

# Full Business case for a Three County Sensory Service

## Vision

To create one sensory service for the three counties Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham to ensure equal opportunities and common criteria for support across the region which meets the *National Quality Standards in Educational Services - for Children and young people with sensory impairment Dc 2005 WG34/2005*

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Sensory support is a low incidence but potentially expensive service to deliver. Children and young people with a significant impairment require highly trained and specialist staff as well as expensive equipment. It may be that in some instances they require a resourced provision to facilitate their access to mainstream education.

### Existing Arrangements

Currently there is a degree of variety in the provision by the three Authorities with two out of the three providing resourced provisions. Both Authorities conducted a review of their provisions recently. It was evident that numbers attending the provisions particularly VI provisions were reducing significantly. There is only one VI provision within the three counties and the numbers are low.

Two out of the three counties provide hearing resourced provision in primary and secondary settings. The staff are highly trained and there is a very high staff to pupil ratio. In the third county staff are trained to a high level and are part of the school staff.

### Current Budget Allocation

| County       | Sensory Service | Resourced Provision |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Denbighshire | £183,838        | None                |
| Flintshire   | £156,000        | £303,893            |
| Wrexham      | £220,000        | £284,503            |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>£559,838</b> | <b>£588,396</b>     |

Please note – the Resourced Provisions are not currently under this Review but a rationalisation would be a consideration. The review is primarily of the central sensory service in the 3 Authorities.

## Staffing Resources

|              | Sensory Service |    |         |     | Resource Provision        |        |     |
|--------------|-----------------|----|---------|-----|---------------------------|--------|-----|
|              | Hearing         |    | Vision  |     | Hearing                   | Vision | MSI |
|              | Teacher         | TA | Teacher | TA  |                           |        |     |
| Denbighshire | 1               | 0  | 1.8     | 1   | 0                         | 0      | 0   |
| Flintshire   | 1               | 0  | 1       | 1.2 | 1 KS1/2<br>1 KS3/4/5      | 0      | 0   |
| Wrexham      | 1               | 1  | 1       | 2   | 1 KS1<br>1 KS2<br>1 KS3/4 | 0      | 1   |

## Number of Pupils - Active caseload

|              | VI | HI | Resourced<br>Provision<br>HI | Resourced<br>Provision<br>VI | Out of county |    |
|--------------|----|----|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|----|
|              |    |    |                              |                              | HI            | VI |
| Denbighshire | 72 | 84 | 0                            | 0                            | 0             | 0  |
| Flintshire   | 74 | 75 | 15                           | 0                            | 1             | 2  |
| Wrexham      | 57 | 62 | 21                           | 0                            | 3             | 1  |

## Case for Change

### Context

The current climate encourages regional collaboration. Extensive planning has been undertaken to develop a Regional School Improvement Service. Whilst Inclusion is currently out of scope there are worthwhile collaborations taking place. The Welsh Government piloted specific areas of reform to the Code of practice for ALN in 8 Authorities. It is now supporting the regional pilot of all 8 elements. Four North Wales Authorities have expressed an interest in becoming part of this work. Two Authorities are progressing a shared Principal Educational Psychologist

### Issues for the Sensory Service

Recruitment to the service has proved challenging in recent years and the Welsh Government offered to support training of new members. Denbighshire currently can offer a bilingual service but its ability to do so may not be sustainable. There is minimal Welsh provision in the other two Authorities.

The teams are small and can be isolated within one Authority. It is difficult to balance continuous professional development with workload issues

The equipment used can be expensive but used for one Learner and then stored

## **Advantages of a regional Sensory Service.**

In bringing the three Authorities together to provide one service the following could be secured

### **1. Rationalising resources and creating greater value for money**

Table 1 in the appendix is an audit of the equipment held by the three Authorities. It illustrates the variety of equipment and also reveals that a number of pieces are currently not in use. Some of the equipment is expensive. A joint service would have greater resources on which to draw and provide savings e.g. 11 CCTVs = £22,000, 5 not in use = £10,000

Table 2 gives a breakdown of costs against set headings and what this means for each Authority under current arrangements. It delivers a £44,363 saving but this is not uniform across the three Authorities because there is an unequal investment in the service. Creating a three county service provides further opportunities for a more efficient use of resources

### **2. Ensuring quality standards are met**

Educational Audiologist

There is currently no Audiologist within the three Authorities. This role is important when supporting those young children who have been identified at birth with a hearing impairment. This role is a vital link between the medical and educational staff and is outlined in the Quality standards

Bi lingual provision

Only one Authority is currently able to provide a bilingual service. The other two have Welsh Medium schools and a joint service would give parity of service and ensure the service meets the objectives in the Welsh Language Strategy developed by each Authority

Improved training and expertise.

A joint service could provide a greater level of expertise enabling staff to specialise in particular fields e.g. IT support, Early Years. It would focus training and develop expertise with a more structured support to the service. A small number of Advisers working in individual Authorities meet the needs of all learners but do not necessarily develop Adviser skills in particular areas.

### **3. Targeted Support**

The service can be more flexible in its delivery and deployment through an increased staff core that can be targeted to meet changing needs across the three LAs

#### 4. An equitable service across the three counties

The three services are developing joint access criteria for support. This would lead to an equitable provision across the three counties.

#### 5. Value for Money

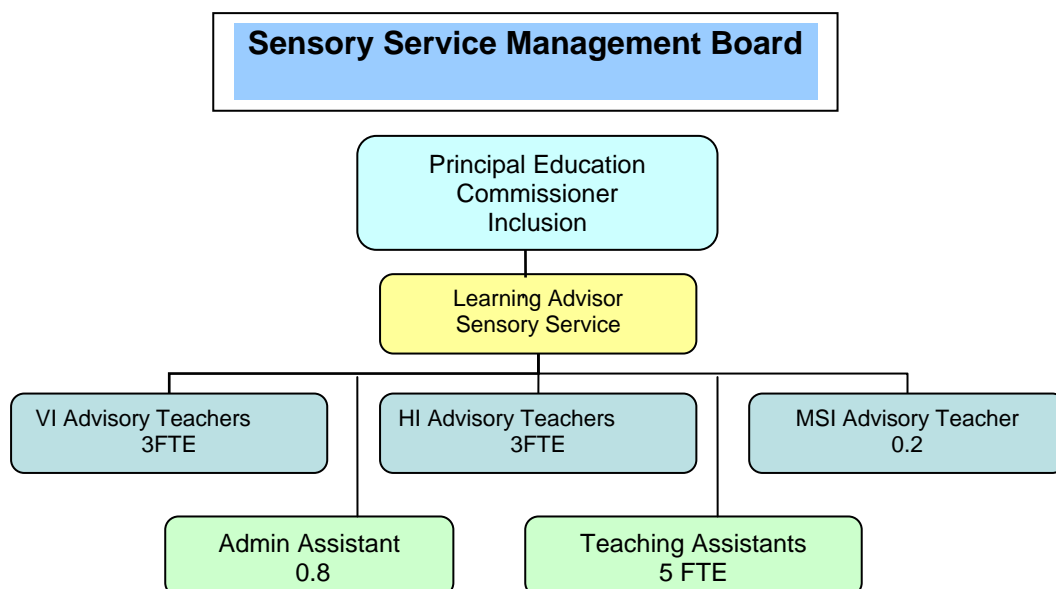
The first task of the appointed Team Leader supported by the management group would be to consider the appropriate staffing levels and to ensure that the service delivers a similar service across the three counties and also offers value for money.

#### Steps taken to realise the vision

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Activity</b>   |
|-------------|---|
| 2009        | Proposal raised at a North Wales Inclusion Officers Meeting – general agreement to proceed.   |
| Feb 2011    | Due to capacity issues, progress was limited. Three Authorities, namely Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham agreed to continue to explore the possibility of collaboration.  |
| April 2011  | Positions paper shared in confidence with Inclusion Officers  |
| May 2011    | Meeting held with the sensory teaching staff. The positions paper was shared and was generally well received. The possibility of a service across the whole of North Wales was discussed as part of this meeting. Whilst the response to a regional service was positive the teams saw particular benefits in the sub-regional model. |
| May 2011    | Sensory teaching staff met to consider the proposal and produce a SWOT analysis and Action Plan.  |
| June 2011   | Officers met with teams to get feedback. A very positive meeting and the three teams had agreed to meet independently to draw up joint criteria. Importantly the three teams appeared keen to work together.  |
| June 2011   | Discussed at North Wales Inclusion meeting and agreement achieved to present proposals to the Directors.  |

## Service Model

It is proposed that the service is hosted by Flintshire County Council and will comprise of the following structure:



The service will be overseen and monitored through the Sensory Service Management Board which will have representation from the three Authorities through the three strategic Heads of Inclusion, along with representatives from the BCW Health Board and the service manager (Learning Advisor).

Day to day management of the service will be provided through Flintshire LA via the Principal Education Commissioner (Inclusion) and Learning Advisor - Sensory Service. They will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements identified through the Service Level Agreement are met through the appropriate deployment of staff and resources.

The Learning Advisor will have additional lead responsibilities relating to the development of the following for the regional service:

- Appropriate service structure;
- Common access criteria & assessment tools across the three LAs;
- Appropriate monitoring / tracking mechanism incorporating the use of Capita ONE;
- Policies and procedures;
- Effective service evaluation; and
- Consultation with other stakeholders, Health, Social Services, Third sector and service users.

The Learning Advisor post will incorporate 0.6 management time and 0.4 specific advisory work in their area of expertise. The Advisory Teacher complement of six FTE will include the additional 0.4 provided through the Learning Advisor role.

All Advisory Teachers will have the same job description to support a consistency of service provision across the three LAs. This may involve some minor adjustments to some teachers' current roles.

The Teaching Assistant roles will be developed to ensure appropriate support for both HI and VI. The team will include staff who will provide additional specialist support, e.g. mobility officers and brailists.

Whilst it is intended that the main Sensory Service centre will be based in Flintshire, it is anticipated that staff will continue to work from centres in all three LAs. Hot desking and storage facilities will be identified in Wrexham and Denbighshire to facilitate this.

Generally, staff will continue to support schools nearest to their current base but there will be overlap as it may be more cost effective for staff to support across county boundaries. A degree of flexibility will need to be in place to ensure effective use of specialist expertise and support for Welsh language provision.

Administrative support will be coordinated and provided through the main centre in Flintshire.

### **Timetable to achieve the sub-regional service**

| <b>Date</b>                         | <b>Activity</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 11 September 2012                   | Staff and their union representatives invited to a venue in Flintshire for an initial meeting and start of consultation. |
| 11 September 2012 - 09 October 2012 | Consultation period and invitations for one to one consultations.  |
| 09 October 2012 – 26 October 2012   | Respond to consultation, make amendments if needed to the original proposal and continue to meet with staff.             |
| End of October                      | Begin the process of advertising staff to apply for the Learning Adviser post.   |
| October 2012 – January 2013         | Service period of notice to staff.   |
| May 2013                            | New service operational  |

Report compiled by:

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
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# Appendix

Table 1 – Audit of equipment across the Three Counties

| Items                         | Cost per item | Wrexham |        |            | Flintshire |        |            | Denbighshire |        |            |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------|--------|------------|------------|--------|------------|--------------|--------|------------|
|                               |               | No      | In Use | Not in use | No         | In use | Not in use | No           | In Use | Not in use |
| FM systems                    | 1460          |         |        |            | 21         | 20     | 1          |              |        |            |
| Diagnostic audio meters       |               |         |        |            | 1          | 1      |            |              |        |            |
| Hearing Aid Analyser          | 4000          |         |        |            | 1          | 1      |            |              |        |            |
| Embossers                     | 3500          |         |        |            | 0          |        |            | 5            | 1      | 4          |
| CCTVs                         | 2000          | 3       | 2      | 1          | 6          | 2      | 4          | 2            | 1      | 1          |
| laptops                       | 300           |         |        |            | 5          | 5      |            | 10           | 10     |            |
| Printers                      | 60            | 1       | 1      |            | 2          | 2      |            |              |        |            |
| Dictaphones                   | 40            |         |        |            | 3          | 3      |            |              |        |            |
| Talking Scientific calculator | 187           | 1       | 1      |            | 0          |        |            |              |        |            |
| Talking scales                | 40            | 4       | 2      | 2          | 1          | 0      | 1          | 2            |        | 2          |
| Talking Jug                   |               | 4       | 2      | 2          | 0          |        |            | 2            |        | 2          |
| Duxbury Braille translator    | 430           | 1       | 1      |            | 0          |        |            | 1            | 1      |            |
| Perkins braille               | 558           | 9       | 9      |            | 4          | 0      | 4          | 9            | 2      | 7          |
| Talking Thermometers          |               | 1       | 1      |            | 0          |        |            |              |        |            |
| Supernova speech              |               | 1       | 1      |            | 0          |        |            | 1            | 1      |            |
| Writing slopes                | 25 - 40       | 8       | 8      |            | 26         | 19     | 7          | 2            | 2      |            |
| Large keyboards               | 40            | 0       | 0      |            | 1          | 1      |            | 3            | 1      | 2          |
| JAWS                          | 659           | 0       | 0      |            | 0          |        |            | 1            | 1      |            |
| magnifiers                    | 10 -400       | 7       | 7      |            | 42         | 18     | 24         | 2            | 1      | 1          |
| Distance cameras              | 2000          |         |        |            | 5          | 4      | 1          |              |        |            |
| Zoomtext                      | 500           |         |        |            | 2          | 2      |            |              |        |            |
| camcorder                     | 150           |         |        |            | 1          |        | 1          |              |        |            |
| Braille note                  | 3000          |         |        |            |            |        |            | 1            | 1      |            |
| Focus Braille display         | 4000          |         |        |            |            |        |            | 1            | 1      |            |
| Zychem Hotspot                |               |         |        |            |            |        |            | 2            | 1      | 1          |
| Video magnifier               | 1000          |         |        |            |            |        |            | 1            | 1      |            |
| Mountbatten Braille writers   |               | 2       | 1      |            |            |        |            |              |        |            |
| Refreshable braille displays  |               | 2       | 2      |            |            |        |            |              |        |            |
| scanners                      |               | 3       | 3      |            |            |        |            |              |        |            |
| Talking scanner               |               | 1       |        | 1          |            |        |            |              |        |            |



Table 2 Breakdown of costs

|              | Staffing | Equipment | Travel | Admin | Professional fees | total  |
|--------------|----------|-----------|--------|-------|-------------------|--------|
| Wrexham      | 173965   | 4000      | 7500   | -     | -                 | 185465 |
| Denbighshire | 161695   | 2500      | 7200   | -     | 800               | 172195 |
| Flintshire   | 141615   | 2500      | 12,000 | 3000  | -                 | 159115 |
|              | 477275   | 9000      | 26700  | 3000  | 800               | 516775 |

Additional costs may need to be factored in to include

- Costs to Host Authority
- Identification of central base although it is expected that hot desking and other flexible working arrangements can be developed.

However additional savings are expected with a new structure, common working practices and shared resources.