

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. PETER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 9th OCTOBER 2018**

Question

How many children in education in Jersey are registered as visually impaired; and what is the funding mechanism to ensure they receive the necessary support so they have, as far as possible, equal opportunities?

Answer

There are currently 41 Children and Young people (CYP) in education in Jersey with a visual impairment. A Visual Impairment Team (VIT) which consists of a 0.8FTE qualified teacher for Visual Impairment and a Grade 7 Specialist Lead Keyworker is responsible for advising and supporting schools to ensure they have the necessary arrangements to meet their needs. VIT work alongside a local charity 'Eyecan' (formerly The Jersey Blind Society) and the 2 Orthoptists at Jersey General Hospital.

In line with the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) two main criteria determine levels of support:

1. Professional assessments determine the degree of visual impairment into the following categories:
 - Mild Vision Loss
 - Moderate Vision Loss
 - Severe Vision Loss
 - Profound Vision Loss

2. Other factors that may impact upon a CYP's functioning such as:
 - Additional factors relating to VI (deteriorating / fluctuating condition, recently acquired VI)
 - Impact of the VI on language and communication development and on access to learning and the curriculum
 - Development of habilitation skills
 - Training and mentoring requirement
 - Transition support
 - Support for use of specialist equipment
 - Physical Learning environment
 - Impact of CYP's VI on personal, social and emotional learning
 - Additional factors relating to family support (acceptance of VI, EAL, LAC)
 - Multi-agency role (including safeguarding)

Once levels of support are determined support is provided through the following ways:

- All schools receive delegated funding to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Most CYP with a VI have their arrangements (support, resources and equipment) to meet their needs met through this funding.
- Some children's needs require more specialist arrangements. In these circumstances needs and arrangements to meet them are detailed in a Record of Need (a RoN). Some of these children access mainstream schools who receive higher level funding to meet these requirements. Other access Mont a L'abbe School which is resourced to meet specialist requirements.

Advances in technology result in continual review of specialist equipment. The QTVI works to ensure that the CYP with VI have the most effective solution to enable access to learning and promote independence. If evidence of best practice determines an advanced solution the QTVI writes a Business Paper to the Senior Management Team in Education for funding to implement the initiative. A successful bid enabled IPAD technology (for e.g.) for all pupils who required magnification of resources. However, caution has to be used as individual pupils may require an individual solution.