



Deafblind Assessment – Guidance 7

Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities towards deafblind children arising from the guidance “Social Care for Deafblind Children and Adults” LAC 201 (8).

They are required to provide specialist assessments, appropriate information and services designed to meet the needs of deafblind children.

The Guidance in brief

The new responsibilities are to:

- identify, make contact with and keep a record of deafblind children and adults in their catchment area (including those who have multiple disabilities including dual sensory impairment)
- ensure that when an assessment is required or requested, it is carried out by a specifically trained person or team, equipped to assess the needs of a deafblind children and adults - in particular to assess need for one-to-one human contact, assistive technology and rehabilitation
- ensure that appropriate services are provided to deafblind children and adults, who are not necessarily able to benefit from mainstream services or those services aimed primarily for visually impaired or deaf children and adults who are able to rely on their other senses
- ensure they are able to access specifically trained one-to-one support workers for those children and adults they assess as requiring one
- provide information about services in formats and through methods that are accessible to deafblind children and adults
- ensure that one member of senior management includes, within their responsibilities, overall responsibility for deafblind services.

The guidance says that ‘persons are regarded as deafblind if their combined sight and hearing impairment causes difficulties with communication, access to information and mobility’. Children and adults do not have to be completely deaf and blind. As with other conditions, deafblindness spans a continuum of need ranging from slight sensory impairment to severe/total dual sensory loss and to complex disabilities.

The definition of deafblindness means that anyone who has both a hearing loss and a sight loss that causes them problems in everyday life is covered by the new guidance.

Deafblind Assessment

The National Charity Sense has published ‘Reaching Out – a toolkit for Deafblind Children’s Services which outlines the responsibilities of the Local Authority, e.g. how a deafblind assessment should be carried out, importance of one to one support, the need for co-ordination and resources etc.

The toolkit explains the importance of social care services to the well-being of deafblind children and their families and to their social needs outside school.

A specifically trained person is required to carry out the assessment of a deafblind child. It is possible to carry out a joint assessment with a Social Worker from the Children's Disability Team.



[www.sense.org.uk/Resources/Sense/Sense%20\(Old%20Website\)/Downloads/Reaching Out.pdf](http://www.sense.org.uk/Resources/Sense/Sense%20(Old%20Website)/Downloads/Reaching%20Out.pdf) · PDF file

Areas covered in the Assessment could include:

- Use of vision and hearing
- Use of other senses
- Physical skills
- Orientation and Mobility skills
- Communication
- Access to information
- Social skills and personal relationships
- Emotional, cultural and spiritual needs
- Health and medical needs
- Behaviour
- Personal care
- Educational needs
- Leisure needs
- Housing
- Financial support

Information can be gained from recent reports e.g. Statement Reports for background information concerning vision, hearing, communication, physical development etc.

The main part of the assessment should be carried out by direct discussion with the child's parents confirming information already gathered and discussing access for social and leisure activities:

- Assess social and leisure requirements
- Identify the family's needs for support to ensure the child leads a full and active life as to be expected for any child of that age
- Identify current agencies already involved providing support to the child and family
- Identify the need and knowledge and training for those working with the child
- Barriers which prevent the child from taking part in leisure activities

Recommendations can also include:

- Teaching methods
- Activities to encourage the child's development
- Type of service that should be provided
- Support e.g. intervenor
- Training needs for staff
- Additional activities such as holidays, youth clubs