

How good is our sensory service?

A Framework for Auditing and Evaluating
the Quality of our Sensory Services

May 2019

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Introduction

Why is it important to develop a Quality Framework to evaluate Sensory Services?

The Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC) provides invaluable support to teachers and others involved in the delivery of Sensory Services. Its mission is to foster educational research and development activities relating to children and young people with a sensory impairment in Scotland. SSC is intent on demonstrating the importance of specialist Sensory Services and in doing so has considered some key issues in relation to services that include findings from the 2012 document, *The Education of Children and Young People with a Sensory Impairment in Scotland*¹, authored by Elisabet Weedon, Linda Ahlgren, Sheila Riddell and Janis Sugden and other key documents.

Some issues and challenges are as follows:

- An increase in the number of pupils with a visual or hearing impairment, albeit a slight decrease in the number with dual sensory impairment reported in *The Education of Children and Young People with a Sensory Impairment in Scotland, 2012*; and concerns raised in 2015 in the *Scottish Government Education and Culture Committee Background briefing: sensory impairment and attainment*², about the accuracy of statistics in relation to the number of pupils who are deaf/hearing impaired and blind/visually impaired, and pupils who are deafblind;
- Research papers, including the 2012 paper, that amply demonstrate the gap in attainment between almost all pupils

¹ Deaf pupils have an average qualification tariff score of 289 compared to 439 for those that can hear while the average tariff score for pupils with a visual impairment is 249. Ten per cent of deaf pupils who leave school have no qualifications compared to two per cent for all school-leavers.

² http://www.parliament.scot/S4_EducationandCultureCommittee/Attainment-sensory-impairments/SPICeBriefing.pdf

with sensory impairment and their peers.¹ And Edinburgh University's *Report from the Achievement and Opportunities for Deaf Students in the United Kingdom: from Research to Practice project*³ 2014, states 'We have already highlighted the fact that there is an important negative effect of deafness on academic outcomes ... and that the differences between all categories of deafness are not significant'.

- Despite the gap in attainment between almost all pupils with sensory impairment and their peers, there is currently no significant evidence to show that pupils with sensory impairment have benefited from Pupil Equity Funding despite National Operational Guidance, 2017 and 2018, stating that 'Headteachers can use their professional judgement to bring additional children in to the targeted interventions'. (Scottish Government's stated aim of closing the attainment gap and the additional Pupil Equity Funding, is generally directed at the links between socio-economic disadvantage and educational outcomes).
- Not all Local Authorities have fully qualified Teachers of the Deaf and Teachers of Children and Young People with Visual Impairment. (Despite the Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2005/355) stating that '*where an education authority employs a teacher wholly or mainly to teach pupils who are hearing impaired, vision impaired or both hearing and vision impaired, then that teacher must possess an appropriate qualification to teach such pupils*').
- An increasing problem is the age profile of *qualified* Sensory Service staff and lack of succession planning.
- Several documents state that Local Authorities report

³ [http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/EDU_37468 - Nuffield Report MASTER v3.pdf](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/EDU_37468_-_Nuffield_Report_MASTER_v3.pdf)

challenges in supporting pupils with a visual and/or hearing impairment across a wide geographical area, lack of time for training, and a move away from specialism.

- There is currently no overall specific quality assurance framework that evaluates the quality of provision made by Sensory Services in Scotland or their impact on young people; nor is there a means by which the explicit need for these specialist services can be highlighted. (Albeit in 2014, NDCS developed Quality Standards for Deaf Children and Young People⁴, and in the same year the Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People (NHS Scotland) developed VINCYP Standards and Quality Indicators)⁵

SSC has developed this quality framework, How Good Is Our Sensory Service? (HGIOSS?) in order to help to determine the quality of Specialist Sensory Services in Scotland and demonstrate their impact on the attainment and achievement of learners. The framework can also ensure that Sensory Services provide value for money in the current context of Local Authority budget constraints, reduction in support services and lack of specialist training.

Importantly, the framework has been developed within the context of HGIOS?4.

In terms of legislative requirements, Sensory Services and their partners must take full account of the *Additional support for learning: statutory guidance 2017*⁶: *Statutory guidance to the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as amended*; the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*; the *Equality Act 2010*; and the *BSL (Scotland) Act 2015*.

4 http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/our_resources/qsrrps.html#contentblock1

5 <https://www.vincyp.scot.nhs.uk/self-evaluation/>

6 The 2004 Act has been subsequently amended by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 ("the 2009 Act") the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") and the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 ("the 2016 Act")

What are the Aims of HGIOSS?

HGIOSS? aims to:

- highlight the importance of specialist Sensory Services so that the needs of learners with sensory impairment can be met effectively;
- demonstrate the professionalism and accountability of the Sensory Service; and
- provide Local Authority Service managers (who may not have specialist experience in ASN/Sensory impairment) with the means to make a comprehensive audit of the strengths and development needs of an effective service and its essential relationship with parents, education colleagues and partner agencies.

In line with all HGIOS? documents, HGIOSS? will also help to answer the questions at the heart of self-evaluation:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- (and help to clarify) What are we going to do now?

Given the particular context of Sensory Services, it is important that they look inwards to analyse and evaluate their own work, look outwards to find out more about what is working well for others in special and mainstream schools and special resource bases, locally, nationally and internationally and look forwards to take account of relevant research to judge what continuous improvement might look like in the longer term.

Who should read HGIOSS?

While the prime aim of this Framework is to evaluate the quality of Sensory Services, this guidance can also be useful in clarifying what is expected of Sensory Services and can provide practical guidance for managers at all levels, as well as for practitioners. The Framework is aspirational: it seeks to raise expectations of practitioners and their partners, and

consequently promotes the need for continuous professional development. The Framework has relevance for a wide range of managers and practitioners in education, health services, social services, as well as staff from other relevant agencies.

Whilst some sections may be more directly related to the work of some people than others, a main aim of the Framework is to ensure there is a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, expectations and quality, in relation to meeting the needs of learners with a sensory impairment in a range of settings.

What should the HGIOSS? Quality Framework include?

HGIOSS? sits in the context of HGIOS?4 which states that 'Effective self-evaluation involves a level of reflection and critical enquiry which is best achieved through a blend of internal and external analysis. Making sound judgements about the impact on learners should be central to self-evaluation'. The triangulation of evidence-based information and data, people's views and direct observation of practice should involve the Sensory Service, their line managers, school staff, partners, parents, learners and other stakeholders'.

1. In the first instance, it is essential that all Sensory Services have a booklet/online information to clarify and disseminate to Senior Managers, Elected Members, Parents, Learners, Education staff, Health professionals and other Partners:

- the aims of the service;
- the context of the service to include location of services, current and predicted numbers of learners with sensory impairment;
- how referrals are made;
- information for schools on assessment and support provided;
- Early Years services from 0–5;

- transition arrangements;
- CLPL/CPD for the Sensory team/s;
- CLPL/CPD delivered by Sensory Services for mainstream and special school staff; and
- Contact information

2. In order that the Sensory Service can evaluate How good it is now? and How do we know? and What do we do now? the Local Authority Senior Manager can direct the Head/s of Service to use *HGIOSS?* to gather evidence-based data, albeit often arrived at through sound triangulated professional judgement. Sensory Services and their partners can use three (adapted) QIs from *HGOIS?*, shown below and described fully in **Appendix 1**.

- QI 1.3: Leadership of Change
- QI 2.3: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment
- QI 2.4: Personalised Support

Where a service identifies specific issues it may wish to use additional QIs from *HGIOS?4* as well as those from *How Good is Our Early Learning and Care?*⁷ and *How good is OUR School?*⁸

HGIOSS? has retained *HGIOS?4's Features of Effective Practice* but has added focused Challenge Questions to the three QIs in order to take account of sensory specialisms and also to highlight the importance of partnership and collaboration. The *Challenge Questions* also incorporate some significant aspects from other relevant QIs such as Safeguarding and Child Protection, and Raising Attainment and Achievement.

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https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1_NIHe ditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf

8 <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HGIOURS-Part1.pdf>

Sensory Services and their partners will use the 1 to 6 (HGIOSS?4) scale to evaluate the QIs. HGIOSS? uses HGIOSS?4 Illustrations at Level 5 (Very good) to guide staff. However, it is essential that managers and practitioners are familiar with the guidance in HGIOSS? 4 (See **Appendix 2**) that helps to clarify how to grade the quality indicators on the six-point scale.

3. People's views should be gathered through **Questionnaires/Interviews** of Learners, Parents, School Staff and Manager/s, Support Staff, Educational Psychologists, Local Authority Senior Manager/s, Partner/s in Health, Social Services and other relevant partners such as Voluntary Agencies and Third Sector, shown in **Appendix 3**. Evaluations of Learners' views can also take account of How Good is OUR School⁹.

What is the Timing and Purpose of the Framework?

The Sensory Service can use the framework flexibly and should ensure School Senior Leaders and partners, particularly those in Health, are aware of the framework and are clear that they will be asked to be important partners in supporting a robust evaluation of the quality of Sensory Services from time to time.

It is recommended that aspects of the three HGIOSS? QIs are carefully considered and evaluated internally throughout the year by Sensory team members, and also with School and Partners at a minimum every alternative year or when required. The **Quality Assurance Calendar** shown in **Appendix 4** provides possible timings for the wide range of internal and external evaluative approaches that provide evidence to inform further improvement.

9 <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/HGIOURS-Part1.pdf>

The Sensory Service will use all the evidence from QI evaluations, observation and questionnaires to agree their priorities for improvement. This evidence makes an essential contribution to the development of the Sensory Service Improvement Plan.

Appendix 1: HGIOSS? adapted from HGIOS?4

QI 1.3: Leadership of Change

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners.

This Quality Indicator emphasises the need for collaborative working and the importance of leadership at all levels. Effective collaborative working is central to the positive impact that Sensory Services can make and requires all parties to contribute their respective skills and expertise. Leadership within Sensory Services is essential at all levels from the peripatetic teacher to the Sensory Service manager to the Local Authority manager, each undertaking their specific role in order to promote best outcomes for children and young people with sensory impairment. In terms of expertise and qualifications, there is an expectation that Local Authorities take full account of the legislation¹⁰, stating that 'where an education authority employs a teacher wholly or mainly to teach pupils who are hearing impaired, vision impaired or both hearing and vision impaired, then that teacher must possess an appropriate qualification to teach such pupils'. Respectful and effective collaboration between Sensory Services and school staff is the key to ensuring best outcomes for children and young people with sensory impairment. Continuous self evaluation at all levels within the Sensory Service and alongside all partners ensures effective provision irrespective of where Sensory support is

¹⁰ Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2005/355)

delivered: mainstream school, special resource base, special school, school for deaf children, school for blind children.

Level 5 Illustration

Developing a Shared Vision, Values and Aims relevant to the School and its Community

We are committed to ensuring that we achieve the highest possible standards and success for all learners. All staff show commitment to shared educational values and professional standards. Senior leaders provide strong leadership which has enabled our school and wider community to develop, promote and sustain an aspirational vision which underpins our continuous improvement. Our vision evolves through ongoing reflection and debate across the school and community. As a result of this active collaboration, the school and community have ownership of the vision, values and aims. These are shaped by our clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context in which children, young people and their families live alongside our awareness of current policy and practice. Through effective leadership at all levels, our school community works together to turn the shared vision into a sustainable reality.

Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement

Senior leaders create conditions where staff feel confident to initiate well-informed change and are committed to collective responsibility in the process of change. We ensure proposed changes demonstrate the interconnectedness of the school and community in improving learning and outcomes for children and young people. Senior leaders effectively guide and manage the strategic direction and pace of change. They take good account of assessment of risk to ensure we follow through on strategies for achieving change. We protect time for professional dialogue, collegiate learning and self-evaluation, so that all members of our school community can contribute to our plans for continuous improvement.

Implementing Improvement and Change

Staff at all levels take responsibility for implementing change and promoting equality and social justice across all their work. Senior leaders in our school community promote and support innovation, creativity and practitioner enquiry which lead to positive change. They work collaboratively to develop a clear rationale and choose appropriate approaches to effectively facilitate change leading to greater equity for all learners. We continually reflect on and develop our practice taking account of our self-evaluation and vision for continuous improvement. Staff, learners and partners engage regularly in critical and creative thinking. As a result, children and young people have developed increased capacity to respond and adapt to change. Practitioner enquiry and creative approaches are integral to the thinking and practice of staff, pupils and partners. We have effective strategies in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of changes on outcomes for learners and the work of our school.

Shared Vision, Values and Aims

Features of highly-effective practice

The vision of the school is ambitious and focuses on improvements in outcomes for all. Leaders at all levels motivate and inspire others to sustain collective commitment to the shared vision through daily actions.

All staff have a very clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community of current educational policy. They use this knowledge well to shape the vision for the school.

All staff have consistently high expectations of all learners.

Pupils, parents, partners and staff are all involved in

Challenge questions:

How effective is the Sensory Service in influencing the vision and ethos in the Early Years setting and schools they support to ensure that learners with sensory impairment feel safe, happy, included and able to achieve?

How effective is the Sensory Service in influencing the promotion of equality and diversity in the Early Years settings and schools they support, taking full account of the specific needs of learners with sensory impairment?

How well does the Sensory Service help to foster high expectations of their learners with a sensory impairment within Early Years settings and schools?

In line with the aims and values of the Early Years settings and schools they support, to what extent is the Sensory Service able to influence approaches that ensure the safety of learners with sensory impairment?

How well does the Sensory Service help to promote teamwork, and nurture relationships with parents along with Leaders in the Early Years setting and the schools they support?

the creation and ongoing review of the vision, aims and values of the school. Learners are supported to understand the vision aims and values through the four contexts for learning.	How well does the Sensory Service ensure the voices of learners with sensory impairment are listened to? And how do they support Early Years settings and schools to do so?
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Strategic Planning for Continuous Improvement

Features of highly-effective practice

All staff are clear on the school's strengths and areas for development based on a range of evidence. This is used to create a clear rationale for future improvements.

All teaching staff regularly reflect on, and show commitment to, the shared values as embedded in the GTCS standards

All staff are committed to change which results in improvements for learners.

Challenge questions:

How well does the Sensory Service manager motivate and support the culture of continuous improvement in the team and discuss this with the Local Authority senior manager/s?

How effectively is lesson observation undertaken by Sensory Service management and Senior school staff to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning of children and young people with sensory impairment?

How regularly are there opportunities for Sensory Services staff for peer consultation, peer observation, peer networking, mentoring and shadowing?

To what extent do Sensory Service staff have the necessary qualifications, knowledge and skills, including personal and communication skills, related to the teaching and learning of children and young people with a sensory impairment within their own service? Or through accessing external support services?

To what extent do Sensory Services take full account of relevant GTCS Standards?

Depending on the learners' needs, how well does the Sensory Service take a proactive approach to ensure the team and other relevant professionals have an appropriate level of BSL, SSE skills as defended within the BSL Act (2015),

Makaton, Cued Speech, Signalong, Hands on signing, Canaan Barrie signing and Braille skills to meet needs?

How effective are the PRD procedures within the Sensory team at guiding staff to worthwhile, relevant CPD experiences and provide them with useful and constructive feedback which helps individuals develop and improve their practice?

Who undertakes PRD with the Sensory Service manager, and is that person qualified in the specialist area in which they are supervising? If not, is joint supervision possible? (between Local Authorities, across Regional Improvement Collaboratives)?

What data and evidence are used to draw conclusions about the service's strengths and needs?

How well does the Sensory Service collaborate with Leaders in the Early Years settings and schools they support, to jointly evaluate the quality of provision, including partnerships with others, taking account of the views of learners and their families, and measuring outcomes for learners?

Implementing Improvement and Change

<i>Features of highly-effective practice</i>	Challenge questions:
Senior leaders carefully guide the strategic direction and pace of change to ensure changes result in positive outcomes for learners and are sustainable. Careful consideration is given to how best to take forward priorities through using a range of improvement methodologies. All staff are involved in the process of change and in evaluating the impact of improvements. This is supported by carefully planned individual and collective career-long professional learning. Senior leaders create conditions to support creativity, innovation and	How effectively does the Sensory Service manager provide professional advice to the Senior Education Authority manager, and prepare draft papers on policy matters that lead to improvement and change? How regularly are evaluations of the quality of Sensory Service provision reported to stakeholders, including elected Members, to inform developments, and help improve practice? To what extent does the Sensory Service manager participate in relevant local and national developments and make good use of links with the Scottish Sensory Centre and non-statutory bodies such as NDCS and RNIB? To what extent is the Local Authority Education/Sensory Service taking account of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives which can encourage collaboration between schools (and services) in different council areas? How well do Sensory Services provide advice on the adaptation of buildings/classrooms/school resources etc. in order to improve access for learners with sensory impairment in line with Equality legislation? How well does the Sensory Service Manager prepare and implement clear

enquiry. Opportunities for learners and staff to regularly engage in critical and creative thinking are embedded. Practitioner enquiry forms a regular feature of approaches to continuous improvement. Practitioners have systematic opportunities to review and refresh their pedagogical practice.	procedures for the management of the service budget and resources? How effectively is the Sensory Service Improvement Plan shared with Early Years settings, Schools and partners and to what extent does it drive improvement and change to ensure impact on learners? How well does the Sensory Service keep up to date with recent research on effective practices? To what extent are Sensory Service staff committed to improving their practice through research, networking and CPD, and are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in their Professional Update?
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QI 2.3: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements.

High quality learning, teaching and *specialist* assessment is essential to ensure children and young people with the range of sensory impairments have their (often complex) needs met. Understanding and overcoming barriers to learning experienced by this range of learners often requires alternative teaching approaches and communication strategies supported by suitably qualified and experienced members of Sensory Services. Effective collaborative practice between Sensory Services and partners, including Health Services and Early Years settings, is essential in ensuring early intervention and, along with schools, in closing the attainment gap of learners with sensory needs. Given the importance of early identification for almost all learners with sensory impairment, the HGIOS⁴ order of the *Features of Effective Practice* and challenge questions have been re-organised to reflect the importance of early identification and specialist assessment that precedes specialist intervention and promotes effective teaching and learning.

Level 5 Illustration

Learning and engagement

The ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to children's rights and positive relationships. Our children and young people are eager and active participants who are fully engaged, resilient, highly-motivated and interact well during activities. Learners' experiences are appropriately challenging and enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests. Learners exercise choice, including the appropriate use of digital technology, and take increasing responsibility as they become more independent in their learning. They understand the purpose of their learning and have opportunities to lead the learning. Our learners are successful, confident and responsible. They contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community in a range of well-planned activities. They know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon.

Quality of teaching

Our teaching is underpinned by our shared school vision and values. We use a wide range of learning environments and creative teaching approaches. Learning is enriched and supported by our effective use of digital technologies. Our explanations and instructions are clear. We use skilled questioning and engagement to promote curiosity, independence and confidence and to regularly enable higher-order thinking skills in all learners. We observe learners closely to inform appropriate and well-timed interventions and future learning. We use feedback effectively to inform and support progress in learning.

Effective use of assessment

Assessment is integral to our planning of learning and teaching. We use a variety of assessment approaches to allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts across the curriculum. Our assessment evidence is valid and reliable. At key milestones, our assessments provide reliable evidence which we use to report on the progress of all children and young people. Across our learning community we have shared expectations for standards to be achieved, and have robust arrangements for moderation across stages and across the curriculum.

Planning, tracking and monitoring

We plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum. Learners are fully involved in planning learning. As a result of our manageable processes to monitor and evaluate learners' progress we have clear information on their attainment across all curriculum areas. This includes for those facing additional challenges, for example young carers, looked after children and those living with financial hardship. We use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve outcomes for all learners.

Effective Use of Assessment

Features of highly-effective practice:

Assessment approaches are matched to the learning needs of learners and are used to support them to demonstrate where they are in their learning. Processes for assessment and reporting are manageable and very effective in informing improvements in learning and teaching.

Challenge questions:

How robust and timeous are the links and shared systems between the Sensory Service and Early Years settings and Health Service colleagues to ensure babies and pre-school children with sensory impairment are identified through specialist assessment, including audiological and functional vision elements?

How robust and understandable for parents and professionals is the Sensory Service referral process at all stages beyond pre-school to Secondary?

To what extent does the VI service take account of the standards set by the Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People? (VINCYP Standards)

How well do VI Services explain the implications of specific ocular and cerebral visual conditions for the child's

development to parents and colleagues?

How well does the VI Service explain to parents and colleagues the probable impact of visual impairment such as difficulties with motor skills, locomotion, cognition, including cause and effect, language development and self help and social skills and the impact of these on the child's learning?

To what extent are HI Services aware of the Scottish Standards for Deaf Children (0 - 3) (SSC, 2011) that emphasise the

importance of a real choice for the families of deaf children, and the right of the deaf child to establish a fluent language by the age of five?

How well do HI Services explain the implications of the results of newborn hearing screening for the child to parents and colleagues: for example in relation to linguistic and cognitive development?

How well do HI Services explain additional medical needs of some deaf children and specific issues such as auditory neuropathy, genetic syndromes, glue ear etc?

How well do Sensory Services, along with relevant health partners depending on the age and stage of the child ¹¹ provide unbiased advice ¹² about options?

What evidence is there to show outcomes for children are improving as a result of Early Years settings and Sensory services encouraging parent and carer participation in family learning, following assessment and identification of needs?

How well does the Sensory Service interpret and critically evaluate the results of formal clinical assessments in order that IEPs/Child's Plan can be developed in collaboration with relevant others?

How well do the class teacher and Sensory Service enable learners to

11 Audiologist, Speech and language therapist, Skills Development Scotland Staff, habilitation staff, educational psychologist and others.

12 such as the principles of linguistic access, informed choice, including options post school, inter-agency working and, for example, the right of the deaf child to have a fully developed language with which to learn.

engage in self- and peer-assessment to improve their learning?

How well does the HI service track language development in the Early Years using relevant assessments such as the EarlyYears Protocol?

As required, how effectively does the HI Service carry out diagnostic assessments of: expressive and receptive language, BSL, non verbal IQ, reading and numeracy, self-help skills, social skills, using up-to-date resources such as ACE assessment and Reynell?

As required, how effectively does the specialist VI Service carry out diagnostic assessments of basic concepts, sensory awareness, listening skills, reading and numeracy, self-help skills, social skills, using up-to-date resources?

As appropriate, how well does the Sensory Service support school staff to liaise with Exam Boards and ensure learners with sensory impairment are sufficiently well prepared to access alternative arrangements when sitting class tests, Standardised National Assessments, SQA examinations and other accreditation?

How effectively does the Sensory Service review the assessments they use and ensure they are aware of new approaches?

Planning, Tracking and Monitoring

Features of highly-effective practice:

A quality body of evidence is used to support assessment judgements and decisions about next steps. Planning is proportionate and manageable and clearly identifies what is to be learned and assessed. Tracking and monitoring are well-understood and used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners, including the most deprived children and young people and those who are looked after. All teachers have well-developed skills of data analysis which are focused on

Challenge questions:

How effectively do Sensory Services collate specialist assessments, undertaken by Health professionals, in order to help Early Years settings and School staff to work together with them and plan effective learning?

To what extent do practitioners supporting learners with sensory needs take full account of the wellbeing indicators to ensure positive impact on children and families?

How well does the Sensory Service use information from assessments to plan next steps?

How effectively do Sensory Services involve learners and parents in planning and evaluating learning?

To what extent do IEPs/Child's Plan for pupils with sensory impairment take full account of advice from all involved colleagues?

Are the targets in the IEP/Child's Plan which have a strong focus on developing language and literacy, social and emotional development and autonomy, sufficiently challenging and reviewed regularly?

How do the Sensory Service, Early Years settings and School staff ensure pupils with sensory impairment are making good progress relative to their starting point and that, together, they are narrowing any

improvement. Learners' achievements in and out of school are recorded and recognised. They understand how these achievements help them develop knowledge and skills for life, learning and work. Learners receive high-quality feedback and have an accurate understanding of their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve.	attainment gaps? How comprehensive, accurate and helpful for colleagues and parents, are the reports written by Sensory Services for individuals and groups of sensory impaired learners? How well do Senior managers/key teachers work with Sensory Services, Health professionals and others to arrange review meetings for parents and their children at critical times¹³? What support do Sensory Service provide for their learners and their parents at times of transitions such as pre-school to primary; primary to secondary; secondary to post school; and school to school? How well do the Sensory Service and School staff support learners with sensory impairment to attend and contribute to the meetings, and ensure the learner knows how well they are progressing and what is required to make further progress?
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¹³ such as following assessment/re-assessment, introduction of new resources or equipment, at S3/4 Options choice, the range of transitions and concerns?

Learning and Engagement

Features of highly-effective practice:

The learning environment is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes.

Challenge questions:

How well does the Sensory Service support the Early Years staff/class teacher and support staff to take full account of the social and emotional needs of the learner with sensory needs?

How well does the Sensory Service work with schools to ensure systems are in place to provide opportunities for dealing with health and well-being issues specifically associated with a learner's sensory impairment?

To what extent do learners with sensory needs have opportunities for social interaction, including if they wish, with peers who have similar needs.

Does the HI service provide opportunities for hearing learners who have deaf learners in their school to learn BSL?

Does the VI service provide opportunities for learners who are sighted who have learners who are blind in their school to have an awareness of braille?

How well do Sensory Services and colleagues engage and include learners with sensory impairment in all aspects of school life and ensure there are opportunities in place for these learners to express preferences, make meaningful choices and develop independence¹⁴, and

¹⁴ such as in everyday activities, for example, with learning media, hearing aids, glasses, radio aid systems and cochlear implants and mobility as appropriate.

develop the four capacities?

How well does the VI Service ensure optimum learning environments and promote positive engagement for learners for the best use of vision¹⁵?

How well does the VI Service advise on using real objects, clear, uncluttered photographs/pictures with good contrast, using clear appropriately sized symbols or fonts and with good contrast?

How well does the HI Service and others such as an Audiologist ensure optimum learning environments for good listening¹⁶?

To what extent does the HI service have the skills to model BSL or other signing systems?

How well do Sensory Services ensure low vision aids (hearing aids, cochlear implants, glasses) are working, clean and worn?

How well do Sensory Services support class teachers to integrate the use of specialist resources into the curriculum?

How well do Sensory Services support class teachers and support staff to give advice on making the classroom accessible for pupils with sensory needs and help to establish classroom routines that enable learners to function as independently as possible?

¹⁵such as appropriate positioning, good lighting, the reduction of glare, lack of clutter, supporting the use of Low Vision Aids, and providing advice on alternative formats?

¹⁶such as the use of Soundfield systems to support classroom teaching, reduction in background noise, appropriate positioning, good acoustics for learning (for example through the use of acoustic panels), using appropriate language levels and signing support and signed TV programmes as appropriate?

	How well do Sensory Services help parents to support the learning of their child with sensory needs, from identification to school-leaving?
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Quality of Teaching

Features of highly-effective practice:

Learners play an active role in the school and wider community and regularly take on leadership roles, including leading learning.

Learners are able to give effective feedback to peers on their learning and suggest ways in which they can improve.

Staff access and apply relevant findings from educational research to improve learning and teaching.

Challenge questions:

How confident are Sensory Services and colleagues that learners with sensory impairment experience activities which are varied, differentiated, active, and provide effective support and challenge?

How alert and proactive are Sensory Services to new research and resource developments, including digital technologies?

How well do Sensory Services and colleagues deploy a wide variety of innovative and creative resources and teaching approaches, including digital technologies, that help learners with sensory needs to become more independent?

How robust is the Sensory service staff knowledge of the Early Years Curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence at BGE, and Curriculum Pathways at the Senior Phase, so that they have credibility when supporting their mainstream colleagues?

How well do Sensory Services and colleagues communicate the purpose of learning and give effective explanations, ensuring that learners with sensory impairment are sufficiently engaged to promote higher-order thinking skills?

Do learners who use braille have access to teachers who are qualified and competent to teach contracted Unified English Braille?

Are HI Services able to provide a BSL or SSE environment?

Are deaf learners supported by staff who are trained at an appropriately competent level in the relevant mode of delivery to enable learners to talk, think and learn in order to access the curriculum?

How well do HI Services support the language development of all learners with sensory needs?

How effectively are learners provided with advice on acquisition and effective use of equipment such as mobile phone and internet?

How well are the community and spaces used to deliver high-quality outdoor learning and specifically to develop confidence in mobility for learners with sensory impairment?

To what extent are learners with sensory impairment encouraged to lead aspects of learning?

QI 2.4: Personalised Support

This indicator focuses on the provision of high quality support that enables all children and young people including those with sensory impairment, to achieve success. It highlights the importance of well being and involving children and young people in decisions about how their needs should be met. Strong partnerships with parents and other partners who support children and young people are essential. Monitoring the impact of interventions and making timely adjustments to practice are key to providing highly-effective universal and targeted support, thus overcoming barriers to learning.

The themes from QI 2.4 are particularly relevant to Sensory Services. The level of universal support may well vary from class to class and school to school. This inconsistency requires sensory specialists to be sensitive to the ethos, classroom management techniques and the overall quality of learning and teaching in order to properly assess how best to support the unique needs of their sensory impaired learner/s. Learners with a significant degree of sensory impairment will require targeted support that includes specialist skills and expertise in knowing how best to overcome their specific barriers to learning.

'Curriculum for Excellence is supported by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), and aims to improve the learning outcomes of all children, including children and young people with disabilities and learning difficulties. In the Getting it Right for Every Child approach, any child or young person who requires additional help should have a plan to address their needs and improve their wellbeing. This will be a single child's plan, but may involve more than one agency. Getting it Right for Every Child promotes an integrated and co-ordinated approach to multi-agency planning. It looks to practitioners to work in accordance with legislation and guidance but also expects agencies to think beyond their immediate remit, drawing on the

skills and knowledge of others as necessary and thinking in a broad, holistic way. For example, a care plan for a child looked after by the local authority, a health care plan, or an individualised education plan should be incorporated within the single child's plan where the child or young person's circumstances require this.' ¹⁷ (GIRFEC National Practice Model, 12 Jan 2016)

Each Authority has developed its practice in respect of GIRFEC and will have clear guidance on its approach to the development of a Child's Plan for the range of learners with sensory impairment.

¹⁷<https://www.gov.scot/publications/girfec-national-practice-model/>

Level 5 Illustration

All children and young people are benefitting from **high-quality universal support**. We have an effective strategy for securing positive relationships and behaviour which all staff and partners take responsibility for implementing. Children and young people are at the centre of all planning, as active participants in their learning and development. Our children and young people have frequent opportunities to discuss their learning with a key adult who knows them well, helping them to set appropriate next steps. This enables them to review their own learning and plan for next steps, gain access to learning activities which will meet their needs, work with a range of partners, and prepares and supports them through changes and choices. Learning targets are in place specific to individual learners, built on prior learning and reviewed and evaluated systematically with next steps based on their progress. All staff know and respond very well to the individual needs of children and young people and promote and support their wellbeing. Tasks, activities and resources are effectively differentiated to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all learners. Our staff and partners work effectively together to increase their ability to meet the needs of our diverse learners through effective use of professional learning, support and specialist resources.

Our **targeted support** builds on robust, embedded universal support. Learners' needs are identified early through reliable and valid assessment information and ensure appropriate, proportionate and timely support including specialist input where required. We fully adhere to legislative requirements and provide all children with additional support needs with high-quality targeted support, including highly-able children. We recognise the important role of parents and partners with specific expertise in supporting children and young people. Children, parents and partners are fully involved in decisions about learning and support. Well-planned interventions are leading to positive outcomes for children with additional support needs including those affected by financial hardship.

Staff and partners take positive and proactive steps to ensure that barriers to learning are minimised. Staff are highly-responsive to the circumstances of at risk children, including young carers, looked after children and children living in poverty. All children with a disability, health issue or social and emotional needs benefit from high-quality targeted support. The school works with key partners to **remove barriers to learning** and provide an inclusive learning environment.

Universal Support

Features of highly-effective practice:

Both universal and targeted learning and support is embedded and is having a positive impact on children's progression with their learning. There are high expectations for all learners across the school. Tasks, activities and resources are effectively differentiated and provide appropriate pace and challenge for all learners. The school reviews the progress of all children effectively, including those with additional support needs. They can provide reliable and valid evidence to support this process.

Challenge questions:

How well do School staff know learners with sensory impairment as individuals?
How well do School staff, including Senior managers, have a good relationship with learners with sensory impairment and recognise the importance of ensuring these young people feel happy, safe and included, and supported to achieve and succeed?
How well do School staff and the Sensory Service work together to use a range of differentiated approaches that meet the needs of learners with sensory impairment?
How well do School staff and the Sensory Service use evidence from tracking meetings, professional dialogue and assessments to measure the progress over time of learners with a sensory impairment and in particular at points of transition?

Targeted Support

Features of highly-effective practice:

Staff make effective use of staged intervention processes and the named person service to ensure children and young people's needs are met. Learners' needs are identified through robust assessment information including specialist input where required. Relevant support staff are involved in planning and reviewing support for individuals and groups of learners. Children requiring additional support have high quality individualised and meaningful progression

Challenge questions:

Where a child or young person develops a hearing or visual impairment after starting formal education, how confident are Sensory Services that Early Years settings and schools know how to make a speedy referral to relevant services including to the Health service and Sensory Services? How well does the Sensory Service interpret and critically evaluate the results of formal clinical and/or functional assessments, and explain these effectively to class teachers so that joint planning can take full account of the learner's needs? How well does the school's collaborative arrangements for curriculum planning meet the needs of learners with sensory impairment? How knowledgeable and confident is the Sensory Service in agreeing the best mode of communication - BSL, SSE, Makaton, Cued Speech, Signalong, Hands on signing, Canaan Barrie signing and braille skills - for each learner in order to meet their specific needs? To what extent do IEPs/Child's Plan for learners with sensory impairment take full account of advice from other colleagues such as the Sensory Service and Speech and Language Therapists, OTs and Habilitation staff? How well does the Sensory Service share flexible intervention criteria and thresholds

pathways. Children and young people and their parents/carers are fully involved in decisions about how their needs will be met. Staff reflect on their own practice and work collaboratively with others, including stakeholders, to build their capacity to meet the needs of all learners.	for support - sufficient numbers of appropriately trained teachers and support assistants and other qualified support staff - with parents and partners to ensure learners benefit from the right support at the right time, particularly at times of transition; and keep these under review? Does the Sensory Service have a qualified Educational Audiologist; a child qualified habilitation officer or similar; a qualified BSL / English tutor; a qualified Auditory Verbal Therapist? <i>If not, how do they access these supports?</i> How well does the Sensory Service provide opportunities for their learners to meet with an adult who has the same sensory impairment? How robust are arrangements that ensure learners with sensory impairment have regular communication and discussions with a key adult/named person to review their learning and plan next steps? How well does the Sensory Service support school staff to ensure learners with sensory impairment can access additional support/alternative arrangements when sitting SQA examinations/assessments? To what extent do School Leaders and Sensory Services prepare learners for post school transition and arrange support from Skills Development Scotland, Adult Services and organise visits to colleges and universities, as appropriate?
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How well can the school and the Sensory Service, along with partners, demonstrate that targeted support is having the desired impact of improving (holistic) outcomes for learners with sensory impairment?

How knowledgeable are School Leaders and Leaders of Sensory Services about ASN legislation and guidance in relation to meeting the targeted needs of learners with sensory impairment?

Removal of Barriers to Learning

Features of highly-effective practice:

Effective partnership approaches are embedded within planned programmes and support processes. There is a strong ethos across the school to minimise the impact of potential barriers to learning.

Challenge questions:

How well do School staff and Sensory Services consider whether their collaborative planning and assessment, and learning and teaching approaches help to remove barriers to learning and meet the needs of learners with sensory impairment? What systems are in place in the Early Years establishment/school to circumvent barriers to learning for learners with sensory impairment? How well do School Staff access effective levels of support and training from Sensory Services and their partners,¹⁸ in order to build their capacity to engage with and promote the attainment and achievement of learners with sensory impairment?

¹⁸ such as including helping them understand the needs of learners with sensory impairment maintaining equipment and supporting learners to use specialist equipment and access relevant IT resources.

Appendix 2: The six-point scale (Taken directly from HGIOS?4)

The six-point scale is a tool for grading the quality indicators. It is mainly used by Education Scotland, local authorities and other governing bodies for the purpose of national and/or local benchmarking across a number of establishments. It is not necessary for individual schools to measure themselves against the six-point scale although they may choose to do so. It should be noted that, when a grading is applied, it is for the whole quality indicator. Individual themes should not be graded. In education, an evaluation can be arrived at in a range of contexts. We need to bear in mind that awarding levels using a quality scale will always be more of a professional skill than a technical process. However, the following general guidelines should be consistently applied.

Excellent

An evaluation of excellent means that this aspect of the school's work is outstanding and sector-leading. The experiences and achievements of all children and young people are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice, based on achieving equity and inclusion and a deep professional understanding which is being shared beyond the school to support system-wide improvement. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

Very good

An evaluation of very good means that there are major strengths in this aspect of the school's work. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish learners' experiences. An evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision for all children and young people and is a standard that should be

achievable by all. There is an expectation that the school will make continued use of self-evaluation to plan further improvements and will work towards improving provision and performance to excellent.

Good

An evaluation of good means that there are important strengths within the school's work yet there remains some aspects which require improvement. The strengths have a significantly positive impact on almost all children and young people. The quality of learners' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the school should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, and also take action to address the areas for improvement.

Satisfactory

An evaluation of satisfactory means that the strengths within this aspect of the school's work just outweigh the weaknesses. It indicates that learners have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on learners' experiences. While the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of learners' experiences. The school needs to take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.

Weak

An evaluation of weak means that there are important weaknesses within this aspect of the school's work. While there may be some strength, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish learners' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the school.

Unsatisfactory

An evaluation of unsatisfactory means there are major weaknesses within this aspect of the school's work which require immediate remedial action. Learners' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, this will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This will usually involve working alongside staff in other schools or agencies.

Appendix 3: Questionnaires

(Please reply on scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning not well at all and 5 meaning very well indeed)
To Learners

How well do Sensory Services staff:

	1	2	3	4	5
listen to you and make sure 'you have a voice';					
support you to understand and manage your sensory needs;					
help to make school and learning fun;					
support the management and use of your amplification and/or use of IT/digital resources and/or Low Vision Aids;					
help the development of your language/communication/listening skills;					
help with alternative communication systems;					
help to access the curriculum;					
help to work independently;					
improve your progress in learning;					
improve your confidence, social skills and future employment opportunities;					
Inform you of activities and events outside school where you will have the opportunity to meet with others who have sensory needs.					

To Parents

How well do Sensory Services staff:

	1	2	3	4	5
explain the role of the service and provide helpful initial advice;					
help you to understand the ASN process;					
develop quality relationships with you and your child;					
explain assessment reports and assist your understanding of hearing/visual problems;					
deliver ongoing advice and support;					
support the management and use of amplification and/or use of IT/digital resources and/or Low Vision Aids;					
help the development of your child's language development/ listening skills;					
help your child to make progress;					
complement the work of the school;					
work effectively with other agencies to provide a co-ordinated approach to support;					
help you to support your child to continue learning at home;					
support transition into/out of school;					
explain how to raise concerns/complaints.					

To Mainstream/Special Resource Base or Special School Teachers and Senior Manager/s

(Please reply on scale of 1 to 5 with 1 meaning not at all good and 5 meaning very good indeed)

How good are Sensory Services in:

	1	2	3	4	5
the speed of their response to initial referral to the service;					
the quality of specialist assessment of the learner's sensory needs;					
explaining the specific needs of the learner to classroom colleagues and School Senior managers;					
working collaboratively with professional colleagues;					
supporting the development of IEPs/Child's Plan					
helping the learner to access the curriculum;					
adapting learning materials and helping to overcome barriers to learning;					
ensuring effective management and support of technical equipment/amplification;					
providing direct and 'team' teaching as appropriate;					
giving advice re 'special arrangements' for assessment in national examinations;					

contributing to monitoring and review for an individual learner;									
writing quality reports which they explain well;									
helping the learner to work independently;									
complementing the work of the mainstream school;									
keeping their knowledge and skills up to date;									
delivering quality CPD and on-going advice.									

To Support Staff

How good are Sensory Services staff at:

	1	2	3	4	5
being accessible and approachable;					
explaining the specific needs of the learner;					
providing support for the use and management of technical equipment;					
supporting the adaptation of learning materials and overcoming barriers to learning;					
complementing the work of the mainstream school;					
building the confidence of support staff;					
valuing the observations of support staff and, as appropriate, including their recommendations in reports and IEPs/Child Plans;					
delivering CPD and providing on-going advice.					

To Educational Psychologists (who have case responsibility)

How good are the Sensory Services staff in:

	1	2	3	4	5
the speed of their response to initial referral to the service;					
the quality of assessment of a child's needs;					
setting suitable learning targets;					
explaining the specific needs of the child to psychologists, to classroom colleagues and School Senior managers;					
adapting learning materials and overcoming barriers to learning;					
working collaboratively with professional colleagues;					
complementing the work of the mainstream school;					
keeping their knowledge and skills up to date;					
writing quality reports which they explain well.					

Local Authority Service Manager/s

How good is the Sensory Service manager at self-managing the team in terms of:

	1	2	3	4	5
distributing caseloads appropriately;					
timetabling;					
leading regular team meetings;					
providing evidence of the overall quality of the service and its impact on learners;					
making recommendations and/or decisions about (often expensive) resources, including requests for adaptations to buildings;					
accessing and delivering relevant CPD and in-service training for team members and schools					
sustaining positive relationships with School managers, Health professionals, Social services and Practitioners;					
sharing information at service, authority and national level;					
keeping their knowledge and skills up to date;					
sustaining positive relationships with learners and their family;					
developing a robust and realistic Service Improvement Plan in line with the local authority Strategic Plan.					

Partner/s in Health: Audiologist/ Speech and Language Therapist/ Ophthalmologist

How good are the Sensory Services in:

	1	2	3	4	5
their degree of professionalism and specialist knowledge when working collaboratively with health staff;					
developing quality relationships with the child and family;					
making appropriate use of health assessments to ensure the child can progress in learning;					
setting appropriate targets and writing reports that assist health colleagues to provide further advice;					
keeping their knowledge and skills up to date.					

Partner/s: Social worker, Habilitation Staff, Voluntary/Third Sector, Skills Development Scotland, for example for Respite Care, Work Opportunities, Housing and Benefits

How good are Sensory Services at:

	1	2	3	4	5
working collaboratively with Social Care staff and other partners;					
knowing and understanding the support that can be provided by Social Care staff and other partners;					
knowing how to refer to make timeous referrals to Social services and other partners;					
developing quality relationships with the child and family;					
keeping their knowledge and skills up to date;					
providing quality reports that alert Social Services and other partners to the need for specific support, particularly at times of transition?					

Appendix 4: Quality Assurance Calendar

Suggested Sensory Service QA Calendar

What	When/Who	Impact	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Team meetings for professional dialogue	1 x Month Sensory Team	Staff feel supported and can share best practice. There is a proactive approach using solution focused discussions about individual learners	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Scrutiny of IEPs/Child's Plans	1 x Term Sensory Service Manager	Plans contain targets that take account of the learners' assessed needs and are suitably challenging										
Visit by Service manager/School Leader/peer colleague to support and monitor learning and teaching in classroom/small	1 x Term Sensory Service Manager/School Leader/peer colleague	Staff become more reflective There is improved consistency in planning and teaching approaches. Pupils are more engaged and learning is promoted	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		

What	When/ Who	Impact	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Review results of national assessments and achievement awards	<i>August</i> Sensory Team with School Leaders as appropriate	Along with the school, the Sensory Service sets realistic but ambitious targets for achievement of national assessments, and broadens achievement opportunities where necessary	✓									
Monitor young people's progress from initial assessment	<i>Ongoing</i> Sensory Service teacher in collaboration with class teacher	Staff are clear about the level of functioning of each young person and differentiate work to meet their needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitor accurate reports of progress	<i>Ongoing</i> Sensory Service teacher, scrutinised by Service manager	Careful analysis of assessment and ongoing tracking of pupil progress ensures accurate reports to parents/carers and next placement (when appropriate)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

What	When/ Who	Impact	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Ensure effective transition arrangements	As required Sensory Service teacher along with School Leader/s	Transitions are carefully planned with relevant agencies to ensure positive destinations										
Monitor the impact of PU/PRD, and the provision and effectiveness of CLPL	1 x Term Service Manager	Teachers' improved knowledge and skills, as they work towards achieving GTCs standards, impact positively on pupils' learning	✓				✓			✓		✓
Take account of the voice of young people in respect of the quality of teaching	Ongoing (informal) May (formal) Sensory Service teacher	Informal, and formal feedback (using questionnaires), is used to improve aspects of teaching and learning, including the use of suitable specialist resources									✓	

What	When/ Who	Impact	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Listen to the voice of parents/carers/ placing authorities in respect of the quality of teaching	<i>Ongoing (informal) January (formal)</i> Sensory Service teachers and Service Manager	Feedback is used to develop aspects of the service which are identified as requiring improvement					✓					
Monitor the quality of collaboration between Sensory Service teachers and School staff	<i>Ongoing and formally using HSIOSS? Internally annually; and with School colleagues bi-annually</i> Sensory Service teacher and Service Manager along with School Leader/s	The combined support of School staff and Sensory Services is having a positive impact on young people's learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

What	When/ Who	Impact	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Monitor the quality of collaboration between Sensory Services and partners including Health	<i>Ongoing and formally using HSIOSS? internally annually; and with partner colleagues bi-annually</i> Sensory Service teacher and Service Manager along with key partners											
Monitor the quality of leadership for change and improvement	<i>1 x Term</i> Head of Service with team; Head of Service with Authority Manager	Leaders at all levels monitor practice and ensure priorities for improvement within the Improvement Plan are being undertaken. Concerns are dealt with swiftly.		✓					✓			

Appendix 5: References

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