

# Quality Standards

Delivery of Habilitation Training  
(Mobility and Independent Living Skills)  
for Children and Young People with  
Visual Impairment



These Quality Standards are designed to ensure that children and young people with visual impairment are enabled, through high quality mobility and independence training and support, to achieve the greatest possible independence and maximise their educational outcomes and life chances

# Foreword

The Quality Standards presented in this publication are an outcome of the Mobility 21 Project funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in England from 2007. This project involved collaboration between the Institute of Education (IOE) at the University of London and the Royal National Institute of Blind people (RNIB).

The term ‘Habilitation’ rather than ‘Rehabilitation’ is used throughout the Quality Standards. This is in recognition of the distinct needs of children as they move towards independence and the acquisition of new skills. Habilitation is therefore different from the rehabilitation of adults, where the emphasis is on regaining independence lost through illness or injury.

In presenting these Standards our intention (informed by current best practice and related international research) has been to establish a baseline for habilitation practice. The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by those delivering such training and what they might be expected to deliver are identified in the Standards. For the children and young people being trained, the learning outcomes they should expect are also given. Such an approach is consistent with and puts into practice, the aspirations of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in ensuring that disabled persons receive the skills training that they need and that those delivering it are suitably trained.

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and Dr Malcolm Garner (Former Head of Sensory Services for  
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## Quality Standards – Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) to Children and Young People with Visual Impairment

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### Overview:

These Quality Standards have been developed from research and consultations undertaken at the Institute of Education, University of London by Dr Olga Miller and Dr Karl Wall (footnote 1). They have been written to provide guidelines for those working with children and young people (CYP) with visual impairment (VI) who need training and support in Mobility and Independent Living Skills (Habilitation Skills-HS).

Whilst not yet mandatory it is hoped they will:

- illustrate good practice in the provision of habilitation skills training and support;
- help guide and encourage the development of local habilitation skills provision and support;
- assist local authorities and others in determining appropriate resources and arrangements;
- assist in the monitoring and evaluation process.

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1 We wish to acknowledge the help and advice of many individuals, groups and organisations in the drafting of this document and the members of MISE and Dr Malcolm Garner in particular.

These habilitation skills Standards have been specifically designed to complement the Quality Standards for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment which were approved by the DfES and strongly recommended for implementation (LEA/0138/2002; June 2002).

They also take account of subsequent published quality standards documents including:

- Quality Standards in Education Support Services for Children and Young People who are Deafblind/Multi-Sensory Impaired (SENSE 2003)
- Quality Standards in Education Services for Children and Young People with Sensory Impairment (SERSEN October 2003)
- Quality Standards for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support and Outreach Services (DCSF Sept 2008)
- Quality Outcomes for Mandatory VI Teaching Qualifications (TDA 2008)



## Outcomes for Children and Young People With Visual Impairment

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These standards are specifically designed as a guide to the quality of services required to achieve the **following outcomes** for children and young people with visual impairment (VI).

- The maximum degree of independent living.
- The maximum degree of independent travel and mobility.
- Emotional well-being, including self confidence and self esteem.
- The maximum degree of social inclusion.
- Competence in the use of any specialist habilitation tools as aids to mobility and independence.
- The ability to be able to assess risks and anticipate likely areas of personal difficulty in mobility and independent living.

The above outcomes, specifically for children and young people (CYP) with VI, are additional to and complement the five 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) outcomes as outlined in the Children's Plan 2020. These apply to all children and young people, including those with any special need, and are grouped under the headings of:

- Being healthy
  - Staying safe
  - Enjoying and achieving
  - Making a positive contribution
  - Economic well being
- (see <http://www.education.gov.uk/> for further details)

The development of these Quality Standards has also included consideration of the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) 'Core Offer' (DCSF 2008) which provides a statement of what families with disabled children can and should expect from their local services (See <http://www.education.gov.uk/> for further details).

The key features of the Core Offer, namely Information and Transparency, Assessment, and Participation and Feedback, are also reflected in these quality standards.

This is to ensure that parents, together with all others involved in the support and education of CYP with visual impairment, are provided with appropriate information, and the guidance and the support necessary to enable them to play their part in the achievement of the outcomes listed above.





# 1 Introduction and Purpose of the Quality Standards

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## 1.01 The nature of visual impairment

Visual Impairment (VI), for the purposes of these Standards, is not defined in clinical terms. Rather it is regarded as **any level of visual impairment that has an effect on education, mobility and the ability to live independently.**

## 1.02 The purpose of the Standards

With the increasing demands of society for independence and inclusion, the ability of a person with visual impairment to be physically, socially and emotionally independent has never been more important. Despite the fact that significant progress has been made in achieving successful educational and social inclusion for many children and young people (CYP) with visual impairment, the provision of good quality training in mobility and independent living remains patchy and variable, and in some cases, non-existent.

The purpose of these Standards is therefore to:

- Increase equality of access to Habilitation training (Mobility and Independent Living) across the country;
- Assist in ensuring effective partnership working between Specialist Teaching Services and Habilitation Services;
- Illustrate good practice in service delivery;
- Provide guidance to assist Local Authorities and others in determining and commissioning appropriate resources and arrangements;
- Assist with the planning, monitoring and evaluation process;



- Clarify what should be expected of Qualified Habilitation Workers (QHW) in the roles of a Habilitation Specialist (QHS) or a Habilitation Assistant (QHA) (see Section 2.01 for further details);
- Clarify what should be considered and included within a specialist training course leading to a qualification in Habilitation training for CYP with VI;
- Clarify what a young person should expect to experience as a result of working with a QHW;
- Clarify what a parent would expect their child to be receiving from a QHW

### **1.03 The Target audience for the Quality Standards**

The Standards should be of interest and value to:

- Young people with visual impairment.
- Parents/Carers.
- Mobility and orientation professionals.
- Related professionals.
- Staff in educational settings accepting pupils with VI (including early years provision, schools and colleges).
- Commissioners for the provision of habilitation training.

### **1.04 The Coverage and Organisation of the Quality Standards**

The standards relate to children and young people with visual impairment from birth, during the pre-school stage, then across all the phases of education including the transition to adulthood. For ease of use they are therefore grouped in four sections:

- Assessment of habilitation needs

- Early Years
- School Years
- Transition to Adulthood

## 1.05 Abbreviations used

CYP	Children & Young People
DED	Disability Equality Duty
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
MIL	Mobility and Independent Living
MOP	Mobility and Orientation Professional
MSI	Multi Sensory Impairment
Parents	Parents and/or carers
QHA	Qualified Habilitation Assistant
QHS	Qualified Habilitation Specialist
QHW	Qualified Habilitation Worker
QTVI	Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired, or a teacher undergoing specialist training to become a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SI	Sensory Impairment
TA/HLTA	Teaching Assistant / Higher Level Teaching Assistant
VI	Visually Impaired or Visual Impairment (including blindness)

## 2 General Principles: Effective Planning and Delivery of Habilitation Training

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### 2.01 Qualified Habilitation Workers (QHW)

It is envisaged that in future there will be two levels of professional qualification in the delivery of Habilitation Training to CYP with VI and two resulting grades of Qualified Habilitation Worker (QHW). These are the Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS) and the Qualified Habilitation Assistant (QHA). The role and responsibility of each is provided in more detail in Annex B in the form of model job descriptions. In summary form it is envisaged that:

The Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS) can demonstrate a high level of professional competence in habilitation work and is the Lead specialist in the delivery of habilitation training for a child or young person.

The Qualified Habilitation Assistant (QHA) can demonstrate a level of professional competence that allows them to work effectively *under the direction of a QHS*, possibly in a larger authority where there is a team of qualified Habilitation workers.

### 2.02 Effective planning and delivery of habilitation training for CYP with VI

In planning, implementing and delivering habilitation skills training for the child or young person with VI, the QHW should take account of the following features.

The need to:

- Ensure that all children and young people with VI have equality

- of access to habilitation skill support from professionals with appropriate qualifications and experience;
- Ensure habilitation skill staff work collaboratively with other agencies, including health, education, social services, career and work guidance services and voluntary agencies;
  - Develop the skills of parents and professionals involved to enable them to be effective partners in the delivery of the habilitation skills programme;
  - Regularly monitor and evaluate pupil progress and achievements;
  - Undertake appropriate environmental audits and risk assessments; identifying and deploying risk management strategies in a systematic way, taking account of the different settings in which the habilitation skills programme is to be delivered;
  - Incorporate, as appropriate, training for the young person and those around them in the use of habilitation tools;
  - Be accountable to parents, pupils, schools and Local Authorities.
  - Respect and value diversity and cultural difference.

### **2.03 Effective working practices when delivering habilitation training**

In working with the child or young person with VI the QHW should also take account of the following features:

The need to:

- Communicate effectively with the young person regarding the nature and purpose of the strategies and activities being undertaken, taking account of their communicative and linguistic competence;
- Work collaboratively with the young person in monitoring and recording progress in the development of their habilitation skills;

- Enable and encourage pupils with VI and their parents to be as fully involved as possible in all aspects of training in habilitation skills;
- Use an understanding of typical child development to inform the observation, identification and recording of the habilitation skill needs of the CYP with VI;
- Take account of any additional sensory, physical or learning needs.
- Incorporate, as appropriate, training for the young person and those around them in making risk assessments, auditing the environment and developing related risk management strategies.



## **3 Key Habilitation Contexts**

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### **3.01 Habilitation training in the Home Environment**

This will require the QHW to recognise and acknowledge that the prime support in the home is usually provided by parents. Parents, together with the young person him/herself, should be fully involved in all aspects of habilitation skills training.

This should include consideration of:

- The need to create a supportive environment;
- Risk assessment, management and control of risk;
- Cultural expectations and practices;
- Social expectations and practices;
- The developmental stage of the child / young person.

### **3.02 Habilitation training in Educational Environments**

(Including Nursery, Primary & Secondary School, College, University)

The QHW should take account of the following factors:  
The need to:

- Work collaboratively and effectively with school and other staff in the educational setting (including SENCO, Form Tutor etc);
- Evaluate and respond to the habilitation demands of different aspects of the environment and curriculum of the school or other educational setting;

- Assist the child or young person with VI, and staff of educational settings, in achieving effective social inclusion.

### 3.03 Habilitation training in Public Environments

(e.g. Home area facilities, travelling, social and leisure environments)

The QHW should take account of the following factors:  
The need to:

- Work collaboratively and effectively with parents, professionals and others working in public settings;
- Evaluate and respond to the habilitation demands of different aspects of public environments and how these relate to the habilitation curriculum being followed by the child or young person;
- Assist the child or young person with VI, and those around them in public environments, in achieving effective social inclusion.





## **4 Quality Standards in Delivery of Habilitation Training**

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### **4.01 Assessment and monitoring of habilitation needs**

Assessment of the habilitation needs of a CYP with visual impairment should always be holistic and take account of the views and knowledge of others, including the opinions of the young person. Various forms of assessment may be needed, but in this section the focus is on assessment of the need for mobility and independence training (Habilitation) and the features of importance in the implementation and monitoring of any training programme.

### **4.02 Quality Standards in Assessment of need for habilitation training**

Supporting evidence:

- A1 The initial assessment of the habilitation needs of a child or young person is made by a Qualified Habilitation Worker (QHW) working in partnership with parents and the Qualified Specialist Teacher of VI (QTVI).
- A2 Where there are learning and complex needs in addition to a visual impairment, assessments are always carried out by a QHS experienced in this area or by a QHW working with others who have this expertise.
- A3 Children and young people have contributed their own views as part of any assessment and, when appropriate, support is offered to help them to do so.

- A4 Parents/carers have been fully involved in the assessment process and are encouraged and supported, if necessary, to make their contribution.
- A5 Assessment procedures have clear aims, are well structured and are clearly understood by all involved, with jargon-free explanations of assessment findings being given as appropriate.
- A6 Assessment and monitoring is ongoing over time, takes place in a variety of situations, is recorded and is reviewed at least annually.
- A7 Assessment and monitoring leads to a structured programme of support and written recommendations regarding practical strategies to be adopted in order to maximise the child's potential for mobility and independent living.
- A8 Where QTVI and professionals from other agencies are involved, joint assessments are undertaken to ensure there is linkage between programmes of support and that arrangements for delivery are complementary.
- A9 Results of assessment are incorporated as part of Code of Practice assessment, School Action Plus provision mapping and any Statement of SEN.

### **4.03 Habilitation training in Early Years provision**

The importance of specialist medical and educational intervention being provided as early as possible is now universally accepted. The same principle applies to the provision of habilitation. Starting a habilitation programme early in life will enable good practice to become established from the outset and avoid the development of bad habits or practice which would then need to be modified at a later stage.

It is therefore very important that there should be involvement from a Qualified Habilitation Worker (QHW), working in

partnership with the teacher of the visually impaired (QTVI), as soon as possible after diagnosis and referral. Involvement from QHW should continue to be available as often as appropriate, according to individual need and circumstance.

It is particularly important at this stage, when the child is mainly in the home environment, that the significant role of parents or carers is fully acknowledged. In this regard all work should be carried out in partnership with parents/carers, taking account of their personal circumstances, beliefs and life-styles, and with an awareness of the social, cultural, emotional, physical and cognitive needs of the child and family.

Any other agencies involved should also be consulted and kept informed of recommendations in order to provide a seamless service for the child.

#### **4.04 Quality Standards for habilitation training in Early Years provision**

##### **Supporting evidence:**

That, in conjunction with the QTVI:

- EY1 There are, as appropriate, home visits from a Qualified Habilitation Worker (QHW).
- EY2 The QHW provides parents/carers with information regarding the aims and purposes of mobility and independence training at an early stage and in an appropriate format.
- EY3 The QHW provides, as and when appropriate, a programme of mobility and independence training.
- EY4 Parents/carers are consulted regarding any programme of support and intervention.
- EY5 Any programme of habilitation skills support includes specific targets/activities.

- EY6 Habilitation skills targets are included in the Early Support Family Plan, the child's IEP or other forms of planning documentation.
- EY7 Input from a QHS is available to advise childcare, pre-school or nursery staff regarding the Habilitation skills needs of the child.
- EY8 Before school entry:
- a) Liaison takes place with the SENCO and/or Headteacher of the receiving school.
  - b) An induction programme is developed to include:
    - i. in-service training to inform the school staff of the mobility and independence needs of the child;
    - ii. advice on any necessary adaptations to the environment and/or curriculum;
  - c) Additional resources necessary to aid mobility and independent function are provided;
  - d) A programme of support monitoring is put in place by the school to ensure that the habilitation skills needs of the CYP with VI are known to relevant teachers and other staff.
- EY9 After the child's entry into nursery and/or school:
- The QHW makes follow-up visits to ensure that the mobility and independence needs of the child are being met;
  - The QHW checks that school staff (particularly any QHAs involved) are confident of their own role in this process.

#### **4.05 Habilitation training in the School/College Years**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, has applied to schools and local authorities since September 2002. This gives disabled pupils the same rights to access the full curriculum and, as outlined in the Extended Schools Core Offer, to the same extra curricular activities as their non-disabled peers.

Schools and local authorities are required, under the Disability

Equality Duty (DED), to plan to increase progressively the accessibility of their schools to all disabled users.

This not only includes improving access to the school's physical environment (e.g. provision of blinds, of adjusting lighting, handrails, carpeting), but also to the curriculum and written information provided for pupils (e.g. handouts, worksheets and timetables in braille, large print or audio tape). It also includes extra curricular activities (e.g. school trips, sporting activities, after- school clubs). It also applies to the provision of support to enable such pupils to attain the maximum possible level of independence and mobility.

Assessment of the implications of sensory impairment on mobility and independence within the school should always be carried out by a Qualified Habilitation Worker (working in conjunction with the QTVI) and regularly reviewed.

#### **4.06 Quality Standards for Habilitation training during the School/ College Years**

##### **Supporting evidence:**

- SY1 CYP with VI has, as appropriate, access to and support from a HS throughout their school/ college years
- SY2 Support offered in conjunction with the QTVI includes:
- a) Planning with the CYP's teacher(s) in their management of any associated teaching assistants and the CYP's learning goals;
  - b) Planning with any associated QHA, Teaching Assistant or Higher Level Teaching Assistant and relevant school /college staff (e.g. SENCO);
  - c) Advice on provision of necessary adaptations to the school / college environment;
  - d) Provision of specialist equipment where necessary, with training given in its use to CYPs, staff and parents as appropriate;

- e) Monitoring the maintenance of specialist equipment and its effective use;
  - f) Awareness raising for peers;
  - g) Training and information for school/college governors and administrative and other staff.
- SY3 All staff working with pupils who are visually impaired are offered appropriate training and support to ensure that they are aware of the habilitation needs of the VI CYPs and are confident in their management of such persons.
- SY4 The QHW provides advice which is considered when devising an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- SY5 CYPs with VI have opportunities and are encouraged and supported to be involved in decision making and in planning their own programme of habilitation skills support.
- SY6 Parents receive clear information about habilitation needs in the school/college and the provision made to address these needs.
- SY7 Consideration has been given to ensuring the Habilitation needs of the CYP continue to be met in the home and the home area and in a way that is complementary to that provided in the school environment.
- SY8 Efforts have been made, as appropriate and where possible, to encourage and enable the young person with VI to travel independently and have the confidence and skills to access their local area facilities (e.g. shops).
- SY9 Where a CYP has additional difficulties, these are taken into account in all aspects of habilitation skills planning and provision and staff with the relevant expertise are involved.
- SY10 CYP have access to appropriate specialist habilitation tools and are trained to use them independently.
- SY11 Habilitation skill issues are considered in the planning and monitoring of work experience placements and in transition and career planning.

- SY12 Effective arrangements are in place, prior to school/college transfer, to prepare both the CYP and the receiving educational institution.
- SY13 An appropriate level of habilitation skill support is provided and maintained through and beyond the period of transition.

#### **4.07 Habilitation training in the Transition to Adulthood**

The move from school / college to the world of further or higher education or the workplace will always present fresh challenges to the young person with habilitation needs. It is to be hoped that, by this stage, the young person with VI will have gained confidence and developed skills in independent mobility and living.

It is nonetheless important that proper planning takes place to ensure that they experience success in their new environment. In approaching this task it is more than ever important that the wishes and views of the young person should be considered and taken into account. This will in itself serve to give them confidence in their ability to achieve independent living and lead to success as they progress from statutory school age into post-17 or post-19 education, or employment.

#### **4.08 Quality Standards for habilitation training during the Transition to Adulthood**

##### **Supporting evidence:**

That, in conjunction with the QTVI and, as appropriate, the Social Care VI Mobility Service and/or other VI specialist:

- T1 Future habilitation needs of the CYP with VI are included in Transition Planning or annual review meeting in Years 9 - 12.
- T2 The CYP is fully involved in the planning and review of support and resources (e.g. Access to Work, Disability Allowances, Student Loans, etc.)



- T3 Links are made at an early stage with specialist adult mobility services for Visually Impaired people and with the career and work guidance services.
- T4 Detailed assessment of habilitation needs has been undertaken by a QHW prior to interview and placement in college, university or workplace.
- T5 Detailed environmental audit and risk assessment has been completed and risk management strategies identified in advance.
- T6 Arrangements for any ongoing habilitation skill support are put in place prior to the student transferring from school/college.
- T7 The receiving establishment is fully informed of the mobility and independence needs of the student, prior to placement.
- T8 Appropriate training in habilitation skills is offered to staff and, with the consent of the student, fellow students/workers as necessary.
- T9 The student is well prepared for the transition (e.g. through mobility sessions, familiarisation visits in advance).
- T10 Referral has been made, in advance, to appropriate agencies (e.g. Social Care, Voluntary bodies, etc) to ensure the student and their family have appropriate advice regarding the full range of personal and technical support (particularly ICT support) available.

# Annex A

## Sample specification for a Habilitation Service for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment

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### Note:

The following specification is not intended to provide a complete list of all the activities that will be undertaken by Habilitation Specialists or Habilitation Assistants. Rather it is designed to provide, in a brief and concise form, the key elements of support to be offered, and clarify the need for appropriately qualified specialists in this field of work.

### Service Specification

Each Local Authority has a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act and the SENDA to provide support of high quality for Children and Young People with any form of learning difficulty or disability.

For blind and visually impaired children and young people this will include support from Qualified Habilitation Specialists (QHS) or Qualified Habilitation Assistants (QHA) to enable them to achieve the greatest degree of independence in living, and in mobility and travel.

Teachers of the Visually Impaired will also be involved to provide educational and other support, and will work closely with specialist habilitation workers in the Habilitation Service.

The Habilitation Service should work with all babies, children and young people who are blind or who have significant visual difficulties which will inhibit their ability to travel and live independently.

QHS/QHA should become involved with VI children and their parents as soon as possible after diagnosis has been confirmed, and as part of the Team around the Child.

The overall aim of the Habilitation Service for Children and Young People (CYP) with Visual Impairment is to provide programmes of individual training and support to enable these children and young people to experience the highest degree of autonomy and independent living, to become confident with their peers, and to become safe.

Training and support can also be offered to families, school staff and the child's peers, helping them to learn more about the mobility and independent living problems experienced by a visually impaired child, and strategies to help alleviate these difficulties.

The Service should itself supply specialist support for students in post-16 provision, or have very strong links with existing Mobility and Independent Living (MIL) provision for adults.

All staff employed in this capacity within the Service should be qualified, or be in the process of qualifying, as a Habilitation Specialist (QHS) or Assistant (QHA).

### **QHS and QHA employed within the service will:**

- work in a range of environments, including the home and home area, educational and public settings.
- provide support at times of transition within and between these settings.
- provide daytime support, but also provide home visits and support in the evening, as may be necessary for CYP with night blindness.

- assess the MIL needs of CYP with VI and develop programmes of support based on their assessment.
- provide age-appropriate, ongoing training which teaches children and young people with a visual impairment, to move safely and efficiently in their home, school, work and community settings, and as independently as possible.
- provide a range of training, from basic skills to enable independence in indoor and campus environments, to cane training and safety skills.
- advise on strategies, such as personal care and home skills, which can facilitate independence in daily living.
- provide training on issues such as sighted guiding for those working with the CYP, as well as for their families.
- be involved in helping CYP to access leisure and community services.
- undertake environmental audits.
- give advice to improve physical access to the environment.
- regularly work with other professionals to share expertise and knowledge about their students.

## **The roles of specific Habilitation workers: the Specialist and the Assistant.**

### **Role of Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS)**

In terms of devising a comprehensive programme of habilitation work (mobility and independence skills) a qualified Specialist would be expected to:

- Assess the habilitation needs of the CYP
- Devise programmes of habilitation training and plan, implement and evaluate programmes

- Advise, support and train those around the CYP, including Habilitation Assistants and other mobility support staff
- Identify key areas and skills for trained habilitation and mobility support staff (including Habilitation Assistants) to implement or reinforce with the CYP
- Emphasise the importance of cross-curricular habilitation training and education
- Monitor the delivery of all habilitation (mobility and independence) programmes being implemented
- Deliver any outdoor route familiarisation
- Deliver all cane skills training
- Implement and deliver training in technological mobility aids – if appropriate
- Implement and deliver all independent travel skills including use of public transport
- Keep up-to-date with educational developments relating to habilitation, V.I. and CYP including for those with additional learning /support needs

### **Role of Qualified Habilitation Assistant (QHA)**

In terms of devising a comprehensive programme of habilitation work (mobility and independence skills) a qualified Assistant would be expected, under the guidance of a qualified Habilitation Specialist to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the need for CYP to be as independent as possible
- Introduce and use a range of sighted guide techniques with CYP
- Introduce and reinforce CYP use of a range of pre-cane skills
- Introduce and support CYP room familiarisation

- Support CYP in simple indoor route familiarisation
- Reinforce the development of CYP sensory awareness
- Participate in the delivery and reinforcement of environmental awareness programmes
- Participate in the delivery and reinforcement of programmes aimed at improving communication skills - including increasing awareness of body language, age appropriate social interaction and “stranger danger”
- Reinforce the use of shopping skills
- Support experiential exercises involving public transport
- Contribute to the monitoring of good practice with regard to cane skills and have an awareness of techniques that may have been specifically adapted to meet the needs of individual CYP
- Know what constitutes good habilitation practice but refer bad practice or the introduction of new skills to the Habilitation Specialist
- Keep up-to-date with educational developments relating to habilitation, V.I. and CYP, including for those with additional learning /support needs

# Annex B

## Minimum Model Job Descriptions for QHS and QHA

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### Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS)

Model Job Description:

#### **The QHS should:**

Hold a specialist Graduate Diploma in Habilitation and Disabilities of Sight (Children and Young People) or equivalent qualification which specifically meets all the learning outcomes arising from the 'Quality Standards – Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment (2011)': Qualification Participant Learning Outcomes.

#### **Job Description**

As a Qualified Habilitation Specialist you will be required to:

1. Co-ordinate all aspects of the provision of Habilitation (Mobility and Independent Living) training for Children and Young People (CYP) who are blind or partially sighted (0-19 years within xxxxxx. *(Insert: Name of local authority or area or service)*)
2. Manage and organise the deployment of any Qualified Habilitation Assistants (QHA).
3. Assess and monitor the habilitation (Mobility and Independent Living) training needs of Children and Young People (CYP) who are blind or partially sighted (0-19 years).
4. Undertake environmental audits in the home, school or public areas as required, for specific habilitation programmes.



5. Undertake appropriate risk assessments and put in place appropriate risk management strategies.
6. Develop individual habilitation (mobility and independence) training programmes on the basis of needs identified, in agreement with the CYP and/or, where appropriate, parents and others closely involved.
7. Deliver appropriate individual habilitation training to CYP with Visual Impairment (VI) in a range of settings (e.g. homes and home area, nurseries, schools, colleges and public places of relevance to the CYP and their needs).
8. Undertake home visits and, on occasions, work in the evenings and when it is dark to assess and train CYP with night blindness.
9. Provide guidance and support to parents/carers in order to ensure habilitation (mobility and independence) training in the school and home settings is complementary and consistent.
10. Provide support in habilitation (mobility and independence) for CYP with VI at times of transition to and between educational settings.
11. Liaise with parents, teachers, teaching assistants, ancillary workers and other professionals within educational settings regarding the habilitation (mobility and independence) needs of CYP with VI.
12. Maintain detailed records of habilitation (mobility and independence) provision for CYP on caseload, and write reports as appropriate.
13. Plan and deliver training in habilitation to staff working with CYP with VI, and for peer groups of such pupils / students.
14. Develop and maintain links with other professionals involved with the education and support of CYP with VI (e.g. QTVI, Mobility Officers for Adults, Specialist Social Workers etc.)
15. Develop and provide advice to relevant authorities regarding the habilitation (mobility and independence) needs of CYP with VI from the area.

16. Attend school parents' evenings or other events where the sharing of habilitation (mobility and independence) information would be helpful.
17. Participate in and, on occasions, organise extra curricula activities for CYP with VI as part of their habilitation training.
18. Periodically evaluate, monitor and report on the work of the Habilitation Service, including comparison with published Quality Standards, and use the results to inform future planning and staff deployment.
19. Periodically review the Aims and Objectives for the delivery of Habilitation Training, taking account of the outcomes specified in the 'Quality Standards –Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment (2011)'
20. Maintain an awareness of current thinking, research and relevant developments in the area of habilitation (mobility and independence) and Habilitation Training, in order to improve and further develop service provision.
21. Undertake such other duties as may be expected within the grade and nature of the post.



## Qualified Habilitation Assistant (QHA)

Model Job Description:

### **The QHA should:**

Hold a specialist Graduate Certificate in Habilitation and Disabilities of Sight (Children and Young People) or equivalent qualification which meets the learning outcomes arising from the 'Quality Standards – Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independent Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment (2011)': Qualification Participant Learning Outcomes.

### **Job Description**

As a Qualified Habilitation Assistant you will be required, *under the direction of a Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS)*, to assist and support the following activities:

1. Assessing and monitoring the Mobility and Independent Living (MIL) training needs of Children and Young People (CYP) who are blind or partially sighted (0-19 years).
2. Contribute to the undertaking of environmental audits in the home, school areas (and other educational settings).
3. Implementing appropriate risk management strategies.
4. Contribute to developing individual habilitation (mobility and independence) programmes on the basis of needs identified, in agreement with the CYP and/or, where appropriate, parents and others closely involved.
5. Delivering appropriate individual habilitation training to CYP with Visual Impairment (VI) in a range of settings (e.g. homes and home area, nurseries, schools, colleges).
6. Providing support in habilitation (mobility and independence) work for CYP with VI at times of transition to and between educational settings.

7. Liaising with parents, teachers, teaching assistants, ancillary workers and other professionals within schools (and other educational settings) regarding the habilitation (mobility and independence) needs of CYP with VI.
8. Maintaining detailed records of habilitation (mobility and independence) provision for CYP on caseload, and writing reports as appropriate.
9. Planning and delivery of training in habilitation to staff working with CYP with VI, and for peer groups of such pupils / students.
10. Linking with other professionals involved with the education and support of CYP with VI (e.g. QHS, QTVI, Mobility Officers for Adults, Specialist Social Workers etc.).
11. Developing advice for relevant authorities regarding the habilitation (mobility and independence) needs of CYP with VI from the area.
12. Attending school parents' evenings or other events where the sharing of habilitation (mobility and independence) information would be helpful.
13. Participating in and, when required, organising extra curricula activities for CYP with VI as part of their habilitation training.
14. Participating in any review of the work of the Habilitation Service and other service development activities.
15. You will also be required to undertake such other duties as may be expected within the grade and nature of the post.

# Annex C

## Quality Standards in professional habilitation practice

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### Introduction

These Quality Standards, in professional habilitation practice, are designed to ensure that children and young people with visual impairment are enabled, through high quality mobility and independence training and support, to achieve the greatest possible independence and maximise their educational outcomes and life chances.

Annex C identifies the professional attributes, knowledge and understanding that are expected from a habilitation practitioner. These may be used to interpret and assess practitioner competence through prior experience and training. The professional standards shown below underpin the two job roles for habilitation workers identified in Section 2.0 of the Quality Standards -Delivery of Habilitation Training (Mobility and Independence Living Skills) for Children and Young People with Visual Impairment, which differentiate between the two roles on the basis that:

- The Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS) can demonstrate a high level of professional competence in habilitation work and is the Lead specialist in the delivery of habilitation training for a child or young person.
- The Qualified Habilitation Assistant (QHA) can demonstrate a level of professional competence that allows them to work effectively under the direction of a QHS, possibly in a larger authority where there is a team of qualified Habilitation workers.

Annex B further specifies the knowledge, understanding and extent of practical skills expected of each role, expressed as a model job description. Habitation workers will need to demonstrate the following:

## **Professional attributes**

### **1.1. Relationships with children and young people and their families**

- 1.1.1. Have high expectations of blind and partially sighted children and young people, including a commitment that they can achieve their full potential in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes and their mobility and independence
  - 1.1.2. Establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with blind and partially sighted children and young people and their families
  - 1.1.3. Liaise effectively and work in partnership with the parents/ carers of blind and partially sighted children and young people, providing information, advice and support, as appropriate
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### **1.2. Frameworks and structures**

- 1.2.1. Have a good, up-to-date working knowledge and understanding of national legislation and policy and local policy and guidelines in relation to children and young people with sensory disabilities and, in particular, blind and partially sighted children and young people
- 1.2.2. Understand the continuum of educational provision available for learners with VI including, mainstream schools, specialised provision, special schools, academies and free schools, other forms of schooling and the role of support services.
- 1.2.3. Understand the policies and procedures set out in the SEN Code of Practice (or equivalent legislation), their implications for blind

and partially sighted children and young people and how to put them into practice

- 1.2.4. Understand the purpose of the Common Assessment Framework (or equivalent tools) and how it is used
  - 1.2.5. Understand how voluntary and advocacy agencies can help children and young people with VI and their parents/carers to make a full contribution to decisions about education and care
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### 1.3. **Communicating with children and young people and their families**

- 1.3.1. Recognise the rights and expectations of blind and partially sighted children and young people and provide opportunities for them to make informed choices and express their views about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively
  - 1.3.2. Know when and how to intervene to support blind and partially sighted children and young people in communication with others
  - 1.3.3. Recognise the rights and expectations of the parents/carers of blind and partially sighted children and young people and involve them in raising their children's achievement and improving their well-being and independence
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### 1.4. **Personal professional development**

- 1.4.1. Act upon advice and feedback regarding their own professional activity and respond positively to opportunities to receive coaching or to work with a mentor
- 1.4.2. Research and critically evaluate innovative practices in relation to improving the achievement of blind and partially sighted children and young people and draw on research outcomes and other sources of external evidence to inform their own practice and that of colleagues



## Professional knowledge and understanding

### 2.1. Specialist knowledge and understanding

- 2.1.1. Understand current and emerging SEN and disability-specific terminology and how it is used in relation to the education, habilitation and care of blind and partially sighted children and young people
  - 2.1.2. Understand the anatomy and physiology of the eye
  - 2.1.3. Understand how sight develops
  - 2.1.4. Have a working knowledge of the physics of light and how the human visual system responds to light
  - 2.1.5. Understand the range of visual impairments and how they are identified
  - 2.1.6. Understand the effects of growth and development on sight loss and its management
  - 2.1.7. Understand the significance of motor and sensory development from before birth, through development and how motor and sensory interactions may inform personal movement in relation to a range of visual needs
  - 2.1.8. Know the functional implications of the pathology and treatment of eye diseases and conditions
  - 2.1.9. Understand the factors that affect the effectiveness of illumination and the principles of good lighting design, and know a range of resources and techniques that can be used to provide appropriate and effective lighting for blind and partially sighted children and young people in a range of settings
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### Optometry

- 2.1.10. Know the theory and application of current optometric practice and protocols

- 2.1.11. Know the importance of assessing how blind and partially sighted children and young people process visual information
  - 2.1.12. Know the strengths and limitations of different forms of optometric assessment
  - 2.1.13. Know the principles of assessing functional vision in general and specifically for habilitation work and how appropriate communication strategies can enhance this
  - 2.1.14. In liaison with an optometrist/QTVI, know the range of available low-vision devices and how to use them appropriately and effectively in different light conditions to minimise the adverse effects of sight loss on mobility and independence
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### **Working with visual impairment**

- 2.1.15. Know how low-vision appliances help a child or young person make effective use of functional vision in environmental navigation, and exploration
- 2.1.16. Understand and take account of the health and safety implications of using specialist equipment and technologies.
- 2.1.17. Know how to respond to a child or young person's level of expressive and receptive language, using the most appropriate mode of communication, including using additional auditory and tactile methods in order to support their independence and self esteem
- 2.1.18. Understand the principles underlying the development of alternative and augmented communication systems, including Braille and how to apply them appropriately in the development of mobility and independence skills building on pupils' strengths
- 2.1.19. Know how to take account of pupils for whom English is an additional language, particularly in relation to possible cultural differences, e.g. in the different interpretation of signs and gestures and the responses of family members to mobility and independence training

- 2.1.20. Know the principles of haptic perception
  - 2.1.21. Know the importance of a range of sensory inputs such as taste and smell
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### **Habilitation**

- 2.1.22. Understand the principles and practice of habilitation (mobility, orientation and self-help)
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### **Impact of sight loss**

- 2.1.23. Understand the impact of profound, progressive or sudden loss of sight on the cognitive, emotional and social development of blind and partially sighted children and young people, and understand ways of supporting the child or young person and those around them in ways which foster their independence
  - 2.1.24. Understand the impact of exceptionally high or low cognitive ability in conjunction with sight loss on the development of mobility and independence skills
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## **2.2. Specialist skills**

- 2.2.1. Have a minimum competence in Grade II Braille
- 2.2.2. Make effective use of specialised informal and formal assessment techniques, including the sensitive and focused use of observation, supported by developmental scales and/or habilitation, orientation and mobility checklists
- 2.2.3. In collaboration with a QTVI contribute to assessing the functional vision of blind and partially sighted children and young people and interpret optometric information in relation to mobility and independence (habilitation) in a range of contexts and environments

- 2.2.4. Understand the roles and responsibilities of the range of specialist services and agencies that work with learners with VI and their families
  - 2.2.5. Use specialised assessment information, including that provided by colleagues from other specialist disciplines, to inform assessments
  - 2.2.6. Anticipate the barriers to self help and participation that may arise for blind and partially sighted children and young people and differentiate/modify approaches to teaching mobility and orientation to minimise these
  - 2.2.7. Encourage learners with VI to monitor and understand their own behaviour and to persevere with their learning when difficulties arise during habilitation work
  - 2.2.8. Know how to promote knowledge and skills related to personal, social and health education, and sex and relationship education in the context of developing independence and accessing advice
  - 2.2.9. Use the information gained from assessment and from parents/ carers and advice from specialist professionals or services to set targets, plan training approaches and other provision that will help blind and partially sighted children and young people to make good progress in their mobility and independence
  - 2.2.10. Use targets to develop criteria to assess and evaluate the progress of blind and partially sighted children and young people, and to establish a timescale for review and evaluation
  - 2.2.11. Contribute to transition planning to ensure that transfer from one setting/school to another is as smooth as possible for learners with VI
  - 2.2.12. Use specialised aids and techniques such as echolocation to support mobility and independence
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### 2.3. **Habilitation Training with children and young people**

- 2.3.1. Design, implement and monitor habilitation (mobility and independence) programmes

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- 2.3.2. Use specialised equipment and devices to support the mobility and independence of learners with VI.
  - 2.3.3. Identify individual learning outcomes in terms of mobility and independence and develop, implement and evaluate a range of approaches to help specific blind and partially sighted children and young people achieve those outcomes
  - 2.3.4. Select and use the most effective approaches, e.g. visual, oral/ aural, tactile and kinaesthetic to enhance independence
  - 2.3.5. Design and produce training and learning materials in an appropriate medium, e.g. audio, tactile maps, Braille, enlarged and modified text, simplified diagrams
  - 2.3.6. Provide a wide range of actual and simulated opportunities for the development of an understanding of daily living and self care
  - 2.3.7. Encourage blind and partially sighted learners to use their mobility and independence skills to promote organisational, information processing, problem solving and thinking skills
  - 2.3.8. know how to make full use of opportunities for learners with VI to make friends and enjoy leisure pursuits.
  - 2.3.9. Encourage blind and partially sighted learners to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and the use of specialist equipment, by involving them in making decisions about the types and levels of support they receive
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- 2.4. **Assessing, monitoring and giving feedback**
    - 2.4.1. Use effective approaches and strategies to monitor the progress of blind and partially sighted children and young people
    - 2.4.2. Include learners with VI and their parents/carers in assessment and target-setting processes and procedures, ensuring they understand what targets have been set and why.

- 2.4.3. Provide realistic feedback which supports the independence of blind and partially sighted children and young people
- 2.4.4. Prepare and write accurate assessment reports that can be understood and used by CYP, teachers, other professionals and parents/carers according to the audience for the report.



Mobility21 (M21) is a project which was set up to support the aspirations of children and young people who have little or no sight and their families. We hope that the Standards developed as an outcome of this project will be used:

- to increase access to mobility and independence training for children and young people;
- to help raise awareness of the important role played by those individuals who already work in this field.

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*Dr Olga Miller (Project Director) and Dr Karl Wall (Project Research and Development: Principal Investigator).*