

NatSIP Newsletter – Summer Term 2020

This is without doubt a difficult time for everyone. We hope that you are all keeping well and that the Easter break has given you time for relaxation and reflection. We are aware that some of your own families and those you support professionally have been affected by the pandemic and we offer our sincerest condolences to those who have lost loved ones.

Within the amazing Sensory Impairment sector we know that services, schools and associated organisations are supporting children, families and other professionals in a variety of ways during this time of adaptation to the coronavirus and we have been closely monitoring the different SI forums for information and advice on what is working within the sector and what problems you are facing. We are also working across the partnership to ensure that any published or updated national guidance we find and can be useful to you is shared. The proactive use of the SI community email forums in sharing ideas and practical examples has been really welcomed and rewarding. It is a privilege to be a member of such a sector.

We have compiled here a quick NatSIP review of some of the issues you have been raising and the most useful guidance and resources that have been issued to date and circulated so that you can have these in one place.

Resources from SI organisations

RNIB now has two key resources online which will be updated on a regular basis. For families please visit <https://www.sightadvicefaq.org.uk/independent-living/Covid-19-CYPF-SAFAQ>

and for professionals www.rnib.org.uk/educationprofessionals

In addition RNIB are going to compile a compilation of Covid 19 top tips, from the weeks previous posts and comments, every Monday on the VI forum.

NDCS has advice, guidance and resources for families which are being regularly updated and can be accessed at <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/coronavirus-and-support-for-deaf-children-information-for-families/>

and for professionals <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/blog/coronavirus-and-support-for-deaf-children-information-for-professionals/>

Sense provide an information page which is being regularly updated at <https://www.sense.org.uk/get-support/information-and-advice/accessible-information-on-coronavirus/>

SignHealth, the Deaf Health Charity, and online interpreting company **InterpreterNow**, have together launched 'BSLHealthAccess' which enables the provision of immediate, on demand access to British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters for communication with Deaf people in health settings. Free of charge during the current Coronavirus situation. <https://www.bslhealthaccess.co.uk/>

Professional SI organisations

BATOD has a page linking to resources for home educating for Deaf Children

<https://www.batod.org.uk/resource/suggested-resources-from-batod-members/>

as well as a collection of resources for teachers of deaf children <https://deafteachers.co.uk/>

VIEW has numerous resources and information at <https://viewweb.org.uk/covid-19/>

National guidance relevant for SI

Information relating to Tribunal Hearings, which are continuing online through video and telephone hearings, can be found at <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/news/send-tribunal-update-for-volunteers-parents-and-carers>

Children's Commissioner guidance on coronavirus virus for children and families is available at <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

Council for Disabled Children (CDC) also have updates <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/covid-19-support-and-guidance>

The Disabled Children's Partnership has resources <https://disabledchildrenpartnership.org.uk/coronavirus/>

Guidance on legal issues

Legal Guide to the current situation and changes to EHCP entitlements

<https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/in-focus/coronavirus/personal/special-education-needs-fags>

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/disabled-children-legal-handbook-3rd-edition>

For general advice for families <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/covid-19/>

Government Information

The main Government guidance relating to young people and Schools in the UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-schools-and-other-educational-settings>

and England <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Guidance to parents and carers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and->

[carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak](#)

Online education resources <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>

Bereavement Support

Sadly, one of the issues raised is about support to families who have had a bereavement. As you know, most Local Authority Educational Psychology Services provide a crisis intervention services as part of usual business. Given the present context, DfE are looking at how this service can be enhanced. They recommend that if you need to advise a family in crisis you should make contact with your local EP service and provide details about the family and the school they attend. You may also find some useful materials on the **Child Bereavement Network** website <http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/running-a-service/covid-19.aspx>

Within Sensory Impairment:

Audiology and New-born Screening

The BAA guidance on Audiology Services <https://www.baaudiology.org/indexphpnews/news-home/baa-covid-19-guidance-updated/>

and on new-born screening <https://www.baaudiology.org/indexphpnews/news-home/newborn-hearing-screening-technical-guidance-during-covid-19/#.Xo2xJ4hKgdW>

Cochlear Implant (CI) switch on

We are aware that the first remote switch on for a paediatric CI patient was successfully undertaken last week in England. This technology has been available for a while, and one consequence of the current issues may be to accelerate its use. This will also mean looking at the wider implications of remote support.

SI service resources for Families and Children

Resources for families and children have been put together by Sensory Support Services and we are aware of some. We do know that many more have sent newsletters and updated their SI information on the Local Offer for their LA. If you wish to share your resources and they are not here or on the Sensory Learning Hub of the NatSIP website please do forward these to us (send links to lindsey.rousseau@natsip.org.uk) and we will update this list.

Cambridgeshire: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Activities-for-you-and-your-child-or-young-person.pdf> and developed from the Peterborough team <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Activity-ideas-to-support-home-learning.pdf>

Useful websites and resources accessible to d/Deaf pupils <http://deafteachers.co.uk/>

Useful resources for teaching Vi students currently learning at home <https://www.teachingvisuallyimpaired.com/online-instruction.html>

J Hollis – Watson, QTVI in Perth and Kinross Council has put together a list of links to resources for VI CYP which is *attached with this newsletter*.

Equipment Issues and Covid 19

Radio Aids

Concerns have been raised about the safety of handling radio aids. Stuart Whyte, as Chair of UK Children’s Radio Aid Working Group Chair, writes “there is no more risk from handling a radio aid than from handling any other everyday object and therefore the usual NHS advice should apply re washing hands etc.”

Hearing Aids

Attached with this newsletter is a booklet that the Epsom and St Helier University Hospital Trust CHSWG produced, adapted from Oticon UK. Whilst specific to the local information of SW London it has some helpful information.

Developments in delivering support

Services are adapting to using virtual platforms to carry on with their teaching and interventions with families. Using Skype for Business (only the meeting organiser needs to have a Skype for Business account) has been a popular way to teach Braille sessions. This has also involved showing Braille finger positions to the camera and the use of Articles for the Blind to send out materials and resources for next sessions, etc. Individual specialist teachers are undertaking virtual home visits to support children, young people and their families using similar platforms. As well as giving advice there are opportunities to show activities for parents to do at home.

Next steps??

This resource list comes to you on the first day of the Summer Term for most schools, except that the majority of schools and educational settings are not open. Nevertheless, as we have seen above, quality services are being delivered to children and young people with sensory impairment and their families.

NatSIP activity continues and we are looking forward very much to the time when we can meet and network again. If there are any other resources or websites you think we should be recommending please get in touch and, if you find it useful, we will endeavour to follow this up with an update in a couple of weeks’ time.

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