Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

Review of Sensory Inclusion Service

September 2018

Synopsis

Review of the Sensory and Inclusion Service for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

During the summer of 2018 Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire carried out a review of the combined Sensory Inclusion Service (SIS). The review was facilitated by SEND4Change, an external company with experience in SEN arrangements and a particular interest and knowledge of sensory services.

Children and young people with a sensory impairment and their families benefit from the advice and support provided by the service, and the service is well regarded. Schools, colleges and settings receive advice from the service about sensory impairment and access to the curriculum.

The review involved a detailed analysis of the service offer, the affordability of the service, the views of service users and the effectiveness of the service. It has resulted in recommendations for a programme of change and improvement. The changes relate to four themes of investigation and a summary of the required change activity is set out below.

1) **Fairness**

   The cost of the combined service is split between the two authorities.

   We asked:
   "Is the current split fair? 43%: Telford and Wrekin and 57% Shropshire"

   Based on the evidence of population data, levels of diagnosis, current and historical caseloads, we believe that the split is reasonable.

   Action: The financial split should be regularly reviewed. On an annual basis the Head of SIS will provide a report for the heads of SEN in both Authorities. The report should provide an analysis of service deployment and the impact across the two local authorities and whether the split of financial contributions remains fair.

2) **Quality**

   The review explored the quality of the service currently delivered and considered feedback from service users including the impact of the service.

   We asked:
   "Is SIS a good service and how could it be improved?"

   We gathered views from a range of service users and stakeholders. Although the service is highly regarded, on the basis of feedback and evidence considered, it will be necessary to refresh the approach, and bring about a number of improvements which need to be set out in an improvement plan.

   Action The service will need to show how it will:
   1) Describe a specific service offer that includes clear pupil outcomes which can be measured.
   2) Improve the teams' knowledge of SEN and the impact this has on learning for pupils with a sensory impairment.

3) Develop school and setting based interventions which build the resilience and expertise of staff in the host school and reduce dependency on SIS.
4) Establish a focus group which explores how best to support teachers in teaching and learning
5) Develop a "bank" of information on sensory impairment which can be accessed online using a variety of media including videos , diagrams and written guidance.

3) Affordability

Budget from both local authorities is provided mainly from the High Needs block of the DSG. There is some additional funding from external contracts. The high blocks in each LA is overspent. The spend on this service is greater than any other SEN service in both local authorities. In the current economic climate both local authorities are operating in a time of financial constraint. Both Councils need to make significant savings against the High Needs block.

Action
1) Achieve immediate savings identified as low risk by service managers
2) Take steps to achieve future additional savings.
   - Adjust the SIS NATSIP Eligibility framework, in line with other local authorities, so that schools with pupils with low level of sensory impairment receive advice and guidance via an online information and advice service.
   - Further develop the NATSIP Eligibility Framework into a Resource Allocation System (RAS), which has a fixed quantum that ensures a transparent, fair and equitable distribution of resources.
   - Establish an income target for the service for 2019/20. The service will need to identify a core offer and a menu of top up services that can be traded as soon as possible.

4) Organisational Effectiveness

The review examined the management structure of the service including both HI and VI teams. It also considered whether there were any benefits of a split service arrangement where each local authority has its own sensory impairment service. After consideration of all options, the conclusion was reached that it remains appropriate to continue with a combined service across the two Local Authorities. However the management structure needs to be redesigned. The following actions are required:

Action
1) Remain as a shared service across the two Local Authorities (no direct action required if this recommendation goes forward)
2) Develop a service level agreement between the two local authorities for the service provided with reference to pupil outcomes and school resilience
3) Establish a new management structure and redesigned service.

Introduction

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin jointly provide a Sensory Inclusion Service (SIS) for children aged 0-25, with a hearing and/or visual impairment. Telford and Wrekin Council hosts the service under a joint arrangement between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Local Authority (LA) areas. The service operates on a 'shared service' principle.

The purpose of the service is to facilitate positive access to the learning environment and the curriculum through early support and intervention. The service aims to build the capacity and resilience of families and staff in variety of settings to meet he needs of children and young people with a sensory impairment.

The service was last reviewed internally during 2014. In light of the implementation of the Children and Families Act in September 2014, current local area reviews of high needs provision and services, and continued pressure on budgets, both Councils are aware of a need to undertake a further review.

Both local authorities are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for children, now and in the future. This means that children get the right support at the right time and from the right agency, in a coordinated and holistic way. Both local authorities are also committed to ensuring best value for money. In preparing for this review, both local authorities were mindful of:

- the Ofsted/CQC framework for local area SEND inspections
- the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) guidance for commissioners of services for children and young people with sensory impairments
- the need to engage with users of the service.

In addition, both local Authorities need to be aware of their **statutory duties** and non-statutory guidance and advice, which relate to children and young people with sensory impairments. These are:

The Equalities Act which:

> ➢ places duties on local authorities to review support services and in doing so requires Local Authorities to have due regard to the way in which any changes will affect children and young people with a disability, in this case those with a sensory impairment
> ➢ specifies the requirement to make well informed, reasonable adjustments for children and young people with a sensory impairment.

The SEND Code of Practice places requirements on Local Authorities to:

> ➢ provide access to advice from a suitably qualified person as part of the EHC process and subsequent "assess, plan, do, review" cycles
> ➢ make appropriate provision for those with an EHC plan in the 0-25 range.

The DfE Specification for Mandatory Qualifications for specialist teachers of deaf/blind children and young people which requires:

> ➢ teachers in the Sensory Inclusion Service to hold a statutory qualification in Hearing Impairment (HI) or Visual Impairment (VI).

Both local authorities recognise that they operate in different circumstances and were keen to obtain an independent review of the SIS in order to gain an impartial perspective of the best way to develop the service in future. As such they commissioned an external organisation, SEND4Change to complete the review.

The Reviewers and Commissioners

The Reviewers

SEND4Change (S4C) is an external organisation, which has been commissioned to carry out the independent review. More information about S4C can be found on their website, www.send4change.co.uk. In summary, SEND4Change is an organisation with significant experience in SEN arrangements, and a particular interest in, and knowledge of, sensory services. Alison Holloway and Chris Harrison, Directors of SEND4Change, completed the review.

The Commissioners – Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin covers a large geographical area in the West Midlands. The total school population is approximately 73,000. Shropshire is a largely rural county with seven market towns and a school population of 44,000 Telford and Wrekin is a unitary authority having developed as a new town in the late 1970's. It has a school population of 29,000.

The Commissioners' requirements

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin set out their requirements from the review as follows:

Through this review both Local Authorities want to have a clear understanding of:

1. The current and future needs of this group of service users.

   Key question:
   - *What does the needs analysis tell us about our current level of need, and how is this forecast to change in future years?*

2. How well the service meets the needs of service users now and what outcomes are being achieved.

   Key questions:
   - *What activities is the service currently performing in family homes, early settings, schools and colleges?*
   - *How does the service offer provided by SIS link with existing provision in those settings?*
   - *How do we know the impact of the service on children and young people with sensory impairments?*

3. The options for developing this service to ensure that it can continue to meet children's needs in the current context of reduced resources and keep pace with foreseeable developments in the future.

Key questions:
- *What can be learnt from best practice elsewhere?*
- *Is the current service delivery model still fit for purpose and does it represent best value for money?*
- *What alternative delivery models could be considered which ensure that the LAs meet their statutory responsibilities?*
- *What opportunities are there for a traded service and generating an income?*
- *Is the joint arrangement still fit for purpose and does it represent best value for money for each LA?*
- *What are the benefits and risks to discontinuing the joint arrangement?*

Both Authorities will use this information to implement a service model from 1st January 2019, which demonstrates that:

- children's needs are identified appropriately
- children's needs can continue to be met, now and in the foreseeable future
- interventions are carried out efficiently, effectively and by the right staff
- the service supports children to prepare for their life as an adult, this includes preparing children to:
  - live independently
  - enter paid employment and/or access higher education
  - participate in their community
  - be as healthy as possible
- the service has sufficient resources, is sustainable and represents value for money
- the service can build capacity in educational settings and the family home
- the service can work equally effectively in each of the local areas, according to local context.

General Demographics

Shropshire
- In 2016, Shropshire had a general population of 314,400 people.
- The population of Shropshire is predicted to increase to 318,000 people by 2020.
- In June 2016 there was a net internal migration of 1,992 people who moved into Shropshire.
- In April 2018, Shropshire had 555 people aged between 16-24 who were claiming out of work benefits. Of this number, 340 were aged 18-21.
- In 2017 the average gross weekly pay of someone in Shropshire was £470.80 in comparison to the average pay in the West Midlands which was £514.90.
- *(Data from the ONS, DfE, and NOMIS)*

Pupil Population Demographics

- In 2017 Shropshire had 43,956 pupils in all schools.
- Shropshire identified 6,112 pupils with SEN in 2017. This is calculated by the number of pupils that have SEN Support and/or an EHC plan.
- The 6,112 pupils are divided into 1,577 pupils who had EHC plans, and 4,535 pupils who had SEN Support.
- In 2017, 780 primary school pupils were identified as having a Moderate Learning Difficulty, which was the greatest identified need that year.
- In the same year, 560 secondary school pupils were identified as a having Moderate Learning Difficulty, which was the highest identified need.

Telford and Wrekin
- In 2016 Telford and Wrekin had a general population of 173,700. This is 55% of the size of Shropshire.
- The population of Telford and Wrekin is predicted to increase to 174,000. However the data also stated that in 2016 only 171,000 people were living in Telford and Wrekin, so the predicted increases are questionable.
- In June 2016 there was a net internal migration of 691 people who moved into Telford and Wrekin.
- In April 2018 Telford and Wrekin had 550 people aged 16-25 claiming out of work benefits.
- In 2017, the average gross weekly pay in Telford & Wrekin was £488.20.
- *(Data from the ONS, DfE, and NOMIS)*

Pupil Population Demographics
- In 2017 Telford and Wrekin had 29,523 pupils in all schools.
- Telford and Wrekin identified 5,460 pupils with SEN in 2017, again this is calculated by the number of pupils that had SEN Support and/or an EHC plan.
- The 5,460 pupils with SEN are divided into pupils who had EHC plans (1,076 pupils) and pupils with SEN Support (4,383 pupils).
- In 2017, 788 primary school pupils were identified as having Speech, Language, and Communication Needs, which was the greatest need identified in that year. In the same year, 617 secondary school pupils were identified as having a Moderate Learning Difficulty. This is the same primary need as secondary school pupils in Shropshire.

The Users of the Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) Service

Users of the service fall into the following categories:

- young people and their families
- schools and settings.

Sensory impairment in young people is described as low incidence with a high level of need.

Hearing and Visual Impairment Demographics

The table below demonstrates the number of pupils with Hearing Impairment or Visual Impairment in the Primary, Secondary, and Special schools of Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin. The chart shows a 5 year period spanning from January 2013 to January 2017, which is the most current data available.

Number of Pupils with Hearing or Visial Impairment in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin from 2013-2017

	Telford & Wrekin	Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Shropshire	Telford & Wrekin	Shropshire
	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
HI Primary	41	33	31	35	38	34	49	43	48	42
HI Secondary	58	52	51	46	53	28	55	29	49	35
HI Special	0	0		0		0	1	0	2	0
HI Total	99	85	82	81	91	21	105	25	99	77
VI Primary	22	19	21	22	29	76	32	72	36	32
VI Secondary	14	60	14	16	22	13	46	17	49	15
VI Special	0	0		0			1	2	1	0
VI Total	36	79	35	38	51	89	79	91	86	47

HI Primary ■ HI Secondary ■ HI Special ■ HI Total ■ VI Primary ■ VI Secondary ■ VI Special ■ VI Total

It demonstrates that Shropshire has recently identified less pupils with visual and hearing impairments than Telford and Wrekin.

In 2017, Telford and Wrekin identified the most number of pupils with visual impairment, 49 pupils.

In 2016, Shropshire only identified 17 pupils with visual impairment, and in 2017 only 15 pupils. This is substantially less pupils than Telford and Wrekin.

The table below demonstrates the number of pupils with HI and VI in primary, secondary and special schools in Shropshire, and its closest statistical neighbour, Devon.
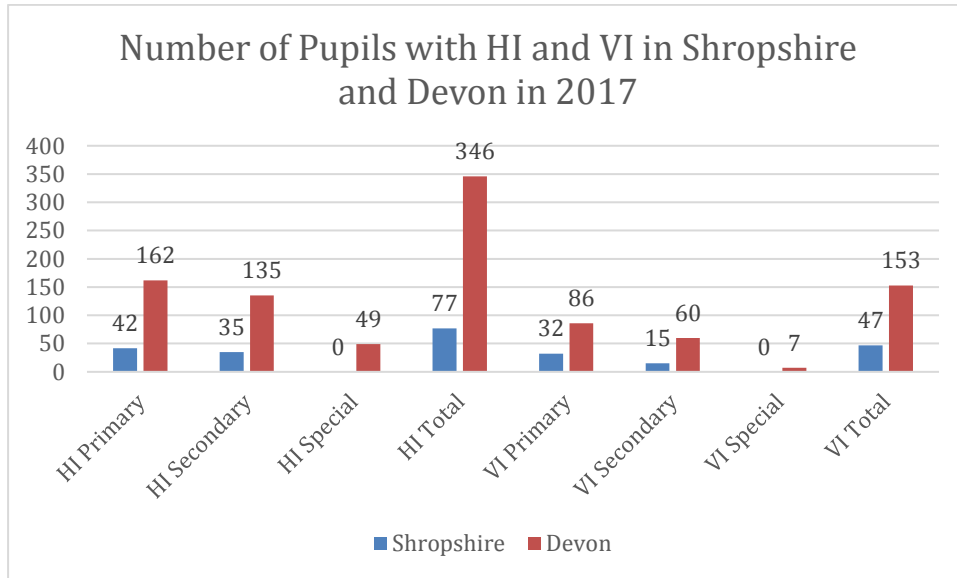
Number of Pupils with HI and VI in Shropshire and Devon in 2017

Category	Shropshire	Devon
HI Primary	42	162
HI Secondary	35	135
HI Special	0	49
HI Total	77	346
VI Primary	32	86
VI Secondary	15	60
VI Special	0	7
VI Total	47	153

The table below demonstrates the number of pupils with HI and VI in primary, secondary and special schools in Telford and Wrekin in comparison with its closest statistical neighbour, Rotherham.

Number of Pupils with HI and VI in Telford & Wrekin and Rotherham in 2017

Category	Telford & Wrekin	Rotherham
HI Primary	48	56
HI Secondary	49	65
HI Special	2	1
HI Total	99	122
VI Primary	36	31
VI Secondary	49	22
VI Special	1	4
VI Total	86	57
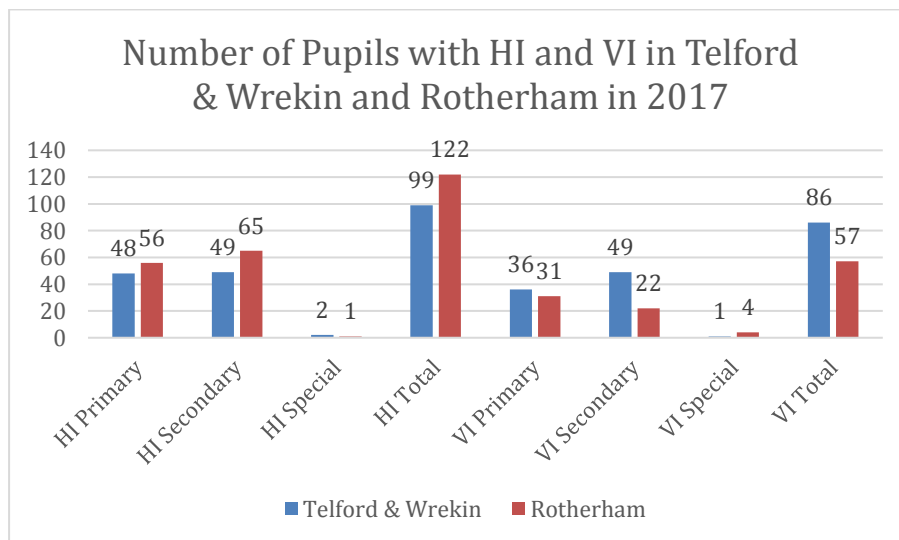
The Providers of the Sensory Inclusion Service

Telford and Wrekin's local offer describes the Sensory Inclusion Service as follows:

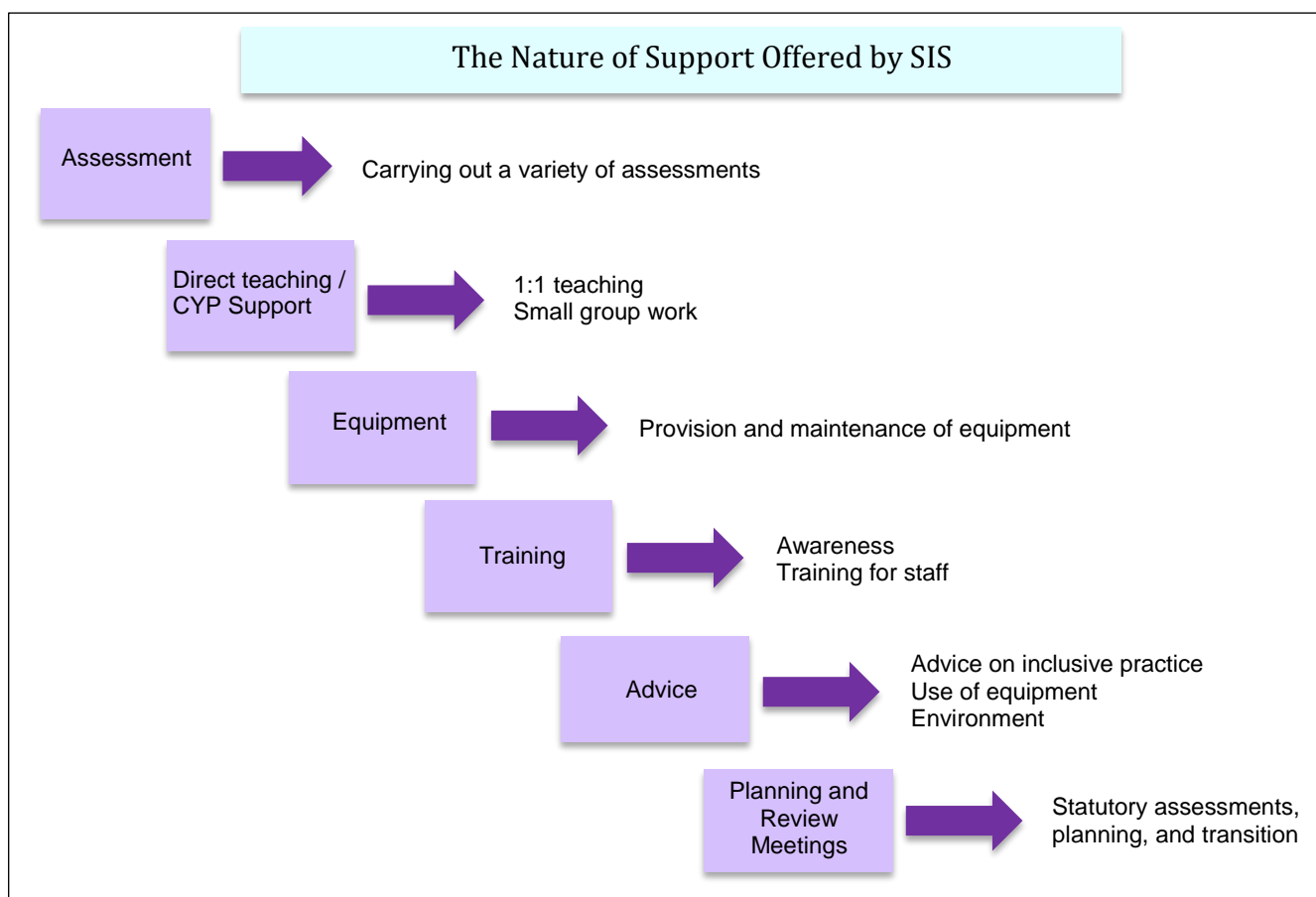"The Sensory Inclusion Service (SIS) is a specialist team which supports children and young people (CYP) with sensory impairments in educational settings and across local communities. It is staffed by trained Teachers of the Deaf (TODs), Qualified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (QTVIs) and many other specialist staff who aim to provide a seamless service from the point of diagnosis until the child or young person leaves full time education. It supports children, young people and their families, and colleagues in health, education and other multi-agency contexts to meet the needs of young people with sensory impairment.

The service accepts referrals primarily from health agencies but also from parents/carers, schools and other agencies but always with reference to medical advice regarding hearing and/or visual loss."

The service offers:

The Nature of Support Offered by SIS

Assessment	Carrying out a variety of assessments
Direct teaching / CYP Support	1:1 teaching Small group work
Equipment	Provision and maintenance of equipment
Training	Awareness Training for staff
Advice	Advice on inclusive practice Use of equipment Environment
Planning and Review Meetings	Statutory assessments, planning, and transition

More specifically this offer includes:

- information on how to refer children for assessment for hearing or vision testing
- clear information about which children are seen by SIS and why
- information and advice to parents/carers, teachers and other organisations including training for schools and colleges
- support for children and young people in their educational settings. This may include individual teaching/in class or in small groups

- support for families within the home
- work with other groups to ensure sensory impaired children's needs are met effectively
- assessment of children's hearing/vision in all environments to determine support levels
- assessment of language, communication and educational attainment using different tests and assessments
- advice on how to communicate with children and young people with hearing loss
- specialist advice to the Local Authority as part of any assessment process such as Education Health and Care Plans
- advice and support for the use of specialist equipment to ensure the inclusion of sensory impaired children
- modification of materials into appropriate formats to allow full visual and linguistic access
- individual support for modifications for external examinations
- teaching of Braille to educationally blind children and young people
- support for children and young people in accessing activities within their community and opportunities for sensory impaired children to meet together.

The Current Sensory Inclusion Teams

SIS Team Structure
March 2018

Service Delivery Manager

Vacant Team Leader*

Advisory Teacher VI
1.0 FTE

VI Teacher: 2.8FTE
Habilitation Specialist: 0.61 FTE
Access Support Assistant: 2.51 FTE
ICT Inclusion Support Officer: 1.0 FTE
Social Inclusion Facilitator: 1.0 FTE

Total: 8.92 FTE

Advisory Teacher HI and Educational Audiologist
1.0 FTE

Advisory Teacher HI
0.9 FTE

HI Teacher: 8.7 FTE
Technical Officer: 1.0 FTE
Social Inclusion Facilitator: 1.0 FTE

Total: 12.6 FTE

Advisory teachers HI and VI currently sharing this role.

A summary of the team's roles and responsibilities are describes below.

The SIS comprises a number of teaching and non-teaching specialists as follows:

- Team leader – a role currently shared by the HI and VI Advisory teachers with responsibility for management of resources i.e. financial and human including performance and line management of staff
- Teachers of the deaf – support classroom teachers and teaching assistants and parents in a variety of settings. They must hold a mandatory qualification as a teacher of the deaf
- Teachers of the VI - support classroom teachers and teaching assistants and parents in a variety of settings. They must hold a mandatory qualification as a teacher of visual impairment
- Access Support Assistants – responsible for adapting learning resources and teaching materials so that they are accessible to pupils with visual impairment. This is not just about conversion to different formats such as large print or braille but also involves the simplification of visual content
- Social Inclusion Facilitators – facilitate social inclusion and encourage children and young people with sensory impairment and/or complex needs to participate in a range of activities in the community, including extra-curricular school activities. This may involve supporting young people with their personal social and emotional development
- HI Technical Officer – responsible for the maintenance of technical equipment such as hearing aids, audiometers or other IT equipment. This involves the repair, management and calibration of specialist equipment
- Educational Audiologist – this role requires a qualified teacher of the deaf who also has a recognised qualification in audiology. The Education Audiologist participates in hearing aid testing and hearing aid reviews often in joint clinics with the community or hospital setting. They provide guidance to schools in relation to acoustics and maximizing listening conditions for hearing impaired pupils
- Habilitation Specialist – supports children and young people with a visual impairment to move around as safely, efficiently and independently as possible. Habilitation specialists can also help children to take charge of their own personal care – washing, dressing, choosing appropriate clothes, organising their belongings and taking a full part in family life, for example by helping at meal times
- ICT Inclusion Support Officer – supports pupils by providing specialist equipment for pupils with Visual Impairment which helps with such things as magnification, enlargement and connectivity with school IT systems.

The Review Process

The 10 Step Approach used by S4C

In undertaking the review S4C followed a 10 step approach which was agreed by both local authorities. This approach was as follows:

1) Confirming the project brief and approach with both commissioning authorities and other interested parties identified by the Strategic Leads. This involved:
    - establishing key contacts across education, health and care and a project governance structure and reporting mechanisms
    - establishing a focus group of stakeholders
    - clarifying the approach and understanding in more detail, the local context and local issues
    - amending the scope accordingly.

2) Collating, analysing and comparing the affordability of SIS. This involved:
    - meeting members of the local authorities finance teams and SEN officers to understand commissioning arrangements and any existing specification or service level agreements.
    - meeting team managers to gain a better understanding of service trends.
    - considering the high need spend within each local area and understanding pressures.

3) Identifying trends in service need and future growth in demand. This involved:
    - gathering and analysing data on the levels of young people with identified HI and VI and any trends in terms of level of incidence.
    - meeting with local authority data officers and jointly considering any arising issues.

4) Describing the current service offer and gathering data on the impact of the service offer on young people. This involved:
    - meeting the sensory teams
    - considering the service structure
    - if not already completed, instigating a self-evaluation assessment by service managers
    - considering pathways into the service
    - comparing the service offer to NatSIP guidance
    - considering and describing packages of support and the model of provision for the HI and VI population
    - considering outcomes data.

5) Meeting and engaging with service users, parents young people and schools and settings. This involved:
    - discussing with the parent carer forum the best way of engaging with families
    - visiting a sample of settings and meeting staff, pupils and families.

6) Comparing the use of the services by both local authorities. This involved:
    - undertaking a case load analysis and describing the demand and spread across each local authority
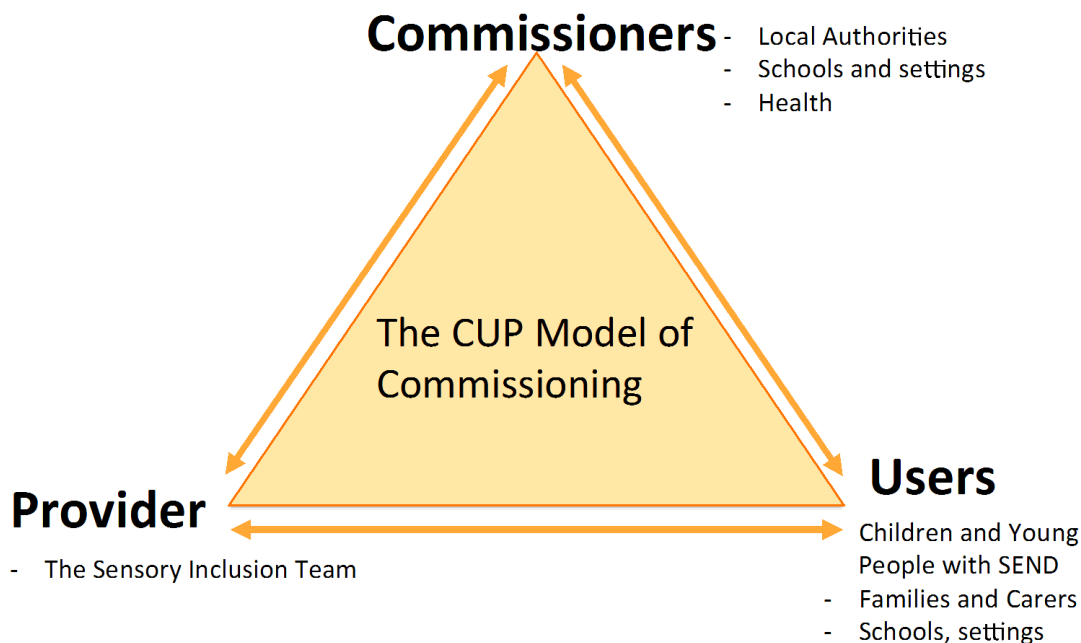
- identifying the benefits and challenges of continuing the joint arrangements across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and any risks of discontinuing this model of delivery.

7) Undertaking an efficiencies exercise with service leads to identify potential savings at levels of 10%, 20%, 30%, and the associated risks. This involved:
    - providing a brief for service leads and support in completing the efficiencies process in order that potential savings and associated risks in achieving the savings can be identified.

8) Presenting interim findings and a draft report. This involved:
    - presenting findings and options to commissioners
    - facilitating focus group discussions to identify a potential decision about the future model of delivery. This will be on the basis of information we have gathered and will address three key issues:
        a) What happens now and how effective is the model.
        b) What we would like the model of delivery to look like in future.
        c) How we can get there.
    - Preparing a draft report which addresses:
        ➢ the current and future needs of service users
        ➢ the effectiveness and the impact of the service on children and young people with sensory impairment
        ➢ options for the future delivery of SIS taking account of models of best practice, national service standards and the available budget.

9) Producing a final report and executive summary based on the findings of the draft report and any amendments. This will involve:
    - a formal written report containing a set of recommendations which have been agreed with the Strategic Leads
    - the report will contain a range of information including notes of meetings, data sets, financial information
    - a power point summarising the main points of the review.

10) Following approval of the final report SEND4Change could provide support during the service transformation phase.

The Consultation Process

The "CUP" Model

The process undertaken followed SEND4Change's CUP model based on the principle of engagement and coproduction. The Cup Model is shown below.

The CUP Model:
Developing the relationships between Commissioners, Users and Providers

Commissioners -
- Local Authorities
- Schools and settings
- Health

The CUP Model of Commissioning

Provider
- The Sensory Inclusion Team

Users
Children and Young People with SEND
- Families and Carers
- Schools, settings

This model is based on the importance of the engagement of commissioners with users and providers in order to commission services more effectively. It chimes with the spirit of the SEND Code of Practice which encourages Local Authorities and Health services to engage with young people with SEND and their families and settings, schools and colleges to ensure that services meet need and have the maximum impact within the resources available.

The Potential for Conflicting Perspectives

It is worth setting out that there are a number of apparent differing perspectives, which have arisen as a result of the discussions with stakeholders. It is inevitable in any review that a range of differing perspectives will need to be considered and sometimes these perspectives will conflict. In the case of this review which has explored the relationship between the VI and HI services across two LAs, across health and education, across providers, users and commissioners, across local authority providers and special interest groups, the capacity for disagreement appears to be more intense.

The table sets out some of these conflicts.

Perspective one	Perspective two	The Potential Conflict
A first class service	A service you can afford	The SIS service is perceived to be a good service, but is it affordable? Alternatively, can each local authority afford not to have this level of service? What would be the consequence of change?
The positive experience of families receiving support from SIS	There is an imbalance in resource allocated to support children and young people with sensory needs.	That substantial resource is allocated to support families, children and young people with sensory impairment over and above that available for other areas of need.
Health	Education	Changes in health provision and practice have an impact on the demands for an educational response and service. Is the balance right between the interventions provided by both services? Is a medical approach driving an increased demand for an educational response? The current close collaboration between health and education is regarded as a model of good practice.
Sensory service	Other SEN services	Any requirement to achieve savings needs to be shared across all service areas. A reluctance to make savings in the sensory inclusion service will increase the strain on other service areas.
Telford and Wrekin	Shropshire	The local authorities have different political leanings and different approaches to SEN. Can a solution which satisfies both authorities be achieved?
Local provision	Out of borough provision	Nearly all children with a sensory impairment have their needs met in local provision. Any changes may result in a reduction of confidence in local provision.
Single issue lobby groups	Local authority decision making	There are a number of special interest groups who will have an interest in the outcome of this review but the authorities need to consider the interests of all families with children who have SEND.
Central services funded by LA	Services paid for by schools (a traded service)	Schools and local authorities are experiencing pressure on resources. If the local authority increases the likelihood of school contributions to services, this in turn increases financial pressure on schools' budgets. Schools already pay for some SEN services, why would they not be prepared to pay for elements of the sensory service?

Information Gathering

The review provided the opportunity to gather information through a number of different approaches:

- collating national and local data and information
- arranging focussed discussions with a variety of stakeholder groups
- visiting facilities and observing practice
- comparing practice in other areas.

As a result of the consultation process a considerable range of data, information and observations was gathered. This information needed to be simplified into an accessible format. S4C has assimilated the information and this has been re-configured into four emerging key themes. The diagram below illustrates the approach.
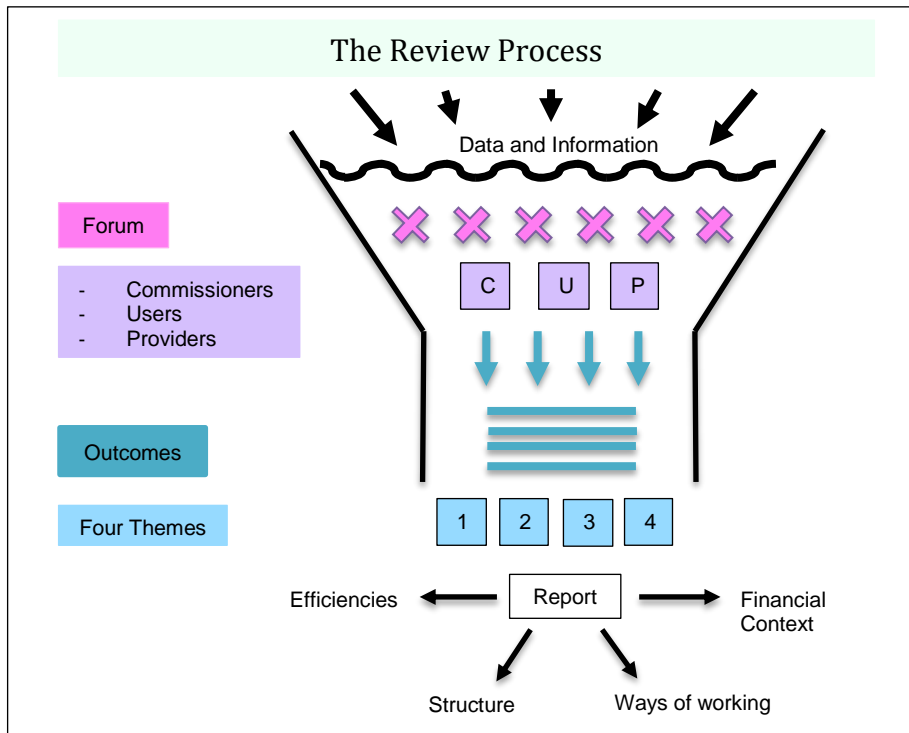
The four emerging themes are as follows:

Theme 1: Fairness

This has involved the development of thinking about the fairness of the split between Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire in terms of the cost of the service, the needs of the communities and the sufficiency of the service provided.

Theme 2 : Quality

This involved the analysis of information gathered from a variety of perspectives about the quality of the service and the impact on young people who accessed the service. This theme considered the strengths and challenges of the current service offer and identified a number of potential improvements.

Theme 3 : Affordability

This involved increasing the understanding of the financial context in which the service is offered. It looked at the possibility of increasing efficiency and considered alternative models of allocating resources.

Theme 4 : Organisational Effectiveness

This involved consideration of the current model of delivering a joint service across two local authorities and whether the management structure and the accountability framework is fit for purpose.

The following sections provide more detail of the 4 themes.

Theme 1: Fairness

This feature refers to the fairness of the split between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Evidence has been gathered relating to:

- the actual financial split (57% Shropshire 43% Telford and Wrekin)
- demographics and population
- levels of diagnosis/Incidence
- caseloads, visits to schools settings, colleges or home or clinic
- geographic dispersal of caseloads across the two Local Authorities

The key question to address is whether the existing financial split of 43% versus 57% is fair between the two local authorities.
S4C examined the following evidence:

What is the 2-18 population for each Authority?

	Shropshire	Telford and Wrekin	Combined
Number of 2-18 population	57,082	36,870	93,952
%	61%	39%	100%

What is the level of service delivery to each authority?

The HI team provided a snapshot of service delivery as on 31.3.18.

The table below shows that the split across HI caseloads is 42% Telford and Wrekin, 58% Shropshire

Category	Telford and Wrekin	Shropshire	Total
Total number supported	261	348	609
Total aided	137	200	337
Conductive	88	154	242
Sensori neural	155	159	314
Mixed	16	31	47
Other	2	3	5
Totals	659	895	1,554
%	42%	58%	100%

What is the level of HI referrals in each authority?

Year date	Shropshire	Telford	Total
16/17 total new referrals % of referrals	56 referrals 62% of referrals	34 referrals 38% of referrals	90
17/18 total new referrals	52 62% of referrals	32 38% of referrals	84
Sessions being delivered	90.55 sessions 60%	59.55 40%	150.1

Is there any increase in demand for an HI service?

The information available for HI suggests that the number of referrals has increased significantly over the last few years. This is due to a shift in patient care and treatment within the health service.

The number of children with a severe or profound hearing impairment has remained relatively static.

NICE, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, issued new guidance in 2016 on the management of children with a conductive hearing loss. This resulted in changes to consultant practice in the local hospitals. The number of children with a conductive loss (such as glue ear), being issued with a hearing aid or a band aid has increased significantly as consultants have shifted practice from inserting grommets (a medical procedure requiring minor surgery) to fitting an externally worn bone conduction hearing aid. This in turn has resulted in increases in the number of referrals to the SIS (HI) team.

Is there any increase in demand for a VI service?

The following shows the trend in demand for VI services.

Year of referral	Shropshire	Telford and Wrekin
13/14	15	15
14/15	23	23
15/16	29	30
16/17	36	17
17/18	18	30

Total cases supported	Shropshire	Telford and Wrekin
31.3.18	155	153

This shows that due to the fact that the level of diagnosis for visual impairment is relatively low, small shifts in the pattern of diagnosis can cause significant swings in the pattern of service delivery. For example, in 2016/17, there was significantly more demand in Shropshire but this has been reversed in 2017/18. It would be difficult to predict where the demand might "swing" over time. The VI service is a prime

example of a flexible service delivered over two authorities which is able to respond to an unpredictable demand for a highly specialist service.

Conclusion

The incidence of sensory impairment is relatively low. As a result, when considering children with a severe and profound sensory loss, the SIS service acts like an "insurance scheme". The cost of making provision for this low incidence of need is relatively high, and as such is referred to as low incidence/high cost provision. The "insurance scheme" protects individual settings from the high cost risk that this presents. It supports the positive inclusion of young people with sensory impairment into mainstream settings. On the relatively rare occasions when a child with severe or profound sensory impairment is placed at a school or setting, a centrally funded service protects the setting from incurring high spend.

The two local authorities pay into this "insurance scheme". The cost of the scheme should reflect the relative demand for the service. The share of the cost of the scheme should reflect the demand in the local areas.

On the evidence provided, the funding contributions from each Authority appear to be fair with regard to hearing impairment. In other words the level of demand and service provision is reflected in the share of the cost.

In relation to visual impairment the incidence of diagnosis is much lower and is less predictable. It is therefore likely that on occasions there will be an imbalance. A few high level need cases in one area will require higher levels of intervention. The following year the need may well be more apparent in another area.

The split across the two service areas seems fair, based on the available indicators. As such there is no requirement to adjust the level of financial contribution made by either local authority. Both local authorities can be assured that they are receiving the level of service for which they are paying. However, it will be necessary to review this on an annual basis and include the outcome as part of an annual service report for both Local Authorities. The head of service will need to report on an annual basis to both local authorities on the use and impact of each service area. This will include:

- level of referrals
- level of caseload allocations
- pupil outcomes

Theme 2: Quality

This section considers:
- the quality of the service currently delivered
- service user feedback including the impact of the service.

HI Team: Quality Self-Assessment

- SIS (HI) carried out a self-evaluation exercise using the NatSIP "Quality Improvement Support Pack Self-Audit Tool".
- The self-evaluation was carried out initially in 2016 but has been updated for the purpose of this review.

The toolkit sets out a number of standards against which services are able to measure themselves. The majority of standards were rated as "green" meaning that the features being described were well developed and confidently implemented, and the SIS was able to provide evidence to justify these judgments. The service also identified a number of standards which were perceived to be "amber" or "red" and required further development. The following list of standards are those which have been identified as requiring improvement:

Relationships with other services
- collaborate with the SEN team in order to ensure a smooth transition into new placements
- improve the understanding of safeguarding processes
- improve the knowledge of the Care Act and its implications

Awareness of broader SEN needs
- develop an understanding of broader SEN arrangements to adapt HI approaches appropriately
- enhance knowledge of the new SEN Code of Practice
- understand the pathways into mental health services
- ensure that assessments and records need to identify and acknowledge broader SEN issues.

Parental engagement
- engage with families using jargon free language in reports
- engage with children and young people and their families in service development
- improve the information on the Local Offer to include NatSIP guidance on service allocations.

Support for Schools and Colleges
- develop online advice and information resources for schools
- improve support for local colleges and pathways to adulthood
- increase the team's knowledge and skills of British Sign Language.

These improvement priorities reflect the need for the SIS to connect further with non-HI related services. They also recognise the need to further embed aspects of the Children and Families Act 2014. Additionally, further work needs to be done with local Colleges. It is important that the service understands its responsibility to ensure that there are pathways into adulthood which take into account the need for healthy lifestyles, independent living and employment opportunities. Also, the lack of BSL

skills within the HI team represents a shortcoming in the SIS contribution to the Local Offer and narrows the approach offered to families with deaf children.

Measuring the Impact/Outcomes as a result of Service intervention

SIS maintain a "bank" of outcomes data in order to evaluate the impact of the service. The outcomes include data that relate to organisational effectiveness and service improvement targets and also data that relates to pupil performance and pupil outcomes.

A sample of Impact and improvement measures used by SIS:

Improvement area	Activity	Telford	Shropshire
Keeping children safe	• staff completing safeguarding training • stability of CiC educational placement	100% 100%	100% 100%
Improving outcomes	• numbers of fixed term exclusions HI /VI	0/0 spring 0/0 summer	0/2 spring 2/- summer
Pupil progress 2015/16	Average progress 8 score key stage 4	Hi -0.84 VI -0.21	HI -0.13 VI 24.5
Pupil Progress 2015/16	Expected standard or above in English, Reading, Writing, Maths, (key stage 2)	HI 40% VI 0%	HI 27.3% VI 0.%
Pupil progress 2015/16	% achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSE including English and maths	HI no data VI 16.67%	HI 42.9% VI 9.09%

It is notoriously difficult to identify pupil outcomes which can be attributed to a service intervention. There are a number of reasons for this as demonstrated by the following key questions:

- Is a pupil's progress as a result of quality first teaching or as a result of a service intervention?
- Is a pupil's "poor performance" as a result of poor classroom teaching or poor advice provided from the service or the inherent limitations resulting from the child's disability?

For example: NATSIP benchmarking data is used in relation to the percentage of young people achieving expected levels in Communication and Language. The data for Telford and Shropshire provides a score for each area but it is impossible to reach a judgement about the effectiveness and impact of the service delivery on outcomes:

Sensory Impairment	Telford	Shropshire
HI Achieved	50%	40%
VI Achieved	50%	33.3%

Does this mean that the service provided by SIS is poor in Shropshire compared to the service provided in Telford? Does this mean that schools in Shropshire are less able to meet the needs of pupils with sensory impairment or does this mean the cohort of pupils in Shropshire had a significantly greater level of sensory impairment, which impacted on their performance?

SEND4Change asked its school improvement associates to consider the data provided by the SIS team. We asked them to use their experience of school leadership, school improvement and the Ofsted inspections framework to determine whether the outcomes provided could be attributed to the quality of service provision. Some of the performance data related to pupil measures and some related to organisational effectiveness. Whilst improvements in organisational effectiveness were recognised, there was insufficient trend data and comparable data to reach a judgement about the overall impact that the service had on individual pupils. It is not possible to determine whether positive performance or poor performance could be attributed to the service provision or whether it could be associated with high quality or poor quality teaching. In addition it was not possible to be certain about whether the performance indicators were in fact positive or negative.

It is therefore recommended that the service establish an effective Quality Assurance Framework in collaboration with school improvement partners.
In developing the framework consideration should be given to:

1) the progress of individual pupils and cohorts of pupils
2) trend comparisons of the progress of cohorts of young people

This should reported regularly to the Service Managers in both Authorities.

In addition as a result of this review it is likely that the service will be undergoing a programme of change. A set of suitable measures should be identified which:

1) monitor the effectiveness of the change programme
2) monitor the impact of the change on pupils
3) monitor the impact on schools and agencies.

Service User Feedback

S4C engaged with a variety of stakeholders across both local authorities.
These consultation activities took the form of:
1) meetings and discussions with commissioners, users and providers of the service.
2) a questionnaire with Shropshire schools.
3) service feedback surveys from service users (SENCOs and Families across both Local Authorities).

A number of consultation meetings have taken place which provided the opportunity for users of the service and interested stakeholders to discuss their perceptions of the strengths and challenges of the service offer with the review team from SEND4Change.

These included meetings with:

• the SEN Strategic leads for both local authorities

- the SIS team managers
- the SIS teams
- HI and VI user groups comprising parents/carers and young people and schools
- parents at "Little Stars" parent group
- CHSWG
- representatives of Telford and Wrekin Parent Carer Forum
- a representative from the Shropshire Parent and Carer Council
- a focused meeting with representatives from Telford schools
- Shropshire Central Policy Group.
- the regional NDCS representative.

Additionally, two questionnaires have been completed.
1. A survey of parents and schools undertaken by the SIS
2. A survey of Shropshire schools.

The main outcomes from the discussions arising during the consultation meetings are described below.

Parent Carers and User Group Summary

The following represents the main discussion points from parents and carers and other users. Two meetings were held with users of the VI and HI services on 5th June, 2018 at Darby House, Telford. The meetings were attended by a range of users from Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin including parents, young people and school representatives. Each meeting focused on four key questions of the users as follows:

- What was your experience of the service?
- What aspects were good, most valuable, most impactful ?
- What could have been delivered differently or have been improved?
- What could you have delivered if time and resources were invested elsewhere?

Visual Impairment Focus

Attended by: Parents Carers and Schools across Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire who use the VI service.

The discussion focused on the user perspective of the VI service. This included a young person's experience, the experience of families and schools.

All users acknowledged the specialist skills of the VI team and were keen to emphasise the dedication and commitment of team members to improving the outcomes for children and young people with VI.

Each user was invited to explain their experience of the service and the following key points arose from the discussion in answer to the four key questions:

Key strengths of the service:
- early help and Family Support Groups. Support in early years provided good opportunities for parents to network. Experience of the early years

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> 'Cuckoo Group' had been good but there were less similar opportunities as children became older
- early identification
- provided challenge to schools
- increased the capacity of schools to meet need
- a range of different specialists across the age ranges
- advice on adaptations in schools
- contact via the office telephone line was slow and unreliable. (This was tested by S4C and on several occasions, the telephone number listed on the Local Offer was not answered.) However, the users were given direct contact with individual team members via mobile phones. Contact via this route usually elicited a speedy response where required or generated an individual visit.

Gaps/Areas for improvement
- lack of social opportunities post 16
- lack of opportunities for life outside school
- there is a need to strengthen arrangements up to the age of 25
- there needs to be increased knowledge of what is available and how people can be linked together for example: access to work
- the number of technical assessments could be reduced. However, it was recognised that it would be worthwhile to keep the level of testing where vision/acuity is changing
- there was no perceived benefit in splitting the service and offering two separate services across two Local Authorities.

Hearing Impairment Focus

Attended by: Parents, Carers and Schools across Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire who use the HI service. The discussion focused on the user perspective of the HI service. This included a young person's experience, the experience of families and schools. All users acknowledged the specialist skills of the HI team and were keen to emphasise the dedication and commitment of team members to improving the outcomes for children and young people with HI.

Each user was invited to explain their experience of the service and the following key points arose from the discussion in answer to the four key questions:

Key strengths of the service:

- families benefitted from early years group and contact with HI early years specialists
- hearing aids fitted early (audiologist fitted aids days after diagnosis)
- families received a very professional input and service
- compared to other service offers it is much more detailed and robust
- supported child all through school
- families with children with a mild and moderate hearing loss received a service
- high level of intervention from the HI team
- school believe the service is good because it is joint across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. Feedback about cross border complications reinforce the notion that a shared service would be better for users

- service support to schools gave families confidence that schools understood their child's needs
- teachers and TAs have received a huge amount of support
- SIS team have invaluable knowledge of cochlear implants
- TODs are extremely committed and "go the extra mile"
- TOD's fitted hearing aid moulds at home which saved a visit to hospital
- SIS provides a course at the beginning of the year which school staff appreciated
- the personal and professional support offered to a deaf young person was described as "amazing"
- the TODs fit in well with school staff and feel like part of the team
- requests for advice and support receive a very prompt and efficient response.
- outcomes for learners who access the service are good.

Gaps/Areas for improvement
- parents and schools reported that they wished support for SEN and CAMHS was as good
- Shrewsbury would benefit from a local family group (not all parents can get to Telford)
- Shrewsbury would benefit from more local "out of school activities"
- there seems to be a lot of "testing". Is this always necessary?
- if you phone TODS directly you get a good level of response, this is not so reliable if you contact the office directly.
- any reduction in service could be costly further down the line.

Feedback From Little Stars Parents group

The Little Stars Parents Group was established in order to develop a supportive network for parents of children with a visual impairment. It is based at a Telford Stepping Stones Children's Centre. It is offered to families across Shropshire as well.

The numbers of families accessing the group varies from 2 to 6. Parents can bring non-impaired siblings.

Key strengths of the service:

- the parents group is well regarded by those that use it
- parents feel it is a good place to meet other parents and support each other
- as the group is held at the children's centre, it helps parents arrange multiple appointments if required with other service providers who are based there
- a QTVI manages the service and is available to provide specialist advice
- some of the children access the specialist sensory room.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:

- some of the parents have to travel a long way to access the group and would appreciate a more local opportunity to meet up .

Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

S4C were invited to attend a meeting of CHSWG on 13th June, 2018 at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. This is the consultative panel with oversight of all arrangements for Hearing Impairment across health, education and the Third sector including the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) and the British Deaf Association (BDA).

The forum has a varied membership comprising parents, young people, consultants, audiologists, teachers, technicians across education and health. The forum demonstrates a very joined up approach for hearing impaired young people in the two authorities.

Key strengths of the service:
- provides a good model of multi-agency working
- operation of joint clinics across education and health provides a good service for the most vulnerable children aged 0-5
- SIS involvement ensures 'seamless communication between agencies'
- contact with the same individual provides consistency for families and a common link
- the HI team's involvement in fitting hearing aids works 'well'
- a single service for all generates benefits in terms of consistent and equitable provision, economies of scale.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:

No gaps or areas for improvement were identified.

Parents Carers Forum: Telford

S4C met a small group of 5 representatives of the Telford and Wrekin parents carers forum.

The purpose of this discussion was to compare the user feedback from a wider group of service users who have children with a variety of needs, not necessarily HI or VI.

Key strengths of the service:

- early years services are good. Where a child is born with a recognisable condition, a clear pathway is in place but for families who enter the system at a later stage in their child's development, the pathway was not so clear and was believed to be less effective
- the SIS service overall for families is very good.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:

- there is not such a good response for children who have autism and are deaf. The SIS needs to 'stretch and reach' and join up more effectively with other services.
- SIS could more effectively "join up" with other SEN service areas . Some families with children with a variety of special needs felt there was a duplication of effort.
- families with children with complex needs are asked to attend a multitude of appointments and professionals need to ensure that these are essential.
- SIS needs to take steps to be more efficient. Some parents commented that they had received significant input from SIS specialists but were not sure that this was needed on such a regular basis.
- parents of children with autism expressed concerns that:
  - services were difficult to access
  - the current pathway is based on a medical model via CAMHs.
  - there appears to be two models of service delivery across all services. One for children with complex needs that are identified from birth and a lower less effective model for those who receive a diagnosis further down the line and access services later in life.

Shropshire Parent and Carer Council

S4C met with a representative from Shropshire's Parent and Carer Council on 2nd July, 2018.

The purpose of this discussion was to compare the user feedback from a wider group of service users who have children with a variety of needs, not necessarily HI or VI.

Key strengths of the service:

- there is a good level of service at an early stage of a child's development, although this is not necessarily the same for other families whose children have a different disability

- 'Little Stars' provision helps parents to emotionally adjust

- Severndale school provides individualised person-centred input but there is limited choice of local special schools for pupils with wider SEN.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:

- SIS is not widely well known and there is the perception that 'they can pick and choose' who receives support
- there is no similar pathway for families of children with Autism
- HI/VI Services offered in Telford are difficult for Shropshire parents to access if they do not have any transport.
- connectivity with families could be improved through the use of social media and technology
- communication with families is key and needs to be open and transparent.

The SIS Parent and SENCO Annual Survey

The service undertakes an evaluation of SIS with Parents and SENCOs on an annual basis. The most recent survey was completed in June 2018.

The majority of feedback from parents and schools is highly positive with some areas requiring further consideration. The feedback is divided between the VI and HI teams and the main points arising from the evaluation are:

Hearing Impaired Service

School feedback

Key strengths of the service:

- staff are extremely knowledgeable, helpful and proactive
- 'Wonderful staff who diminish barriers to learning and participation'
- they work with both the child and staff
- regular contact and liaison available
- detailed reports provided
- provide an invaluable link between medical teams and providers.

SIS Parent and SENCO Annual Survey HI Service Feedback Continued.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:

- need to build in time to give feedback to staff about progress and pedagogical approaches
- need to link closely with teachers
- need to build more resilience of class teachers and staff in school
- need to improve levels of support and resources for staff in college.

Parent feedback

Key strengths of the service:

- very positive - offer an 'excellent' service
- regular visits at home and in school
- very supportive
- proactive, organised, helpful
- advise on equipment and also provide effective and speedy technical support for hearing aids
- excellent teachers of the deaf who do an amazing job.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:
- the early years offer is "too Telford focused"

- support drops off during the summer holiday period
- once school starts contact with parents diminishes
- transition to adult services is "disappointing"
- there needs to be more information about bi-lingual approaches.

Visual Impairment service

School Feedback
Key strengths of the service:

- provides high quality interventions and advice for schools, settings and colleges
- the team has highly valued specialist knowledge and provides high quality guidance
- the team works well with children and families
- good Braille service which is timely and excellent.

Gaps/ Areas for improvement:

- communication and CPD could be improved (one comment).

SIS Parent and SENCO Annual Survey VI Service Feedback Continued.

Parent feedback
Key strengths of the service:

- highly valued service
- 'Fantastic individual support that meets the needs of my child'
- 'Huge support to my child'
- newsletters, offers and events for VI young people
- effective specialist support to the student, family and school.

Gaps/Areas for improvement:

- provide support for children with multiple sensory challenges (there tends to be a focus on events and activities for able bodied individuals)
- supply home aids to help in the home environment
- staff training
- communication with parents when inputs are taking place in school.

Shropshire Central Policy Group

Shropshire has a Central Policy Group, which is used by the LA to discuss policy developments and strategic issues with school representatives. Following a presentation by S4C on the interim findings of the review of SIS, the members of the Policy group asked questions and raised a number of issues from a school's perspective. These issues included:
- why is education paying for elements of provision which appear to be health provision? Is the health/education balance correct?
- teachers need advice on pedagogy, not levels of hearing

- advice is often very technically based
- is there a cheaper way of delivering the service?
- the view was held that the service appears to be expensive compared to other service areas. Do all the tasks need to be carried out by a qualified teacher of the deaf or qualified teacher of visual impairment?
- some schools reported that it had been necessary for them to override the advice given by SIS. This had occurred when pupils have additional SEN or have English as a second language
- some questions arose about the suitability of the SIS approach in special schools
- should the service be based in Shrewsbury?

The Policy group requested further exploration of a number of key issues.
They requested that an exploratory survey be sent out to schools to identify key themes. The identified themes should be then further explored in the Autumn term by a focus group.

A questionnaire has subsequently been issued to all Shropshire schools with a deadline for returns by 20th July, 2018.

Telford and Wrekin Schools

A sample of Schools from Telford and Wrekin were invited to joined a focused discussion about the Sensory Inclusion Service. The schools in attendance had experience of both the Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment service.

Key points arising from the discussion were:

Hearing Impairment: key strengths of the service

- a very good service is provided for pupils with the highest level of needs. However, advice provided for pupils with lower levels of need is perceived to be common sense
- support from the service has enabled TAs to understand how to check and clean hearing aids
- it is helpful that a consistent team member sees the pupil
- schools that have received the service, value it and indicated that they would be prepared to pay for it
- support from the Social Inclusion Facilitator was good. This related to a child who was putting herself in at risk without being aware of the danger. The support from the SIF was positive and also linked with the family.

Gaps/Areas for Improvement

- the service reports provided focus on the level of hearing loss at a point in time. It would be helpful to have more practical solutions
- children who do not need hearing aids receive support and the service provides a report. Schools are not sure of the value of this input
- schools receive visits from the HI team because of a need which has been identified by the service and not the school
- termly and annual visits are received. Reports are provided and the class teacher is made aware. However, it was reported that it would be good for

the SIS to advise how to enable the child to participate more effectively in class
- there is a perceived difference between the delivery of HI and VI which appears to relates to the ability to build capacity and resilience in schools.

Visual Impairment: key strengths of the service

- when visits were made for a specific identified need, the support is good
- training which is provided at the end of the year to understand how a child with a visual impairment functions is highly valued.
- life skills training for the child was very helpful
- direct access to the VI teacher by phone was helpful.
- training provided to build resilience is helpful and schools stated that they would like more of the same.

Gaps/Areas for Improvement

- communication about the VI offer needs to improve
- more practical solutions are needed
- a consistent training offer should be provided – one school reported that training had not been offered for four years whereas other schools indicated that they had received annual training
- some schools received visits as part of a schedule but the outcomes were not perceived to be effective and schools would not have routinely requested the visit
- classroom observations often resulted in what appeared to be a criticism of the class teacher
- advice for pupils with lower levels of need could be provided by technology/YouTube.

Other cross service issues:

- HI/VI needs are tangible and obvious. Other needs such as autism are not so easily recognisable or diagnosed. There was the perception that there was a high proportion of other children with SEN whose needs were not being met in the same way or to the same level as pupils with HI/VI.
- the service is often driven by health needs and provision for which education is paying:
- CAMHS
- SALT
- Audiology
- there seems to be a mismatch in funding available for pupils with HI/VI compared to pupils with other needs (Autism, SEMH)
- head teachers would like a clear understanding of what can be expected from the SIS to deliver the maximum impact
- it is perceived that SIS is a service which is "done to schools rather than being based on what schools want. It happens because of an identified need from health".

Regional NDCS Representative

NDCS

S4C met with David Heap, Regional Director for the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) for the West Midlands. S4C briefed the NDCS on the interim findings of the review, David then provided some information about the national picture which has helped to inform the review.

The key points from the conversation were:
- nationally there is a 14 % decline in the numbers of teachers of the deaf.
- there is a significant number of existing TOD's who are in the upper age quartile and are due to retire
- the attainment gap has widened for deaf children. The West Midlands gap is 26%, the gap in England is 25%
- NDCS is interested in mainstream support for deaf children. There is the acknowledgement that deaf children don't want to be removed from the classroom, and they don't want to be seen to be different
- there needs to be a close alignment of the support given by the sensory inclusion services that recognises the changes in the national curriculum and approaches in schools and new models of learning
- whilst direct support is good, there are other ways of providing advice and support that utilises digital platforms, social media and technology. Much of this is already available to deaf people
- there is a national imperative to improve post 16 arrangements, and SIS will need to develop links with local employment providers and support planning for students' adult life
- the NDCS will be challenging local authorities about careers advice, pupil destinations, higher education and work
- regional collaborations are an emerging solution for many local authorities who are seeking an efficient cost effective model of providing sensory services.

In addition to the conversation with the Regional Director, a report was provided entitled "Data on Deaf Children: Shropshire Telford and Wrekin (NDCS Briefing July 2018). This makes some key points:
- deafness is not a learning disability. With the right support, deaf children should reach similar levels of attainment to other children
- there is a total of circa 50,000 children in UK who are deaf. Twice as many children have autism
- deaf children have diverse needs including various:
  - levels and types of hearing loss
  - use of technology
  - communication approaches
  - languages spoken at home.
- 20% of deaf children have additional SEN
- Teachers of the Deaf (TOD) are a unique solution to the low incidence nature of sensory impairment
- TODS work with families from an early age

Regional NDCS Representative Feedback Continued.

- data from the annual survey of deaf provision shows:
  - an increase in caseload from 2010 to 2018. However, since 2016 this has included children with a temporary hearing loss
  - staffing has fluctuated over the same period from 9 to 12 TODS
  - caseloads fluctuate from the lowest figure of 219 in 2011/12 to the highest figure of 604 in 2015/16
  - currently in 2017/18 caseloads stand at 602 but this now includes significant number of children and young people with a temporary loss.

- NDCS made a comparison between the combined sensory services in Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire and a hypothetical joint service of Rotherham and Herefordshire (statistical neighbours of both authorities)

Joint Sensory Service	Caseload	Teachers of the Deaf
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin	602	9.5
Rotherham and Herefordshire	603	14.8

- NDCS provides cautionary advice to LAs who are looking to reduce services. Budget reductions may make it more difficult for LAs to meet their statutory duties
- NDCS recommended that the review considers the impact on Post 16 provision
- NDCS also suggests that LAs consider regional collaboration (such as that which currently exists between the two authorities in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin)

The Role of Specialists

The review considered the impact of presenting SIS as a highly specialist service and the positive benefits and potential negative consequences. The potential impact of a culture of expertise and specialism is shown below

Building School, Setting, College and Family Resilience
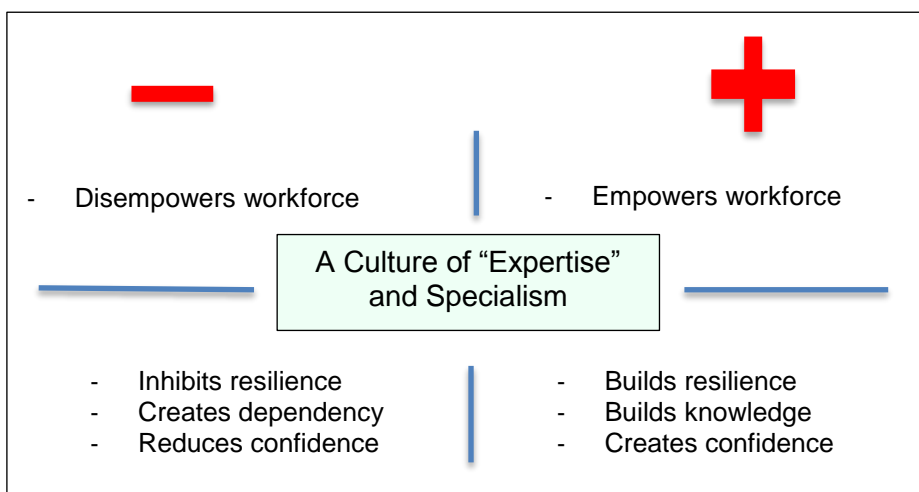
The Sensory service is by nature a specialist service. The specialist knowledge and expertise possessed by the team is highly valued by those who receive advice and support from it. Used effectively, this specialist knowledge empowers staff in schools, builds confidence and develops the ability to appropriately manage the learning experience of young people with sensory needs.

The successful specialist teacher who supports staff in mainstream schools strikes a good balance between holding and keeping that knowledge or imparting aspects of that knowledge in order to develop the expertise of staff in schools. If the balance is wrong, a specialist teacher could disempower staff in schools and inadvertently generate a lack of confidence and create a culture of dependency.

Care should be taken in the way in which the team is described as specialists and qualified Teachers of the Deaf or Qualified Teachers of Visual Impairment. On the one hand it is an accurate description, but on the other hand it is a construct which is potentially disempowering. It is not a phraseology that is apparent in other service areas. An Education Psychologist has a psychology qualification but would not be generally referred to as a "qualified educational psychologist".

It is recommended that conversations are held between schools, SIS and School Improvement colleagues focusing on developing approaches which:

i)   Support children and young people with hearing and visual impairment
ii)   Build resilience in settings schools and colleges.

Senior Managers from SEN in both Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin carried out a number of observations of the SIS team in the classroom. These senior managers expressed a number of opinions, which are worthy of consideration. These include the following:

- Teachers of the deaf/visually impaired should consider the model upon which they operate to ensure that it empowers school staff to meet the needs of children with hearing and visual impairment in their classrooms
- Teaching sessions delivered with children, including pre-tutoring and independent skills, should always be linked to class based learning
- The use of lengthy assessments and completion of reports should be reviewed to ensure that the activities add value
- Termly lesson planning and continuous assessment should form the basis upon which personalised learning is delivered.

There should be consideration of the specialist roles undertaken by SIS in building capacity and resilience in schools, settings and colleges and families. Commissioners should consider the roles, the impact that they make and whether they are best placed to be employed by the service or commissioned separately. The commissioners should consider whether:

- *Access Support Assistants* should increase their focus more on building capacity in schools alongside modifying aspects of the curriculum.
- To identify other funding sources *for the Social Inclusion Facilitators* – should Social Care/Early Help be funding this rather than education?
- Activities delivered by the *HI Technical Officer* could be conducted differently
- the *Habilitation Specialist* post could be commissioned from alternative providers. It may be worth noting that Derbyshire's Adult services are looking to outsource this role to an external provider. Additionally, Herefordshire is

looking to outsource the whole Sensory Improvement service to an external provider.

- a more detailed analysis of the role of the Educational Audiologist might help to determine whether aspects of this should be funded or provided by Health.

Conclusion

On the basis of the feedback and evidence considered, the predominant view is that the service provided by the Sensory Inclusion Service is good. However, as with any service there is always room for improvement. The priorities for improvement may Include the need to:

- develop a strategic aim to build resilience in settings, schools and colleges, and enhance the service offer to increasingly focus on teaching and learning
- improve telephone communication at Darby House
- provide an on-line advice and information service which is easily accessible to parents and young people. This should, in the first instance, focus on advice and support for young people with conductive loss and low levels of hearing loss.
- improve the BSL skills in the team and increase the breadth of support available across the HI team.
- Improve the knowledge and understanding of the team of SEN and the impact on the learning of young people a sensory impairment.
- address the improvements identified in the HI team's self-assessment
- develop a coherent pathway to adulthood for young people with sensory impairment
- offer a venue for parents to meet in Shrewsbury.
- Develop more robust measures for tracking pupil progress.

Schools are very keen to develop the skills and knowledge of staff in their own schools. Schools should be supported in becoming increasingly knowledgeable and self-sufficient.

A concern was expressed by some schools which suggested that, on occasion, the approach adopted by the sensory service, did not take account of the needs of those children and young people with sensory impairment who also had varying additional SEN. In some cases where a child had complex SEN and an additional hearing impairment, schools believed that the approach adopted by the sensory service did not reflect a good understanding of SEN.

It is recommended that commissioners consider the roles within the SIS, in particular those focused on social interaction and technical support and whether the roles are best placed in the service or should be commissioned externally.

It is also recommended that a Quality Assurance framework is established to track pupil progress and school resilience and that the outcomes are regularly reported to senior managers in both Authorities. An annual report should include
- Measures of pupil progress
- Measures of school resilience.

Theme 3: Affordability

It was necessary to examine whether the spend on sensory services was affordable given the financial context of each authority.

As with all public services in the current economic climate, both councils are operating in a time of financial constraint. In such a climate, there is increased accountability on how public money is being spent with increased pressure to ensure value for money and effectiveness.

The Telford and Wrekin Financial Context:

Telford and Wrekin receive £144.5 million Designated Schools Grant

This is divided three main ways as follows:
- Schools   £111.3 million (77.0%)
- Early Years   £ 12.0 million (8.3%)
- High Needs   £ 21.2 million (14.7%)

The high needs funding block is used to deliver three main areas of activity and provision as follows:
1) cash allocations to schools (top-up funding)
2) specialist provision
3) support services.

The support services derive their funding from three main sources:
1) A High Needs funding allocation
2) Contributions from Shropshire (for Portage and SIS)
3) Income generation from traded services.

Telford and Wrekin have a significant budget pressure on the high needs block. This equates to a predicted deficit of £1.3 million in 2018/19. This comprises an overspend of £500,000 and a deficit of £800,000 carried forward from 2017/18.

The LA plans to offset this by;
1) transferring an additional 0.5% high needs contribution from the DSG (£550,000).
2) benefiting from an additional high needs allocation from the DfE of £750,000.

In effect this additional funding of £1.3 million balances the budget. However, it is predicated on the need to keep the high needs spend at the same level in 2018/19. This is unlikely to happen as demand on the overall high needs budget is increasing with significant increases in demand for special school places and also a significant increase in expenditure for Post 16 provision as a result of the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014. The Government has not made any additional funding available to meet this new demand.

As a number of other SEN services derive their budget from income generated activity there is little option but to seek savings from the sensory team. In other words it is essential that the sensory service identifies savings or alternatively, increases funds through income generated activity.

The Shropshire Financial context

Shropshire receives £201 million Dedicated Schools Grant.

This is divided in three main ways as follows:

- Schools   £156 million   (78%)
- Early Years   £ 15 million   (7.5%)
- High Needs   £ 25.873 million (12.4%)

Shropshire offers fewer support services to schools than Telford and Wrekin. The opportunity for buyback is also minimal.

Shropshire Council has been fortunate that, in the past, its high needs budget was not experiencing significant financial pressure. This is no longer the case. Until recently, Shropshire has maintained a high needs budget that is not in deficit and is able to demonstrate positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND in comparison with similar groups nationally. Recent changes to the way local authorities recoup money for special school places used by other neighbouring local authorities have resulted in a sudden increase for Shropshire in the cost of these places. Shropshire will be required to pay the core funding element of £10,000 as well as the variable top up element of any school places it commissions from its neighbours. As Shropshire is heavily reliant on places in special schools in other Local Authorities, Shropshire will need to find an additional £800,000 per year to cover this cost. Shropshire did not benefit from additional high needs funding through the new national funding formula to cover this and so the additional cost will need to be found from the existing high needs block.

In other words there is a compelling case that savings will need to be derived from efficiencies in support services. As Shropshire does not have a significant support service offer, and Telford's support services generate much of their budget through income activity, SIS will need to contribute, alongside all other areas, to achieve savings across the two local authorities and also consider increased income generation.

Exploring more cost effective ways of delivering the SIS

The need for both local authorities to derive savings triggered discussions about efficiencies in SIS.

S4C carried out an efficiencies exercise with schools finance officers and team managers in SIS. This involved setting efficiency targets of 10%,15% and 20%. Sensory Inclusion Service managers were asked to identify areas of potential savings and efficiencies and to make judgements about the level of risks associated with those efficiencies.

This resulted in the identification of areas that would yield savings that could be achieved with a perceived low to medium level of risk.

Efficiencies Exercise

Activity to achieve low risk savings
Non staffing (training, cleansing budget)
Consolidate management posts
Vacancy control
Develop self-serve approach to low level need
Activity to achieve medium risk savings
Cleanse vacant posts from structure
Remove annual visits to unaided children
Review the delivery model for specialist posts
Further considerations
Variable options by adjusting RAS (Resource Allocation System)

Further savings could be achieved by:

    i)   reviewing the roles of all staff in the service to explore whether further efficiencies in existing practice can be delivered or whether other funding sources are available or whether some roles could be commissioned

    ii)   adjusting the resource allocation system. The system currently employed by SIS is a national framework developed by NatSIP and ways of adjusting this are explored below.

The NatSIP Guidance.

The Service uses the NatSIP guidance to determine the levels of support for children with a sensory impairment. There are three separate frameworks for the three aspects of sensory impairment:
1) Framework for hearing impairment.
2) Framework for visual impairment.
3) Framework for multi-sensory impairment.

The guidance is in effect a Resource Allocation System (RAS). A RAS is a system that has a process and a logic and a rationale for distributing resources. The following extract from the guidance sets out the purpose:

"The NatSIP Eligibility Framework for Scoring Support Levels document has been developed for use by local authority (LA) Sensory Support Services offering outreach support to children, young people and their families and educational settings (except for SI specialist provisions). The 2017 edition supersedes the previous 2015 version.

*The Eligibility Framework has been devised by experienced practitioners to provide a tool for Sensory Services to guide decision-making over support allocation for individual children and young people with hearing impairment (HI), vision impairment (VI) or multi-sensory impairment (MSI) through systematic consideration of a wide range of relevant factors. **Whilst the purpose is essentially to promote good practice in the allocation of support, the Eligibility Framework should not be interpreted and applied as a rigid set of criteria**."*

The following diagram illustrates how the RAS works. A number of steps need to be followed in order to determine an appropriate service allocation. This involves:
1) Gathering information about the child
2) Entering the child's details against the eligibility criteria
3) Calculating the score
4) Allocating a level of support.

Allocating SIS Resources Using NATSIP criteria
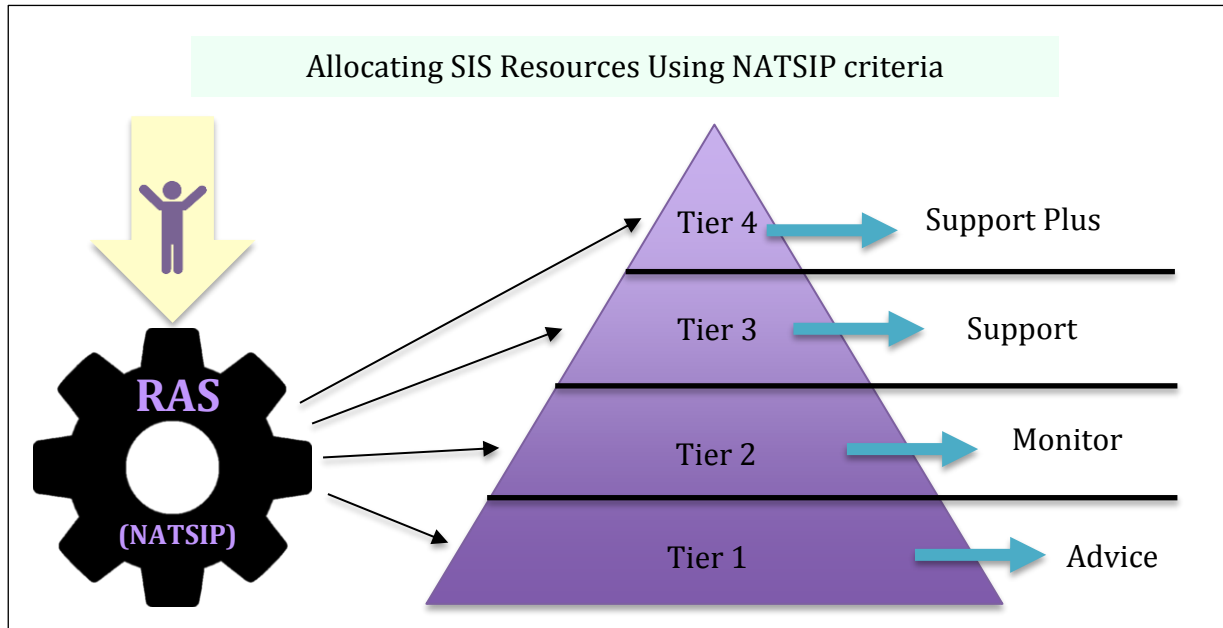
The current RAS employed by SIS uses a matrix allocation system based on NatSIP guidance that generates locally agreed levels of support to the majority of children assessed. An alternative matrix could "retune "the level of allocation. This could in effect do three things:

1) raise the threshold so that scores that achieve tier one are offered advice only
2) reduce the intensity of support offered at other tiers
3) ensure that there is a clear description and guidance on the duration of support packages and exit criteria.

The following matrix is offered in the NatSIP guidance as an exemplar. It is different from the current matrix used by SIS.

NatSIP Support Allocation Matrix Guidance (example)

Total Score Range	Support Category	Support Allocation
75% +	Support Plus	Plus Active caseload/very high level of support/probably includes pupils being seen twice or more each week/may include SIS Early Years children who have one visit but high level of multi-agency liaison required/reports required.
50-75%	Support	Active caseload/specialist SIS teachers decide on frequency and timing of visits/flexibility required/may include pupils seen for blocks of time/must let school know time and date of next visits/reports required.
25-50%	Monitor	Active caseload/one of two visits annually.
0-25%	Advice	Not on active caseload/lists held centrally/advice sent to schools following referral/advice by telephone following the request of the school/no reports provided.

This "retuning" of the allocation process would enable SIS to achieve savings whilst ensuring that there continues to be a fair, equitable and transparent decision making process for allocating the resources that are available. By using this approach, it will enable the local authorities to adjust the level of funding allocated to SIS.

The HI Service currently offers a direct support model of support for those children who have been assessed as having a low level of hearing impairment. This includes those with a loss but no aids, those with glue ear and offered a bone conduction aid, and those with a loss in one ear. With the significant increase in children with a bone conduction aid, as a result of changes in health practice, education colleagues in SIS will need to make a judgement about how they respond. It will be necessary to consider how advice can be provided to schools and families in alternative ways using social media, web based information, YouTube videos etc. The local offer would be a good place to provide a bank of advice and information that could be easily accessed by schools, settings and families.

Buy Back

Many SEN services and local authority services offer the opportunity for schools, settings and colleges to buy back additional elements of advice and support. Services provide a core offer based on statutory responsibilities with an extra menu of optional or additional service elements or enhancements. Care is needed to ensure that the core offer is adequate and that a menu of top up services is deliverable.

Information has been received from Coventry, Solihull and Worcester about their VI allocation processes. This information indicates that all of these LAs use NatSIP criteria to determine eligibility and bands of funding to allocate levels of support. However, the service offers in these LAs varies in terms of frequency and intensity.

In Worcester the bulk of the service for VI is commissioned by the Local Authority The service offers three tiers of support. These tiers are determined by NatSIP criteria.

- The top tier is commissioned by the LA
- The middle tier is commissioned on a bespoke level but "extras" can be purchased such as an audit of SEN adaptations, or extra staff training sessions over and above the core offer.
- The lower tier is traded and relates to pupils with good near and/or distance vision which is not fluctuating. The service offers 3 hour visits to include a full report and also a short assessment visit of 1 hour with a summary report.

The opportunity to offer a "buy back" service is worthy of exploration by the SIS. In effect the local authority would commission the core service provided to schools. If schools would like to commission additional services, over and above the core service offer, a framework or menu of services will need to be developed. There is the opportunity to "retune" the SIS NatSIP allocation criteria to recognise the core offer and the possibility of offering additional services.

Conclusion

Given the current financial context in which both Local Authorities are working, the current cost of the sensory inclusion service is unsustainable. Steps will need to be taken to bring the cost of the service in line with the financial resources that are available.

It is believed that efficiencies can be achieved without significantly compromising the effectiveness of the service.

In order to achieve greater efficiencies over a longer period which will result in further savings, the team should adjust the NatSIP allocation system by:
1. Raising the threshold for direct support.
2. Adjusting the frequency of visits at other tiers.

In addition the service should:
1. Establish targets for each service area which will generate more income
2. Establish a menu of services that can be bought by schools
3. Establish a source of advice and information for schools, settings, colleges and families for pupils with lower levels of hearing and vision loss.

These new approaches will need further development.

Theme 4: Organisational Effectiveness

This section considers:
- the benefits of a joint service versus a split service arrangement
- the management structure of SIS including both HI and VI services
- leadership and strategic involvement of the team managers and team members
- the additional costs to Telford and Wrekin of employing the teams i.e. management, redundancy etc
- alternative models of service structures
- the accountability framework and governance of the service across two local authorities
- the need for a Service Level Agreement.

Following Local Government Reorganisation (LGO) in 1999, Shrewsbury subdivided into two authorities and became i) Shrewsbury and ii)Telford and Wrekin. Most of the services offered by the authority pre LGO, split into separate and locally managed services.

SIS, Portage and the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) remained as jointly funded services. More recently, the EPS split into two services commissioned separately by each local authority. SIS and Portage now remain as the only joint services. Portage is a very small service and does not form part of this review.

It has not been possible to identify a service level agreement for the SIS between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin.

Split service or joint service

A number of conversations have focussed on the benefits of SIS remaining as a joint service.

The discussions explored two issues:
1) the benefits of splitting into two services managed separately by Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin
2) whether it would be better for the service to remain as one and if so, should it be hosted by Telford and Wrekin, or Shrewsbury.

3 options have emerged as follows:

1) Split the service so that each local authority has its own SIS.
2) Remain as a joint SIS hosted by Telford and Wrekin.
3) Remain as a joint SIS hosted by Shropshire.

The review provided the opportunity to explore the benefits and challenges of each option.

There are a number of reasons why it would be *beneficial to split* the service into two teams. These are based on concerns expressed during the review about the

current joint arrangement and the majority relate to organisational and procedural matters. The concerns are:

i) There is no sense of real belonging to either Local Authority and this fuels a sense of separation and isolation from the wider SEND agenda within each LA

ii) The teams believe that they are different from other SEND teams and SEND structures which are LA specific

iii) There are management oversight difficulties such as when complaints are raised about work completed by the Shropshire team, these are dealt with by colleagues in Telford

iv) Data about Shropshire children is held on Telford and Wrekin case management systems

v) There are risks associated for staff working within two LA procedures in relation to Safeguarding, health and safety etc.

In general most of these concerns can be discussed and resolved, but at the moment, these have not been formally recognised and addressed.

There are a number of reasons why it would be *difficult to split* the service into two teams:

i) The team members in both HI and VI teams have a range of specialisms which are over and above their specialism in sensory impairment. These relate to:
   - Age specialism (Early years, primary, secondary)
   - Curriculum specialism (knowledge of curriculum area)
   - Specialist knowledge and role (team manager, audiology, IT, habilitation officer, social inclusion facilitators).

   If the team was to split, it would difficult to ensure that the required specialist areas are available in both local authorities. For example education audiologists are highly specialised, additionally trained and are fairly rare. There is only one such post in the SIS team. In order to ensure that an audiologist was available one authority would need to recruit and the other authority would need to buy back the service. There would then be a situation of moving back to the original position of having a shared service.

ii) Creating a management structure for two teams may also be expensive. The feedback provided by health professionals, emphasised that they are very keen to avoid duplication and complications caused by a split service. The health offer is across the two authorities and they would prefer to mirror this with the sensory team.

iii) Schools conclude that, based on difficult experiences of cross border issues in other areas, they would prefer a joint service that avoids multiple referral processes and contact points.

iv) Parents did not express a preference as they were not generally aware of which Authority hosted the service.

v) Nationally, the NDCS reports a growing trend in local authorities sharing a service. This is as a result of a number of factors including cost effectiveness/ economies of scale and a shortage of suitably qualified specialists.

vi)   The cost to Telford and Wrekin of hosting the service is shared between the two local authorities. A percentage of the charge made to Shropshire covers the cost of the team's accommodation and other overheads.

It appears that on balance, a shared service is:
1) The most cost effective
2) The preferred option of key partners
3) Organisationally effective.

Where should the service be "hosted"?

If we assume that the service stays as one, we have discussed with the team and stakeholders the possibility of the service being hosted by Shropshire. Some team members expressed a preference for the Shropshire option. This would at first appear to be a simple operational change. However, disaggregating the service may be more complicated. Telford and Wrekin would need to delete a service and this would require a consultation process. Shropshire would need to create a service and this would require political and school forum consultation. Staff would be required to TUPE across to the new employing authority. Accommodation, administrative support, IT provision, storage would need to be arranged.

The scale of the political decision making process, the HR process, the disruption to normal service, seems to outweigh the marginal benefits of such a move.

Management Structures

The reviewers considered and discussed the management structure of the service. A number of issues arose relating to:

1) the number of managers
2) the flatness of the current management structure
3) the suitability of a single manager leading a combined service across two specialist disciplines (HI and VI)
4) the complexity of reporting to leads in two authorities
5) contributing to the strategic agenda in the host LA.

Three potential management and structure models emerged for consideration. These are set out below. All options are based on the premise that the service remains within Telford and Wrekin and belongs to the Telford and Wrekin Management Structure led by their Service Delivery Manager.

Current SIS Arrangement

Service Delivery Manager

| Hearing Impairment Team Leader | Hearing Impairment Team Leader | Visual Impairment Team Leader |

Option 1

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Service Delivery Manager │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────┼────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Principal Educ-  │ │ SEN Team Lead│  │ SIS Team Lead│
│ ational          │ └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
│ Psychologist     │        │                 │
└──────────────────┘ ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
   ┌─────┴─────┐     │ Assessment   │  │ Senior       │
┌──────┐  ┌──────┐   │ Team         │  │ Advisory     │
│ EPS  │  │ LSAT │   └──────────────┘  │ Teacher HI/VI│
└──────┘  └──────┘                     └──────────────┘
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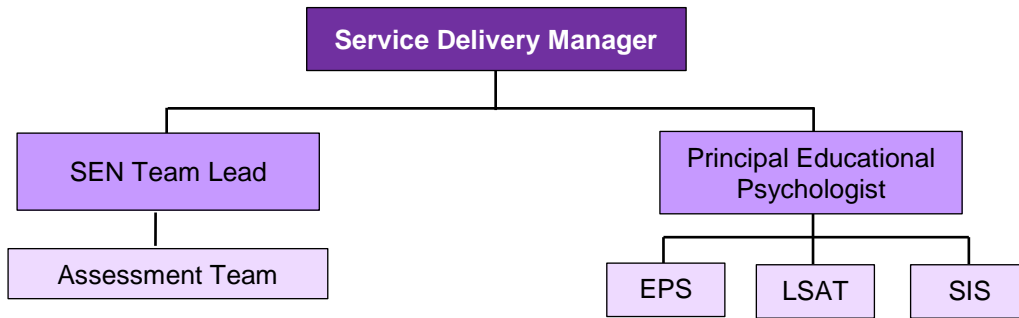
Option 2

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Service Delivery Manager │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────────────┴──────────────────┐
   ┌──────────────┐                      ┌──────────────────┐
   │ SEN Team Lead│                      │ Principal Educ-  │
   └──────────────┘                      │ ational          │
          │                              │ Psychologist     │
   ┌──────────────┐                      └──────────────────┘
   │ Assessment   │                  ┌───────┼───────┐
   │ Team         │              ┌──────┐ ┌──────┐ ┌──────┐
   └──────────────┘              │ EPS  │ │ LSAT │ │ SIS  │
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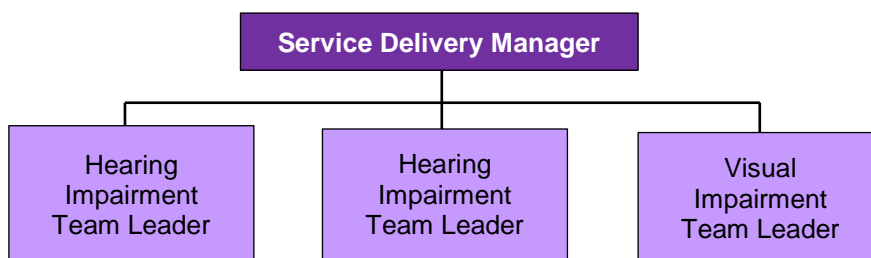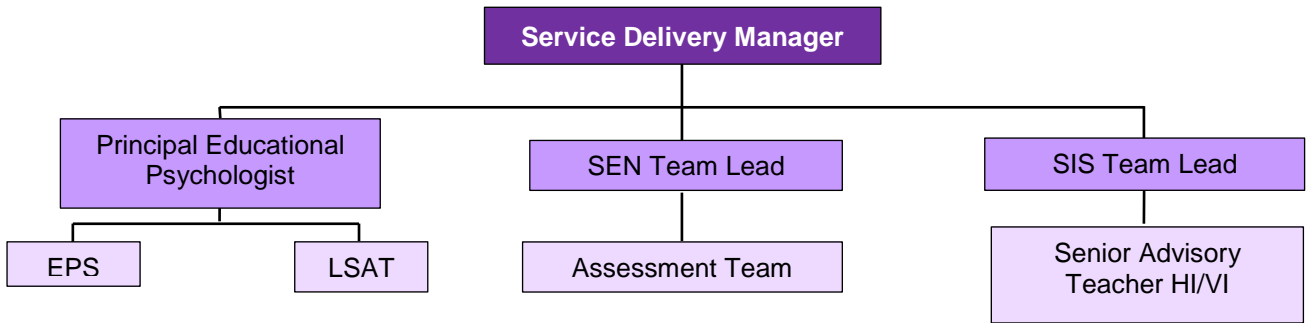
Conclusion

Following a review of the organisational effectiveness of the service, it is recommended that:

1) The service continues as a combined authority service.
2) The service continues to be hosted by Telford and Wrekin.
3) The management structure and sensory inclusion service is redesigned as proposed in options one or two so that there is an efficient, streamlined management and accountability arrangement.
4) Members of the SIS are employed by Telford and Wrekin and as such need to have an involvement in the strategic issues that affect the employees of the host LA. However, there also needs to be the opportunity for the service to contribute to strategic decisions relating to SEN in Shropshire as well as Telford. This could be achieved through the creation of a SIS Management Board comprising the Head of SEN in both Local Authorities.
5) The head of the SEN service in Shropshire has an appropriate opportunity to contribute to the on-going development of the service by establishing a process for regularly contributing to service development.
6) The Head of SIS to resolve issues concerning safeguarding and health and safety and to ensure that appropriate measures are in place.
7) A robust Service Level Agreement is established that would enable both local authorities to hold the service manager to account and Shropshire to hold Telford and Wrekin to account for the service they provide.

Outcomes

Theme 1: Fairness	
Area	**Outcome and actions**
Equity of share versus financial contribution	There is no requirement to adjust the level of financial contribution made by either local authority. Both local authorities can be assured that they are receiving the level of service for which they are paying.
A Service level agreement and an Annual Report	An annual report should be prepared by the Head of SIS on the use and impact of each service area. This will include: • level of referrals • level of caseload allocations • pupil outcomes The report should also review the contributions made by Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire to the cost of the service and the financial split. This information should form part of the annual reporting of the service which will need to be included as a requirement in a new Service Level Agreement.

Theme 2: Quality	
Area	**Outcome and action**
Building Resilience in settings, schools and colleges	Commissioners to consider the role of all members of SIS, in particular the team members supporting social inclusion and technology and whether they are best placed to be in the service or should be either commissioned externally or provided as part of the normal school, setting or college offer. Establish a focus group and facilitate a discussion between schools and SIS to develop a shared approach on how SIS could enhance its offer into one that builds resilience and reduces dependency. There is the need to establish a shared approach on how SIS can support teachers and pupils with teaching and learning.
Phone links	Consider the feedback regarding the difficulties encountered in receiving a response via the phone line at Darby House. This is the phone number given on the local offer.

Area	Theme 2: Quality Continued Outcome and Action
Training and advice to settings and families	Establish an "on line" advice and information service. The use of social media should be explored and developed. Which in the first instance should focus on advice and support for young people with conductive loss and low levels of hearing loss
British Sign Language	More opportunities for developing BSL skills within the HI team should be developed in order to improve the breadth of the offer to families.
Improvement activity	SIS to develop an Improvement plan to address areas identified within the NatSIP self-evaluation of the HI team to include improvements relating to: • relationships with other services • awareness of broader SEN needs • support to schools and colleges and pathways to adulthood. • establish a Quality Assurance framework which tracks the progress of individual pupils and the impact of the service and ensure that this is regularly reported to Service mangers in both Local Authorities. Parents also reinforced the notion that SIS and SEN teams were not joined up.
Pathways to adulthood	The improvement plan needs to respond to parents' concerns that more robust arrangements need to be in place for young people, as they approach adulthood. A second focus group should be established to identify appropriate activity that brings about the required improvements in relation to pathways to adulthood. This focus group will have significant representation from parents and young people.
Parent Network Opportunities	The venue for the parents' group meetings currently held at the Child Development Centre (Stepping Stones) should alternate between Shrewsbury and Telford for a trial period. In the weeks where the SIS team is not in attendance, parents may wish to facilitate their own network meeting.

Theme 3: Affordability

Area	Outcome and possible action
Efficiencies	Implement the identified low to medium risk efficiencies and ensure that mitigating actions are applied.
Adjust the NatSIP Resource allocation system (RAS)	Adjust the NatSIP RAS to: 1) raise the threshold for direct support 2) adjust the RAS levels of allocation and frequency of sessions delivered. 3) ensure that there is a clear description and guidance on the duration of support packages and exit criteria.

Area	Theme 3: Affordability Continued Outcome and Action
Advice and Information	Develop an on line source of advice and information in order to respond to level one of NatSip allocations.

Theme 4 : Organisational effectiveness

Area	Outcome and possible action
Single Service	Retain the SIS as a shared service across both LAs. The service continues to be hosted by Telford and Wrekin.
Team management structure	The management structure and sensory inclusion service is redesigned as proposed in options one or two so that there is an efficient, streamlined management and accountability arrangement
Accountability	The two Local Authorities need to develop a service level agreement which clearly sets out the role of SIS and expectations placed on it and the agreed financial contributions from each LA and performance management arrangements linked to the proposed service improvements. This will enable both local authorities to hold the service manager to account and Shropshire to hold Telford and Wrekin to account for the service they provide. The head of the SEN service in Shropshire has an appropriate opportunity to contribute to the on-going development of the service by establishing a process for regularly contributing to service development.
Safeguarding and health and safety	The Head of SIS to resolve issues concerning safeguarding and health and safety and to ensure that appropriate measures are in place.

SEND4CHANGE September 2018