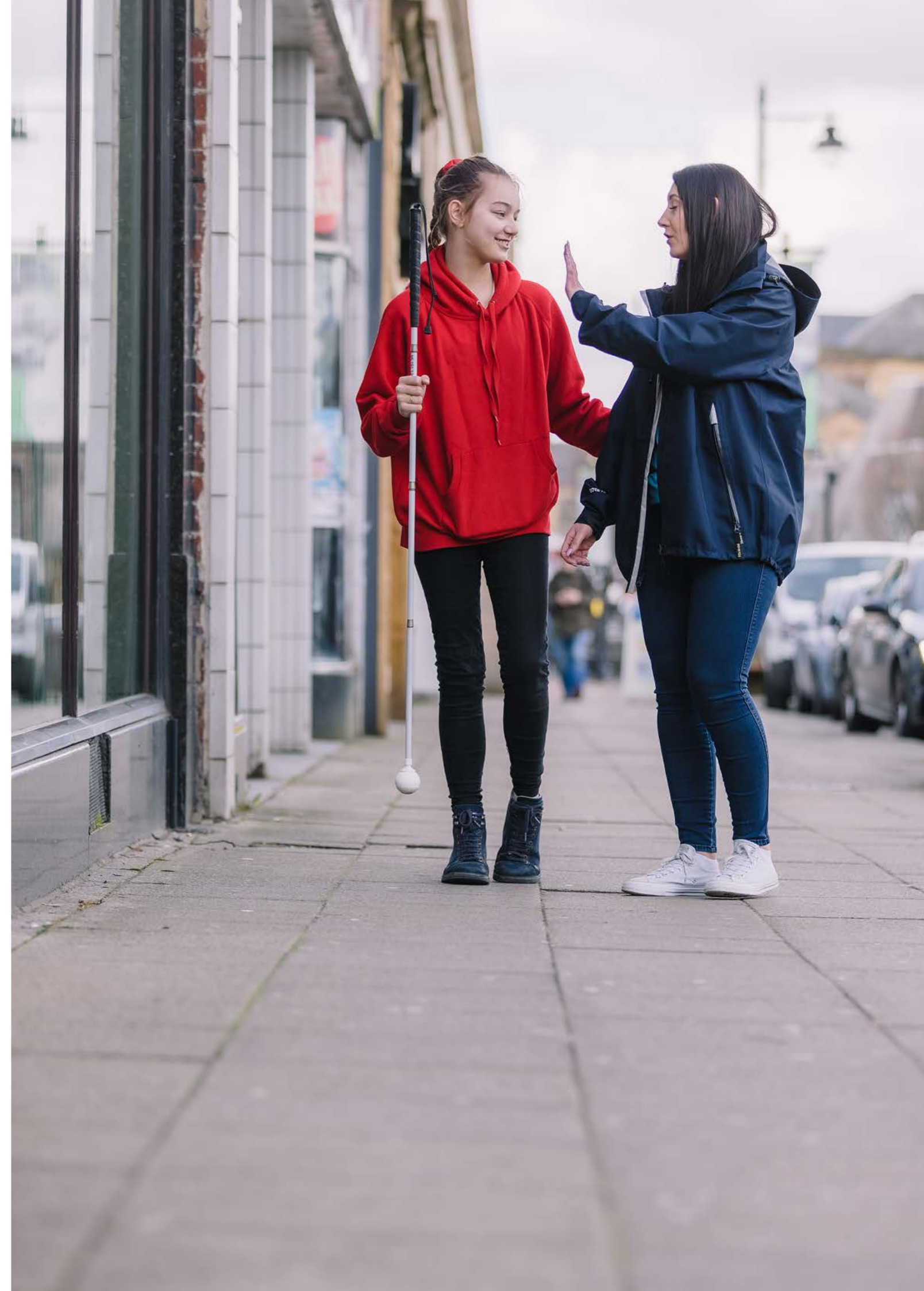
”

Guide Dogs Habilitation Services Manager

For many, additional specialist support, advice and guidance is required to gain the skills they need to maximise their independence. This support is needed at different periods as the young person transitions to the next stage of their development and/or education setting. Habilitation supports in preparing them with the mobility and independent living skills they need to thrive in further study and employment.

The specialist support is provided by qualified Habilitation Specialists that support children and young people with vision impairment within an educational setting (from nursery all the way through to university and postgraduate study), in public spaces and in the home. Habilitation Specialists teach movement and mobility skills including spatial awareness, long cane use and independent living skills e.g. cooking, personal care, social skills and purchasing goods<sup>[3]</sup>.

Habilitation Specialist support should be available as and when a child or young person requires it. However, it is particularly important at key transition stages, for example when moving between schools and education settings. By providing mobility training and equipping the child or young person with the skills they need to act independently with confidence it can reduce the need for additional resources such as home to school transport and teaching assistant time.



[3] <https://habilitationviuk.org.uk/what-is-habilitation/>

# Inconsistent support

The difference that habilitation support can have is profound. It can unlock the potential of children and young people with vision impairment, supporting them to learn and develop strategies for mobility and independence skills, enabling them to engage fully with their education<sup>[3]</sup>.

The inconsistent provision of habilitation support across England is demonstrated by

1. Almost a third (33 per cent) of local authorities supported less than 10 children or young people over a 12-month period, and over half (53 per cent) supported 20 or less.
2. Almost a quarter were unable to provide data, the main reason provided is because many local authorities do not record this information.

Whether a child or young person with a vision impairment receives habilitation support is dependent on a number of factors. There is no standard approach, leaving many without the support they may need.

[3] <https://habilitationviuk.org.uk/what-is-habilitation/>

“

**In areas where there is great working practice, I have seen fantastic results where children absolutely soar and continue to soar, achieving their aspirations and goals. They have skills that will enable them to live independently and engage with their local communities, make choices about their next steps and feel in control of their future – with some going off to medical school or university, playing sports at high levels or starting their chosen profession. In others, where the children aren't picked up and haven't received the support, they may lack self-confidence and the necessary skills to become independent and may rarely leave their own home without support.**

”

Guide Dogs Habilitation Specialist







Nell is now in primary school and supported in and out of school by a learning support assistant and her habilitation specialist. Through their time together, Nell is learning about her surroundings and how to use her cane outside to explore with her friends.

“The best moment throughout habilitation support was when Nell got her cane. The habilitation specialist’s determination to let Nell try things gave her a lot a drive. When given a cane, Nell just went. She wanted to be independent, and if she bumped into things, she just got up and went off. Nell is like a bottle of pop and people have said she is so confident that you forget that she’s blind.”

Rachel, Nell’s mum

Every six months, Nell’s support is reassessed by the local authority and her habilitation specialist has to put forward a case for funding to continue.

“

Of course, they [children with sight loss] are going to need specialist support, how could they not have that? It is unfair that our habilitation specialist has to justify the necessity of the funding, and that we are disappointed we are not more involved in the process.

”

Rachel, Nell’s mum

# Dependent on age



Further and Higher Education is an important stage for young people. It is when they start to plan for what they would like to do as an adult, make new friendships and start to explore what it means to be independent. Without the right support many young people with vision impairment are being placed on the backfoot, reducing their chances to attain and sustain employment.

Astonishingly, our research shows that the older a young person is the less likely they are to receive habilitation support. It is not acceptable that in a number of local authority areas young people with vision impairment are not receiving mobility and independence training at a key time in their education.



**Engaging with friends as a teenager is as vital as a toddler exploring the world for the first time. So, it is crucial that young people of all ages have access to habilitation. There are some fantastic adult services for young people with a vision impairment, but there aren't enough, and so again we see a postcode lottery with the type of support a 16+ year old will receive.**



Guide Dogs Habilitation Services Manager

Of the local authorities that do provide habilitation to those aged 16+, some have in place restrictions in accessing the service that aren't in place for any other age group. For example, it may be dependent on whether a college will buy in the support or not. Or the young person must have an EHCP or be at 6th form college.

We believe that there are gaps at both ends of the system. While most local authorities said they provided habilitation support for children 0-4, practical experience suggests that until a child is in education or nursery, it can be very challenging to access.



**In education the HE/FE college have the option to buy in support from the Sensory & Physical team or provide their own. If not in education the young person would come under adult social care for rehabilitation."**

Nottingham City Council



**Commissioned by colleges if recommended by [children and young people], families or sensory service. From the [sensory] service if in school."**

Shropshire Council



**Transition work to college is covered but there is no capacity to support college placements."**

Warwickshire Council

# Dependent on processes

Whether a child or young person will receive habilitation support can be dependent on the referral routes and eligibility criteria of their local authority.

A fifth (20 per cent) of habilitation services only allow referrals from either a QTVI or medical professional. A third of local authorities with more than one referral route do not take referrals from parents and carers, and less than half do not take referrals from children and young people.

We would expect the eligibility criteria to be set at a level that ensures a person can access habilitation support if they have a vision impairment and an assessed need.

When asked about their eligibility criteria it is clear that many children and young people with vision impairment are being unfairly excluded from services. Thirteen per cent said that the young person must have a serious sight impairment, and eight per cent said that they must have an EHCP. This is worrying as 80 per cent of children and young people with a vision impairment do not have an EHCP<sup>[5]</sup>. The SEND Code of Practice states that commissioning of services must cover children and young people both with and without EHCP<sup>[6]</sup>.



Currently [they] do not receive support [if] not SSI [Severely Sight Impaired]. This is due to caseload capacity but is to be reviewed to increase with added resource by 2020.



Somerset Council

[5] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2019>

[6] Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years section 3.9

# Dependent on what habilitation support is offered

We took the Quality Standards: Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment and asked local authorities which areas of support it offered for each age group.

It became apparent that the support offered between local authorities differed. The one type of support, which was more likely not to be offered was independent living skills.

This is vital in supporting children and young people to learn how to cook basic meals, make a cup of tea, and to participate in general family life – without this support, local authorities are creating a dependency on parents and care givers.



The key professional in hospital, responsible for making referrals to the relevant health, social care and education teams may vary. In some hospitals it is the Ophthalmologist. In others, it may be an Optometrist or it might be an Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO). Not all hospitals have a 'paediatric' ECLO, they may only be involved in adult services and so know very little about services for children. For this reason, referrals may either not happen or the family may be referred to health but not, education i.e. the local VI Team. Meaning families may fall through the net.



Guide Dogs Habilitation Services Manager

# Case study, Hannah, 11

Habilitation support was recommended for Hannah by Moorfields hospital during an appointment when she was 10. Hannah had not had any mobility training up to this point. The family contacted the local authority sensory support team but due to Hannah's home schooling, they were not prepared to support her.

The family were eventually made aware that they could apply for a social care assessment and have a care plan produced that would cover mobility training. Training eventually started in February 2019 when Hannah was ten and a half years old.

Her social care plan was limited to a set number of sessions which has now come to an end and Hannah's mother doesn't know when it will be reinstated.

“

It would be so much better, if access to the service did not require the need to jump through so many hoops. Whilst there is an agreement when access to habilitation is required, there is a very poor understanding as to what it entails, why it is needed and the length of time the support is required for.

The process of receiving habilitation training was and continues to be a source of great stress.

”

Kim, Hannah's mum



# Habilitation is a specialist support

Habilitation is a specialism, yet data shows that it is not always clear who is providing the service and what their qualifications are. It is vital that it is delivered either by a Qualified Habilitation Specialist or Qualified Habilitation Assistant (under the supervision of a team of Qualified Habilitation Specialists).

Eleven per cent of habilitation services aren't even provided by a children's team and instead sit within adult social care. Worryingly when asked who delivers habilitation support, over a quarter of local authorities provided unclear data. We are concerned that without records of provision it is difficult for local authorities to understand the habilitation needs of children and young people with vision impairment.



# The cost of habilitation support

Throughout the FOI responses local authorities refer to limitations around funding and resources as to why they are unable to deliver on particular elements of habilitation support.

Research in 2016 told a similar story. 'Time to Move' explained some of the key factors behind a lack of provision. It reported that funding challenges are threatening service provision, forcing some local authorities to have strict eligibility criteria to prioritise which children should receive services. Local authorities stated that even a small increase in demand could make it very challenging for their habilitation service to meet local need in some areas<sup>[7]</sup>.

Our FOI has found that local authorities provide vastly different amounts of habilitation support for the children and young people with vision impairment living in their areas. For example, we found a local authority providing habilitation to 3% of the children and young people with a vision impairment in their area over a 12 month period, while another local authority supported 47%.

There may be good reasons for this, for example not every child will require habilitation every year. However, this pattern of disparity was not unique, which suggests there are levels of unmet need<sup>[8]</sup>.

[7] <https://www.visionuk.org.uk/time-to-move-a-review-of-habilitation-for-children-and-young-people-with-sight-loss-in-england/>

[8] Data provided by RNIB from their FOI carried out at the same time. Left Out of Learning 2019 <https://www.rnib.org.uk/left-out-learning>

# The benefits of investing in habilitation support

Vision impairment in children and young people is a low incidence disability that requires investment as specialist workers are required to deliver support. Our research shows that investing in habilitation support provides good value for money.

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of a Guide Dogs habilitation service in Northern Ireland (which is very similar to those provided across the rest of the UK) found that for every £1 spent £7.13 is created in social value. While some of the value relates to parents, the majority value is based on children and young people themselves. It found that the habilitation service creates £5.72 (for every £1 spent) solely from service user outcomes<sup>[4]</sup>.

The benefits of habilitation are felt by the young person, through improvement in confidence and ability to carry out tasks for themselves. This in turn improves feelings of emotional wellbeing and mental and physical health.

[4] NEF Consulting (2018) Social Return on Investment of the Guide Dogs' habilitation service at Jordanstown School

“

**I can do a lot more without help. I don't always hold on to someone, I use my cane now.”<sup>[4]</sup>**

“

**I don't bump into things or trip over as much. I know my way around the playground better.”<sup>[4]</sup>**

The SROI research also showed reduced stress and anxiety in parents and an improvement in their knowledge and awareness, so that they are in turn able to support their child more effectively.

“

**[The habilitation service] took a lot of pressure off of me.”<sup>[4]</sup>**

“

**Before I felt that things were closing off. Now I feel they are opened up and we just have to adjust to doing things a bit differently.”<sup>[4]</sup>**



# Conclusion

The benefits of habilitation support is clear. By investing now in children and young people with vision impairment, it means that they are given the skills and confidence they need to succeed in their education and to progress into adulthood, whether this is FE, HE or employment.

However, our FOI has shown a patchy and inconsistent provision of habilitation across England. It has also raised a number of questions about the standards, consistency and possibly the quality of services. It is a specialised service, and yet there is not a clear picture of how services are delivered, and what the qualifications are of those delivering the support.

What it does show is that urgent action is needed to ensure that every child or young person with vision impairment who needs habilitation support receives it – at whatever stage in their development they are at. Without this, we risk closing the door on children and young people with vision impairment at the point that they need it the most.

**This is why Guide Dogs and Thomas Pocklington Trust are calling on the Government to:**

1. Strengthen the SEND Code of Practice so that there is a clear duty for all local authorities to assess and provide ongoing habilitation support for all children and young people with vision impairment when they require it.
2. Review and endorse the Quality Standards Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment.
3. Make funding for low incidence high need services available through the Higher Needs Funding allocation.

**We are also calling on local authorities to:**

1. Deliver the local habilitation service in line with the Quality Standards: Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment.
2. Deliver a habilitation service that assesses and meets the needs of all children and young people with vision impairment as and when they require it, including at key transition points, by a qualified Habilitation Specialist.
3. Ensure habilitation services are adequately funded and resourced to meet the needs of local children and young people. To do this, local authorities must keep records on the habilitation service, to understand the number of children and young people requiring habilitation each year.
4. Provide young people in college and Higher Education (HE) with habilitation if they have been assessed as having that need. Colleges and other HE providers should not be required to buy in habilitation support.

# Appendix 1

## About the research

This report draws from two key pieces of research. A Freedom of Information request made to all local authorities in England, and a SROI.

## Freedom of Information request

A FOI was submitted in April 2019 to all local authorities in England to understand the extent of provision of habilitation support.

A total of 131 responses were received, three were consortiums consisting of a number of local authorities pooling resources to deliver one habilitation provision. Therefore, there are 131 services representing 141 local authorities. Not all local authorities responded to every question. Social Return on Investment

Guide Dogs commissioned NEF Consulting to undertake a SROI analysis to help them to understand the social value generated from investment in its habilitation service. This SROI analysis focuses on the habilitation service as delivered through Guide Dogs' contract with Jordanstown School in Northern Ireland. As part of the service, trained habilitation practitioners work with visually impaired children at Jordanstown School to help them to develop orientation, mobility and life skills.

# Appendix 2

## To whom it might concern

I am writing to request information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please can you provide answers to the following questions regarding the local authority's provision of habilitation services for children and young people (CYP) with vision impairment only. By habilitation we mean support and training in orientation, mobility and independent living skills.

## Service delivery

1. a) How are habilitation services commissioned?  
(Please indicate the option that applies):

How are habilitation services commissioned?	Please tick the option that applies
A local authority department is commissioned to deliver the service (please go to question 1b)	<input type="checkbox"/>
An external organisation is commissioned to deliver the service (please state the name of the organisation)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services are spot purchased	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>
This service is not commissioned (please indicate what alternative support is provided instead)	<input type="checkbox"/>



b) If the service is commissioned to be delivered in-house, which department is responsible for delivering the service? (Please indicate the option that applies):

Department	Please tick the option that applies
Children and Family Social Care Services	
Education (Sensory Team)	
Education (General)	
Adult Social Care	
Other (please state)	

c) Between financial years 2016/17 and 2018/19 have there been any changes to how habilitation services are commissioned?

(For example, has the service changed from being internally to externally commissioned, or has the local authority department responsible for delivering the service changed.)

Yes / No

d) Are there plans to change how habilitation services are commissioned in 2019/20?

(For example, are there plans to change from an internally to an externally commissioned service or, will the local authority department responsible for delivering the service change.)

Yes / No / Unknown

If 'Yes', please provide further details:

If 'Yes', please provide further details:

Engaged with when changes were made (c)

Plans to engage with on future changes (d)

Stakeholder

Yes

No

Yes

No

Parents/carers

CYP with vision impairment

Internal staff

General public

Voluntary sector

Schools and Education Settings

Other (please state)

## Service delivery

2. What was/is the allocated budget for the delivery of habilitation services for the following financial years (please provide like for like budget data, if this is not possible please indicate why):

Financial year

Total budget

2016/17

2017/18

2018/19

2019/20

Other (please state)

Comments

3. a) Please indicate whether habilitation support is provided to the following age groups:

CYP group	Yes	No	If 'No', please outline what alternative support is available
0-4 (Early Years)			
5-11 (Primary School)			
12-16 (Secondary School)			
17-19 (College)			
19-25			

b) Please indicate what habilitation support is available to CYP in each age category. Please note that this does not mean that every child will receive this support but that the local authority provides or commissions this support (please select all that apply):

Type of support	0-4 (Early Years)	5-11 (Primary school)	12-16 (Secondary school)	17-19 (College)	19-25
To family and carers (including those in 'looked after' settings)					
Independent living skills (in the home)					
Long cane training in public spaces (such as on the pavement, on public transport, high street, shopping areas etc.)					
Learning of routes between home and education setting					
Transitions, as learners move between key education settings					
Long cane training in an education setting					
Route planning in an education setting					
Other (please state)					

c) Between financial years 2016/17 and 2018/19, were there any changes to the habilitation support available to any of the following age groups?  
 (If 'Yes', please provide further details of the changes and the reasoning why):

CYP group	Yes	No	If 'No', please outline what alternative support is available
0-4 (Early Years)			
5-11 (Primary School)			
12-16 (Secondary School)			
17-19 (College)			
19-25			

d) Are there plans to change the habilitation support available to any of the following age groups in 2019/20? (If 'Yes', please provide further details of the changes and the reasoning why):

CYP group	Yes	No	If 'No', please outline what alternative support is available
0-4 (Early Years)			
5-11 (Primary School)			
12-16 (Secondary School)			
17-19 (College)			
19-25			

e) If Yes to c) and/or d), were parents and stakeholders engaged with when the changes were made, or are there plans to engage with stakeholders?  
 (Please select all that apply):

Stakeholder	Engaged with when changes were made (c)		Plans to engage with on future changes (d)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Parents/carers				
CYP with vision impairment				
Internal staff				
General public				
Voluntary sector				
Schools and Education Settings				
Other (please state)				

Comments

4. Please provide information on the structure of the team responsible for delivering habilitation services to CYP with vision impairment:

CYP group	Number of staff (FTE) delivering habilitation support in the following financial years		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19

Habilitation Manager

Senior Habilitation Officer

Habilitation Officer

Habilitation Assistant

Other (please state)

Comments

## Eligibility for habilitation support

5. What is the eligibility criteria for a CYP to access habilitation support?  
(Please indicate as many as apply):

Eligibility criteria	Yes	No
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The CYP must have an Education and Health Care Plan to access habilitation support

The CYP must be registered as severely sight impaired to access habilitation support

The CYP must be registered as sight impaired to access habilitation support

The CYP must be registered as sight impaired to access habilitation support

The CYP must be registered as sight impaired to access habilitation support

Other (please state)

Comments

## Referrals and assessment

6. Please indicate where referrals for an initial assessment of habilitation needs are accepted from. (Please select as many as apply):

Profession	Yes	No
Medical professionals		
Qualified Teachers of Children with Vision Impairment (QTVIs)		
Parents/carers		
Young people		
Other (please state)		

Comments

7. Please indicate who the initial assessment of habilitation needs is conducted in partnership with. (Please select the option that applies for each category):

Stakeholder	Always	Never	Sometimes
QTVI			
Other education professionals (please state which education professionals)			
Parents/carers			
It is not conducted in partnership			
Other (please state)			

8. a) Is the progress of the CYP receiving habilitation support monitored?

Yes / No

If 'Yes', please provide an overview of the process and attach a copy of any relevant policies.

b) If 'Yes', if needs are not being met as assessed are the habilitation needs of the CYP reassessed?

Yes / No / Unknown

If 'Yes', please provide an overview of the process and attach a copy of any relevant policies.

## Demand

9. How many CYP were referred for an initial assessment of habilitation needs and how many received habilitation support in the following financial years:

Financial year	Number of CYP with VI referred for an initial assessment of habilitation needs	Number of CYP with VI who received habilitation support
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2016/17

2017/18

2018/19

Comments

## Notes

# About Thomas Pocklington Trust

Thomas Pocklington Trust is a national charity dedicated to enabling and empowering blind and partially sighted people of all ages to live the life they want to lead. We are committed to increasing awareness and understanding of their needs and aspirations and to working with partners to develop and implement services which meet these needs and improve lives.

This includes:

- Acting as an advocate and positive change agent for blind and partially sighted people.
- Creating opportunities for blind and partially sighted people seeking employment.
- Enabling opportunities and supporting blind and partially sighted people whilst in and entering education.
- Facilitating the voice and encouraging self-determination of blind and partially sighted people.
- Being an effective grant funder based on our knowledge of the sector.

# About Guide Dogs

**Guide Dogs is here to help the two million people living with sight loss live the life they choose.**

Children and adults. Friends and family. Our expert staff, volunteers and life-changing dogs are here to help people affected by sight loss live actively, independently and well.

We're a UK-wide charity, founded in 1934, and we are best known for our world-famous guide dogs. But our work now encompasses so much more. In recent years, we have expanded our services beyond our dogs to help thousands of people, of all ages and with different needs, to reach their potential and lead fulfilling lives. Find out more at [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk). To help us continue our life-changing work, we rely on donations – every pound raised makes a difference.



[www.pocklington-trust.org.uk](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk)  
[www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)