

Q&A session 15/7/20

Link to 4 training PowerPoints

<https://www.arthurmellows.peterborough.sch.uk/page/?title=VI+Summer+Online+Training&pid=178>

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CYPVI – child or young person with a vision impairment

QTVI – qualified teacher of vision impairment

VI Awareness

How can I explain some concepts when I cannot bring in real-life objects such as animals, Ancient Greece or the 1st World War?

It is not only about using real life objects you can use sounds, smells and tastes. A mixture of these will enhance the learning experience. Think about making an activity as multi-sensory as possible.

Sometimes it is possible to access artefact boxes from museums or private companies see <https://www.mytopicbox.co.uk/> as an example.

When I was doing the activities, I was still able to tell what the plastic object was with my eyes closes. You say to avoid plastic objects, Why?

Plastic objects often feel very similar for a CYPVI. Plastic food is a great example of this. We might be able to bring all the prior knowledge we have when feeling a plastic object but a CYPVI will not have the same reference points.

If you can't find anything suitable that is not plastic then it is worth seeing if you can find a suitable sound that will give additional info e.g. elephant sound, plastic elephant toy and a piece of battered leather may help build up the concept of 'elephant.'

We often have a certain amount of things to do things in class. I don't want my student to stay in at break or miss assembly so I often finish a task for them so they don't fall behind. How can I support them so this doesn't happen?

Have all the parts of the task been made accessible for the student? Do they have all the equipment to hand that they need? Is assistive

technology being used when needed? Such as screen reader, Dolphin Easy Reader, accessibility features.

When planning, consider the extra time needed – what is the learning objective and is that covered? Do they need to do 10 answers or could they do 3 to cover the same objectives? Really important to consider extra time it takes for children with vision impairments when planning activities.

Important to be prepared and ensure that resources are readily available e.g. not waiting for ages for a glue stick. However, don't be tempted to get all the materials for them – encourage independence.

How can I support my CYPVI with handwriting practise?

Firstly, speak to your QTVI as it will depend on the recommendations for each individual student. Some VI students may practise touch typing or braille in handwriting time if that is the preferred means of communicating. The recommendations for some students may be to use a Berol broad pen and a specialist exercise book e.g. wide spaced bold lines available from partsight.org.uk

It is worth considering whether it is pertinent to learn pre-cursive and cursive or whether print is going to be more accessible. It is a reasonable adjustment to teach print even if the school policy is to teach cursive if this is more accessible and this should be discussed with senior management.

(Worth noting that many schools also have feedback and marking policies which may need to be adapted to allow individual access. Ofsted recognises the need for individualised reasonable adjustments).

**The VI student in my class does not have a TA, I have a class TA.
How can we support the CYP VI?**

Follow QTVI recommendations, verbal commentary for whole class, be organised with resources and technology. Think about position in class and who the CYP VI is sitting next to. When possible QTVI will visit class to update recommendations for in class.

Consider peer support but do aware that the CYP VI should not always be in the position of being helped, sometimes they need to be helping others. It is important to facilitate teamwork and give the CYP VI a role / responsibility.

Consider whether some lessons require additional support – talk to the SENCO, consider whether it is worth applying for an EHCP, is there any flexibility in TA timetables?

We're planning to do a Shakespeare play next term – what suggestions do you have to ensure that this is fully inclusive for someone with VI?

Sign up to RNIB Bookshare, <https://www.rnibbookshare.org/cms/> Your QTVI can give advice on this. You can then download a version in PDF/word if needed. Also download a study guide for the play. Source an audio copy which can be listened to. Research what productions are available online with audio descriptions.

We are planning a field trip next year to visit an art gallery – what do I need to think about from the perspective on the student in my class with VI?

Great question as trips are so important and it is important to plan ahead. Really important that CYP VI are fully included in trips and that they are well planned for as this is an opportunity to get 'real' experiences. Contact the gallery/museum etc to see what support they have do they have audio tours, large print resources etc. Do they have guide with experience in sensory needs. Look at the website with class before/online are there copies of exhibits which can be accessed on technology. I would refer to mobility specialist to give advice on trips/visits.

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living-home-and-leisure/art-galleries-museums-and-theatres>

Join the library <https://www.livingpaintings.org/> to borrow tactile art books

Do I need to think about lighting and position of the child in the classroom?

Have a look at the recommendations from the QTVI as this will depend on the child and their condition. We can also refer for an environmental audit which will also give further information on this. Some students can be really affected by bright lights and may even wear photochromic/dark glasses. Think about having the blinds closed and the position where the teacher stands, such as not in front of a bright window.

For positioning it will depend on the student. Some will need to sit at the front, others will not be able to access the board. A student with technology may need to be near a plug socket. Usually a place with an easy route to leave the classroom.

Is there are further training I can undertake to help me prepare?

Our VI training powerpoints, the VI Hub website, QTVI Reports and EHCP if applicable. Look out for future trainings from our team virtual or at the hub. Also talk to the student – what are they used to, equipment/resources.

The following websites may have details of current courses:

<https://www.natsip.org.uk/search-new?q=training>

<https://viewweb.org.uk/training/>

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/insight-online/events-for-education-professionals>

For learning Braille we recommend <https://uebonline.org/>

What would you advise I say to the rest of the class about Student A's vision Impairment?

This would depend on the vision impairment and age of the other students. This could be done via social stories, a school assembly on VI awareness, talk on technology. Some older students have spoken to their peers but many do not feel comfortable doing this. Some students may want this done when they are out of the classroom. This can be done with support from your QTVI. It is really important to discuss with the child and parents how this may be done as it is a very sensitive issue.

Regarding OneNote - which will be organised using sections and folders, how easy will it be for a child to navigate to the correct "page" within each subject from relatively small tabs or should that child's OneNote be organised in a different way if possible?

Your IT department should be able to help so each time that the student logs on everything is automatically enlarged.

Depending which system you are using you may be able to use inbuilt accessibility tools such as Zoom which will enlarge the section you tap on.

If using a Connect 12/ Connect or Learn, the magnifier can be used to enlarge icons and tabs.

Modifying and Adapting

The student I work with has an iPad. They can enlarge resources. Does this mean that as long as I email everything to them before the lesson, I can give them the same resources as the rest of the class?

Unfortunately the iPad does not solve all problems. An inaccessible piece of work which has not been modified just becomes a larger piece of work which is just as inaccessible. The quality of the original is key. Lots of resources will still need adapting particularly if there is extra information or clutter on the page. This is particularly true of maths and science resources, anything involving tables or busy diagrams or pictures such as mind maps are a nightmare to access and will need adapting.

Be aware that screenreading software finds tables really difficult to read.

Sometimes an app such as Seeing AI can be used to read documents (recommend having headphones so as not to disturb other learners).

Apps can also be used to describe pictures and diagrams but

Be aware that all of this will take extra time – switching between apps or using a screen reader and so to ensure that the CYP VI has equitable access it is important to modify work to make it easily accessible and prevent unnecessary visual fatigue.

What do you suggest if I only have a PDF document?

There is an app called Seeing AI which will read PDF documents and even handwritten documents. I would thoroughly recommend downloading it.

We usually use a photocopier so the student can see the resources by enlarging it to A3. What else can we do?

Be prepared. Ideally modify and adapt work prior to lesson. It should not really be the case that something needs enlarging last minute however, in the real world we understand that this may occasionally be necessary. You may consider using the iPad to enlarge. A3 is hard to scan and hard to organise in folder or book for retrieval purposes - work folded up and stuck in an exercise book is it really difficult to find again quickly and efficiently. Consider sharing the resource and enlarging electronically or use screenreading software such as built in voiceover software. Apps on the iPad such as Seeing AI can be used to read documents.

We are writing training modules on using apps for independence and using ipads in class – almost ready. Please let us know if you are interested in accessing these modules. Hoping they'll be ready before the end of term.

What are your tips for following your advice so that it doesn't mean I have to type everything out again for the VI student in my class?

If you are making your own resources then it is easier to make a simple version and use that for everyone in the class. If different children need different adjustments then they can be added afterwards rather than having to take things away. If the whole class can use the same resource that obviously makes everything more inclusive but do understand that not everyone needs the same adjustments so it is a balancing act.

When choosing ready-made resources consider how VI friendly they are. E.g. Twinkl resources are generally not very VI friendly so if you need to use them then they will need modifying.

Voiceover may be used or apps such as Seeing AI to access materials. We are in the process of writing training modules using iPads in the classroom and apps for independence which will give you more information and advice.

Are there any particular fonts you'd recommend?

Plain font, ask the student, maths maybe different from English e.g. Arial 6 (could look a little like an 8), Times NR 6.

Talk to the CYP VI and your QTVI

Avoid block capitals – gives no clues about the word through shape (also key point for learners with dyslexia)

Avoid italics

Consider spacing between lines too. 1.5 line spacing may be easier to access.

How do we ensure learners with dyslexia or other needs are also accommodated when making powerpoints etc.

Many of the points are the same. Cream background is fine – still contrasting. Easier to minimise and then add e.g. overlay,

additional visual clues



Encourage staff to make simple powerpoints and resources and save a copy before they add any additional images, borders etc. It is not always possible but the more the CYP VI gets the same resources as their peers the more included they will feel.

What do I do if I have diagrams, tables or video clips?

Videos – audio description, send video prior to lesson, verbal commentary

Tables and diagrams usually need adapting, they may need a verbal description.

What do I do if I emailed all the work but they can't access their technology?

They need support to do this. This needs to be taught. QTVI can help but staff need to be confident in using IT systems and passing this knowledge on to child. Important to develop independence.

If technology simply isn't working that day e.g. no internet then may need quick on the spot adaptations, text read out, verbal descriptions etc. Depending on resources and child's needs may be able to print out in correct font size etc.

Encourage CYP to voice what is wrong and to work together with staff to find a solution. Don't just give them answers, work together so they are enabled to find their own solutions in future.

How do I adapt my art classes for a student with VI?

It will depend very much on the child's vision. We are developing training modules for each specific subject area but for now here are some ideas.

Multi-sensory– clay, collage, wikki stix, scented crayons,

Contrast – don't be bound by the colours you see – may be useful to make more contrast between colours, thick black outlines

Do not be bound by norms e.g. why is cotton wool used to represent clouds?

If you are making a 3D object, introduce the student to a model of the finished object first. Guide the student's hands and indicate landmarks and associations.

Lots of verbal description will help the child visualise the project.

Don't underestimate the impact of not having access to incidental learning.

Children have to learn how to 'read' a picture

Role models See <https://scene360.com/art/78311/blind-artists/> for info about famous blind artists. See Keith Salmon, Jeff Hanson, Sargy Mann and Terry Hopwood Jackson – British artists with vision impairment.

Visits For info about visiting art galleries, museums and the theatre see <https://www.rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living-home-and-leisure/art-galleries-museums-and-theatres>

Literature Join the library <https://www.livingpaintings.org/> to borrow tactile art books

Useful websites:

<http://disabilityarts.online/>

<https://vocaleyeyes.co.uk/>

<http://www.mousetrap.org.uk/index.php/special-educational-needs/envision.html>

<https://www.macularsociety.org/sites/default/files/resource/Macular%20Society%20tips%20for%20teaching%20Art%20to%20visually%20impaired%20students.pdf>

<https://library.tsbvi.edu/Play/13365>

https://www.city.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/364636/Session-3G-Lee-Campbell.pdf

The Disabled Photographer's Society <http://www.the-dps.co.uk/>

ILS - Independent Living Skills

This was very interesting. These are the skills that your team come in and teach the student. Is that right?

A Habilitation specialist will teach the student these skills along with staff and parents. Advice will be given to support staff and parents to help them with this. All skills need to be practiced at home and school for the student to become confident.

Are these skills for older students? A younger child would not be able to do these things would they?

The earlier skills can be taught the better. Early lessons could involve getting a child familiar with different size and shapes of buttons or cutting play dough with a knife. All these skills will help the student later in life with things like eating and dressing.

Knowing that things take longer for CYP VI important that we plan and prepare them for the next stage.

Careful planning and breaking everything down into stages is crucial to enabling a child to become an independent adult.

I help my Year 1 student get ready for PE and give him everything right way round and ready to put on. What should I be doing?

I would get your student to organise their clothes themselves ie place the clothes in a systematic way. If in piles place them as they would put them on. Make the student more responsible by practicing one skill at a time until they are confident. Start with organisation of clothes and

location. Move on to them taking off their clothes by themselves and making sure they are all the right way. Small achievable steps are the best.

Encourage a child to feel for labels. Work with parents so skills are practised and consolidated at home. Be aware that children may be exhausted after a day at school so work with parents about what is achievable. Be realistic and work together.

I work with a child with complex needs. Are there some VI students who will never be able to do these tasks and will always need support at school and home?

There may be some who are never fully independent especially if they have additional disabilities but if they can do 70%. 100% or 20% of the task this is an achievement and gives them some independence. We must always have high expectations and a small step towards independence. Really important to encourage small steps to independence, give time to practise and don't just do it for them.

Could you give some tips for making a drink?

Use a liquid level indicator (available from RNIB). Be organised. Practice making cold drinks first. Put cup on a tray so any spillages are easy to clean up. Break into small steps. So first they can fill a glass or jug and you do the rest. Increase the steps as the student becomes confident. Praise is important. It depends on the child and their vision but a Habilitation officer can assess the child and advise you based on the individual child's needs.

Do we need to buy any special equipment?

Some specialist is equipment but generally you can use every day equipment and train the student how to use it. Specialist equipment is fine but will not always be available in the outside world so they should get used to using equipment readily available.

The QTVI will recommend specialist equipment if it is needed.

Will these skills be taught in school?

It is important that all ILS skills are taught at home and school. The more a student can practice the quicker they will be on the road to independence.

The habilitation specialist in our team (Debbie) is currently only working within an education setting so there may be some negotiation needed around parents coming in to attend sessions or sharing objectives. It is really important that there is a consistency in approach and language.

We are going on a school trip abroad next year – what do you suggest we need to think about to support someone with VI in a new / strange environment?

It is not possible for them to become familiar before the trip but when you are there you can allow them time to explore their living quarters. They may need to be sight guided as all areas will be unfamiliar to them. An adapted map may be of some use. It will depend on the child's degree of mobility, confidence and vision. It is best you contact your Habilitation Specialist before to discuss this.

One child I work with finds it really difficult to spread butter or other toppings, do you have any ideas how to make it easier please?

A habilitation specialist will help you with this as there are ways to do this. It is important to be organised so everything is ready and accessible. No specialist equipment needed. Break it into small steps. Encourage the child.

Do you have any tips for helping VI students in DT lessons eg cooking or woodwork etc - secondary school?

Often we will do an assessment in class of the child's needs and then plan a short intervention programme for specific things like knife skills or using a saw. Really important that CYP VI are included in all activities. A vision impairment should not be a barrier to any technical subject or skill we just need to find the right strategy.

Avoid specialist equipment as much as possible as there is no guarantee that it will be available to a student at a later date e.g. talking microwave costs around £280 this cost may be prohibitive. We want to prepare students for adulthood and they need to be able to prepare meals that they will be able to make for themselves independently in the future. AMVC hub do have some equipment available for loan if the QTVI recommends it.

We are planning to develop training modules for each specific subject area. If you would like some general tips and information, please give us your contact details and we will send it to you.

Amar Latif is on Masterchef this week. An inspirational role model who runs the travel company TravelEyes.

SEMH

A very interesting topic. Will this be mainly taught by VI team when they are in school?

This may be taught through a programme by the VI team or they may offer support to setting staff to deliver. We will also offer advice about how to incorporate promotion of wellbeing into a child's daily life. We can offer advice about ideas to ensure CYP VI are included in social aspects of school / how to organise group work with peers – VI teachers more involved if the YP needs specific help with e.g. how to discuss their VI with peers, how to advocate for themselves and ensure they get the support they need in the way they prefer – they may do some 1:1 sessions to ensure the YP knows about their VI and feels comfortable discussing it with others / practise answering questions for example

What can I do in school to support this? I have limited time.

We know how limited time is available and sometimes it is a matter of looking at current practice to see what changes we can make - to review how you organise work with TA to make sure the CYP with VI does more for themselves / you work with CYP sometimes and TA works with other pupils – work as a team with VI teacher? Can you do things differently to be more inclusive? Rather than modify materials can you make all of them more accessible all the time, so it is the norm and no extra work involved? Can you arrange the room differently to make it easier for the CYP to be independent? Can you make changes to teaching resources for the whole class - e.g. if using videos some are better than others at providing as much information on the audio as visual info – others really depend on the visual images – if you are using

pictures can you include real objects / real experiences of the subject?
Or audio descriptions simultaneously?

Running commentary / verbal descriptions of what is happening can help if the individual is unable to see what is happening around them and get everyone used to saying their names when speaking or if you are addressing individuals make it clear who you are speaking to – cooperative learning in appropriate groups helps with social interaction but needs to be planned carefully behind the scenes to ensure the YP with VI has a role and is an equal in the group – we all have different strengths and skills to bring to team working so find out what these are and ensure the YP with VI can use their strengths in the group – if they need help then allow them some way to reciprocate

Can I have advice on setting up a social skills groups as my VI student and others could benefit?

If you are interested in this it may be a good idea to get on some training e.g. for the “think right feel good” programme

<https://www.natsip.org.uk/database/3159-think-right-feel-good> or

something similar / it may be possible to organise something jointly with other schools / you would need to include the YP themselves so they have ownership too / need to have clear rules and protocols re behaviour and respect for each other in any discussions. It doesn't have to be a group relating to sensory impairment though – social groups are usually based on common interests or hobbies such as a choir or chess club, or outdoor activities group – so it could be a more informal group with some additional support around social skills if needed -

How can we encourage peer support?

Circle of friends, buddy system for playground, specific meeting places, coloured tags on bag as identifier, may talk to group of peers but need to discuss with child and possibly parents (depends on child's age) what they are happy to say – rehearse so they feel comfortable with what will be said and can edit if necessary. They may feel happy to speak out themselves.

Another aspect of improving peer interaction is to make sure the YP with VI is aware of and practices their “social etiquette” - peers will find social interaction with the YP with VI more difficult if for example they are unaware of personal space or keep interrupting a conversation at the wrong time, these things are learned incidentally and usually depend on good vision – parents and anyone working with the YP need to explain these rules – ideally by providing some commentary during normal interactions – maybe supplemented with some chance to practice on a one to one basis - it is important not to be critical of the YP with VI but rather to explain how to be polite, and appear interested in what people are saying, how to keep a conversation flowing etc. and why people feel uncomfortable if you get too close etc. provide them with sensitively delivered feedback - rather than say what they did wrong or what they shouldn't do, talk about social rules and how they work and why – “this is what you do in such and such a situation” “this works best when ,,,,” “ if you want to start a conversation it helps to know what people have been watching on TV / what music they like etc. what the person is interested in” – and then give some examples including from their own experience if you can – practice scenarios

How can a TA support SEMH? - they need to think of how to ensure the YP can do more and more themselves and the TA do less all the

time / teach the skills they need and encourage increasing responsibility for e.g. ensuring their own equipment is charged and ready to use, they know where to file their work, their timetable / organise themselves

Also need to avoid being a cause of social isolation – if a TA or teacher is always present to support that CYP then they can inadvertently interfere with social interaction with peers – where you sit can make a difference – always ensure you are not preventing interactions, sit back or to the side and only intervene when really necessary – some support can be “behind the scenes” - try to ensure the CYP with VI gets lots of opportunity to work and interact with peers in groups – as above this may involve providing peers with info about the YP with their agreement and involvement.

Are there any outside agencies or charities who will support with SEMH for CYP VI?

From our local Educational Psychology Covid webpage - information for professionals

A team of psychologists from across Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council have published three webinars to support staff as they (start to) return to school following COVID-19.

The first module outlines how we understand the experiences and emotional response associated with pandemics, and ways to ease the transition that might be helpful for all.

The second module introduces Seligman’s PERMA model, a useful model for well-being and resilience which can be applied to everyday life.

The third module focuses on the needs of children and young people that have experienced loss and bereavement over the last few months.

Without time for reflection and discussion (which is recommended), the webinars run for 15 – 20 minutes each.

The modules can be found at....

Module 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSAW0X58yiE&feature=youtu.be>

Module 2

<https://youtu.be/rOJK0jLuhtM>

Module 3

<https://youtu.be/gzBnXbl2Epg>

You can also view documents to support the webinars:

[Recovery following Pandemic PCC - Primary](#)

[Recovery following Pandemic PCC - Secondary](#)

[Active Listening Activity](#)

[Webinar Summary and Resources](#)

Other resources for professionals can be found below:

- [Peterborough Educational Psychology Service Covid-19 Resource Pack for Professionals Working with Children and Young People.](#)
- [Looking after ourselves, staff wellbeing](#)

Information for parents and young people

- [Covid-19 Information Pack for Parents](#)
- [Covid-19 Information Pack for Young People](#)
- [Peterborough City Council Covid-19 Bereavement guidance](#)

Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service - Cambs and Peterborough

The team comprises of clinicians all with experience of working with children and young people.

The service has two main aims:

1. 'System Navigators': To support professionals (education, health, and social care) access the right evidence-based service at the earliest opportunity, ensuring personalised support and the best outcomes.
2. To work with schools to help them to improve the general emotional health and wellbeing of their pupils.

Who to contact

Telephone 0300 555 50 60 - between 9.30 am and 4.30 pm **E-mail**
ccs.ehw@nhs.net

Local VI departments in some Hospitals have ECLOs – **Eye Clinic Liaison Officers** – who can refer to local and national organisations - Peterborough does not have one unfortunately – **Addenbrookes VI dept** does have psychologist attached who can offer counselling – if seen at Addenbrookes

At Addenbrookes - through eye clinic

Specialist Clinical Psychology

Clinical psychology is embedded within the Paediatric Ophthalmology service, and provides support for children, young people and families attending the clinic. The role includes offering support with adjustment to diagnosis (for parents and children) and working with any emotional difficulties.

Clinical psychology aims to help families find ways of coping with some of the possible difficulties that may arise from living with a visual impairment - for example, peer relationships, using visual aids, worries about life transitions (starting school/secondary school/college and increasing independence).

[How to access the psychology service](#)

Contact the secretary to the Paediatric Clinical Psychology Team using any of the following:

T 01223 216878

Internal extension: 2878

F 01223 586 794

E joanna.goddard@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Not VI specific - <http://chums.uk.com/cambs-pborough-services/>

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH SERVICES

CHUMS Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service

CHUMS Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service offers support to children and young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and low mood, as well as those with significant emotional wellbeing difficulties arising from life events, such as bereavement and bullying.

Referral criteria

Peterborough – Up to the age of 18

Cambridgeshire – Up to the age of 25

'Look' has regional parent support groups - details and links on their website. Information and contact details: **Phone: 0121 428 5038 Email: office@look-uk.org Website: www.look-uk.org**

Moorfields have produced a pdf with contact details for a number of support organisations

<https://www.moorfields.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Information%20for%20children%20and%20young%20people%20with%20sight%20loss%20and%20their%20families.pdf>

This includes sports and other activity groups – although not directly involved in counselling or mental wellbeing - being active and meeting other YP with VI through these organisations can help with social and emotional wellbeing.

New College Worcester have a number of on-line resources including some chat groups for YP to share ideas and meet up virtually

VICTA are a useful organisation too – although not specific to social emotional issues they have family and YP support groups and information <https://www.victa.org.uk/>