SENSORY CONSORTIUM SERVICE

Aim: To raise standards for all children, particularly those with sensory impairment.

PARENT INFORMATION PACK

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

Welcome to the Sensory Consortium Service Parent Information Pack

Your child will recently have been diagnosed with a hearing loss and referred to the Sensory Consortium Service (SCS) for support from a Teacher of the Deaf.

We recognise that this is a difficult time for families and hope that the information in this pack will help you understand more about hearing impairment, its educational implications and how we can support you as a family. The pack should be used in addition to the Early Support Pack given to you by your visiting teacher and the Audiology information from the hospital. You may not want to read it from cover to cover immediately; it is there for you to refer to and to provide you with contact information. We hope you will share the pack with friends, relatives and other people who care for your children.

Your Teacher of the Deaf is:

Based at:

Contact phone number:

Email:

Head of SCS:	Jane Peters	Tel. 07887 540921
Hearing Impaired (HI) Co-ordinator:	Jane Kilminster	Tel. 07887 528852
Educational Audiologist:	Lisa Bull	Tel. 07798 534409

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

Sensory Consortium Service

Aim: To raise standards and achievements for all children, particularly those with sensory impairment

Dear Parent/Carer

Your child has been allocated a Teacher from the Sensory Consortium Service. You will be expected to agree the frequency of these visits and you should feel free to revisit this decision as both your needs and those of your child change.

The Sensory Consortium Service (SCS) Teacher can use this time with you for a variety of activities and services and this form offers you the opportunity to both reflect on what best suits your needs but also enables us to revisit activities which you choose not to engage with but which you may wish to explore at a later date.

- Providing support, information and advice for the family.
- Provision of visual/hearing stimulation programmes.
- Functional vision, hearing, listening skills assessments.
- Liaison with other professionals which may include attending outpatient appointments with the family where requested.
- Joint assessments with other professionals, i.e. Speech and Language therapists.
- Liaise with nursery schools on transition into education and write reports for Education providers including Education, Health and Care Plans where appropriate.
- 1:1 teaching in the home or nursery school environment.
- Assess and teach Habilitation skills.
- Environmental audits of the home or nursery environment.
- Provision, maintenance, use and evaluation of specialist equipment.

Your SCS teacher will also offer you access to the:

	Date Provided
Early Support Developmental Journal/ Monitoring Protocol	__________
Sensory Consortium Service Parent Pack	__________
Sensory Consortium Service website	__________
Sensory Consortium Service Parent Workshops	__________
Sensory Consortium Service early years Groups	__________
Sensory Consortium Service Social Groups (School age pupils only)	__________
Contact with other parents of children with sensory impairment	__________
Opportunity to access on-line course with forums designed for parent use	__________

You may decide you want all this information at the first point of contact or to revisit these provisions as seems appropriate for you and the needs of your child. Hence we have dated this section so that we can be sure that at some point you are offered the opportunity to explore these provisions further.

Please discuss this with your visiting SCS Teacher or alternatively you may contact the SCS Team Leader:

Jane Kilminster (Hearing Impairment)
Telephone: 07887 528852

Paula Scott (Vision Impairment)
Telephone: 07887 531696

Early Support Materials

Early Support and the NDCS have put together some early support resources for families with a child diagnosed with a hearing loss. These resources are downloadable from: Council for Disabled Children

Developmental Journals

The Early Years Monitoring Protocol is designed for families, practitioners and others to use as a way of recording, celebrating and supporting children's progress. It can be downloaded on the link below:
Early Support Monitoring Protocol

Our Family and My Life

This is a family held plan for your child. The plan is designed to help families to plan support with professionals and to keep information together for their child in one place. The aim is to reduce the need to repeat information for every meeting or hospital visit. The Sensory Consortium Service have designed a set of templates which they will share with you according to your priorities. This is not a legal document.

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1. INFORMATION ON THE SENSORY CONSORTIUM SERVICE

"Partnership for empowerment and achievement"

Specialist Education Support Service for

Hearing Impairment
Visual Impairment
Multi-Sensory Impairment

A joint arrangement between all LAs within the Berkshire Area.

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (host authority)
- Slough Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

The **primary aim** of the service is to work effectively in partnership with pupils, schools, families and other providers to empower young people with sensory impairment as learners and citizens within an inclusive community.

Service Description

The peripatetic teaching and advisory service is available for children and young people with educational needs arising from a diagnosed hearing and/or visual loss. Specialist teachers for the visually and hearing impaired are available to work across the age range in schools and families. The team offers a range of additional skills above the foundation specialist qualification. These include skills in educational audiology, mobility training, specific learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairment and curriculum and early years education.

As a service we aim to respond effectively to the specific needs of each child and to provide support in a number of different ways. We work closely with colleagues in schools and with families, linking our work with that of Social Services and Health Authorities.

As a consortium service, we are available to all families and schools within the six Local Authorities. Other agencies are welcome to contact us for directly purchased input. Any school with concerns about the educational implications of a child's sensory impairment is welcome to contact the Sensory Consortium Service for:

- General advice.
- Initial assessment, advice and recommended support programme.
- Details of our INSET programme.

Principles

Early Intervention

- Recognising the benefits of early detection, diagnosis and intervention.
- Immediate response to referral by a senior teacher.

Partnership with Parents

- Parents are provided with informed professional advice and practical support to enable them to make decisions to meet their needs and the needs of the child.
- Close working with local parent groups and user consultation.

Family Centred Intervention

- Family systems are acknowledged through a family centred approach to detection, diagnosis and early intervention.

Trans-Professional Working

- Effective links and joint working with educational psychologists, health departments and social services in an effort to provide a seamless service.
- Joint Education/Audiology Clinics.
- Key Worker appointed for children
- Joint programme planning.
- Regular multi-professional meetings and case conferences.

Equal Opportunity

- Range of provision regardless of area of residence.
- Full information regarding options for education and methodology.
- Commitment to quality educational experience regardless of communication mode, age, race, class or gender.

Quality of Provision

- Review and audit of service delivery, outcomes and value.
- User consultation.
- High profile for training and development.

SENSORY CONSORTIUM SERVICE OFFICE BASES

MAIDENHEAD (Central Office):

Children’s Services
RBWM
Town Hall
St. Ives Road
Maidenhead SL6 1RF

Tel No. 01628 796786

Head of Service:* *Jane Peters
Service Support*:* *Diana Crawcour*
Bursar: *Jill Sidhu*

MAIDENHEAD (Local Office):

Town Hall
St. Ives Road
Maidenhead SL6 1RF

Tel No. 01628 673253

Teacher Support: *Olivia Greasely*

SLOUGH:

2nd Floor East, St Martins Place
51 Bath Road
Slough SL1 3UF

Tel No. 01753 787 633
Administrator: *Saira Shabbir*

WOKINGHAM:

Highwood Annexe
Fairwater Drive
Woodley RG5 3RU

Tel No. 0118 974 6232
Administrator: *Theresa Webb*

READING:

1st Floor, The Avenue Centre,
Conwy Close
Reading
RG30 4BZ

BRACKNELL:

The Open Learning Centre
Rectory Lane
Easthampstead
Bracknell RG12 7GR

Tel No. 01344 354270
Administrator *Debbie Jones*

WEST BERKS:

Second Floor, West Street House
West Street
Newbury RG14 1BZ

Tel No. 01635 503646
Administrator: *Heather Silvester*

2. PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMME

Home Teaching Programme

A qualified teacher for the deaf is available to you to work at home with you and your child. In consultation with you, the teacher will devise an individualised teaching programme. This will include effective use and management of your child’s hearing aids and equipment, an early stimulation programme and preparation for school or nursery.

Habilitation Programme

A Habilitation Programme (Family Support following diagnosis of deafness) is offered by our Educational Audiologists.

This runs in collaboration with the local audiology services at King Edward VII and the Royal Berkshire Hospitals. The programme consists of a combination of family support at clinic-based sessions and/or at the playgroups/workshops. Charting your child’s hearing, choosing appropriate aids and the development of communication are the principal family concerns for this programme. Every aspect is pursued in partnership with carers. All carers are welcome to take part. In the case of two parents, both parents are always invited to attend.

Parent Programme

The Service offers programme of workshops and speakers for parents of children across the age range (evenings and Saturdays).

Parent support groups also meet on a regular basis. All parents of pre-school children are welcome.

Information about national and regional parent events and organisations are passed on to you.

Early Support Materials

Early Support is a national programme designed to deliver better co-ordinated services for parents of all disabled children under the age of three, as soon as a child is identified as needing extra help.

Your Teacher of the Deaf will provide you with access to the Early Support materials.

The information includes:

- A Family Pack containing information relating to the care, support and development of your child.
- The Monitoring Protocol for deaf babies and children which tracks development and progress over the first three years or so after a diagnosis of hearing loss.

Record Keeping and Liaison

All records are accessible and available to carers as specified by data protection regulations and service policy. We always discuss any formal report with yourselves prior to circulation, and in the case of habilitation we ask you to countersign any reports we write.

We plan and evaluate our teaching programmes with you and value the partnership approach which ensures that we learn as well as contribute to learning. It is our view that the parents/carers are the experts about their child.

We facilitate multi-professional meetings, where we seek to share ideas and exchange information with you and plan how best to support your child/young person so that they can fulfil their potential. Our reports are always shared with you beforehand and your comments included.

In some cases a parent or a professional may request a case meeting.

Education, Health and Care Plans

All children and young people can be enrolled with us on diagnosis. If there is a need to move to a formal assessment this will generally happen in time for nursery or school entry. Parents/carers are fully involved in such decisions and discussion. We will ensure that we provide leaflets and information at an early stage.

Our Promise

- To provide qualified, specialist staff.
- To deliver the support plan we make with you to the best of our ability.
- To respect your skills, knowledge and views.
- To offer support as well as ideas.
- To share all our written reports with you.
- To actively listen to any concerns you have and take appropriate action.

- To let you know as soon as we know if a member of staff is ill or an appointment needs to be changed.

We ask you:

- To help us plan the support programme.
- To share your ideas and views with us.
- To let us know what things work well and what things don’t.
- To provide a safe and quiet place for our work with you at home.
- To take a full and active part in all our sessions.
- To keep a diary of all your appointments so that we can arrange sessions at times and dates that suit you.
- To let us know as soon as you know if you need to cancel or change an appointment.

As a Specialist Service our role is to:

- Share ideas and experience.
- Contribute to the resources available to your family.
- Work in partnership with yourselves and other services involved.
- Offer real and practical support.
- Offer specialist early years education programmes.

Pre-school groups for children with a hearing impairment

The Sensory Consortium Service runs two early years groups, on alternate Tuesdays, one in the Slough area (Chatty Monkeys East) and one in the Reading area (Chatty Monkeys West). The groups are part of the early years programme.

Any child with a hearing impairment is welcome to attend. Siblings are also welcome to come along and join in the activities. The sessions are run by qualified Teachers of the Deaf and our Specialist Support Assistants who run a programme of fun activities to encourage language, listening and social skills.

It is also an opportunity to meet other parents and to have earmould impressions taken.

Regular newsletters are sent out to let you know what is happening as well as the dates for the term and the programme of additional workshops on offer.

For more information contact

Chatty Monkeys West - Jane Peters 07887 540921
Chatty Monkeys East – Susie Cornish 07823 533608
or
Your Visiting Teacher

3. PARENT WORKSHOPS

The Sensory Consortium Service has a rolling programme of workshops for parents which are held across Berkshire as part of the Early Years Group Programme. Topics have included developing language and communication skills, listening skills, assessment, play, educational options, getting ready for early years and school. A crèche is provided for the daytime workshops staffed by our Teachers of the Deaf and Specialist Support Assistants. A number of the workshops are held jointly with the Speech and Language Therapists.

Dads and Grandads workshops open to all parents and extended family have been held on a termly basis. Topics have included practical sessions on hearing aids, radio aids, providing a good listening environment, acoustics and a focus on curriculum areas such as learning to read and developing mathematical skills.

4. MULTI AGENCY WORKING

The Sensory Consortium Service recognise the importance of multi agency working and are partners with other professionals from:

- Health
- Social Services
- Education
- Voluntary Agencies

We aim to provide a family friendly service as outlined in the National Deaf Children's Society Quality Standards Document.

In order to achieve this we:

- Hold an annual multi agency day involving parents to look at how we can provide better support and joint working.
- Attend the Children and Hearing Services Working Group.
- Our Service Educational Audiologist attends joint Audiology Clinics at both King Edward VII and the Royal Berkshire Hospital and we provide regular attendance at Hearing Aid Reviews.
- Joint planning and assessment with Speech and Language Therapy.
- We provide training for other Health and Education professionals.
- Run a number of joint parent workshops with Speech and Language Therapy.
- Regular liaison with Social Services.

5. THE ROLES OF THE EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGIST AND CLINICAL SCIENTIST IN AUDIOLOGY

Educational Audiologist

The Educational Audiologist is an integral part of a service aiming to deliver an auditory aural approach to language development to its hearing impaired pupils. The Educational Audiologist has an education background and qualifications and which includes understanding and experience of educational settings. They will also have an additional qualification in Paediatric Audiology. The Educational Audiologist supports the link between the clinic and the real world in which the child is living and has a responsibility to ensure that the equipment issued to each child is effective in the educational setting and the home. The Educational Audiologist works as part of a multi-disciplinary team working in a variety of settings including the hospital, school and home. Thus advice given can be based on the individual and specific needs of the pupil and their social and physical environment. They have a key role in interpreting and sharing educational and audiological assessments undertaken (particularly language and hearing) and the educational impact and significance. They will communicate this information with pupils, parents and colleagues (whether in schools or in a clinic setting). Thus all professionals are better able to deliver a co-ordinated (cost effective) and comprehensive service to families and Teachers of the Deaf are supported in matching programmes with needs identified by Clinical Scientists in Audiology.

Clinical Scientist in Audiology

Clinical Scientists in Audiology are highly trained in the science of hearing and balance in adults and children. They have considerable theoretical knowledge about hearing, acoustics and balance which enables them to develop ways to assess the degree and origin of a hearing loss. Typically they will inform the family of a child’s hearing status, discuss options for management of any hearing impairment and recommend referral to other healthcare disciplines as necessary. Clinical Scientists are responsible for fitting and maintaining a child’s hearing aids and for ensuring the hearing is reviewed on a regular basis. They are usually hospital-based but form part of the multi-disciplinary team who work directly with the hearing impaired child and their family.

6. USEFUL NATIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY (NDCS)

The National Deaf Children's Society was founded in London on the 15th December 1944 by a handful of parents of deaf children concerned about the impact of the 1944 Education Act on their schooling. Its objective was *'to further in every way possible the provision of full modern education for all deaf children in England'.* It remains, to this day, an organisation of families, parents and carers, providing emotional and practical support through a unique Freephone helpline and a network of trained Regional Officers, Family Support Workers and Family Officers.

In 2002 the NDCS and Friends for Young Deaf People merged, resulting in the creation of the NDCS youth wing. The merger allows NDCS to provide a seamless service supporting families with deaf children from birth to 25.

To this day, NDCS's vision and values reflect the fact that it remains essentially a parents' organisation, dedicated to the needs of all deaf children, their families and carers.

As the leading provider of impartial information and individual advocacy on every aspect of childhood deafness, NDCS can help with welfare rights and benefit claims, making education choices, advising on health and audiology and technology, or simply as someone to talk to.

NDCS campaigns for improvements in services aimed at families with deaf children, working with central and local government, health authorities, education professionals, social services, manufacturers and other voluntary organisations.

The National Deaf Children's Society
Web: **http://www.ndcs.org.uk/**
Tel: **020 7490 8656**
Email: **ndcs@ndcs.org.uk**

READING DEAF CHILDREN’S SOCIETY (RDCS)

The Reading Deaf Children’s Society was set up by parents for parents of hearing impaired children to provide support and share ideas on a local basis. The group is run by a small committee interested in organising activities for children so that they can socialise with other hearing impaired children who also understand the issues they face. The committee are also very willing to talk to parents about their experiences.

The membership of the RDCS is made up of families whose children use many forms of communication and attend different types of educational setting i.e. Mainstream, Resourced Schools, Special Schools and Schools for the Deaf.

Each year the group organise a range of activities which have included Easter and Summer Play Schemes, trips to Theme Parks, the Hexagon Pantomime and family trips to National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) events. Parents who join the database receive details of events throughout the year.

For more information contact:

Reading Deaf Children's Society
http://www.readingdeafchildrenssociety.org/

Alison Bell (Chair) on 07764 879 764
Christina Cullen (Secretary) on 07958 440 238
Email: reading@ndcsgroup.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1025966.

SOUTH EAST BERKSHIRE DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

The Society is run by and for the families of deaf children in the Windsor, Maidenhead, Bracknell and Slough areas. A committee of about 10 members, which meet 10 times a year, runs the group. They organise events so that children with a hearing impairment and their families can meet together socially, and offer mutual support.

They organise events such as a Christmas party, a barbecue, trips to the theatre as well as the monthly session at the Thames Valley Adventure Playground. They meet there on the first Sunday in the month between 2.00 and 5.00 p.m. Special events such as an Easter Egg Hunt and joint sessions with other organisations take place here too.

The latest venture is to provide a service where parents of newly diagnosed children can be put in touch with another parent who has been through a similar experience.

Membership is made up of families who use many different types of communication and have varying degrees of hearing loss. Everyone is welcome, and it is free to join.

For more information, or to join, contact the Secretary

Ruth Holland
Tel: 01628 771094
Email Natalie Foan: sebdcs@gmail.com

7. INFORMED CHOICE

- The Sensory Consortium Service (SCS) is an Education Service employed by your Local Authority. As such, it is committed to the Local Authority Policy of Inclusion as outlined in the Local Offer, available on the Local Authority website.

- SCS teachers should

  - share their expertise with you about sensory needs.

  - be clear about what they can provide and what preferences and choices it may be more difficult to obtain.

  - support you in making the right decisions and expressing preferences and choices for your child and family.

  - assist you with any changes over time which may influence your preferences and choices.

- Your SCS teacher will provide you with information about arrangements for supporting your child's special educational needs.

- The Local Authority will always seek to provide support in the local community for your child unless this is not feasible in fully meeting your child's needs.

- Your SCS teacher will assist you in making contact with your Local Parent Partnership and a meeting with the local Special Needs Department to discuss preferences and choices where required.

There are different types of Educational Provision for children with Visual Impairment**/**Hearing impairment. All children who have a sensory impairment will have different needs but they in common with their peers should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Early Years Setting and Mainstream Schools

This is often the preferred choice of parents and children who want to attend the local school with their friends.

A mainstream early years setting will offer the Foundation Curriculum which complements the National Curriculum. A mainstream school will offer the National Curriculum to a child with a sensory impairment making reasonable adjustments where necessary, which might include an appropriate level of additional adult support. Where appropriate an Education, Health and Care Plan will indicate the outcomes expected and the type and level of support provided to meet these outcomes.

The support may include teachers and specialist support assistants with additional experience and/or qualifications for working with children and young people with sensory impairment. All schools are offered in-service and training for staff. Individual teaching programmes are provided as necessary.

Resource Base

In addition to the above a qualified teacher for children with a visual impairment (QTVI) or Teacher of the Deaf (QToD) will be part of the school staff and therefore there is likely to be a higher level of access to specialist teaching and specific pastoral care programmes.

Special School

When a mainstream school or resource base is unable to meet the child's needs, a special school may be considered.

Some special schools support children with learning difficulties. Where the child also has a sensory impairment, additional inputs will be offered in the same way as for mainstream schools.

Specialist schools for sensory impairment often require some residence because of low incidence of need and thus few schools offering this type of provision. Special schools can offer a greater extended curriculum which may include a significant element of self help and independence skills. Class sizes tend to be smaller with more specialist staff and children have the opportunity to meet and work alongside others with similar disabilities.

They also generally offer on-site provision of physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and other professional services deemed necessary.

Attendance at such schools may mean that the child is at a distance from the family and local community and issues sometimes arise when transition to the wider community has to take place at the end of schooling.

8. RESOURCED SCHOOLS WITHIN THE CONSORTIUM

Westwood Farm Infant School Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst Berks RG3 6RY Tel: 0118 942 6113 Fax: 0118 945 4926	Westwood Farm Junior School Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst Berks RG3 6RY Tel: 0118 942 5182 Fax: 0118 9454498
Wessex Nursery & Primary School St Adrian’s Close Cox Green Maidenhead Berks SL6 3AT Tel: 01628 629607	Kennet School Stoney Lane Thatcham Berks RG19 4LL Tel: 01635 862121
Brookfields Special School Sage Road Tilehurst Reading RG31 6SW Tel: 0118 9421382 Fax: 0118 9455176	The Langley Academy Langley Road Slough Berks SL3 7EF Tel: 01753 214440
Ambleside Early Excellence Centre Ambleside Close Woodley Reading RG5 4JJ	Emmbrook Junior School Emmbrook Road Wokingham RG41 1JR Tel: 0118 978 4259
Emmbrook Infant School Emmbrook Road Wokingham RG41 1JR Tel: 0118 978 4259	

9. INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE

(formerly Parent Partnership)

Following the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice, the Parent Partnership Service became known as the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS).

The IASS continues to offer an impartial and confidential service to parents and carers who may be concerned about their child or young person's educational or other needs, and/or the provision made for them. In addition, they will offer a service to children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities who may want to receive information, advice or support themselves.

Local Authority	**Phone no**	**Website**
Bracknell	01344 354011	http://cyp.iassnetwork.org.uk/service/bracknell-forest-information-advice-and-support-service/
Reading	0118 937 3421	http://cyp.iassnetwork.org.uk/service/reading-information-advice-and-support-service-for-send/
RBWM	01628 683182	http://ias-rbwm.co.uk/
Slough	01753 787693	http://cyp.iassnetwork.org.uk/service/slough-parent-partnership-sendiass/
West Berkshire	0300 303 2644	http://cyp.iassnetwork.org.uk/service/west-berks-sendiass/
Wokingham	0118 9088233	http://cyp.iassnetwork.org.uk/service/wokingham-sendiass/

10. DEAF SERVICES SENSORY NEEDS SERVICE (SOCIAL SERVICES)

Deaf Social Care specialist workers should provide:

- Social work support.
- Advice, guidance and assistance on a wide range of issues, leading to independent living.
- Information about essential equipment to assist daily living in the home.
- Information on deaf issues, registration, interpreters.
- Information on Deaf Clubs and where to meet other people.

Local Authority	**Phone no:**	**Email:**
Bracknell (The Children's Specialist support team)	01344 352020	Childrens.SocialCare@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk
Reading	0118 937 3641	
RBWM (Children and Young People's Disability Service (CYPDS))	01628 685878	CYPDS@rbwm.gov.uk
Slough	01753 787693	sendass@scstrust.co.uk
West Berkshire (Children & family social care services)	01635 503090	child@westberks.gov.uk
Wokingham (Sensory Needs Team)	0118 974 6548 Minicom: 0118 908 8201	deafservices@optalis.org or visualimpairment@optalis.org

11. EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE VIA THE SENSORY CONSORTIUM SERVICE

Hearing aids are essential pieces of equipment as they help hearing impaired children by amplifying speech. However, they can also amplify unwanted background noise. In some schools the acoustic quality of the classrooms can be influenced by thin walls and hard shiny surfaces, which bounce the noise around making listening difficult. Modifying the physical environment of the classroom can solve some of the difficulties e.g.

- laying carpets on the floor or fitting rubber ‘feet’ on tables and chairs
- installing double-glazing to cut down on noise from the outside
- putting pin boards on the walls and fitting vertical blinds on the windows to ‘soften’ hard surfaces

In addition to the above modifications hearing impaired pupils can benefit considerably in the school environment by using a **radio aid** or a **sound field system**.

A **radio aid**, (or FM system), is a means of “reducing” the distance between a teacher and a hearing impaired pupil by using radio waves. The teacher's speech is transmitted to the pupil by way of these unseen radio waves. Changes in the distance between them do not affect the volume of speech the child hears. The child receives a consistent sound level even when the teacher moves around.

The second advantage is that the radio aid cuts down on background noise. As the teacher's microphone is only six inches away from his/her mouth the child receives a good signal, uncontaminated by classroom noise.

For this reason, a radio aids system is of particular benefit to hearing impaired pupils in mainstream classrooms where acoustic conditions are poor and where the level of background noise is likely to be high.

Sound field systems can also help a pupil overcome background noise in a classroom. This system improves the listening environment of the classroom for all the children as well as the hearing impaired pupil. The radio aid can be connected to the sound field system.

In both systems the teacher wears a transmitter, with a microphone on the chest about six inches from the mouth, which transmits their voice. In the radio aid system a receiver, worn by the pupil, and connected to the pupil's hearing aids picks up these radio waves. In the sound field system the radio waves are broadcast from a speaker, equalizing the volume across the classroom.

The Sensory Consortium Service currently use a variety of radio aid systems. The choice of which system to use is made on each pupil's individual needs. There are some body worn systems which are very simple to operate and are robust, and some more discrete systems which are more fragile, and need to be managed carefully.

The Teacher of the Deaf and the educational audiologist, following discussion with the parents and class teacher, decides whether or not a particular system is suitable for a pupil. The Sensory Consortium Service uses a "radio aid matrix", which gives a score in regards to urgency of need, and, if there are no systems available for immediate issue, the pupil is placed on a waiting list. As funding allows the educational audiologist supplies the most suitable system for the next pupil on the waiting list.

The Sensory Consortium Service supply the radio systems on loan, and are happy to advise schools about sound field systems, but the purchase of these is the responsibility of the school.

ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD TO WEAR HEARING AIDS

'When I had hearing aids I was 2 years old and I used to pull them out all the time. Now I am 10 and I am used to them, I don't know they are on me.' **(Profoundly deaf pupil)**

When your child first starts wearing hearing aids, it is important to encourage them to wear their aids regularly and to aim for them to wear them during all their waking hours. Your attitude is important because if you are positive then your child will be more accepting and positive about wearing them as well.

Helpful Tips

- Hold the earmoulds in your hand for a couple of minutes before putting them in as this makes them warmer and less of a shock than when they are cold. They will also be more pliable and may be easier to put in.
- Slowly build up the length of time your child is wearing the aids. Initially you may start by putting them in for short periods several times a day. Do not however take them out if the child is happy to wear them! If you are feeling stressed have a break and try again later when you are more relaxed. Remember however you are aiming for consistent use as soon as possible to give your child the best opportunity to learn to listen.
- Have something ready to distract your child such as a favourite toy or try at meal times if they are distracted by eating. With small children give them something to hold – if they have something in each hand they have no hands left to pull the aids out with.
- Meet other parents so that they can share their experiences. This may also give the child the opportunity to see other children with hearing aids.
- Decorate the hearing aids with stickers and ask for favourite transfers to go inside the earmould. Go for coloured moulds – pink sparkly earmoulds or favourite football team colours.

- Remember you decide when and how long your child wears their hearing aids and try not to let your child use taking them off as attention seeking.
- Use a training clip attached to your child’s clothing if you are concerned that they will pull the aids out and get lost. Huggies which attach around the aid and the ear can secure the aids in place and are worth a try. Some parents find toupe aid useful to stop the aids flapping around on very young children.

Decorative add-ons for hearing aids and cochlear implants are now being made by a parent in the UK quite cheaply.
For further information please visit the following website:
http://pimpmyhearingaids.wordpress.com/

Sensory Consortium Service
"Making Sense of Learning"

YOUR CHILD'S AUDIOGRAM PROFILE

Name:

Hearing Aids Issued:

Date	Middle Ear Status	Hearing Aids	Earmoulds	Ear	Unaided Thresholds							
					250	500	1k	2k	3k	4k	6k	8k
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								

Date	**Middle Ear Status**	**Hearing Aids**	**Earmoulds**	**Ear**	**Unaided Thresholds**							
					250	500	1k	2k	3k	4k	6k	8k
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								
				Right								
				Left								
				Bone								

CHECKING HEARING AIDS

<u>You will need</u>:
A stetoclip
Spare batteries
A puffer
An attenuator

What to do

With young children and children with other special needs it is important for the hearing aids to be checked at least daily and immediately if the child becomes less responsive and does not appear to be listening as well.

1. Remove the aid from the child’s ear.
2. Pop the mould into the end of your stetoclip.
3. Use an attenuator as advised if the hearing aid sound is too powerful to listen to comfortably.
4. Listen to the aid while talking checking that the sound you are hearing is of good quality. You should hear a beep when the aid is switched on and a series of beeps when you change programmes (not all children have more than one programme).
5. Have a listen for any crackles or breaks in the sound.
6. If there is no sound, change the battery – dispose of it safely.
7. Check the mould and the hearing aid for cracks and damage to the switches, the hook and the earmould tubing.
8. If there is moisture in the earmould blow it out with the puffer.
9. If there are holes or twists in the earmould tubing then contact your Teacher of the Deaf/ parents to replace the tubing.

If there is a problem with the aid contact the Audiology Department to arrange for the hearing aid to be replaced with a spare as soon as possible.

HOW AN EAR MOULD IS MADE

1. The impression made by the audiologist is sent to the laboratory in a box, with a printed label stating the type of material, style, colour etc. required.

2. The laboratory enter the information into their computer system, and make their own labels, so they do not mix up the impressions.

3. The impression has the sponge tip removed and it is trimmed to the correct size.

4. It may be coated with a thin layer of wax, to make a good fit.

5. A cast is made in a small pot, from a special hardening gel, using the impression.

6. When this is set, the impression is removed from the cast.

7. Molten ear mould material is then syringed into the cast, to make an ear mould in the exact shape of the impression.

8. If required, a picture or image can then be carefully inserted before the material sets, using a pair of tweezers

This is a picture of inserting the actual working parts into an in-the-ear hearing aid. The picture would be inserted in the same way.

9. The ear mould is then buffed and polished.

10. A hole is drilled for the tubing, and the tubing is inserted.

11. The completed ear mould is then checked, labelled, and sent in the post to the family or hospital.

Each person in the laboratory has his or her own job. One person will make the casts, and another will do the trimming. It is still a process that is mostly done by hand.

Ear moulds for babies and young children are given priority. The process takes at least 12 hours, to allow for setting and cooling time.

Photos courtesy of Arlington Laboratories, Newbury

Checking radio aids

You will need:	A stetoclip with a radio aid lead Spare batteries Spare leads Spare audio shoes

What to do

It is important to check the hearing aid first to check it is working before checking the radio aid system. With young children and children with other special needs it is important for the system to be checked daily and immediately if the child becomes less responsive and does not appear to be listening as well.

1. Check the hearing aids first – see Checking Hearing Aids sheet.
2. Attach the radio aid to the child's hearing aid.
3. Pop the mould into the end of your stetoclip.
4. Check the status of the batteries in the radio aid system or hearing aids.
5. Place the radio aid transmitter at a source of sound – e.g. with another child/teacher who will be speaking into it.
6. Make sure the system is switched on and the hearing aid is on the right programme setting.
7. Listen through the hearing for the signal from the transmitter.
8. Check that the sound you are hearing is of good quality.
9. Have a listen for crackles or breaks in the sound.
10. Check the radio aid system for damage to the casing or switches.
11. If this is not working contact the Teacher of the Deaf.
12. Systematically change the audio shoes re-checking each time if one is not working.

Be careful not to mix up the new and the current leads or shoes. If you are unable to troubleshoot the problem contact your Teacher of the Deaf.

Retubing an earmould

It is important to replace the earmould tubing if it becomes cracked, discoloured or very stiff. The earmould may also have moved within the earmould.

1. Remove the old tubing taking care not to split the earmould.

2. Take a new piece of tubing and taper one end by at least two centimetres.

3. Thread the tapered end of the tubing into the earmould and pull through until the bend of the tube is at approximately right angles to the earmould.

4. Compare the length of the old piece of tubing against the new one and mark where to cut it.

5. Place the hearing aid behind the wearer’s ear and check the length of the tubing is correct before cutting it. If in doubt, cut the tubing in small stages.

12. DEVELOPING LANGUAGE AND LISTENING

Sensory Consortium Service Communication Policy
It is recognised that there needs to be a degree of flexibility when implementing a communication policy for children and their families depending on the individual child and family profile. A child's communication method should promote an enjoyable and meaningful experience with other people through language. Parents should be fully involved in all discussions regarding how their child will communicate and how that will be promoted, developed and monitored. In this way they will be able to make an informed choice.

The Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (BSCS) supports children and families for:

1. Hearing Impairment

2. Visual Impairment

3. Multi Sensory Impairment

1. Hearing Impairment

Most children with hearing impairment, who are identified through the neo-natal screening programme, have the potential to acquire a high level of competency in spoken and written language. In recent years this has been facilitated by early identification leading to appropriate amplification and opportunities to develop spoken language through stimulating interaction with family and others. On this basis the BSCS promotes the use of an auditory-oral communication approach from diagnosis. The development of language in children with hearing impairment will usually follow the same language acquisition process as for hearing children, through meaningful interaction and conversation. Although language may be delayed due to hearing impairment, for the majority of children with hearing impairment language acquisition will match other aspects of the child's development. However, individual children with a hearing impairment have a variety of communication needs and these may change over time. The BSCS, together with partner agencies, provides the parents of newly diagnosed children with information about methods of communication.

Approaches to Communication

Auditory – Oral

Auditory – Oral approaches are based on the belief that children can learn to use their residual hearing well enough to develop good listening and speaking skills. This will enable them to communicate and mix with hearing people as part of the wider hearing community. It is also believed that oral language better supports the development of English literacy skills – reading and writing, because written language is built on an understanding of the sounds and structure of the spoken language.

Sign Bilingualism

Sign Bilingualism uses sign language as the child's first language and the spoken language of the family is learned as a second language. This may mean that children learn three languages: sign language, the language of the home and English. A sign bilingual approach believes that for deaf children to have full access to language, learning, education, information and the world around them, together with a strong positives deaf identify, a visual language is essential rather than one which relies on hearing and speech.

Total Communication

Total Communication is not a single approach and uses a variety of methods flexibly. These may include sign, speech and hearing, fingerspelling, gesture, facial expression and lip-reading - in whatever combination works best for the child.

Taken from "Communication with your Deaf Child" Gwen Carr / NDCS

2. Visual Impairment

‘Vision is our most powerful sense, providing instant access to information and helping us to make sense of the world around us. It plays a vital part in children’s play and their development of language and social interaction.’ (RNIB 2012)
A child’s first experiences have a very important effect on their future so children who have a visual impairment will have Sensory Consortium Service involvement, depending on the levels of vision.
Working closely with parents, the QTVI will teach effective communication and listening skills to allow children to fulfil their potential. Attention will be given to providing real objects and experiences to support the visually impaired child’s understanding of language. Tactile and oral methods will be promoted. Pre Braille skills will be introduced when appropriate and as a child matures Braille support can be offered in school if necessary.

3. Multi-Sensory Impairment

Deafblind/Multi-sensory-impaired children are all very unique and their communication needs will vary considerably. Much will depend on whether the child has been multi-sensory impaired from birth or whether they have acquired deafblindness later in life. The methods used will depend on the amount of residual vision and hearing a pupil may have as well as if they have additional difficulties. In all cases the BSCS recognises the importance of being consistent, allowing the child time and the importance of building trust.

Some MSI children will use speech, whilst others may use sign or augmentative communication systems as described below.

<u>Approaches to Communication</u>

<u>BSL or SSE</u> (Signed Supported English) (refer to HI Section). Some MSI children might use sign but within their visual frame only or using tactile signing. This involves putting your hands over the hands of the person communicating so they can feel the signs. The person listening has their hands on top whilst the person communicating has their hands underneath.

Makaton – a language system which uses sign, symbols and speech.

Objects of reference - Particular objects are used to symbolise an activity e.g. a spoon may symbolise food or a towel may symbolise bath time.

Picture symbols - These may be used to support the development of language.

Deafblind manual alphabet - Each letter is denoted by a particular sign or place on the hand. You can download a copy of the deafblind manual alphabet from Sense www.sense.org-uk.

The Sensory Consortium Service:

- Promotes the use of Early Support Materials to be accessed online.
- Works jointly with audiology departments, to obtain an accurate hearing profile in the shortest time possible.
- Ensures residual hearing is maximised via carefully selected and maintained hearing aids, cochlear implants, radio aids and soundfield systems.
- Responds as flexibly as possible to parental choice of communication mode within available BSCS resources and signposting to other agencies and support.
- Draws up a care plan for family support through discussion with family and liaison with other interested professionals.
- Offers regular home visits to families of pre-school hearing impaired, visually impaired and multi sensory impaired children to support the development of the skills they will need to access their education.
- Offers a series of playgroup and workshop sessions to support the home programme.
- Offers a regular programme of support to hearing impaired children in mainstream schools.
- Liaises regularly with all other agencies involved in the linguistic and educational development of each individual child.

- Ensures that all teachers working with hearing impaired children are qualified Teachers of the Deaf or achieves qualified status within three years of joining the Service.

- Provides on-going professional development for Teachers of the Deaf to ensure an up-to-date understanding of child language acquisition, affective/effective work practices with families of young hearing impaired children and current developments in audiological equipment.

- Ensures that, when the child is in a position to do so, that his/her views and preferences are sought and acted upon.

- Liaises with Education Authorities.

- Contributes to statutory processes for those with special educational needs, including assessments, advice and reports.

13. USEFUL ADDRESSES

West Berkshire Audiology Unit Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Trust London Road Reading RG1 5AN Tel: 0118 322 7080	East Berkshire Audiology Unit King Edward VII Hospital NHS Trust St Leonard's Road Windsor Berkshire SL4 3DT Tel: 0300 365 6222
Deaf Education through Listening and Talking (DELTA) Head Office, The Con Powell Centre 83 Sherwin Road Nottingham NG7 2FB Tel: 0845 1081437 www.deafeducation.org.uk Email: enquiries@deafeducation.org.uk	The National Deaf Children's Society National Office Ground Floor South, Castle House London EC2A 4LS Tel: 020 7490 8656 Fax: 020 7251 5020 Email: ndcs@ndcs.org.uk
British Deaf Association (BDA) 1-3 Worship Street London EC2A 2AB Tel: 020 7588 3520 (Voice) Tel: 020 7588 3529 (Minicom) Fax: 020 7588 3527 Email: info@bda.org.uk www.bda.org.uk	Council for the Advancement in Communication with Deaf People (CACDP) Durham University Science Park Block 4, Stockton Road Durham DH1 3UZ Tel: 0191 383 1155 (Voice and text) Fax: 0191 3837914
Deafax No. 1 Earley Gate, University of Reading, Whiteknights Road, PO Box 236 Reading RG6 6AT Tel 0118 935 3685 Fax 0118 935 3686 Email: info@deafax.org www.deafax.org	Cerebra 2nd Floor, Lyric Building King Street Carmarthen SA31 1BD Freephone: 0800 3281159 www.cerebra.org.uk (Grants, information and support for anyone closely connected with a child who has a brain injury, developmental problem, mental disability or neurological disorder)

14. FUNDING SOURCES

Family Fund https://www.familyfund.org.uk/FAQs/what-can-we-apply-for	The ACT Foundation http://www.theactfoundation.co.uk/content/apply-grant-individuals
Caudwell Children http://www.caudwellchildren.com/how-we-help/equipment-services/	Children Today Charitable Trust http://www.childrentoday.org.uk/how-we-can-help/
Family Action https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/grants/educational-grants/ ‘grants to individuals over the age of 14, looking to unlock their educational potential by participating in further education’	Lifeline 4 Kids http://www.lifeline4kids.org/what-we-do/
Action For Kids (mobility grants) http://actionforkids2016.ritdns.co.uk/	Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children http://newlifecharity.co.uk/docs/care-services/Newlife-Equipment-Grants.shtml
The Nihal Armstrong Trust (small grants up to £1000 for children with cerebral palsy) http://www.nihalarmstrongtrust.org.uk/grants.html	VICTA (blind and partially sighted) http://www.victa.org.uk/
Cerebra (Grants, information and support for anyone closely connected with a child who has a brain injury, developmental problem, mental disability or neurological disorder) Freephone: 0800 3281159 **http://www.cerebra.org.uk/**	

15. WEBSITES

SCS	www.berkshirescs.btck.co.uk
DELTA	www.deafeducation.org.uk
NDCS	www.ndcs.org.uk
ACTION ON HEARING LOSS	www.actionhearingloss.org.uk
ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE	www.rbfrs.co.uk/ (*Please ask your Sensory Consortium Service teacher to complete a referral form with you for a free home safety check.)*
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE UK	www.familyresourcecentreuk.org.uk
NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST	www.literacytrust.org.uk/talk_to_your_baby
COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN	www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk
COMMUNICATION TRUST	www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk
BERKSHIRE CARERS	http://www.berkshirecarers.org/?s=newsletter *Berkshire Carers Service provides information, advice and support to unpaid carers in Berkshire. The link takes you to their current newsletter.*

16. HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN AND PARENTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

‘The input from the Teacher of the Deaf has been invaluable in providing expert advice and support for all aspects of life as a hearing impaired child including practical help with equipment, liaison with the school and emotional support for X during difficult times.’ (*Parent of a profoundly deaf Boy)*

‘Having a Teacher of the Deaf is good because you can ask lots of questions and you feel you are not alone, there is someone to talk to and teach you what to do with your hearing aids.’ (*Secondary Pupil)*

‘X is very happy and integrated in his mainstream school thanks to the support he receives from the staff and equipment of the SCS. They enable him to go to the same local school as his friends, fellow cubs and siblings, which has greatly facilitated his social development and confidence.’ *(Parent)*

‘My husband enjoyed the Dads Workshop and doesn’t have to ask me every time X needs help with her aids.’ (*Parent of a moderately hearing impaired girl)*

‘The Hearing Impaired early years group is a friendly group for parents and children to meet up. The children have lots of fun with stories, games, songs and crafts and while they’re having fun they’re learning to listen. It’s the only time in my week when I can finish a cup of coffee.’ (*Parent)*

‘The Dads and Granddads workshop brings working dads up to date with understanding hearing loss, the latest developments in technology and an opportunity to ask the professionals about your child’s situation.’ *(Parent)*

I like Cate coming to see me at school. She makes sure my radio aid is working. She’s great.’ (*Primary pupil, moderate loss*)

Having a child with Down Syndrome and a hearing loss requires a lot of communication between parents and school especially in a mainstream school. The Teacher of the Deaf has been able to address my child’s needs at school offering support to both of us. *(Parent of hearing impaired pupil)*

17. GLOSSARY

For glossary terms used in sensory impairment, please see the NATsip website:

https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/sersen-sesip-document-archive/109-si-glossary