

## Referral to the Visiting Teacher Service (VTHVI)

### Introduction

The visiting teacher service provides support for children who are deaf/hard of hearing and for children who are blind/visually impaired. The conditions for referral and the referral process are set out below.

### Referral to the Visiting Teacher Service for Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (VTHI Service)

Referrals in respect of the following groups of children are accepted:

- Children with mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss
- Children with unilateral hearing loss
- Babies, following newborn hearing screening (NBHS)
- Except in exceptional circumstances, children should be referred to the VTHI service only if they are using or are being fitted with hearing aids.

Referrals to the VTHI service for the following groups of children are not accepted

- Children diagnosed with secretory otitis media or "glue ear", with temporary or fluctuating conductive hearing loss
- Children diagnosed with auditory processing disorder.
- Children who have less than average 40dBHL hearing loss in the poorer ear with normal hearing in the other ear.

### Referral to the Visiting Teacher Service for Children who are Blind/Visually Impaired (VTVI Service)

Referrals are accepted for children with a visual disability which is so serious as to impair significantly their capacity to see, and where the visual difficulties are not satisfactorily corrected by the wearing of spectacles and/or contact lenses. These children include:

- Children with a visual impairment of 6/18 or less
- Children with a deteriorating visual condition
- Children with a significant visual field loss

Referrals to the VTVI service for the following groups of children are not accepted.

- Children whose visual difficulties are satisfactorily corrected by the wearing of spectacles and/or contact lenses
- Children whose visual acuity is better than 6/18
- Children with monocular vision where vision in the better eye is better than 6/18
- Children who are colour blind
- Children who are wearing a patch to treat a squint
- Children with scotopic sensitivity syndrome (Irlen syndrome)

### 3. Referral process

The referral of children to the visiting teacher service is made by the HSE audiological services, the HSE ophthalmology service, or by a child's parents or school. Other referral agencies may include the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI), the Cochlear Implant Unit, Beaumont Hospital and DeafHear.

Each referral should be made on the standard referral form, and must be accompanied by an up-to-date audiology or ophthalmology report, as appropriate.

Referrals should be sent directly to the local visiting teacher.