

PHYSICAL & SENSORY SUPPORT SERVICE

“Specialist support for living and learning”

The Physical & Sensory Support Service continues to develop as a county wide service in close partnership with agencies and voluntary services in the boroughs to best support children and young people with Hearing Impairment (HI), Visual Impairment (VI) & Physical Disability (PD) across Surrey from pre-school through school years to post 16.

The Physical & Sensory Support Service is heavily involved in a number of developments that stem from national initiatives, regional partnership and local activities.

National Initiatives – helping to shape future provision

Early Years Support Pilot Projects (RNID/DfES)

During 2003 Advisory Teachers of the Hearing Impaired have been working with 6 families of pre-school children in different parts of the county to trial the use of monitoring protocols which assess the development of their child. These early trials are being evaluated and will become a PAN disability Family Toolkit from April 2004. When introduced this protocol will be held by the family and all professionals working with them will contribute to it in a trans disciplinary way.

In July 2003 the whole advisory team received INSET from a specialist from Manchester University and a member of the DfES team developing the Service Audit Toolkit. This toolkit will also be introduced in 2004 and will be highly valuable for the Physical & Sensory Support Service, Surrey Children’s Service and health partners in evaluating the quality of our Services to disabled children. As contributors at the Consultation Stage, the Physical & Sensory Support Service will have helped shape this new framework before its National rollout later this year.

Regional Partnerships

Surrey continues to be well represented on a number of working groups within the S.E. Region SEN Partnership. As Head of Service, Gary Anderson is leading an activity around benchmarking and eligibility criteria for the triggering of involvement from services supporting children with sensory needs.

Nicki Harris, Post 16 Coordinator, is leading a working group which is monitoring outcomes for young people and students with hearing and visual impairment. Surrey’s Physical & Sensory Support Service is currently supporting 150 students with HI, VI, PD in the colleges and universities in Surrey.

Local Developments

Given the low incidence nature of the disabilities the Physical & Sensory Support Service supports, children and young people with HI, VI, PD are not evenly distributed through each of the boroughs. As a rapid response service we aim to meet their needs wherever they are placed. The following activities during 2003 have impacted on our client group at county, area or borough level :-

Hearing Team

Modernisation of Children's Hearing Services

During 2003, 4 Education Audiologists from the Physical & Sensory Support Service have attended joint training with colleagues from health at Manchester University. Children and young people receiving services from The Royal Surrey County Hospital in Guildford and St. Helier Hospital in Carshalton will be able to experience hearing through state of the art digital hearing aids as this modernisation programme rolls out over the next 2 years. This will enhance their educational opportunities.

The Physical & Sensory Support Service has been instrumental in setting up a Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) at The Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford. This joint collaboration between the Audiology department and Surrey Children's Service should impact positively on families from the point of diagnosis to provide a better family friendly service. The CHSWG at St. Helier Hospital continues to develop with Physical & Sensory Support Service involvement.

Newborn Hearing Screening

The next wave of this national programme begins to roll out locally during 2004. Babies within East Surrey PCT will soon have their hearing tested within the first 4 weeks of birth through the Crawley Hospital site. The Physical & Sensory Support Service is currently planning the response its Service will provide within partner colleagues in health and voluntary services.

Early Years Support

During 2003 the Physical & Sensory Support Service Hearing Team launched a series of coffee mornings for families of pre-school deaf children to meet in conjunction with the Surrey Deaf Children's Society. Schools with Resourced Provision for children with Hearing Impairment at Guildford Grove Primary, Broadmere Primary, Sheerwater & The Mead Infants in Ewell have hosted these successful opportunities for families to meet around an educational topic such as story sacks, Audiology and Usborne Books.

Training

The Hearing Team ran In-Service training days for Teaching Assistants working with hearing impaired children. Sessions aimed at primary and secondary aged children have been given to 60+ staff. Evaluations of the day indicate they were well received.

Joint Monitoring Visits

The Head of Profession (Hearing) in conjunction with the SEN Consultant at Four S carried out annual joint monitoring visits for the schools with Resourced Provision (Hearing) :-

The Mead Infant School, Ewell
Auriol Junior School, Ewell
Epsom & Ewell High School, Ewell
Broadmere Primary, Woking
*Bishop David Brown, Woking
*Guildford Grove Primary, Guildford
*Philip Southcote School, Addlestone

*These schools all received OFSTED Inspections during 2003 and all resources were favourably reported on.

Vision Team

In March 2003 the first official Surrey Children's Service contract was set up between the Physical & Sensory Support Service and Surrey Association for the Visually Impaired (SAVI) (Fetcham) to secure the support of two Mobility Officers from SAVI. These officers work with children and young people to assess mobility needs and develop independent living skills training particularly at the point of transition between schools and college. The two officers attend the monthly Physical & Sensory Support Service Vision Team meetings.

SAVI and the Physical & Sensory Support Service meets each term to develop services for children and young people with VI, e.g. to produce information in appropriate formats to enable 11 – 16 year olds (nearly 300) to access statutory services.

The Physical & Sensory Support Service take part in liaison ophthalmology clinics with St. Peter's & Ashford Hospitals; the Royal Surrey Hospital, Guildford; and East Surrey Hospital, Redhill. This collaboration impacts positively on the support and provision for children with a visual impairment and their families.

The Physical & Sensory Support Service is an active member of the Team around the Child Project in the S.W. area. This multi-agency pilot for disabled children and their families consists of Children With Disabilities S.W. Team, S.W. Multi-Professional Team, Parent User & Blackwater Valley & Hart PCT Children's Service Provider. The Physical & Sensory Support Service is currently involved with 6 children and their families.

The Physical & Sensory Support Service is also represented on the Woking Children & Families Common Interest Group, the aim of which is to co-ordinate support for Woking Borough Families through representatives from voluntary and community organisations and the statutory services meeting to discuss issues relevant to their work and be a link partner for the Local Strategic Partnership.

As Head of Profession, Judy Sanderson represents SCS as a member of the Surrey Low Vision Services Committee (LVSC). The LVSC is a voluntary committee involving commercial organisations, statutory and charity service providers working together to enable adults, young people and children with low vision living in Surrey to meet their full visual potential. Evaluations show that the sessions were well received.

One of the Advisory Teachers for VI has become an assessor for the Communication Aids Project. This project aims to support statemented children with a disability who may benefit from ICT to enable their communication skills. Her role as assessor supports Surrey children from accessing the most appropriate equipment to enhance their learning.

Training

The Vision Team presented In-Service training throughout the year for various groups including Teaching Assistants working with children with visual impairment, NVQ Level 3 Students at Spelthorne College, SE region orthoptists at The Royal Surrey Hospital, Surrey Partnership with Parents, and Early Years Learning Assistants from playgroups/nurseries throughout Surrey.

The MATTER project (Making Access To Text Everybody's Right) continues to develop from the Reigate Area Office. As well as supporting students with VI with adapted text facilities, it is now being used by the East Surrey Physical, Sensory & Cognitive Disabilities, HIV & Aids Forum to transcribe their minutes into Braille.

Joint Monitoring Visits

The Head of Profession (Vision) in conjunction with the SEN Consultant at Four S carried out annual joint monitoring visits for the schools with Resourced Provision (Vision) :-

Sythwood Primary, Woking
Woking High Secondary, Woking
George Abbot Secondary, Guildford

St. Stephen's Primary, South Godstone
Oxted Secondary.

All schools continue to make good provision for pupils with VI.

Physical Disability Team

From From 1st April 2003, an agreement for the ordering and supply of specialist equipment for school children was set up between the Head of Profession for Physical Disability, (on behalf of Children's Services), and the Community Equipment Stores in Sheerwater, Woking. The procedures have been redefined over the year to improve delivery times. Where possible, equipment is requisitioned from the stores in order to make best use of financial resources.

The Special Needs and Information Communication Technology team which provides assessments and computer equipment loans for children with communication needs, was aligned to the Physical and Sensory Support Service from September 2003. This service continues to be in demand with an increasing number of referrals.

The Physical Disability team has given In-Service Training to teaching and support staff in schools in Woking and Redhill. Three sessions of Disability Awareness training have been given to pupils in schools in the Epsom and Ewell and Mole Valley areas. Training sessions have been given for 42 Teaching Assistants working with pupils with physical disabilities in primary and secondary schools. INSET to therapists in the Spelthorne and Runnymede areas has resulted in developments in joint working and support in schools where there are a number of pupils with high level therapy needs. INSET has been given to the SW SEN Advisory Group based in Guildford.

The PD team continues to support schools in developing access for pupils with physical disabilities. Six site visits have been carried out to provide advice to schools for their Access Plans.

Joint monitoring visits were carried out for children in Special Needs Support Units (SNSUs) in association with SEN Consultant for Four S. These were to:-

Badshot Lea Infant School
Cordwalles Junior School
Dovers Green Infant School
Eastwick Junior School
St. Matthew's C of E Junior School
Kings College for the Arts & Technology

A self-audit tool was sent out to all SNSUs to support their own monitoring of the provision. Schools have used these to inform improvement plans and have shared the information with governors and OfSTED and HMI inspectors.

As a result of the 2002 monitoring visits and resulting action plan, a SNSU and Secondary PD Conference was held in November 2003 to address issues raised by the schools. The evaluations from the day indicated that participants found the Conference informative and useful in meeting identified specialist training needs.

MSI

There are two specialists on the Physical & Sensory Support Service Team who support children with multi-sensory impairment. They assess and monitor individual needs of children who are deafblind in partnership with colleagues in SENSE with whom the Physical & Sensory Support Service has a contract.

One of the specialists is a member of the multi-agency assessment panel that meets at White Lodge to determine the needs of children.

During 2003 / 2004 the Physical & Sensory Support Service has forged closer links through presentations and working with the Early Learning Assistants, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and Partnership with Parents.