



**Policy for Habilitation Training
(Mobility and Independent Living Skills)
for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment**

Each Local Authority has a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) to provide support of high quality for Children and Young People (CYP) with any form of learning difficulty or disability. For blind and Vision Impaired (VI) CYP this may include support from a Qualified Habilitation Specialist (QHS)

The London Borough of Hillingdon recognises how difficult it is for parents of a CYP with VI to allow them the freedom and independence they may want and therefore does everything possible to equip them with skills to keep themselves safe and independent. The Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (QTVI) work closely with QHS to provide educational and other support to all babies and CYP who are blind or who have significant vision difficulties which may inhibit their ability to travel and live independently.

We endeavour to ensure that CYP with VI are enabled, through individual high-quality habilitation and independence training to achieve the highest degree of autonomy and maximise their educational outcomes and life chances.

What is Habilitation Training;

Habilitation training involves one to one training for CYP with VI. Starting with their existing skills, it builds upon personal mobility, navigation and independent living skills. Habilitation training is a way of developing the skills to access the world, maximise learning strategies through specific learning and experiential approaches. It also provides opportunities for social inclusion within society and boosts self-confidence and self-esteem.

What we do in Hillingdon:

The Sensory Impairment Teamwork works in partnership with a QHS contracted to work with Hillingdon CYP with VI. The QHS, with the QTVI carry out an initial assessment of habilitation needs to determine a suitable programme for the individual. This may involve a block of one-off training or a longer term training plan.

This may involve observations, assessments and discussions between parents, carers and other key professionals and the CYP with VI. Joint environmental audits and risk assessments may be undertaken to give advice and to improve physical access to the environment.

Special schools:

There is a limited budget and resources for Habilitation services, therefore, mainstream schools will be prioritised.

Special schools should be using the funding from the EHCP to commission habilitation specialist services, if they do not have in-house provision.

Special school staff should support in the implementation of the habilitation plan, as overseen by the specialist.

Individual habilitation programmes are planned, implemented, reviewed and monitored termly. The habilitation specialist undertakes the teaching of all the practical



habilitation skills and independent living skills. These will be reinforced at every opportunity at school and in the family home.

Through this partnership with the QHS, the QTVI can reinforce the skill development of parents and professionals involved to enable them to be effective partners in the delivery of an individual habilitation learning programme. Some CYP with VI may need to develop skills in using a cane for orientation and mobility. A progressive skill plan would be implemented determined by the developmental stage and maturity of the learner. Training would be provided on issues such as sighted guiding for those working with the CYP with VI, as well as for their families. Habilitation skills involving orientation and mobility are carried out in a range of environments including in the home, community settings, educational and public settings.

The QHS has knowledge and experience in training and supporting CYP with VI from the birth to the age of 25, covering the wide range of vision and vision related impairments from low vision to blindness.

Support is provided to the individual and their families through all the education phases and at transition points and ultimately their progress to college, university and into employment.

The range of skills to be taught is determined by age and maturity; these can range from body and spatial awareness in a young learner to the use of a cane for an older learner and sighted guide techniques. Developmentally appropriate skills are planned which may include personal mobility, independent navigation and independent living skills in many areas of personal life. These may include dressing skills, personal care and eating, safe travel including to, within school and returning home, shopping, banking, cleaning and enabling access to leisure activities and community services.

Daytime support is offered alongside support in the evenings, as necessary, for CYP with night blindness. A flexible approach is taken according to the need of the learner.

Habilitation Specialists External Link:

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

https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUK EwjA6_HtxvT8AhWAQEEAHXI_C6sQFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fhabilitationviuk.org.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2022%2F05%2FHabilitation-Quality-Standards-2nd-edition.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3v7Uu6cU0KKBxjM8WfXrSa

<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/resources/vi&multi/habilitation.pdf>

SEND ADVISORY SERVICE

CHILDREN SERVICES

Policy Created May 2020.

Reviewed July 2023.

Due for review May 2026.