

# Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)

Defining specialist skills development and best practice support to promote equity, inclusion and personal agency.



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As members of the project management team, we are proud of the collaborative way this framework has been conceptualised and developed. We hope that you will find it useful in whatever UK context and setting you are situated and will be able to draw upon the framework to help promote equitable and inclusive education for all children and young people with vision impairment.

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# Introduction to the framework

## Aims

The Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment has been developed to support children and young people with vision impairment access an appropriate and equitable education. The framework presents outcomes within 11 teaching areas. It provides a vocabulary to be used by children and young people, their families and professionals in the UK who work with them. A shared vocabulary supports both better communication and purpose.

### The aims of the framework are:

- To help clarify and define the elements of specialist skill development, interventions and best practice support that are considered to be essential for children and young people with vision impairment;
- To assist qualified specialist practitioners in raising the awareness amongst other professionals and parents, of the need for children and young people with vision impairment to be taught skills that enable them to access the curriculum and the wider world with as much independence as possible; and
- To aid discussions and understanding amongst all involved in a child / young person's education of how and when these skills should be taught by suitably qualified specialists and reinforced by non-specialists.

The central specialist practitioners working in the field of vision impairment education are qualified teachers of children and young people with a vision impairment (QTVI) and registered qualified habilitation specialists (RQHS).

Our audience might also include rehabilitation workers (vision impairment) who may have specialised in working with children and young people, and specialist teaching assistants (STAs) who have undertaken additional training, such as a braille qualification and are working under the direction of a QTVI. These specialist professionals often work in collaboration with others, such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and educational psychologists, depending upon the individual needs of the child / young person.

## Vision impairment and education

We know vision impairment is associated with major obstacles to children and young people acquiring and developing fundamental skills. We also know these obstacles can be reduced, or removed, if children and young people with vision impairment receive appropriate teaching input in an appropriate teaching environment.

The importance of a specialist framework which captures the distinctive skills required by this group has been widely recognised within the vision impairment education field for many years.

However, to date, there has been no universally recognised specialist framework for children and young people with vision impairment in the UK context. This has led to a lack of clarity about what should be taught and by whom. This can result in services making inconsistent educational offers and different stakeholders finding it difficult to communicate with one another. The framework provides a strong foundation for achieving equitable entitlement for children and young people with vision impairment across the UK.

Underpinning this specialist framework is the “access to learning-learning to access” model (McLinden et al, 2021; McLinden et al, 2016; Douglas et al, 2019).

This model is rooted in the belief that specialist support for children and young people with vision impairment should focus on two key outcomes as a route to social inclusion:

**Access to learning:** Ensuring all children and young people have fair and optimised access to education.

**Learning to access:** Ensuring all children and young people have opportunities to develop their own agency, voice and independence.

The model recognises a balance between approaches: on one hand supporting the child’s development by providing an appropriate learning environment and providing appropriate support and adjustments; on the other, supporting the child’s development by teaching appropriate skills such as mobility and the use of technology.

The model also recognises a progression, over time the emphasis shifts from support being provided directly to the child / young person (“access to learning”), to their acquisition of the particular skills so they can act and learn more independently (“learning to access”).

This balance will vary for individual children, reflecting their particular context, support needs and developmental age. The framework seeks to be inclusive and celebrates young people’s achievements in all its forms. This is true whether these achievements are early-reaching or expressions of awareness and choice in young and developmentally young children, or using mobile braille technology to help navigate a complex city environment.

Within the broad philosophy of this model, 11 areas have been identified to form the basis of this framework and seek to capture an important part of the educational experience and outcomes of children and young people with vision impairment.

# Overview of the framework

## The 11 areas of learning defined by the framework

<b>1. Facilitating an Inclusive World</b>	Recognising the role of educators (including specialist practitioners) and parents / carers as facilitators and advocates for children and young people with vision impairment in education and society.
<b>2. Sensory Development</b>	Working with children and young people to maximise use and development of the senses.
<b>3. Communication</b>	Working with children and young people to develop their social communication skills.
<b>4. Literacy</b>	Working with children and young people to develop literacy skills.
<b>5. Habilitation: Orientation and Mobility</b>	Supporting children and young people to be able to move safely through their world as independently as possible.
<b>6. Habilitation: Independent Living Skills</b>	Supporting children and young people to develop the day-to-day skills they need in order to live as independent a life as possible.
<b>7. Accessing Information</b>	Teaching of methods children and young people can use to access, produce and manage information independently.
<b>8. Technology</b>	Providing training and opportunity for children and young people to use technology with as much independence as possible.
<b>9. Health: Social, Emotional, Mental &amp; Physical Wellbeing</b>	Providing targeted teaching and support to facilitate the development of the mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing of children and young people.
<b>10. Social, Sports and Leisure</b>	Supporting children and young people to have opportunities to participate in social, sports and leisure.
<b>11. Preparing for Adulthood</b>	Supporting children and young people to prepare for their lives after compulsory education and make decisions for their future.

# How to use the framework

The primary focus of the framework is children and young people who are 0-25 years of age. It is recognised that local authorities and countries differ in the precise way support is arranged and provided (e.g. as the young person moves into adulthood, often specialist support may be provided by adult services).

Nevertheless, the 0-25 age band reflects wider concerns about educational provision for supporting children and young people with disabilities across the UK and how it links with adulthood (and in some countries this is also captured with statutory educational guidance). Research evidence clearly highlights the significant role services have in helping young people with vision impairment to prepare for and transition into adulthood (Hewett et al, 2021).

For school-aged children, it is our intention that the framework should be closely integrated with the core or national curriculum to which all children and young people are entitled. Although the framework is non-statutory, we will be seeking to achieve statutory, or guidance, status to ensure that the areas of the framework are recognised as essential and not optional. Children and young people with vision impairment must have the opportunity to develop the skills contained within the framework in order to thrive. The teaching of these essential skills should be led by specialist qualified practitioners, such as a QTVI or habilitation specialist, working in close partnership with families and other professionals.



# How the framework can help children and young people with vision impairment

Children and young people with vision impairment will have a range of experiences and insights into what facilitates or inhibits their access to education, independence and social interaction.

It is essential that their views, as well as the views of their family, are central and that each individual is encouraged and supported to advocate for themselves to whatever extent is possible and appropriate to their age or stage of development.

The framework seeks to clarify and define the range of skills that are important for children and young people with vision impairment to develop.

Of course, not everything listed is relevant to every child or young person at any given time. For example, braille is a route to literacy for some young people but not others; the use of a long cane as a mobility aid will be vital for some young people but not others; the use of tangible symbols and objects of reference will be at the heart of a communication approach for some but not others.

Used carefully, the framework will provide young people with a clear understanding of outcomes they can target and language they can use to engage with their parents and educators. All young people deserve to know what their education is trying to achieve for them and to have a voice in this.

The framework provides young people with vision impairment with an insight into some of the ways they can do this – how they can access information and use technology, move about as independently as possible, interact confidently with others and have an understanding of their own potential. Such understanding of their own potential will also support their emotional wellbeing and sense of agency.



# How the framework can help parents of children and young people with vision impairment

The framework can be used to enable parents and carers to understand the pathways of support for their child and the services involved in providing that support within a given nationwide context. It provides a common language and shared vocabulary which enables parents, vision impairment education professionals, classroom teachers, teaching assistants and other professionals to communicate more effectively when discussing a child or young person's support needs.

This increased understanding of the areas of focus for a child's learning should enable parents to feel more

comfortable and confident when meeting professionals to discuss their child's progress.

## The framework can help parents by:

- Aiding understanding of the long-term objectives of specialist professionals in helping children and young people with vision impairment maximise their independence – both in education and the wider world – in preparation for adulthood.
- Serving as a guide when they engage with their child's activities at home as they learn new skills and knowledge.



# How the framework can help professionals working in education with children and young people with vision impairment

Many professionals will be involved in promoting the inclusion of children and young people in education, including specialist professionals such as a QTVI, RQHS or rehabilitation officer. They will also be involved in directly teaching specialist skills to the young person including for example: mobility; independent living skills; braille literacy; technology and communication.

They will also be involved in directly teaching specialist skills to the child or young person including for example: mobility; independent living skills; braille literacy; technology and communication.

These specialists share the objective of balancing approaches that ensure inclusive practice for children and young people with vision impairment (through promoting access to learning approaches), with ensuring that individuals are provided with the necessary skills and opportunities to become as independent as possible (through targeted learning to access approaches).

Importantly, those who work with the young person on a day-to-day basis are crucial in ensuring this specialist work is embedded in everyday life. This may involve collaborating with parents/families, teachers and other professionals such as teaching assistants, speech and language therapists, occupational

therapists, educational psychologists, ophthalmologists and those working in social care.

A UK-wide framework can allow colleagues across the sector to ensure the needs of children and young people with vision impairment are being met across all outcome areas. It offers a shared vocabulary for specialist and non-specialist education professionals across the UK for the first time, as well as identifying key outcomes for these children and young people from ages 0-25 years.

The framework is not intended to provide the detail of how to deliver outcomes as this, along with resource allocation, remains at the discretion of the service or professional working with the child/young person.

It is these services which are designed to ensure that support continues to be delivered on the basis of individual need and in accordance with local, regional and/or national policy and practice. Allocation of staffing and support levels would still be informed as they are now, e.g. by drawing upon NatSIP eligibility criteria and/or the judgement of specialist professionals.

However, the framework is intended to capture the importance of specialist provision for children and young people with vision impairment. By doing so the framework should



help ensure specialist services are adequately resourced to support children and young people with vision impairment to both access the curriculum, and to develop the broad range of skills that they will need to live as independently as possible.

The framework descriptors are intentionally high level to allow for services and schools to be able to

adapt existing provision or develop new activities and resources to fit into these overarching outcome areas. This continues to encourage flexibility of approach across the UK and embraces the degree of autonomy specialist professionals currently have in designing successful, individualised provision for all children and young people with vision impairment.

# How the framework is aligned with inclusive practice

The shift towards greater inclusive practice in the UK has seen significant changes in educational access and placement for children and young people with vision impairment. The majority of children and young people with vision impairment, including those with a range of additional learning and physical needs that can be met in mainstream settings, are educated alongside their peers who are fully sighted. They will therefore participate in most subject areas with individual teaching activities limited to particular “specialist” curriculum areas (e.g. mobility, braille instruction and technology). In comparison, the majority of children and young people with complex needs are educated in generic special schools that are not designated specifically for pupils with vision impairment.

Inclusion and inclusive practice are much debated terms. For the authors of this framework, inclusion is not solely defined by educational placement or in a belief that all children should get the same educational experience. Rather, inclusion also recognises that each individual has diverse needs, requiring a range of approaches. This includes specialist approaches which are particular to children and young people with vision impairment – these approaches are not at odds with inclusion; in fact, the outcomes they target are vital components in achieving inclusion.

Effective inclusive practice in the UK will seek to ensure that all learning and assessment activities are accessible (i.e. that all children and young people with vision impairment are provided with access to learning).

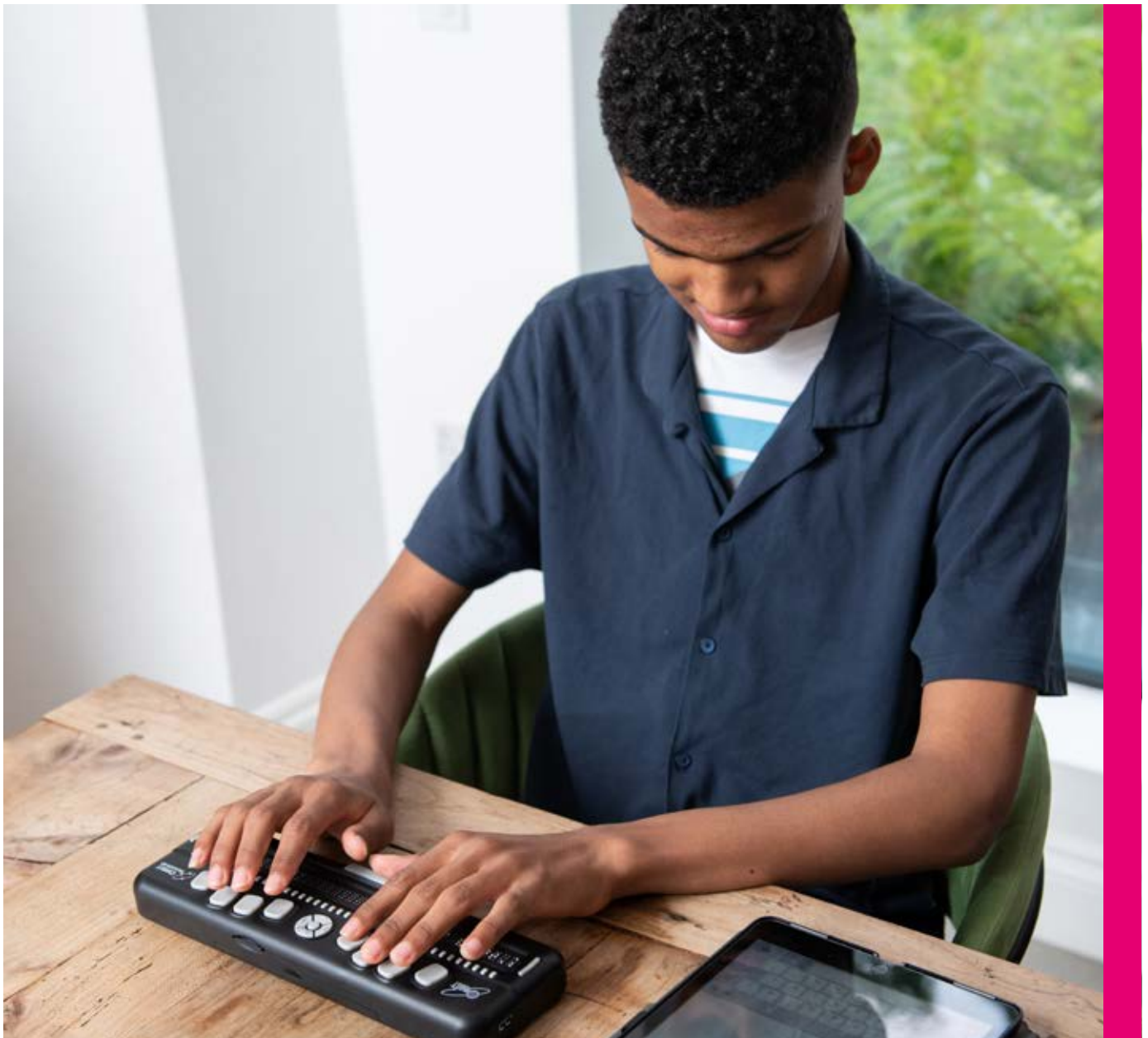
This practice will avoid the risk that they are unfairly disadvantaged, whilst recognising the distinctive learning needs that are associated with vision impairment.

This emphasis is captured in Area 1 of the framework (Facilitating an Inclusive World) which recognises the role of carers and educators as facilitators and advocates for children and young people with vision impairment in education and society more broadly. Such recognition also requires a need for specialist curriculum areas to be offered as appropriate to promote greater learner independence over time.

It is important to recognise that the general school curriculum and the specialist curriculum presented in this framework are not independent of each other. They overlap and the skills involved in the specialist curriculum are fundamental to being able to fully access the general school curriculum.

## Examples of these skills include:

- The ability to use technology controlled by eye movement to communicate / express choice across the curriculum.
- The ability to recognise object symbols in order to use a tactile timetable.
- Use of a talking scientific calculator or App in Maths.
- Effective use of modified large print materials in an external examination.
- The ability to touch type and read back / using a screen reader for revision.
- Development of braille literacy to access all core curriculum areas.
- The ability to access food technology using skills acquired as part of Independent Living Skills (ILS).
- Ability to use mobility and orientation skills to move between lessons.



# Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment

## The 11 areas of the framework

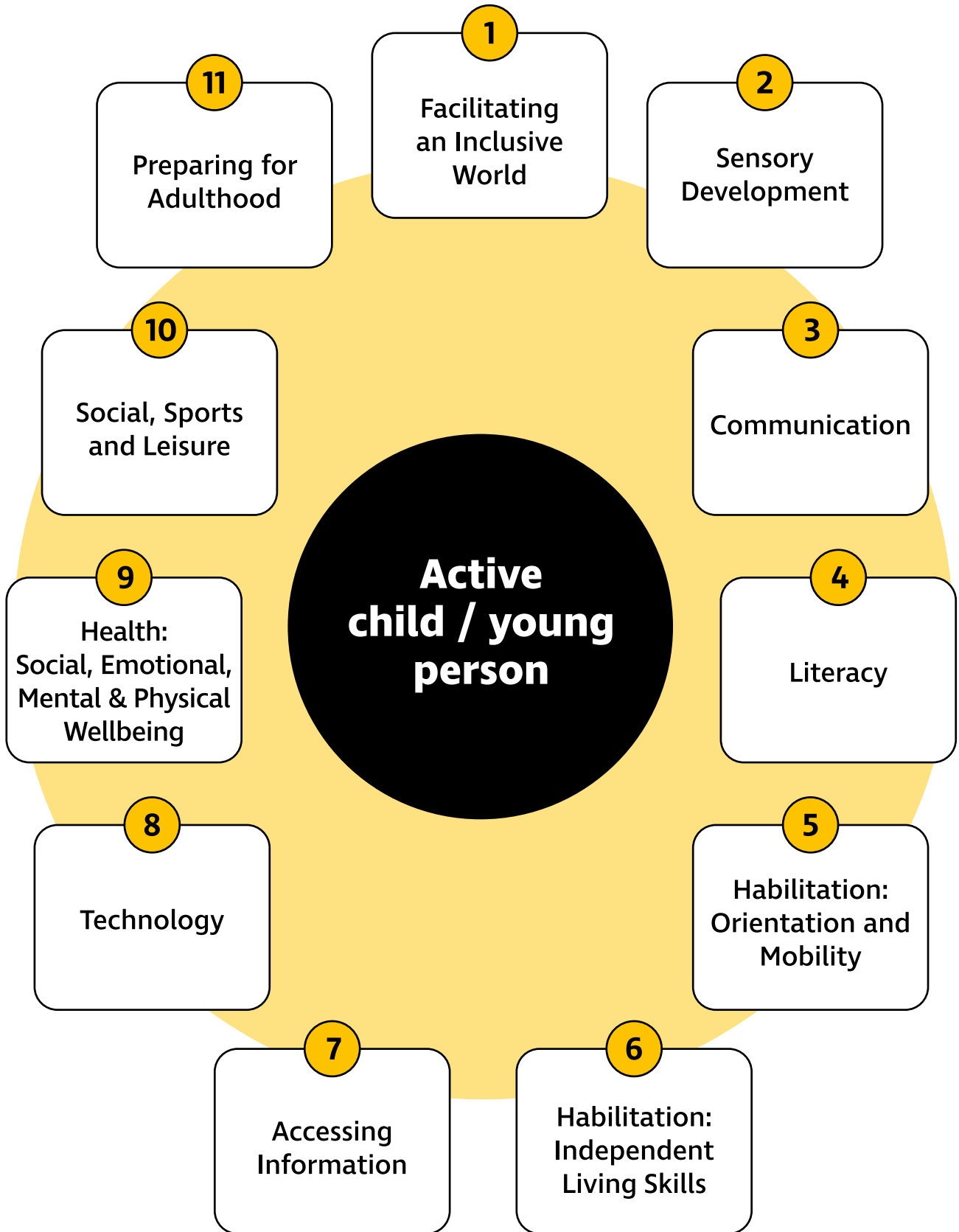
The 11 areas of the framework are in line with the access to learning / learning to access model outlined on page 5. Area 1 focusses on inclusion and inclusive practice to ensure physical and social environments are accessible for children and young people with vision impairment. Areas 2-11 highlight the particular skills that they require to enable them to participate in education with increasing independence, learn how to carry out everyday activities, move around by

themselves, and to feel fully included in their education setting. Figure 1 shows the different areas.

In the sections that follow, each area of the framework is described. Examples of targeted outcomes are then listed as bullet points. It is also important to recognise that these examples will not be relevant to all children and young people with vision impairment all of the time – inevitably some outcomes will be relevant to some people only (e.g. braille, low vision devices, augmentative and alternative communication).



# Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment



**Figure 1:** Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)





# Area 1: Facilitating an Inclusive World

## Description:

At the heart of this area is a social model of support, with a focus on inclusion and inclusive or universal practice, ensuring physical and social environments are accessible for children and young people with vision impairment. School cultures are welcoming of difference and diversity, universal design as the norm is the aspiration, with appropriate adjustments and support put in place to enable access. Particular attention may be needed as young people transition between different settings. Beyond education, this area recognises the importance of working towards a more inclusive society, allowing children and young people with vision impairment to live as independently as possible.

The responsibility for an inclusive society rests with all members of that society. Nevertheless, this area recognises the role of parents / guardians, all educators (including specialist professionals) and professional carers as facilitators for children and young people with vision impairment in education and society. They advocate for inclusive education and community environments which enable young people to flourish and develop their personal agency, and for the removal of barriers to access participation.

Specialist qualified professionals, as well as parents and carers, have important oversight of the development of the individual, with the objective of ensuring that they are provided with the necessary opportunities to become as independent as possible. Importantly, this should be supported by those who work with the child / young person on a day-to-day basis, collaborating with the specialist qualified professionals (supported by other specialists such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, paediatricians and eye health professionals). Children and young people with vision impairment will have a range of experiences and insights into factors that facilitate or inhibit their access to education, independence and social interaction and it is therefore essential that their views are considered and that they are encouraged and supported to advocate for themselves in this respect.

### **Targeted outcomes of this area include:**

- Identification, recognition, and understanding of the specific and holistic needs and rights of a child and young person.
- Creation of accessible physical environments, including classroom space and general school environment (e.g. accessible signage and information, keeping corridors and classrooms clear of trip hazards).
- Creation of accessible social environments (peers).
- Knowledgeable and empowered family around the child and young person.
- Knowledgeable and empowered educators around the child.
- Supporting transitions as the child / young person moves between settings.
- Creation of accessible social environments (community, work and lifelong education).
- Availability of accessible and appropriate learning materials, as directed by specialist professionals.
- Availability of accessible and appropriate learning tools, (e.g. appropriate assistive technology, tablet computers and computers).
- Accessible infrastructures (e.g. networks, libraries, internet spaces, virtual learning environments, transport).
- Availability of accessible information for independence in adulthood (e.g. from private and public services).

## Area 2: Sensory Development

### Description:

This Area of the framework recognises the importance of working with the child / young person and family to maximise the use and development of the senses. This will promote access and inclusion, by developing the sensory strategy that suits them best as early as possible whilst continuing to develop the effective use of other senses. This input and support will be informed by the nature and severity of the vision impairment, if it was from birth or later onset or if the condition is degenerative, and whether there are other physical or learning needs. This may involve specialist qualified professionals collaborating with other professionals, such as occupational therapists.

### Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Tactile / haptic perception and development.
- Fine and gross motor skills.
- Engaging with surroundings.
- Vestibular development – sense of balance, head / eye-coordination, visual scanning.
- Proprioceptive and kinaesthetic development – sense of movement (sense the position of our body when moving through space, as well as to describe the movement of individual body parts in relation to one another).
- Olfactory development – sense of smell (e.g. smells to support sensory stories / identify food; identify danger such as smoke).
- Using vision effectively.
- Visual stimulation / visual development.
- Auditory skills – listening skills, hearing and making sense of what is heard, being able to listen to audio at increasing speeds to support learning.
- Managing sensory overload, reducing sensory stimulation, working with tactile selectiveness.

## Area 3: Communication

### Description:

This area of the framework recognises the importance of working with children and young people to develop effective communication in formal (e.g. in the classroom) and informal settings (e.g. outdoor spaces). This might involve specialist adjustments and approaches to teaching, or adopting alternative or bespoke approaches. Much of the teaching should be undertaken by, or under the direction of, a suitably specialist qualified professional. Such professionals will be able to guide decision-making in relation to promoting effective routes to communication which will highlight the range of expressive and receptive approaches which are appropriate to the individual learner. Central to this will be the child or young person's preferences, needs and circumstances. This area is closely linked to literacy, which is a particular type of communication. Approaches should be informed by the specific needs of the child and young person, as determined in collaboration with a speech and language therapist. Some approaches may be very particular to the individual, particularly in the early years.

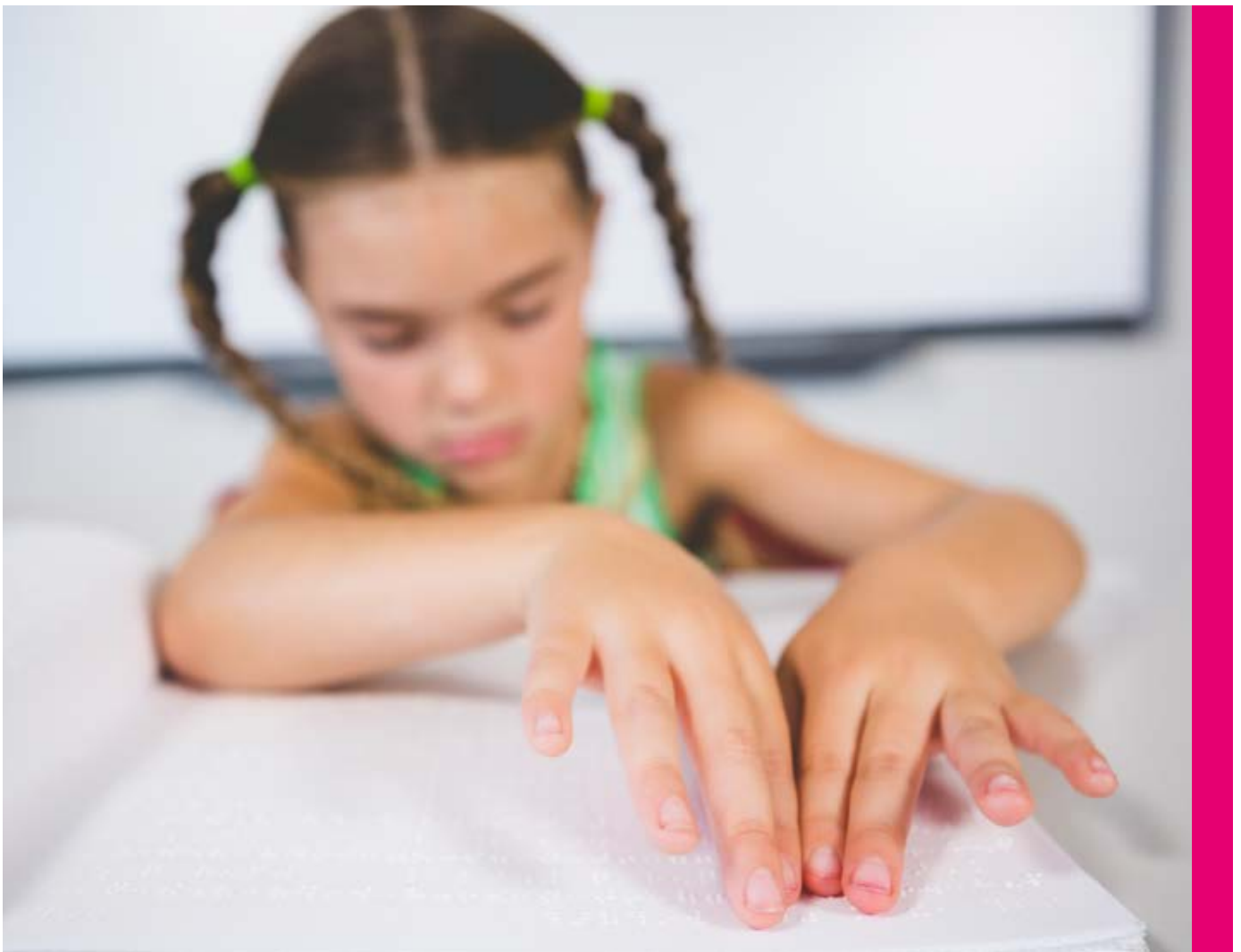
### Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- A clear and developing communication pathway.
- Receptive and expressive communications.
- Communication and literacy development through sensory stories that are appropriate for children and young people with vision impairment.
- Appropriate and accessible communication approaches for learners, e.g.
  - visual/tactile symbols, spoken, sign language, sign systems, on-body signing, objects of reference/tangible symbols, tactile symbols, auditory/vocal;
  - visual/tactile access to dual communication boards, including technology that relies on communication through various kinds of switches;
  - augmentative and alternative communication (AAC);
  - body language;
  - spoken word, working with scribes.
- Choosing appropriate and suitable communication approaches (or combinations of approaches) for learners.
- Teaching and supporting good communication skills to empower the learner to articulate their needs in different environments.
- Training on modes of communication for the workplace, such as email, video conferencing, and support for understanding the use of language in formal work settings.
- Social skills, including social norms and awareness of nonverbal cues.

## Area 4: Literacy

### Description:

This area of the framework recognises the importance of working with children and young people to develop literacy skills. This might involve specialist adjustments and approaches to teaching, or adopting alternative or bespoke approaches, codes and technology. Much of the teaching should be undertaken by, or under the direction of a QTVI or another suitably qualified professional. Such professionals will be able to guide decision-making in relation to literacy pathways, and they will have particularly high levels of input if braille is one of the chosen routes. Teaching of literacy to children and young people with vision impairment should not be thought of as a simple access issue that can be solved with adjustments to print material or an alternative code (such as braille). Such access opens up opportunities to develop literacy that needs teaching, and this teaching commonly needs particular teaching approaches (in particular in relation to braille literacy).



## Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- A clear and developing literacy pathway plan, informed, by assessment including appropriate strategies for those whose first language is not English (or Welsh in Welsh-medium schools).
- Literacy through print:
  - Optimising print presentation;
  - Use of low vision devices;
  - CCTVs / electronic magnification;
  - Mainstream electronic equipment, e.g. tablets;
  - Specialist magnification software;
  - Training in speed reading.
- Literacy through Moon.
- Literacy through braille, informed by regular assessment:
  - Pre – and early braille;
  - Braille reading and writing – uncontracted / contracted braille (in appropriate language, e.g. English, Welsh, Arabic);
  - Specialist braille codes, e.g. maths, music, science codes;
  - Refreshable braille technology.
- Literacy through sensory stories, pictures and object symbols.
- Speech technology (in appropriate language, e.g. English, Welsh).
- Writing and use of appropriate technology:
  - braille, computer, pen, dictation software;
  - handwriting, developing an appropriate handwriting style which aids legibility;
  - touch typing.

## Area 5: Habilitation: Orientation and Mobility

### Description:

This area of the framework, which has close alignment with sensory development, recognises the importance of teaching children and young people with vision impairment to be able to navigate the world around them, and to be able to move safely and with confidence from one place to the next. It recognises the importance of each child / young person being supported to be as independent as possible, in an age appropriate way. It also recognises that other conditions (e.g. learning and / or physical disabilities) may have an influence on how movement is achieved and taught. Much of the teaching should be undertaken by, or under the direction of, a registered qualified habilitation specialists (RQHS) or (particularly as the young person moves into adult services) a rehabilitation worker (vision impairment).



## Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Body awareness.
- Motor skills development (fine and gross) – the ability to move and interact with one's immediate and distant environment.
- Engaging actively with surroundings.
- Using senses to navigate environment.
- Development of spatial cognition including mental maps of the environment.
- Navigating home environment.
- Walking safely indoors.
- Navigating indoor environments.
- Working with a sighted guide.
- Walking safely outdoors.
- Using landmarks.
- Planning safe and efficient routes.
- Using tactile maps for orientation and mobility.
- Navigating outdoor environments, including road safety.
- Using mobility aids, including from an early age. This would include a full range of potential mobility aids, e.g. various canes, guide dog, electronic devices (including specialist Apps and equipment), smart wheelchair with switch.
- Using public transport.
- Travelling alone, including interacting with the general public.
- Travelling to unfamiliar places.
- Accessing information in public places.
- Understanding own needs and knowing when to ask for help.
- Core functional skills for sports and fitness.



# Area 6: Habilitation: Independent Living Skills

## Description:

This area of the framework recognises the importance of supporting children and young people with vision impairment to develop the day to day skills they need in order to live as independent a life as possible. Much of the teaching should be undertaken by, or under the direction of a RQHS (who will work in liaison with other professionals such as occupational therapists and QTVIs). This includes support to the child / young person and their family.

## Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Eating, using cutlery, understanding the social skills around eating, including eating at a social occasion.
- Toileting (in collaboration with other professionals).
- Personal hygiene.
- Dressing, such as using clothes fastenings and appearance (including make-up and beauty).
- Cooking and food preparation.
- Safe use of kitchen appliances and specialist technology, such as talking scales and liquid level indicators.
- Shopping.
- Cleaning.
- Laundry skills.
- Managing the home, for example changing batteries, replacing lightbulbs.
- Technology skills for living such as online shopping, food identification, online banking and using technology to read print post.
- Time management and calendar organisation.
- Organisational skills.
- Money management.
- Leisure.
- Managing and understanding one's health.
- Social, emotional and cognitive independent living skills, including making and maintaining relationships.
- Self-advocacy.

# Area 7: Accessing Information

## Description:

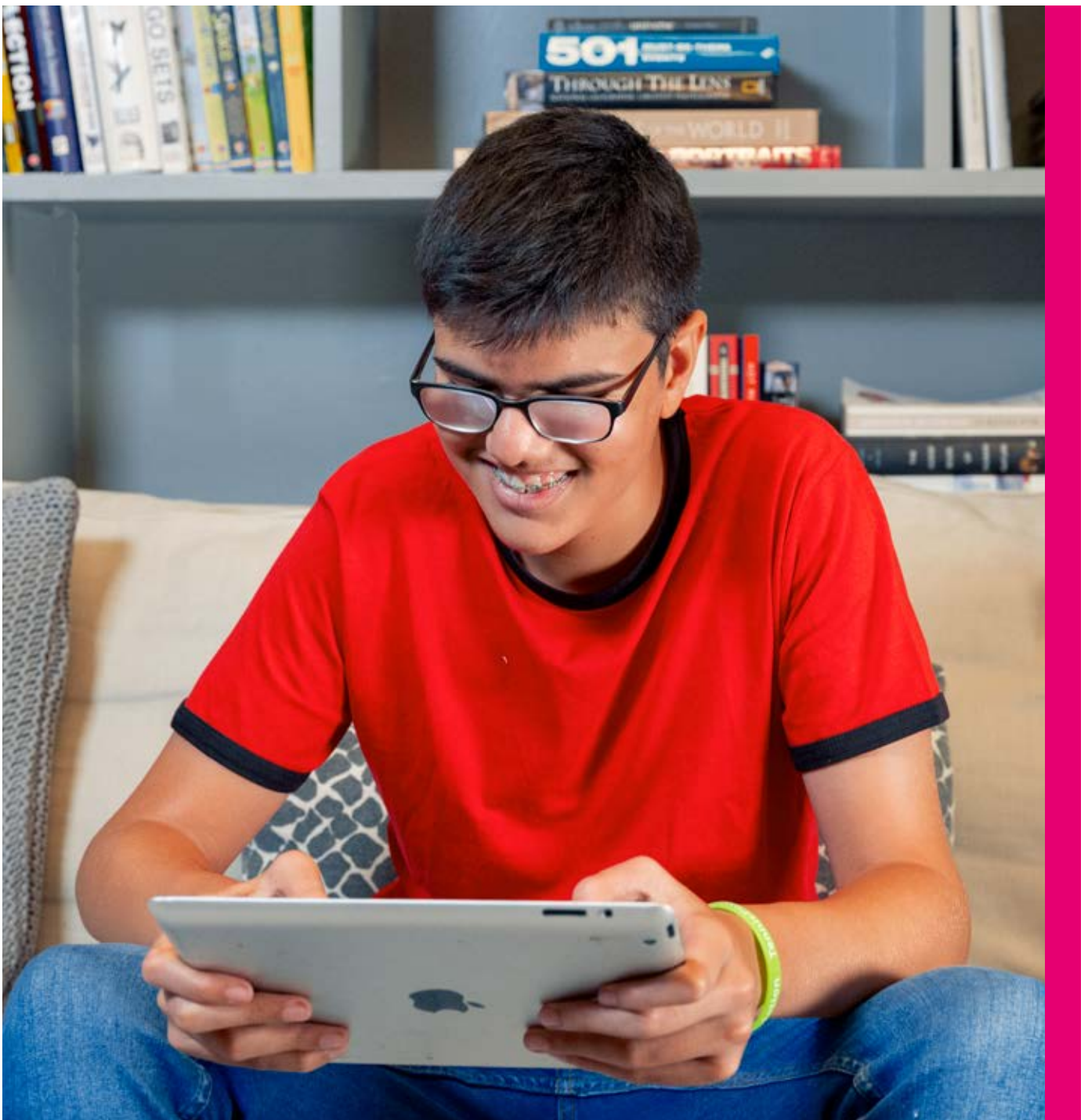
This area of the framework considers the teaching of methods children and young people can use to access, manage and produce information as independently as possible. As well as a range of skills, young people require an understanding of the following: when to use particular approaches, how to manage and navigate an information rich world, and the role of others in scaffolding them by preparing materials, adjusting the environment and making accommodations.

Such adjustments should be anticipatory so that the child / young person is able to access this information at the same time as their peers, for example, through the use of tactile symbols or a tactile diagram. There is a recognition that particular tasks (which may be linked to particular disciplines, formats, or activities) may have associated ways of presenting and accessing information. This may require specific teaching or adjustment.

## Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Understanding and developing a range of suitable approaches to accessing and presenting information (e.g. tangible objects / objects of reference, print, speech, recordings, braille, tactile graphics).
- Recognise that taught strategies to accessing information will change, and this may be linked to developmental stage or changing circumstances (e.g. in relation to level of vision, or child or young person's views).
- Choosing suitable approaches (or combinations of approaches) to accessing and presenting information in different circumstances. This should include low-tech solutions to provide alternative options when technologies fail.
- Managing information so that it can be accessed when needed (e.g. contacts, timetables, diaries).
- Supporting the development of key concepts around numeracy and data at an appropriate age or stage of development, including (where appropriate) supporting understanding of braille codes and language relating to the key concepts both in maths and science.
- Supporting the development of tactile graphicacy skills to promote and facilitate access to two and three-dimensional representational material such as tactile maps, diagrams, pictures and other graphical and figurative material.
- Supporting ability to choose specific approaches (or combinations of approaches) to information access in particular contexts (e.g. exam skills, in lessons and independent study).

- Managing information, for example file / folder management, organisational skills, editing / bookmarking, revision skills. This includes teaching specific study skills for students accessing information in non-visual ways.
- Learning to use, recognise and manage the tools needed to access information (e.g. low vision devices, technology, software and hardware).
- Understanding the wider systems required to access information: when to seek support, when to seek accommodations, being aware of entitlements.



## Area 8: Technology

### Description:

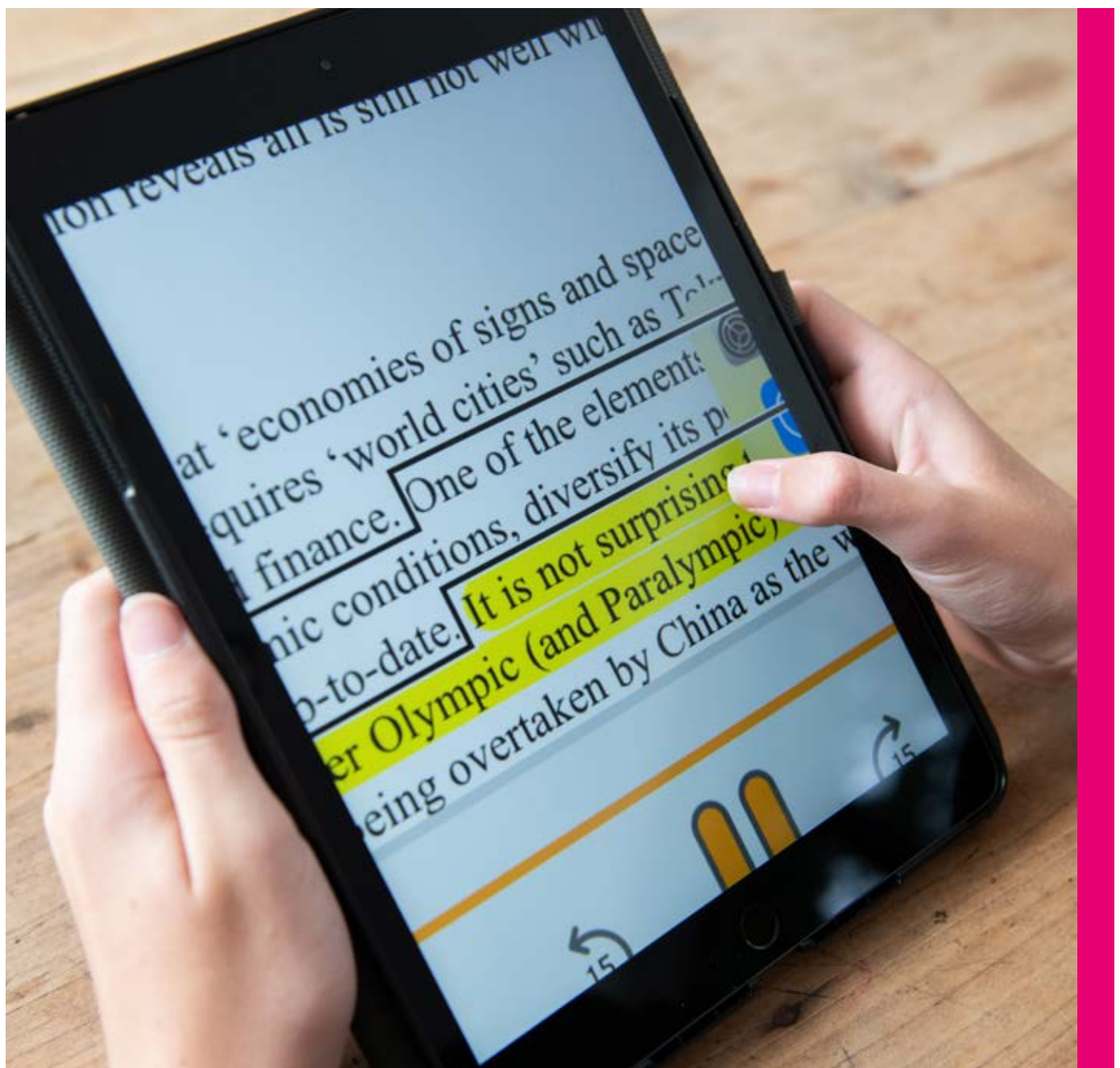
This area of the framework recognises the importance of children and young people with vision impairment being provided the training and opportunity to be able to use technology and equipment with as much independence as possible. Some technologies require bespoke teaching and time delivered by a professional with specialist knowledge of that technology. It is important that children and young people have access to the most appropriate assistive technology for their needs at as early an age as is appropriate, and that this is facilitated within their day to day working (e.g. ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place and learning material is provided in a compatible format). This should include recognition that some children and young people may have conditions which means they experience fatigue when using screens. Therefore, a balance of high-tech and low-tech solutions are required.

Where appropriate, it is also important that children and young people are empowered to be able to make informed choices about the most appropriate technology for them to use in different situations. Recognition should be given to the rapidly changing nature of this area due to technology advances. It is important for children and young people with vision impairment (and those advising and teaching them) to have opportunities to learn about the introduction of new technology.

### Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Educational Technology (EdTech) e.g. interactive whiteboards, screen sharing apps and software.
- Assistive Technology:
  - Magnification and screen reading software, braille displays and notetakers, touch monitors.
- Mainstream technology:
  - Adaptations to accessible mainstream technology, e.g. tablets, accessibility tools and general / universal settings on standard operating systems.
- Technology and equipment for accessing the curriculum and beyond:
  - e.g. switches, computers, accessible scientific calculators for non-visual learners, accessible music composition software programmes, tactile protractors.

- Technology for life:
  - e.g. mobile phones, apps (including specialist apps such as colour recognition tools), GPS and navigation apps (including transportation apps), social media, speech input software.
- Access to E-learning, for example, virtual learning environments.
- Touch typing, including keyboard shortcuts, navigation skills, scrolling, searching, tabbing through documents (e.g. headings, links).
- Understanding choice e.g. switches, computer programming.
- Keeping safe in a digital world.



## Area 9: Health: Social, Emotional, Mental and Physical Wellbeing

### Description:

This area of the framework recognises that children and young people with vision impairment need targeted teaching to support the development of their mental and emotional resilience in a world that should be inclusive (Area 1), as well as their mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. This area is important for all children and young people with vision impairment, across the full spectrum of developmental and communication stages. It includes working with the family of the child / young person, as well as providing support to professionals to ensure the needs of the child / young person are understood.

### Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Access to specialist support, such as mentoring or counselling. This should include support for children and young people across a wide range of developmental and communication stages, and those for whom English / Welsh is not their first language.
- Supporting early attachment and relationship building, emotional development and emotional resilience, including signposting to other services. This includes supporting the child / young person to understand different types of emotions and knowing how to respond if things go wrong.
- Developing self-advocacy and problem solving skills.
- Self-confidence, self-efficacy and agency, ensuring children and young people with vision impairment feel that they can have an influence and impact on their world and on the decisions that are made regarding their education and life.
- Self-awareness, e.g. recognising and understanding anxiety and depression.
- Self-esteem, recognition of strengths.
- Social skills, including awareness of social norms and awareness of non-verbal cues which may be missed and confidence to interact with others independently.
- Personal identity, and the potential benefits of meeting others with vision impairment.

- Understanding of vision impairment, including being able to:
  - communicate with others about their vision impairment and how it affects their experiences, needs and requirements;
  - respond to questions regarding their vision impairment;
  - correct assumptions others make about their needs and experiences;
  - participate in health related appointments as independently as possible.
- Acceptance of vision impairment – establishing one’s own identity in relation vision impairment and disability.
- Making and maintaining relationships (attachments, familial, peer and romantic).
- Sex education.
- Participation in sport/ social activities, including supported access to disability sports groups for children/ young people with complex physical/ learning/ vision impairment needs.
- Personal safety – keeping yourself safe as an individual with a vision impairment.



# Area 10: Social, Sports and Leisure

## Description:

This area of the framework recognises the importance of supporting children and young people with vision impairment to have opportunities to participate in social, sport and leisure opportunities, and the community which is traditionally beyond formal education.

## Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Accessing family groups, such as baby and toddler groups in the community.
- Providing opportunities for interaction with others with vision impairment (e.g. family groups, transition days, social events).
- Awareness of national charities and organisations supporting leisure and sporting opportunities for children and young people with vision impairment, including mentoring opportunities.
- Accessing enrichment opportunities, such as volunteering and community gardening.
- Accessing community groups, such as youth clubs.
- Participating in religious activities.
- Support for residential experiences within the school context.
- Knowing how to get involved in social, sport and leisure activities and finding out what is available.
- Accessing sports, including competitive sports, providing access to adapted sports activities where the young person can fully participate and work towards competing / higher level skills if they wish.
- Accessing music, including learning instruments and playing in musical ensembles.
- Building skills and independence to enable young people to build and sustain positive friendships.
- Meeting up with friends in age appropriate settings.
- Accessing online communities, including keeping safe online.
- Accessing social venues including restaurants, cafes, bars, clubs, theatres, and cinemas.



# Area 11: Preparing for Adulthood

## Description:

This area of the framework recognises the importance of supporting children and young people to prepare for their lives after compulsory education. This might include preparing for further study, employment or for children and young people with complex needs, identifying the most appropriate settings for them to transition into. The contents of this area need to be taken into consideration throughout the child / young person's life, to ensure that everything is in place for them to have a successful transition into adulthood. Whilst children / youth specialist services might not provide direct support as the young person enters adulthood, the focus on preparation for adulthood will ensure that the young person and their family are equipped for participating in their next settings.

## Examples of targeted intervention approaches:

- Providing support in preparation for key post compulsory education transitions, e.g.:
  - Further Education;
  - Higher Education;
  - Seeking and participating in employment;
  - Assisted living.
- Specialist input to careers education, information and guidance, including supporting volunteering / work experience opportunities, searching for and applying for jobs, disclosing vision impairment, preparing for interviews, supporting work experience placements.
- Supporting young person taking personal responsibility; recognising their rights and responsibilities.
- Entitlement and benefits (including transitions between child and adult systems).
- Supporting direct engagement between health professionals and social services personnel, local specialist adult sensory impairment services and young adults as they transition to adulthood.
- Supporting understanding of certification of vision impairment.
- Supporting skills and knowledge for accessing key community services, such as banks, libraries, and doctors surgery.
- Housing.
- Wider relationships: house sharing, romantic relationships, preparing for parenthood.

# About the framework partners

## Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

RNIB recognises everyone's unique experience of sight loss and offers help and support for blind and partially sighted people – this can be anything from practical and emotional support, campaigning for change, reading services and the products we offer in our online shop ([shop.rnib.org.uk](http://shop.rnib.org.uk)).

We want to ensure children and young people with vision impairment, aged 0-25, including those with complex needs, get the best possible start in life and go on to achieve their full potential.

**RNIB – See differently – [rnib.org.uk](http://rnib.org.uk)**

## Vision Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR)

VICTAR which is based in the School of Education at the University of Birmingham, was launched in Autumn 2001 and brought together the teaching and research activities of colleagues at the University in the area of vision impairment education.

**Vision Impairment Centre for Teaching And Research (VICTAR)**  
**[birmingham.ac.uk](http://birmingham.ac.uk)**

## The Professional Association for the Vision Impairment Education Workforce (VIEW)

VIEW is a leading voice representing the interests of children and young people with VI, championing best practice, and promoting the specialist VI education sector. We exist to help you support the education, development and opportunities of children with vision impairment.

**VIEW – [viewweb.org.uk](http://viewweb.org.uk)**

## Thomas Pocklington Trust (TPT)

With our focus on Education, Employment and Engagement, we support blind and partially sighted people to live the life they want to lead and support grant applications that reflect our core strategy strands.

Our student support service provides information, advice and a support network for students aged 11 and over. We support people wanting to start, restart or progress their careers. We encourage engagement and volunteering and will continue to extend our network of Sight Loss Councils across the UK. We support families of children with vision impairment and professionals within the education service. And we provide advice and promote the adoption of accessible technology.

**Thomas Pocklington Trust**  
**[pocklington-trust.org.uk](http://pocklington-trust.org.uk)**



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