



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Information for consultation

Changes to Lancasterian Sensory Service

I am writing to provide you with information on the changes that are now being proposed to the Sensory Support Service. If these proposals are approved they will be implemented from **September 2017**.

As you are aware, during the summer the City Council consulted on proposals to make some changes to the Sensory Support Service in Manchester. During this time we received a high number of responses to the online consultation and we also had the opportunity to meet with parents/carers at three events across the city as well as with staff from the Service. Officers in the Council together with managers from the Sensory Support Service have looked at all of the responses to the consultation and have made some changes to the original proposals.

The main changes **now** being proposed are described below.

Mainstream Resource bases for primary children with a significant hearing impairment

It is proposed that there are **2 primary resource bases** and **one secondary resource base** for children with hearing impairments.

This is a change as currently, there are 3 primary schools with resource bases for children with a more severe hearing impairment. These are Alma Park Primary (Levenshulme) St Andrew's C of E (Levenshulme) and St John's C of E (Longsight).

There is no change proposed to the resourced provision at Manchester Academy.

- Alma Park Primary School (currently 12 places and 7 pupils*)
- St Andrew's C of E Primary School (non-prescribed, numbers part of school published admission number PAN) - currently 6 pupils*)
- Manchester Academy (currently 7 pupils*)

It is proposed that the base at St John's C of E Primary School is closed.

All 3 bases are in schools which are quite close together in the centre of Manchester and have relatively small numbers of pupils with a hearing impairment. This means that the resources and expertise from the Sensory Support Service used to support these pupils are spread out over 3 schools in close proximity. The proposal would focus these resources in 2 schools.

We will meet the St John's parents individually to discuss how the proposals affect their children. The 9* children currently at St John's C of E Primary will be offered a place at either Alma Park or St Andrew's C of E Primary if that is parental preference. Alma Park will go over their numbers to accommodate additional pupils. However, if children wish to remain at St John's C of E Primary or transfer to a local mainstream primary the Sensory Support Service will provide an appropriate level of specialist support. All of these children will also have an Education, Health and Care plan setting out their aspirations, needs, desired outcomes and the provision required to achieve the outcomes.

* numbers at November 2016

Description of Primary Resourced Provision:

- Alma Park Primary will provide specialist provision from Nursery to Year 6. It will offer Auditory Verbal/Aural/Sign or a combination of approaches appropriate to the learner. The teaching approaches will be the same as offered in the current provisions. The number of children attending this school may expand.
- St Andrew's will provide intensive specialist provision from Nursery to end of Key Stage 1/early Key Stage 2. It will offer an Auditory Verbal/ Aural approach appropriate to the learner. The teaching approaches will be the same as offered in the current provisions. By the end of Key Stage 1/early Key Stage 2, through assessment and multi-professional involvement and discussion with parents/carers, a decision will be made as to what sort of provision best meets the child's needs. The choices will be for the child to remain in St Andrew's with peripatetic support or to move to a local school with peripatetic support or, if they will need longer term access to resourced provision, to move to resourced provision at Alma Park.
- There will be one line manager for both resourced provisions to ensure flexibility, shared practice/learning and common approaches across the two bases. Specialist staff will all be employed by the Sensory Support Service.

Sensory staff will continue to work for the Sensory Support Service but will be allocated to each resource base. They will sometimes work flexibly across both bases to share best practice.

Training and advice for mainstream schools on sensory needs

The proposals include an increased role for sensory teachers on providing training and advice to schools. This would address some of the concerns raised, particularly by parents, that the needs of their children were not always understood or met when the peripatetic teacher was not in the school and there was an over reliance on the peripatetic teacher

The Sensory Support Service will work closely with National Deaf Children's Society and Royal National Institute for Blind People to develop an ongoing programme of

training for settings, schools and other services to promote awareness of sensory needs. The Sensory Support Service will also work with these organisations to identify the most effective models of promoting best practice in settings and schools. There will be a focus on this training at network meetings for school SENCOs which are arranged and funded by the Local Authority.

Assessment and allocation of support from the Sensory Support Service

Assessment and allocation of support will be agreed through the use of NatSIP (National Sensory Impairment Partnership) tool alongside professional discussion with staff who have a mandatory qualification as teacher of the deaf or qualified teacher of visual impairment and in discussion with pupils and parents. This will ensure consistency of allocating support both within the service and also enable comparison across other Local Authorities. Over 70% of Local Authorities use the tool currently.*

* Source: CRIDE report on 2015 survey on educational provision for deaf children in England

The NatSIP assessment criteria use a broader range of factors than currently used in Manchester, which consider such aspects as:

- Degree of sensory impairment (SI)
- Impact of sensory impairment on language, communication and access to the wider curriculum
- Use of hearing amplification or development of habilitation (mobility) skills
- The support needs of children and young people with sensory impairment to use equipment effectively
- Training requirement for family or setting
- Transition between settings and into further education
- The learning environment
- The impact of SI on the child or young person's personal, social and emotional learning
- SI teacher involvement in any multiagency liaison

Currently Manchester's assessment for allocation of support from the sensory service uses the following method:

For children with a Hearing Impairment

The team has developed its own weighting form which is not used anywhere else and allocates support based on an assessment of the following factors and in discussion with a teacher of the deaf and senior manager

- Degree of impairment
- Additional factors linked to the hearing impairment
- Delay in amplification
- English as an additional language
- Total communication requirement
- Learning level – this uses National Curriculum Speaking and Listening levels which need to be updated to reflect changes to the curriculum.

For children with a Visual Impairment

This team has used various versions of a NatSIP Eligibility Framework together with discussion between a qualified teacher and a senior manager.

For children with a Multi Sensory Impairment (MSI)

NATSIP Multi sensory impairment Eligibility Framework is used for children with MSI and this is discussed with a teacher of the deaf, visual impairment lead for Early Years and a senior teaching assistant with experience of MSI.

Impact on pupils of using the NatSIP tool for assessing and allocating support

The NatSIP tool for assessing and allocating support was used from May 2016 as a trial to see the impact on levels of support. The outcome of this shows that directly as a result of the new assessment model:

Hearing Impaired Pupils

Of 166 children allocated to a teacher:

- 124 have seen no change to their support
- 19 have seen an increase in teacher support
- 23 have seen a decrease in teacher support *

Visually Impaired pupils

Of 156 pupils allocated to a teacher:

- 75 have seen no change to their support
- 50 have seen a decrease in support *
- 31 have seen an increase in support

*The reasons for a decrease in allocation include:

- Children are receiving additional support from their mainstream school through their EHC plan and it is therefore not required from the Sensory Support Service;
- Change in support required following successful transition to secondary school;
- Pupils making above expected level of academic progress;
- Support divided between a teacher and a teaching assistant rather than just from a teacher.

Provision for Special Schools

It is proposed that special schools are provided with a package of time allocated to the schools based on numbers of pupils with a sensory impairment and the levels of need of these pupils. This package of time can be used flexibly by the school, in discussion with teachers from the Sensory Support Service, to provide training, advice, assessment and reports for reviews etc.

This is different to now where children in special schools all have their own allocation of support which is spread out across the year.

This proposal will improve support for children attending a special school with a sensory impairment because it will ensure that all staff working with children in school will have a greater level of skill and understanding about their sensory needs and this will be incorporated into their daily learning programme. Children's individual assessed needs will still be met.

Family Support

Support for families with a hearing impaired or visually impaired child is available through Manchester Information, Advice and Support Service (IAS) and there should be closer working between this service and the Sensory Support Service.

Furthermore, information about how schools support children with special educational needs and disabilities should be accessible to parents/carers through the SEN information report which is published annually by individual schools.

It is proposed that family support provided by the Sensory Support Service is reduced from 2 full time staff to the equivalent of 1 full time staff across both visual impairment and hearing impairment (0.5 for hearing impairment and 0.5 for visual impairment). The focus for the Sensory Support Service will be work with families who have children in the early years or a recently diagnosed child or where a child's needs have changed.

It is also proposed that the Parent Engagement staff from the IAS team train the Family Support workers to use the Local Offer with families and that parents of children with sensory impairments are invited to join the IAS parent participation register and the Parent Carer Forum (PACT).

Manchester also has a growing number of parent champions who are trained and supported by IAS to promote the use of the Local Offer* to other families. The range of expertise of the parent champions would be enhanced by including parents of children with sensory impairments – the Service will also explore training available for parents of children with a hearing or visual impairment to become 'expert parents'.

***Link to Manchester's [Local Offer](https://manchester.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer) - manchester.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer**

Habilitation (mobility officer)

The offer of habilitation for children with a visual impairment was originally proposed to reduce from 2 full time staff to 1 full time officer. After consultation the new proposal will increase this to 1 full time officer based in the Service and 3 days per week from an officer from Guide Dogs also funded by the Local Authority which equates to 1.6 full time equivalent in total. In addition, there will be an improved referral process to access this offer and support provided for all moves between schools and into adulthood.

Resource and data officer

It is proposed that this post is disestablished and the Sensory Support Service managers would carry out these tasks.

Changes to Teaching Assistant terms and conditions

In order to minimise the number of teaching assistant redundancies it is proposed that the number of Teaching Assistant Grade 3 posts is reduced and the number of

Teaching Assistant Grade 2 posts is increased. All teaching assistants working peripatetically will be Grade 3 and there will be some grade 3 staff in each resource base.

Impact on staffing

- Teachers of the Deaf: Current; 17.6 - Proposed: 15.6 full time equivalents (fte)
- Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired: Current: 7.6 - Proposed: 7
- Current Teaching Assistants: Current: 29.4fte - Proposed: 29fte
- Resource and Data Officer: Current: 1 - Proposed: 0
- Family Support Workers: Current: 2 - Proposed: 1fte
- Habilitation Officers: Current: 2 - Proposed: 1.6 fte

It is proposed that the areas outlined below remain the same as they are in the current Sensory Support Service offer or are strengthened.

Early Years will continue as it is now with a focus on early support and intervention.

All early years children will continue to be supported and monitored with dedicated teams across the service including specialist Teaching Assistants who are able to work under the guidance of the qualified teachers with parents, children and settings. The Sensory Service will continue to place an emphasis on early years support and to promote a short term programme approach which meets families' needs. These will be blocks of time which will develop skills, promote independence and allow assessment of the continued need in preparation for educational settings.

Specialist equipment and services – the Sensory Support Service will continue to maintain a specialist team who will be able to advise on the maintenance, management and use of specialist equipment to support children and young people's learning and interaction. The Visual Impairment team will be strengthened and further developed to provide an equitable provision of equipment and resources for children with a visual impairment.

Speech and Language Therapy - the existing level of Specialist Speech and Language therapy (0.5fte) provided through the Sensory Support Service will remain the same.

In summary, these proposals are intended to:

- Consolidate resources and staff expertise across two primary resource bases for hearing impaired children, instead of three, while still offering the same number of places in resourced provision.
- Improve the knowledge and understanding of mainstream school staff and special school staff, so they are better able to teach and support their pupils with sensory impairments.
- Use an assessment tool which the majority of other local authorities use, alongside professional discussion by specialist teachers. The assessment tool will take account of

a wider range of factors when allocating the amount of support, allow the sensory support service to benchmark against other areas and provide consistency.

- Give more flexibility in how special schools support their pupils with sensory impairments.
- Provide a more efficient use of SEN funding, which will enable the local authority to meet all its statutory requirements. By making these changes, the Sensory Support Service will cost £275,510 less in April 2018 from the current budget of £3.1 million. This will allow for our expected growth in special school places and increasing numbers of children in mainstream schools who will need an Education, Health and Care Plan.

A full report outlining the current service offer, the original proposals, the feedback from the public consultation and new proposed changes as a result of this feedback has been published on the Council website:

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2876/children_and_young_people_scrutiny_committee

The dates for this additional consultation will be from **Wednesday 11th January 2017 to Wednesday 8th February 2017.**

The consultation is on the Manchester City Council website:

www.manchester.gov.uk/sensoryserviceconsultation