



Department
for Education

Specification for Mandatory Qualifications

**For specialist teachers of children and
young people with vision impairments**

For courses starting from September 2023

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Introduction

This specification applies to mandatory qualification (MQ) courses starting from September 2023. It has been revised and updated to allow it to remain a high quality qualification that continues to:

- reflect the changing landscape.
- be sufficiently flexible to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the profession and children and young people with sensory impairment.
- align with DfE priorities, to ensure that schools, Higher Education Institutions and others across the sector work collaboratively on the design and delivery of training in an increasingly school-led system.
- raise aspirations for children and young people with visual impairments (VI), hearing impairments (HI) and multi-sensory impairments (deafblind).

So that children and young people¹ with sensory impairments receive the best quality education and care, teachers of classes of children and young people who have HI (deafness)², who have vision impairments (VI)³ and who are deafblind⁴ are required⁵ to hold an additional specialist qualification in addition to qualified teacher status (QTS) or qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS)⁶. This qualification is known as the mandatory qualification for specialist teachers of pupils with hearing impairment, vision impairment or multi-sensory impairment/ deafblind (MQ). It is designed to prepare teachers⁷ to work effectively with children and young people who are deaf, who have VI or who are deafblind.

There are three versions of the qualification: one for teachers of deaf learners, one for those teaching learners with VI, and one for those teaching deafblind learners. Teachers

¹ Up to age 25

² Deaf children are defined as all children with sensorineural and permanent conductive deafness, using the descriptors provided by the British Society of Audiology and BATOD. The term 'deaf' includes all levels of deafness, from mild to profound'.

People with hearing impairments may have some functional hearing. Hearing impairment is sometimes referred to as 'deafness' or 'hearing loss'.

³ Vision impairment is sometimes referred to as 'blindness', 'partial sightedness' or 'sight loss'.

⁴ Deafblind people may have some functional sight and/or hearing. Deafblindness is sometimes referred to as 'multi-sensory impairment' (MSI) or 'dual-sensory loss'

⁵ Statutory Instrument 2003 No.1662, the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003.

⁶ Since 1 April 2012, further education teachers who have been awarded QTLS by the Institute for Learning (IfL) and are members of the IfL are recognised as qualified teachers in schools.

⁷ The regulations apply to teachers employed in schools and not specialist peripatetic teachers working with pupils with sensory impairments employed in special educational needs support services. However, the DfE has stated that it is their expectation that such teachers would have the relevant MQ. See text below.

employed to teach classes of children and young people with a sensory impairment who do not already hold an appropriate MQ are required to gain the qualification within their first three years in post.

‘A qualified teacher may be employed to teach a class of pupils who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, or both hearing and visually impaired if the headteacher is satisfied that the person in question is in the process of obtaining the relevant MQ and provided that the aggregate period for which the teacher teaches a class of pupils does not exceed three years.’ [Statutory instrument 2003 No.1662. The Education (School Teachers’ Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003, 9]

Although the requirement to hold an MQ applies only to teachers in specific roles, the appeal of the MQs is much wider. Qualified teachers in support and advisory roles, and those working with children and young people who have VI in home⁸, early years and post-16 settings, are also strongly advised to complete MQ training, in the best interest of the children and young people with whom they work.

*‘Those teaching classes of children with sensory impairment **must** hold an appropriate qualification approved by the Secretary of State. Teachers working in an advisory role to support such pupils should also hold the appropriate qualification.’⁹*

All MQ training programmes must meet the minimum specification set out on pages 10 - 33. However, it is expected that some providers will wish to develop additional criteria so as to tailor MQ courses more closely to the needs of participants and other stakeholders.

To be awarded an MQ, the Department for Education (DfE) requires that participants are assessed against – and demonstrate that they meet – the course outcomes. The academic level at which the qualification is validated is entirely a matter for providers. It should not compromise the purposes or quality of the MQ and should be consistent with the expertise required to carry out the role of a Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment.

Providing training leading to the award of an MQ

To deliver a course leading to the award of an MQ, training providers must gain the approval of the Secretary of State. Although the type of provider is not stipulated MQ courses have traditionally been delivered by higher education institutions, working in partnership with others, including local authorities, schools and voluntary bodies.

To become an approved provider of MQ courses, the Department for Education will periodically invite training providers to seek approval and, if they are interested, submit

⁸ From birth

⁹ DfE (September 2014) Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years

an application demonstrating how their provision will meet the requirements of the specification and how their course will assist teachers in meeting the course outcomes, including the minimum MQ outcomes.

It is envisaged that successful providers will receive approval from the Secretary of State to deliver courses leading to the award of MQ for an initial period of three years, with the option for this to be extended annually for a further 3 years. Approved MQ provision may be inspected by Ofsted.

The MQ specification

This specification was revised following a review of the previous specification led by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) in 2018/19, and subsequent co-production with the sensory impairment sector in 2019/2020, which then reported to DfE. This is to bring the specification up-to-date with recent developments in the teaching of children and young people with sensory impairments. The review contributors included the University providers of the courses, Local Authority sensory impairment services, professional associations and individual specialists in the field, voluntary organisations and parents. The revised specification is set out below (pages 10 -33).

The specification sets out six overarching criteria. In delivering the qualification MQ course providers must meet each of the criteria.

Criterion 1

MQs should have as their main objective and outcome the raised achievement of children and young people with VI through improving participants' professional knowledge, understanding and skills

Provision should give participants the knowledge, understanding and skills to maximise the opportunities open to children and young people with VI so as to improve their life chances and enable them to fulfil their potential. In this criterion, and throughout the specification, references to the 'achievement' of children and young people should be taken to be broadly defined to include not just academic attainment, but achievement in relation to, for example, physical, mental and emotional well-being; developing confidence and independence; and making a successful transition to adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training, and independent living. The course should also prepare participants to listen to the views of children and young people and to work together with others, including other professionals, parents, carers and families, to protect children and young people, help them to achieve and influence practice.

MQ courses **must** be strongly rooted in practice and providers should make strong links with mainstream settings, special schools and settings, and sensory support services to

help keep provision up to date and relevant to practice. There should be opportunities, in work contexts, for participants to apply, practise and demonstrate what they have learnt.

MQ courses should help prepare participants to work effectively in their current roles (in any phase or context, including in early years and post-16 settings, within mainstream and specialist provision and in support and advisory roles) and must give them opportunities to gain experience of other relevant work contexts, eg through visits, work shadowing and teaching placements.

Criterion 2

MQs should offer high quality training that makes best use of available resources through being tailored to meet participants' training and development needs

The purpose of this criterion is to make the best possible use of the resources available to deliver MQ courses so that they have the maximum impact on participants' practice and the outcomes achieved by the children and young people they teach. Those teaching children and young people with sensory impairments will come from different backgrounds, work in a range of different contexts and have varying knowledge, skills and experience. As a result, participants will have different strengths and training needs in relation to the course outcomes. To ensure that all participants gain maximum benefit from MQ training and that providers make the best use of the resources available to them, provision should be matched as closely as possible to individual needs.

It is important that everyone who joins a course leading to the award of an MQ is able to benefit fully from it. Providers should, therefore, assure themselves that those accepted to join MQ courses have sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills on joining the course to be likely to meet all the course outcomes by the end of the course. Where prospective participants fall below an acceptable entry level in one or more areas, providers should offer them guidance about what they need to do to achieve the required entry level.

Provision should incorporate an initial needs assessment in relation to the course outcomes in order to ensure well-targeted and cost-effective professional development for participants. An initial needs assessment against the course outcomes can help providers to tailor the course to participants' needs. Courses should take full account of participants' prior knowledge and achievement. If a provider is satisfied, at the beginning of an MQ course, that all the participants in the group already meet a particular group of outcomes, then the course need not cover these in great detail, and the time released can be spent looking at other aspects in more detail.

Ultimately, however, all participants must demonstrate that they meet all the course outcomes, and assessors should look for evidence against all the course outcomes throughout the course as an additional check on the accuracy of the needs assessment.

MQ courses cannot cover everything that teachers of children and young people with VI will need to know throughout their careers. As with all professional development, completing an MQ is a stepping-stone. MQ providers have a responsibility to ensure that, at the end of the MQ course, participants are helped to identify areas for further development. This does not mean that the MQ provider has to set specific objectives. Objective setting is done in discussion with line managers in the workplace, as part of the appraisal process. But providers should emphasise the importance of participants setting objectives for further development, eg by building opportunities to set objectives into the end of courses, providing planning tools, discussing further possibilities and opportunities, and giving participants ideas they can consider and discuss with their managers.

Criterion 3

MQs should be delivered flexibly, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, to maximise access for participants

This criterion covers aspects of accessibility for all candidates to make it possible for all those needing or wishing to take an MQ to be able to do so.

Providers offering MQ courses should promote equality of opportunity and good relations by meeting the requirements of relevant equality legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), and the Equality Act 2010. For example, they should:

- meet the DDA 'anticipatory duty' by anticipating the needs of disabled candidates/participants and making provision for them
- encourage and support candidates/participants to disclose disabilities so that reasonable adjustments can be made
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- reflect the needs of disabled candidates in promotional and pre-course materials for MQ candidates, and
- comply with relevant duties under equalities legislation to enable all participants to access and participate fully in the course

Since the majority of MQ participants study part-time, provision should be as flexible as possible without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome. DfE is aware that there are limits to the amount of flexibility that one provider can achieve, especially where numbers are very small. However, those offering the MQ courses should make their provision as flexible as possible. Even very small changes can make a considerable difference. For example, providers could publish information about course dates well in advance to enable participants to attend training without missing important events at their workplace. They could also put key content from taught sessions online so

that participants who miss sessions unavoidably are able to catch up, or advertise any crèche provision that might be available.

Criterion 4

MQs should be informed by the needs of stakeholders and involve them in development, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the provision

Stakeholders might include teachers, schools/other settings, employers, local authorities, parents/carers, children and young people, and others such as the relevant SEND associations and groups of disabled people, as well as current and former participants on MQ courses.

Providers of MQ training must collect and take account of evidence about the needs of stakeholders. This does not mean that stakeholders can determine the content of MQ courses. That is largely dictated by the MQ outcomes and the identified needs of participants. However, providers should be clear about what stakeholders feel is important and, wherever possible, should allow this to influence course content.

MQ course providers should also involve stakeholders, directly or indirectly, in their provision, e.g. as guest speakers, as hosts for visiting participants, as tutors or mentors for participants in the workplace, as moderators or assessors, or by giving evidence about the impact of MQ courses.

Criterion 5

MQs should be of a consistently high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures, and be supported by mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of provision on teachers' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI

MQ course providers should subject all aspects of provision to rigorous quality assurance, including:

- recruitment and selection
- needs assessment and setting objectives
- course content, including workplace-based elements
- assessment against the course outcomes, and
- evaluation

They should have good sources of evidence, and mechanisms for ensuring that information gleaned will be applied to future planning and development of the content and delivery of provision.

The main purpose of MQ provision must be to raise participants' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI. The DfE recognises that it may be difficult to gather evidence on the impact of MQ provision on the achievement of children and young people over the short time that the course runs. Providers should, however, take every opportunity to gather such evidence. They could, for example, encourage participants carrying out assignments to take baseline measures before interventions, and to measure the impact on the achievement of learners with VI following those interventions and over time.

It is essential that candidates are suitable for work with children and young people. As part of their recruitment and selection procedures, providers should assure themselves that those accepted onto MQ courses have had the appropriate background checks to allow them to work with children and young people.¹⁰ The majority of MQ candidates are likely to be employed in posts where they are already working with children and young people at the time of taking the course and, as such, are likely to have undergone the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure check. However, if a candidate with QTS or QTLS has not worked in a school or FE college in a post that involves regular contact with children or young people within the past three months, it will be necessary for a DBS enhanced disclosure to be obtained.

Criterion 6

MQs should have, as a minimum requirement for successful completion, the outcomes set out in Annex A of the MQ specification, so that those holding the qualification(s) make maximum impact on practice

Providers will ensure that the MQ is awarded only to candidates who have shown that their knowledge, understanding and skills match the outcomes in Annex A of the specification. These are minimum requirements. Providers may wish to include other outcomes.

¹⁰ As stipulated by The School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2006, School Staffing (England) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 2006, and Further Education (Providers of Education) (England) Regulations 2006.

Specification for courses leading to the mandatory qualification for teachers of children and young people with VI

The national specification is set out below. It has, at its heart, three purposes.

These are that mandatory qualifications should:

- be of a consistently high quality,
- have an impact on raising the achievement and improving the well-being of children and young people, and
- be easily accessible to those wishing to take them.

Mandatory qualifications should:

1. Have as their main objective and outcome the raised achievement of children and young people with VI, through improving participants' professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

MQ courses will demonstrate that provision will:

- 1.1 Have a clear focus in course aims, objectives, content and assessment on raising the achievement of children and young people with VI to close the attainment gap and improve their well-being by working from their aspirations to determine wider outcomes.
- 1.2 Make strong links to effective practice in schools, homes and other settings.
- 1.3 Require participants to apply, practise and demonstrate what they have learnt in a range of appropriate work contexts.
- 1.4 Be evidence-based, reflecting recent research and inspection evidence and important developments and innovations relating to vision impairment, including current specialist equipment.
- 1.5 Develop participants' understanding of current legislation and government policies and initiatives in relation to sensory impairment, and the implications of these for children and young people with VI and the settings in which they are cared for and/or educated.
- 1.6 Develop participants' skills in consulting children and young people with VI about issues that affect them individually and collectively and helping them express their views to others.
- 1.7 Develop participants' skills in advising, supporting, coaching and collaborating with colleagues and families. Working in partnership with multi-agency teams to meet the needs of children and young people with VI, and their families.

- 1.8 Provide specialist support, as appropriate, for participants teaching children and young people with VI in any phase or context, including in home, early years and post-16 settings, within mainstream and specialist provision including those in support and advisory roles.
- 1.9 Equip participants with the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to apply what they have learned more widely, i.e. in different phases or contexts.
- 1.10 Enable participants to make an impact on practice by meeting the course outcomes.
- 1.11 Involve rigorous assessment of participants against all of the course outcomes.

2. MQs should offer high quality training that makes best use of available resources through being tailored to meet participants' training and development needs.

MQ courses will demonstrate that:

- 2.1 Arrangements are in place to recognise that participants will have a range of levels of knowledge and experience.
- 2.2 Provision, including visits and teaching placements, is of high quality, cost-effective, tailored to individuals' circumstances and their training and development needs and offers specialist supervision to provide optimal support.
- 2.3 Arrangements are in place for those achieving the MQ to be helped to consider further professional objectives and identify further opportunities.

3. Be delivered flexibly, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, to maximise access for participants.

MQ courses will demonstrate that provision will be accessible and flexible, without compromising appropriate progression and quality of outcome, through:

- 3.1 Complying with relevant duties under equalities legislation to enable all participants to access and participate fully in the course, eg making reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates/participants.
- 3.2 Flexible course delivery, for example, opportunities for participants to be taught in different modes, eg direct face to face teaching, blended or e-learning, full-time and part-time.
- 3.3 Using ICT effectively in teaching and learning, and to facilitate effective communication, eg to facilitate:

- communication between providers and link schools, settings and services
- direct tutor support for participants, eg telephone calls, e-mail, forums, videoconferencing, web chat, and
- communication and collaborative learning between participants, eg through email, forums or online work groups.

4. Be informed by the needs of stakeholders and involve them in development, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the provision.

MQ courses will demonstrate:

- 4.1 Clear evidence that provision has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and that they will be involved, directly or indirectly, in evaluation.

5. Be of a consistently high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures, and supported by mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of provision on participants' competence and the achievement of children and young people with VI.

MQ courses should demonstrate:

- 5.1 The range of internal and external evaluation measures available, including quality assurance of teaching placements, and how the evidence gathered will be used to improve the quality and impact of provision.

- 5.2 That systems are in place to ensure that participants recruited onto the course have up to date DBS check as well as sufficient prior knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to benefit from the course, and to meet the course outcomes by the end of the course.

- 5.3 Have quality assurance measures in place to guarantee that the course is delivered by those with appropriate experience, up to date specialist knowledge and skills and ensures that those involved in delivery and assessment, including on teaching placements, understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out to a high standard.

- 5.4 That participants have access to a range of appropriate high-quality teaching placements including peripatetic services and special schools.

- 5.5 That there are sufficient, up to date, specialist teaching resources available that are relevant to training teachers of children and young people with VI, to enable all participants to reach the course outcomes.

- 5.6 That means are in place to ensure that assessment judgements across provision are consistent, reliable and accurate and that these will be moderated.

5.7 Specific evidence and explanation of the methods and measures to be used for evaluating the quality, standards and impact of provision on participants' competence and confidence and, where appropriate, the achievement of children and young people with VI for e.g. by requiring participants to evaluate improvements in pupils' achievement as a result of particular aspects of their practice.

6. Have, as a minimum requirement for successful completion, the mandatory qualification outcomes (Annex A) so that those holding the qualification(s) make maximum impact on practice.

Annex A – Minimum mandatory qualifications outcomes

Introduction

The mandatory qualifications (MQs) for qualified teachers of Sensory Impairments (QTSIs) include the qualifications for teachers of learners with hearing impairment/deafness (HI), or multi-sensory impairment/ deafblindness (MSI), or vision impairment (VI). These MQs demand high expectations of both course providers and qualifying teachers. Central to the role of the QTSIs is enabling learners with SI to have equal access to education and to have opportunities to develop their independence and personal agency.

The in-depth knowledge base and specialist skills required are extensive and incorporate all aspects of the sensory impaired learner's development across education and family contexts, from 0 to 25 yrs. The courses recognise that a sensory impairment is ever present and has an impact on every aspect of life.

Supporting families is crucial to the role of a QTSI and families need specific information about sensory impairment in order to be able to make informed choices about approaches to learning.

The QTSI qualifications covers the roles of specialist teachers in special schools, resource bases and as visiting teachers in all provision, including preschool. Therefore, the course content provides the grounding for those wishing to practise in any of these settings.

Because of the level of expertise and knowledge required the course equips the QTSIs to become a critical and reflective practitioner who will be able to pursue personal career development and improve practice through research and self-reflection.

Learners with VI, MSI/deafblindness or HI/deafness may also have an additional special educational need or disability. These standards will equip the QTSI to work together with other professionals as required.

Whilst being part of an overall category of sensory impairment (SI) the three courses recognise the essential differences between HI, MSI/deafblind and VI learning and the children and young people they represent, which are reflected in current legislation.

Generic Standards

There are a number of key knowledge and skills that are common across the three different SI qualifications. These are outlined below before we outline the specific knowledge and skills relevant to QTVI.

Standard 1: The current legislative and educational framework

Specialist teachers must have detailed knowledge and understanding of current educational legislation and practice and recognise that this will change over time (both in terms of legal frameworks and guidance/codes of practice at national and local levels). QTSIs, as determined by their specialism, must be able to apply this knowledge and understanding when working with learners with sensory impairment 0-25 years, in a range of educational contexts, and working with other professionals and families.

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
<p>1K1a Understand national legislation and the range of policies/guidelines that inform provision for learners with SI and which defines their entitlements.</p> <p>1K1b Have an overview of the differences in policy and process in different parts of the UK.</p> <p>1K1c Have an understanding of the specific terminology around education, health and care of children and young people SEN and disability-specific terminology related to SI.</p>	<p>1S1a To source and critically evaluate and implement legislative guidance and policy with respect to the role of an SI specialist teacher (UK wide and locally).</p> <p>1S1b To work with professionals to determine the implication of legislation and guidance for local policy and practice including support for those with and without EHCPs.</p> <p>1S1c To support families in their understanding of the national legislation and guidance which relates to their child.</p>
<p>1K2 Understand current statutory and non-statutory curriculum frameworks and their associated assessment criteria (e.g. Early Years Foundation Stage, National Curriculum, and education and training for learners from 18 to 25).</p>	<p>1S2 To be able to work with all education providers to facilitate the delivery of the appropriate curriculum for SI learners in their settings.</p>
<p>1K3 Understand safeguarding policy and practice and understand the specific vulnerabilities of learners with SI.</p>	<p>1S3 To advise on and support the implementation and execution of safeguarding procedures.</p>

<p>1K4 Understand early identification of sensory impairment protocols, including the role of the specialist teacher in all settings.</p>	<p>1S4a To work with parents/carers and other professionals to implement early identification protocols.</p> <p>1S4b To support parents/carers in making an informed choice on appropriate provision for their child or young person and be able to signpost them to other resources.</p>
<p>1K5 Understand school/setting self-evaluation and improvement processes, including the mechanisms for setting priorities, objectives and targets and translating these into policies and strategies.</p>	<p>1S5 To work with schools to evaluate and adapt their provision for learners with SI to optimise SI learners' engagement, inclusion and attainment in line with national guidelines for education including those of external evaluation bodies such as Ofsted.</p>

Standard 2: Personal professional development

The QTSIs are key role models who can influence the attitudes, values and behaviours of learners with sensory impairment as well as others involved in their education and development. Holding high expectations of all learners with sensory impairment and communicating these expectations to stakeholders to effect positive change, are important professional qualities which are central to the work of a specialist teacher. These qualities are evident in the professional identity and behaviours of specialist teachers. Given the heterogeneous nature of the learners with SI and the complex and varied educational contexts in which they are situated, specialist SI teachers must be practitioner-researchers who, in collaboration with key stakeholders, are able to design and critically evaluate educational interventions.

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
2K1 Understand the role of a reflective and critical teacher in supporting all aspects of a learner's development.	2S1a To be critical and reflective (e.g. through observation, analysis, and evaluation). 2S1b To have the confidence and skills to ensure that recommendations are implemented so SI learners can achieve their potential.
2K2 Understand the importance of an evidence-based understanding of current thinking, research and practice within SI and general education.	2S2a To access and critically evaluate evidence-based research and professional publications. 2S2b To continually reflect on and develop skills to support SI children and their families. 2S2c To plan and maintain ongoing (and post-qualification) professional development including changes to legislation and policy as well as in other areas pertinent to the SI sector.
2K3 Understand that their own perspectives and cultural understanding will influence their work with learners and their families.	2S3a To take account of cultural, linguistic and family differences when working with all families and their children 2S3b To monitor own emotional resilience and know where to go for support.

	2S3c To establish respectful and constructive relationships with children and young people with SI and their families.
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Standard 3: Working in partnership with families

A fundamental part of the QTSI's professional role is working in partnership with learners with sensory impairment, their families, and colleagues in education, health and social care. The key aim of these partnerships is to improve the educational outcomes, social and emotional development and well-being of the learner with sensory impairment. QTSIs must show knowledge and understanding of a wide range of roles undertaken by fellow professionals working across education, health and social care, signposting to other services where appropriate. They must show skill and sensitivity in communicating with families and other professionals to ensure a shared understanding and consistency of approach in supporting learners with sensory impairment and promoting their independence.

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
3K1 Understand the potential impact of the diagnosis of SI upon the family.	3S1a To provide effective, timely and sensitive support to families. 3S1b To work in partnership with families to understand and implement effective strategies to communicate with their child.
3K2 Understand the importance of early intervention.	3S2a To work in partnership with families to understand and implement strategies to support the development of their child. 3S2b To work in partnership with families to adjust to family life with their child. 3S2c To work in partnership with families to understand and navigate the systems and transitions they engage with to support their child.
3K3a Understand the range of education, training and employment opportunities available to SI learners, as well as the support available to them as they leave school. 3K3b Have up to date knowledge of services and supporting organisations available for families at both a local and	3S3 To work with families in making an informed choice on appropriate provision for their child or young person.

national level. Including local charities, national professional bodies.	
3K4 Understand the key elements of successful transition through stages and school settings.	3S4 To work in partnership with the SI learner, parents/carers to ensure informed and effective transitions across different settings.
3K5 Understand the key principles of effective partnership working to achieve optimal outcomes for SI learners.	3S5a To establish a professional relationship that can meet the needs of the SI learner and family recognising that this may change as the learner grows and include representatives from the voluntary sector. 3S5b To establish a team approach that includes clear roles and responsibilities, communication pathways and a means of evaluating the team's effectiveness.
3K6 Understand the key roles and expertise of the range of specialists supporting the SI learner and family.	3S6a To be able to locate and work closely with a range of different professionals to optimise a SI learner's engagement, inclusion and attainment.

QTVI specific standards – Introduction

The term children and young people with vision impairment (CYPVI) is used throughout this document to refer to all learners with vision impairment between the ages of 0 and 25 years. The term ‘children and young people’ is used in the current (2015) special educational needs and disability code of practice for England. The term ‘vision impairment’ is used by the Department of Health in relation to registration of vision impairment as a disability.

Standard 4: Vision impairment and how children and young people learn

QTVIs need to have knowledge and understanding of how the visual system works, the developmental implications of vision impairment, and the different ways in which **ocular and/or cerebral vision conditions** can influence functional vision and the ways children and young people with vision impairment (CYPVI) learn and interact. QTVIs must also know and understand the nature of the CYPVI population and recognise that vision impairment may coexist with other special educational needs and disabilities. They need to understand how vision impairment can influence the way that children and young people learn, develop and participate in social and educational contexts. Understanding this association is a key foundation to designing an appropriate inclusive educational system.

Knowledge and understanding (‘learn that...’)	Skills (‘learn how...’)
The visual system	The visual system
<p>4K1 The human eye has a distinctive anatomy and physiology and QTVIs need to understand how the visual system works and the ways in which the brain processes information.</p> <p>4K2 There are two main broad types of vision impairment: ocular vision impairment and cerebral vision impairment (CVI); QTVIs must understand the main differences between them.</p> <p>4K3 There is a range of causes of sight loss requiring understanding of how vision impairment is identified, any</p>	<p>4S1 To interpret reports from a range of medical and health professionals for example: ophthalmologists, orthoptists and optometrists.</p> <p>4S2 To explain this information and its educational/developmental implications to others involved in a CYPVI’s education: for example, parents, teachers, therapists.</p> <p>4S3 To recognise that different types of vision impairment will have different implications for appropriate teaching strategies, resources and approaches for CYPVI.</p>

available treatments and the potential effect of these on learning.	
Developmental implications of vision impairment	Developmental implications of vision impairment
<p>4K4 All degrees of vision impairment (including those arising from prematurity, those that occur from asphyxia at birth and those that are progressive, longstanding or sudden onset), have potential implications for the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of CYPVI and on their families.</p> <p>4K5 Vision impairment present from birth has implications on all areas of early development.</p> <p>4K6 There is a relationship between vision impairment and the development of communication skills (e.g. the acquisition of concepts or social communication skills) and that longstanding communication difficulties can influence the cognitive, emotional and social development of CYPVI.</p>	<p>4S4 To plan, deliver or advise on interventions that meet the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development needs of CYPVI.</p> <p>4S5 To plan, deliver or advise on appropriate teaching approaches/strategies/resources that address specific developmental needs identified.</p> <p>4S6 To signpost/refer families/learners with VI to other professionals, when required, to address specific needs: e.g. occupational therapists, wheelchair services, counselling services, speech and language therapists.</p> <p>4S7 To liaise with other professionals involved in the CYP's education or medical care to gain a holistic view of their developmental needs and put interventions in place to meet those needs.</p> <p>4S8 To advise key professionals on how to modify their approaches/resources for CYPVI to promote development.</p>

Standard 5: Learning to access: The specialist curriculum

A key educational aim at the heart of the QTVI's role is to develop the personal agency of CYPVI and maximise their independence. This involves identifying support needs and teaching/promoting access to a range of specialist skills and resources that normally sighted CYP do not require. QTVIs must be secure in their knowledge and ability to use assistive technology, to teach and use tactile communication skills including braille, and to promote independent learning and self-advocacy skills. They must also be skilled and confident in working in collaboration with other practitioners to promote CYPVI's learning in specialist curriculum areas such as habilitation (mobility and orientation, independent living skills).

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
Promoting literacy through touch	Promoting literacy through touch
<p>5K1 In promoting literacy through touch there are alternative and augmented communication systems including braille and Moon, with distinctive rules and design principles.</p> <p>5K2 As a QTVI you must be able to demonstrate competence in the contracted literary braille code to agreed national standards.</p>	<p>5S1 To select and use alternative and augmented communication systems including tactile codes such as braille and Moon, as part of a curriculum to develop learners' skills and understanding.</p> <p>5S2 To teach braille (including contracted braille) at an appropriate level for the CYP.</p> <p>5S3 To understand the pre-braille skills necessary for a child or young person to learn braille.</p>
Supporting mobility and independent living	Supporting mobility and independent living
<p>5K3 As a QTVI there are specific principles and practices involved in the teaching of habilitation skills: mobility, orientation and independent living skills.</p>	<p>5S4 To work with mobility/habilitation specialists to support the implementation and promotion of mobility, orientation and independence programmes, including cane skills, wheelchair mobility and independent living skills.</p>
Assistive technology and specialist equipment	Assistive technology and specialist equipment
<p>5K4 There is a range of ICT hardware and software to help CYPVI access communication and learning, and that CYPVI need to develop the necessary skills to make effective use of technology.</p>	<p>5S5 To recommend, teach and assess the use of specialist equipment and technology to overcome or reduce the impact of sight loss.</p>

<p>5K5 There is a range of optical and electronic low vision devices that can help a CYPVI make effective use of functional vision.</p>	<p>5S6 To teach the use and maintenance of low vision devices.</p>
<p>Vision impairment and self-advocacy</p>	<p>Vision impairment and self-advocacy</p>
<p>5K6 CYPVI may need support to understand their sight loss and develop a positive self-image as a young person with vision impairment.</p>	<p>5S7 To raise awareness of the importance of good eye health and regular eye examinations, and explain the findings of eye examinations to CYPVI, their carers, and others.</p> <p>5S8 To support CYPVI to explain their vision impairment and its implications to others.</p>

Standard 6: Access to Learning and Development: Inclusive classroom and home-based practice and teaching.

QTVIs need to be expert in all aspects of designing, delivering, evaluating and advising on teaching which is accessible to CYPVI in educational settings and in the home environment for pre-school children. Good inclusive practice and differentiation involves ensuring that the physical and social environment is structured and modified to promote participation, learning and access to the core (academic) curriculum, while promoting development in the early years. Specialist teachers must identify teaching approaches that address challenges arising from the physical and social environment and promote learning; they must understand how these approaches may need to vary between different phases of education and at key transition stages (from home to school and between educational settings and phases).

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
The learning environment	The learning environment
<p>6K1 There is a range of factors that contribute to good environmental design and that enable the creation of effective teaching and learning environments (e.g. good lighting, acoustics, tactile cues and reducing clutter, awareness of peers and adults) and that a positive social and physical learning environment also contributes to the academic, social and emotional inclusion of CYPVI, and ultimately their well-being.</p>	<p>6S1 To undertake and/or contribute to habilitation-led environmental audits.</p> <p>6S2 To assess and review the learning environment within settings/homes, identifying resources and techniques needed to create a positive learning environment for CYPVI (including awareness training of peers and adults).</p> <p>6S3 To contribute to schools'/settings' accessibility plan and risk assessments using specialist VI knowledge.</p> <p>6S4 To recommend, monitor and/or implement strategies that encourage independent mobility and help develop social interaction.</p>
Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning

6K2 Sight loss has a significant influence on the learning, development and achievement of CPVI, and that teaching, learning and assessment can be adapted to enable them to make good progress.	6S5 To use the information gained from assessment and other sources to set outcomes and plan and review teaching approaches that promote access to learning/support development and that will help CYPVI make progress.
6K3 There is a range of appropriate approaches, strategies and interventions to enable CYPVI to access the curriculum.	6S6 To implement appropriate strategies and interventions to enable CYPVI successfully to access the curriculum.
6K4 Teaching and learning approaches need to be modified when working with CYPVI in school or home settings e.g. using visual, oral/aural, tactile and kinaesthetic approaches to enhance communication and learning and promote positive outcomes.	6S7 To modify, produce, and adapt teaching and learning materials in an appropriate medium to make them accessible to CYPVI, and provide training to others in how this is done (e.g. audio, braille, tactile diagrams, braille , enlarged/modified text, simplified diagrams).
6K5 There are key principles of haptic perception that need to be considered with respect to how CYPVI can learn effectively through touch.	6S8 To apply the key principles of haptic perception when supporting CYPVI and ensure that they can learn effectively through touch.
6K6 It is important to encourage and support CYPVI to be independent learners, and that there are teaching strategies and interventions that promote their increased independence.	6S9 To balance providing targeted support for individual CYPVI with the need to develop independent learning.
6K7 Inclusive teaching involves raising awareness of vision impairment among peers, teachers, parents and other adults working with CYPVI.	6S10 To model/adopt best practice in promoting positive outcomes when working with CYPVI, selecting and using the most effective approaches e.g. tactile/kinaesthetic, visual. 6S11 To raise awareness of vision impairment among peers, teachers, parents and other adults working with CYPVI.
6K8 there are principles of person-centred planning that enable CYPVI and their families to identify short and longer-term outcomes and to acquire the skills/obtain the support they need to achieve them.	6S12 To identify individual learning outcomes and develop, implement and evaluate a range of approaches to help CYPVI achieve those outcomes as part of a plan, assess, review cycle. 6S13 To support classroom teachers in differentiating or personalising provision to match and develop the capabilities of CYPVI.

	6S14 To inform person-centred planning and review processes including contributing to plans that take account of other planning formats, e.g. Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.
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Standard 7: Specialist and inclusive assessment

QTVIs need to have expertise in the accurate and ongoing assessment of CYPVI's functional vision, informed by an understanding of clinical assessment findings and strong links with medical and health professionals. They must be able to interpret these assessment findings to ensure that appropriate teaching strategies, curriculum resources and assistive technology are in place to ensure that each CYPVI achieves optimum outcomes. QTVIs must also know and understand the principles and processes of assessment of need, assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning. The QTVI must ensure these assessments are accessible to and appropriate for the CYPVI, including the use of access arrangements to ensure that individual achievement is commensurate with ability.

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
Functional Vision Assessment	Functional Vision Assessment
<p>7K1 There are key principles and practices in assessing functional vision and knowledge and understanding of these informs the practice of a QTVI.</p> <p>7K2 There is a range of commonly used clinical and functional procedures for assessing how CYPVI respond to visual information and knowledge and understanding of these informs practice.</p>	<p>7S1 To undertake and contribute to the assessment of functional vision, using appropriate tools and observations, interpreting and drawing on the specialist assessment of others, such as orthoptists, ophthalmologists and optometrists.</p>
Monitoring, assessing, reviewing and reporting	Monitoring, assessing, reviewing and reporting
<p>7K3 There are best practices associated with monitoring, assessing, reviewing and reporting on the learning of a CYPVI as part of a plan, do, review cycle (e.g. as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014).</p>	<p>7S2 To monitor the use and effectiveness of specialised approaches, devices, equipment and resources to ensure that they achieve their intended outcomes for CYPVI.</p> <p>7S3 To use appropriate means to monitor the progress of CYPVI and include learners and their parents/carers and other professionals in the assessment process, as appropriate. This may incorporate specialist assessment approaches (e.g. specialist assessments of literacy, learning media assessments).</p>

7K4 There is a range of special arrangements to support CYPVI's access to assessment processes at different stages of education and that these assist in ensuring that achievement is commensurate with underlying ability.

7S4 To undertake and/or contribute to the assessment of communication, using appropriate tools and observations specific to CYPVI, and interpreting and drawing on the specialist assessment of others such as speech and language therapists.

7S5 To undertake and contribute to the assessment of cognition and development, using appropriate tools and observations, and interpreting and drawing on the specialist assessment of others such as educational and clinical psychologists.

7S6 To facilitate appropriate access and support arrangements to enable CYPVI to have their achievements recognised.

7S7 To collate and present, where appropriate, the educational implications of multi-disciplinary assessment and parental contributions and views to inform curricular and placement decisions.

7S8 To use provision mapping to determine how well provision for CYPVI matches their needs and to demonstrate accountability to key stakeholders including parents/carers.

7S9 To provide data and information on the progress of CYPVI which shows the added value provided by specialist teaching and learning.

7S10 To prepare and write accurate assessment reports that can be understood and used by teachers, other professionals, parents/carers and, where appropriate, CYPVI.

	7S11 To contribute to the strategic review and evaluation of learning and teaching provision in the development of school and local offers.
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Standard 8: Social development, emotional development and well-being

QTVIs need to understand the wide-ranging implications of vision impairment for children and young people's social development and long-term emotional resilience. They must be skilled at promoting learning environments where CYPVI are able to thrive and know a range of interventions most likely to support their social and emotional development and well-being. QTVIs must be able to identify risk factors for social and emotional development among CYPVI of different needs and ages and know and understand the role of the different professionals who may be approached for further intervention.

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
Promoting positive behaviour	Promoting positive behaviour
<p>8K1 There is a number of ways in which sight loss can influence the behaviour and emotional wellbeing of CYPVI and their peers.</p> <p>8K2 There are issues of stereotyping and equal opportunities that apply to CYPVI.</p> <p>8K3 The language and behaviour of other people, and the physical and social environment can have a strong influence on the emotional and behavioural responses of CYPVI.</p> <p>8K4 CYPVI may need guidance to form effective emotional relationships with adults and with peers and understand how positive relationships can promote good behaviour and self-esteem.</p> <p>8K5 There are more complex situations that might need specific interventions from other professionals such as counsellors.</p>	<p>8S1 To take account of the fact that sight loss may have an impact on the behaviour of CYPVI and use effective strategies to promote positive behaviour, manage difficult situations and resolve conflict.</p> <p>8S2 To encourage CYPVI to monitor and control their own behaviour and as a QTVI work towards change in the physical and social environment of the CYPVI.</p> <p>8S3 To intervene to support CYPVI to communicate with others, and to know which intervention is appropriate and which professional might be the most appropriate person to provide the intervention.</p> <p>8S4 To use effective and sensitive strategies to raise awareness of vision impairment among sighted peers and to promote positive relationships between CYPVI and their peers.</p> <p>8S5 To support CYPVI to develop effective social and emotional skills.</p>
Health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing

<p>8K6 A key to a CYPVI emotional resilience is opportunities for them to develop positive self-esteem, emotional well-being and self-advocacy skills.</p> <p>8K7 There can be positive benefits for CYPVI in taking opportunities to socialise, as appropriate, with other CYPVI.</p>	<p>8S6 To employ strategies that encourage CYPVI to be emotionally resilient and to persevere with their learning when difficulties arise.</p> <p>8S7 To help CYPVI to develop effective social and emotional skills.</p> <p>8S8 To promote knowledge and skills related to personal, social and health education, and sex and relationship education for CYPVI.</p> <p>8S10 To take advantage of/signpost opportunities for CYPVI to make friends and enjoy leisure pursuits.</p>
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Standard 9: Supporting transitions

QTVIs have a key role to play in ensuring that transition is effective across a wide range of ages (0-25) and contexts. They must show knowledge and understanding across a range of areas including: the effective dissemination of specialist assessment and information; awareness raising and training; ensuring that appropriate specialist equipment is in place in new settings and that staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate its use; and the promotion of independence and self-advocacy skills in children and young people.

Knowledge and understanding ('learn that...')	Skills ('learn how...')
<p>9K1 There are principles and practices associated with successful transition throughout the educational pathway of a CYPVI (0-25).</p> <p>9K2 There are particular challenges faced by CYPVI at transition and that these may change according the stage of their educational pathway.</p> <p>9K3 It is important to empower CYPVI of all ages to be prepared and make informed choices about their future.</p> <p>9K4 There is a range of opportunities for school leavers with vision impairment and that it is important to ensure they have high expectations for what they can achieve and that they understand any implications that sight loss may have on their future career choices</p>	<p>9S1 To ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place so that CYPVI of all ages can make a successful transition e.g. appropriate transition planning, liaison with key stakeholders (parents/carers/receiving settings), ensuring access to the curriculum/assessment/exams, ensuring a CYPVI is familiar with the environment of a new setting.</p> <p>9S2 To liaise with appropriate information, advice and guidance services and give information to older CYPVI about support available e.g. Access to Work scheme, disability benefits.</p> <p>9S3 To assist older learners to develop the knowledge and skills they will need in adult life, further or higher education, post-school training opportunities and employment e.g. interview and study skills.</p>



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