

Evaluation of the use of the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI)



2025 Summary Report

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Introduction

The Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment (CFVI) is a UK-wide framework which was launched in March 2022 and has since been adopted by vision impairment educators across the UK (Hewett et al., 2022; Hewett et al., 2023).

The CFVI acts as a framework for supporting children and young people with vision impairment to access the general curriculum and develop the broad range of skills needed to learn alongside their peers and live as independently as possible in adulthood. The framework clarifies and defines interventions, best practice support and the range of skills that are essential for children and young people with vision impairment to develop. It also offers a shared vocabulary for specialist and non-specialist education professionals, children and young people and their families. Importantly, it provides a roadmap to a more inclusive education for children and young people with vision impairment. The CFVI covers the broad spectrum of need of this population and is designed to cover ages 0-25.



The framework presents outcomes within 11 areas of learning:

- Area 1:** Facilitating an Inclusive World
- Area 2:** Sensory Development
- Area 3:** Communication
- Area 4:** Literacy
- Area 5:** Habilitation: Orientation and Mobility
- Area 6:** Habilitation: Independent Living Skills
- Area 7:** Accessing Information
- Area 8:** Technology
- Area 9:** Health: Social, Emotional, Mental and Physical Wellbeing
- Area 10:** Social, Sports and Leisure
- Area 11:** Preparing for Adulthood

Since the CFVI launch in 2022, CFVI 'Phase 2' (or the evaluation and implementation phase of the project) was undertaken over three years from 2022 to 2025. The aims of this phase were linked to evaluation, policy and campaigning, and the development of training and teaching resources. This project evaluated the implementation of the CFVI by service providers across the UK. This has meant engaging with local authority specialist services, independent and charity run service providers, special schools and mainstream schools with resourced provisions to ascertain if they are using the CFVI, how they are using it and what difference it is making. The evaluation project began in September 2022 and around 100 service providers have taken part in parallel longitudinal studies over three years. This report provides an overview of our findings.

Overview of the evaluation and implementation work

The evaluation and implementation work was conducted over two strands:

- Longitudinal UK-wide surveys of service providers over three rounds of data collection between April 2023 and March 2025.
- Longitudinal UK-wide case studies of service providers over three rounds of data collection between November 2023 and June 2025.

Longitudinal UK-wide surveys of service providers

Specialist providers were recruited into the evaluation study through a range of targeted approaches. All local authorities, specialist provisions and special schools/colleges from across the UK were invited to participate in the study, with the objective of tracking their implementation of the CFVI. A total of 96 service providers participated in the first round, while a further 12 providers were recruited into the study. Surveys were completed by senior leaders who had strategic overview of their service, and questions explored the following topics:

- knowledge of the CFVI
- use of the CFVI
- impact of the CFVI
- general feedback on the CFVI
- training needs
- policy enablers and barriers.

The study covered a 24-month period, with the first survey being completed between April and June 2023, the second between June and November 2024 and the third between February and March 2025. Table 1 summarises key characteristics of the participating service providers.

Table 1: Key characteristics of participating service providers

	Total (N)	Total (%)
Local authority/ Visiting Teacher Service (including consortiums)	63	66%
Resource base/ specialist unit/ resource provision in a mainstream setting	9	9%
Special school	5	5%
Specialist VI setting	6	6%
Habilitation service	6	6%
Visiting teacher service with oversight of resource provisions within authority	5	5%
Other	2	2%
Total	96	100%

The majority of participants were based in England (83 per cent) reflecting the larger population size of the nation (and the numbers of services in that nation), with 10 per cent being based in Scotland, 4 per cent in Wales and 2 per cent in Northern Ireland.

Longitudinal UK-wide case studies of service providers

Drawing on the participants in the UK-wide evaluation survey, we recruited 20 case studies of local authorities, special schools and mainstream schools with specialist resourced provisions from across the UK, as summarised in Table 2. Each case study was designed to have around 5 representatives covering different types of roles. Interviews took place over three rounds between November 2023 and June 2025, and each case study participant was invited to complete pre and post case study questionnaires. The aim was to gain a rich understanding of how the CFVI was working in different contexts. The interviews covered the following topics:

- use of the CFVI by service providers
- barriers and enablers to implementing the CFVI
- training, resource and support needs
- evaluation of the CFVI
- impact of the CFVI
- plans for the future.

Table 2: Summary of case studies (N=20) and participants

Country	Total (N)
England	15
Northern Ireland	1
Scotland	2
Wales	2
Type of setting	
Local Authority*	13
Resourced provision	2
Special School	4
FE College	1
Habilitation provision	
In-house	13
Bought in	7
Support children and young people with complex needs	
Yes	18
No	2
Role of representatives	
QTVI	37
Habilitation specialist/ rehabilitation specialist	12
Specialist TA/Higher Level TA	16
TA/Pupil support assistant/LSA	4
School principal/vice principal	4
Class teacher	3
Operations manager	2
SENCO	1
Other	9

*In the case of the Northern Ireland this is a national service.

Use of the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment

Over the course of two years, the evaluation study tracked the different ways in which the CFVI was being used by service providers. At the time of the first survey, **66 per cent of respondents** reported that they were using the CFVI. By the time of the third survey this had **increased to 92 per cent**.

The use of the CFVI by service providers evolved over time, and by the end of the project it was being used more extensively. As illustrated in Table 3, the most common way in which

service providers reported using the CFVI include: for 'structuring and informing teaching and learning', 'informing formal documentation' and in 'communicating with education professionals'. The responses demonstrate an increase over time in the use of the CFVI across all the categories given, with the largest increases being in informing formal documentation, communicating with parents and communicating with senior managers / budget holders.

Table 3: Use of the CFVI by service providers: a comparison between Round 1 and Round 3 survey responses

Reported uses of the CFVI	Round 1 survey	Round 3 survey
To structure and inform your teaching and learning (formal or informal)	63%	78%
To inform formal documentation such as Individual Education Plans, Education Health and Care Plans, Statements	51%	79%
When communicating with parents about the specialist support which your organisation provides	44%	64%
When communicating with parents about how they can help their child	35%	48%
When communicating with children/young people	37%	43%
When communicating with other education professionals	59%	71%
When communicating with senior managers/ budget holders	45%	64%
When communicating with health and social care professionals	29%	42%

Case study interviews highlighted how services chose to focus on embedding the CFVI within their own systems and processes first, before then starting to use it directly with other stakeholders. This is illustrated by the following vignettes from the case studies.

Vignette 1:

Case study – Gwynedd and Anglesey Visual Impairment Service

The Gwynedd and Anglesey Visual Impairment Service supports children and young people with vision impairment aged between 0 and 19 years old. Support is provided in homes, early years settings, and in primary, secondary and special schools.

As a service they were already monitoring outcomes of individual students, so the CFVI has fed into this work. They have drawn on the framework to help identify areas of focus when working with the children and have identified some gaps in their support – particularly around the areas of social and emotional development and pre-braille skills.

The service now refers to areas of the CFVI in annual reviews. They have found it to be particularly beneficial for transition planning and a useful tool for focusing on preparation for independence. They also use the CFVI to set targets in pupils' termly progress reports that are put together by QTVIs and sent back to the ALN service. They are planning to develop a presentation which can be used to introduce the CFVI to schools.

Vignette 2:

Case Study – Joseph Clarke School

Joseph Clarke is a specialist school for pupils aged 3 to 19 with vision impairment and/or additional needs. Situated in Waltham Forest, they are a small, inclusive school welcoming pupils from across London and surrounding counties. When the case study commenced in December 2023 there were 103 students enrolled at the school.

When the CFVI was launched, the school started to explore implementation of the framework for their learners with vision impairment. As a result, they have undertaken significant restructuring of the school curriculum to explicitly align it with the CFVI.

Every learner at Joseph Clarke school who has a vision impairment has a profile with individual targets and intervention slots in relevant areas that align with areas of the CFVI. They work weekly on these targets with input monitored by senior leaders. The main focus of these sessions is on selected Areas 2-11 of CFVI. The CFVI is drawn upon in school documentation such as education, health and care plans (EHCPs) and individual development plans, in discussion with pupils and in work with other professionals as well as with parents.

The school appointed a 'CFVI lead' to drive developments in this area. Her role is school-wide and includes liaising with staff to make sure that all students have individual appropriate targets related to areas of the CFVI.

Impact of the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment

Respondents to the Round 3 survey reported on the different ways in which the CFVI had already positively impacted on their work, and its future potential for improving their service delivery once the CFVI is further embedded. Their responses are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Current and future potential of the CFVI when working with a range of stakeholders.

The CFVI has...	Yes, has helped (%)	Yes, has potential to help (%)
helped us/has potential to help us to structure our teaching	79%	84%
helped inform/has potential to inform our teaching and impact the learning of CYP	81%	86%
informed/has potential to inform our development planning	83%	91%
helped inform/has potential to help inform formal documentation such as Individual Education Plans, Education Health and Care Plans, Statements	79%	95%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate with parents about the specialist support which our organisation provides	73%	88%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate/work with parents about how they can help their child	64%	81%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate/work with children/young people	60%	81%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate/work with other education professionals	77%	84%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate/work with senior managers/budget holders	57%	79%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate with/work with health and social care professionals	48%	71%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate with/work with Local Authority leads	53%	79%
helped us/has potential to help us communicate/work with third sector and/or outside agencies	47%	78%
helped us/has potential to help us respond to service reviews	52%	79%



The responses demonstrate that by summer 2025 the CFVI was already having positive impact on the work of service providers in a range of contexts and when working with various stakeholders. These findings also reveal that users expect that in time this impact will extend further.

Case study participants were invited to share the main ways in which they believed the CFVI had had

a positive impact. Their feedback can be categorised under the following themes:

- providing credibility and improving understanding
- improving quality of service offer
- improving outcomes for children and young people with vision impairment.

Providing credibility and improving understanding

One of the most consistent types of feedback received was how the CFVI has helped formalise existing work, thereby raising the credibility of the work of specialist professionals. This has been beneficial in developing trust and understanding between specialists and non-specialists, in demonstrating the depth of support needed by children and young people with vision impairment and in providing vital evidence of need when advocating for the support needs of children and young people.

"As a specialist VI provision there were many aspects of the CFVI already embedded within the school curriculum. The CFVI has enabled us to justify the strategies and opportunities we provide whilst providing sound evidence that is research-based."

(Classroom teacher, special school)

"Teachers and teaching staff now have a deepened understanding of the CFVI and its critical role in providing equitable education for children and young people with vision impairment. This understanding has strengthened teaching practices across the school, ensuring that CFVI principles are fully embedded in all aspects of student support."

(Classroom teacher, special school)

Improving quality of service offer

The respondents also identified various ways in which the CFVI had enabled them to improve their quality of 'service offer' (i.e. the way the service or school articulates the educational support it provides). This included: the benefits of having the CFVI to provide structure to their offer; being able to use the CFVI to review the breadth of offer to ensure that it meets the holistic needs of children and young people with vision impairment; and improved collaboration with other stakeholders.

"The introduction of the CFVI has had a significant and positive impact on the support I provide to children and young people with vision impairment. One of the most notable changes has been the way it has helped structure and formalise the delivery of habilitation and specialist support, ensuring that it is both holistic and tailored to individual needs." (Habilitation specialist, local authority)

"Recognising the importance of developing specialist skills, it has given a shared language but also a recognition of the value of these skills and the importance of different areas. So, it is much more holistic and it has promoted more joint working between services and partner organisations. As well as a way of having discussions with children and young people." (QTVI, Local Authority)

Improving outcomes for children and young people with vision impairment

While most respondents focused specifically on their improved service provision, several also identified ways in which this improvement had directly benefited children and young people with vision impairment. This included the children and young people having a better access to education and receipt of specialist support (and therefore having their broad range of needs met) and also having an improved understanding of the purpose of the specialist interventions they were receiving.

"The children/young people have better access to their education. It has helped to develop their independence."

(QTVI, Local Authority)

"Ensures that there is a holistic focus on development of skills needed as a CYPVI rather than just focusing on visual access to the academic curriculum."

(QTVI, Local Authority)

"Supporting CYPVI to understand why they need to develop specialist skills in addition to the core curriculum and supporting CYPVI to understand their educational rights."

(QTVI, Local Authority)

Vignette 3:

Case Study – Derbyshire Local Authority

Derbyshire Advisory Service (Vision Impairment) supports a very large county bordering 13 different authorities. The service supports children and young people from the age of 0 to 19 in the home and in special and mainstream schools. They started to implement the CFVI when it was launched in 2022, focusing firstly on revising service documentation and by communicating with special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) across the authority to let them know that the new framework had been introduced.

During the 2024-25 academic year, the service ran a pilot year testing a new method of working, rooted within the principles of the CFVI. The new organisation of support to mainstream pupils meant that more targeted and concentrated support was given to students during the school day and justified to schools with reference to the CFVI. Schools were also given tailored guidance on how to support the implementation of the CFVI during day-to-day schooling in the form of five key recommendations for the academic year.

Following evaluation, the team found that schools had been more responsive to the advice that they had been given, and that students were more satisfied with the support that they had been receiving.

Feedback on the Curriculum Framework for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment

Overall satisfaction with the CFVI

A key focus of the evaluation and implementation work was to receive feedback on the first edition of the CFVI. This included: the extent to which the CFVI covers all areas of specialist VI curriculum content, overall satisfaction, as well in-depth feedback on the way in which the CFVI is framed, the individual areas and the example outcomes.

Table 5: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? ‘In my view, the 11 areas of the CFVI cover all of the specialist VI curriculum content’.

	Round 1 Total (%)	Round 3 Total (%)
Strongly agree	37%	45%
Agree	58%	48%
Neither agree nor disagree	0%	0%
Disagree	5%	7%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Table 6: Overall, how satisfied are you with the current version of the CFVI?

	Round 1 Total (%)	Round 3 Total (%)
Very satisfied	14%	17%
Satisfied	59%	66%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25%	14%
Dissatisfied	2%	3%
Very dissatisfied	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Tables 5 and 6 summarise ratings from the respondents to the UK-wide evaluation. **Ninety-three percent** of Round 3 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the **CFVI covers all of the specialist VI curriculum content**, comparable to the 95 per cent of respondents who took part in the Round 1 survey. **Eighty-three percent** of Round 3 respondents described themselves as either **‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the current version of the CFVI**, a slight increase from the 73 per cent of respondents who answered this way during Round 1. These findings are very encouraging that users continue to rate the CFVI positively after having used it for over three years.

Case study participants at the end of the study were also invited to provide feedback on their ‘initial perceptions’ of the CFVI and how important the CFVI would be as a mechanism for

supporting the educational and social inclusion of children and young people with vision impairment. They were also asked for their current perception of the CFVI's importance after extensive use. Their responses are summarised in Table 7. The feedback given demonstrates that by the end of the case studies, almost 80 per cent of respondents viewed the CFVI as 'very important', whilst all respondents viewed it positively. All but two of the participants either maintained their perceived level of importance that they placed on the CFVI or reported that this had increased.

Table 7: Initial and post study perceptions of the importance of the CFVI

How important is the CFVI?	Initial perceptions on first introduction	Final perceptions by end of case study
Very important	59%	78%
Somewhat important	27%	22%
Neutral	10%	0%
Somewhat unimportant	2%	0%
Not important at all	0%	0%
Unsure	2%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Suggested changes to the first edition of the CFVI

Whilst overall ratings are very positive, through the feedback to the evaluation surveys and case study interviews, participants reported there were some improvements needed to the first edition of the CFVI. A thematic analysis of the feedback given identified that the following changes were necessary:

- Ensuring clarity in the framing of the CFVI, including:
 - Emphasising that preparation for adulthood doesn't just happen at the end, and the notion of 'beginning with the end in mind' (Allman and Lewis, 2014).
 - Emphasising that the CFVI is not just for specialists, but also for non-specialist professionals, parents, children and young people.

- Providing more detail on the role of different professionals.
- Exploration of possible edits to the main CFVI diagram to emphasise that Area 1 'Facilitating an Inclusive World' is distinctive in comparison with Areas 2-11.
- Addressing overlapping areas, including explaining why these exist.
- Addressing specific gaps in the framework and the example outcomes.

These changes have since been incorporated into the CFVI 2025 Revised Edition (and further addressed through the development of other resources e.g. for parents and children and young people).

Looking forward

Respondents to the Round 3 evaluation survey were asked if they intended to continue using the CFVI beyond the 2024-2025 academic year. **Eighty-eight percent responded saying that they did plan to continue using it**, whilst a further 5 per cent were unsure, and 7 per cent responded that this was not applicable to them as they were not currently using the CFVI. This demonstrates ongoing commitment to using the CFVI and emphasises that, particularly in the context of limited time and resources, service providers see value in continuing to invest time in implementing the CFVI.

Future plans of service providers

The respondents also identified various ways in which they intend to continue to use and implement the CFVI. These include:

1. Structuring service notes and documents so that they align with the CFVI.

"To create a mechanism for recording work related to the CFVI that is flexible enough to work for all pupils, is not onerous but manageable and enables us to view the CYP across the whole CFVI"

(QTVI, Local Authority)

2. Using the CFVI within formal documentation, such as (in England) Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and (in NI) Statements.

"Updating EHCPs with CFVI

Terminology: We plan to update all EHCPs to incorporate CFVI-specific language and frameworks, ensuring that each student's plan accurately reflects their needs and aspirations within the CFVI context. This will enhance communication and support across the school and with external agencies."

(Class teacher, Special School)

3. Using the CFVI to inform and evaluate the teaching and support offered by the service.

"Use of CFVI outcomes areas for targeted support. I have developed a quality assurance process and hope to gain a better understanding of which CFVI outcomes my QTVIs and Habilitation Specialists work on most and which areas are targeted least. Then we can consider why some areas are targeted least and work on those (maybe with other organisations to fill the gaps)."

(QTVI, Local Authority)

4. Using the CFVI when liaising with other professionals, such as Educational Psychologists, Habilitation Specialists and non-specialist educators.

"We will continue to work closely with families and professionals to ensure that we are providing a unified, holistic approach to supporting CYPVI. These strong partnerships will help enhance students' learning outcomes and personal growth, ensuring they have the best support at every stage."

(Class teacher, Special School).

5. Using the CFVI when working and communicating with children and young people and parents.

"We plan to help children and young people be more aware of the CFVI, how it can help them develop skills and prepare them for life beyond education. We would also like to involve CYP more in identifying the areas in which they need more support."

(QTVI, Local Authority)

6. Staff induction and development to ensure they understand and are able to use the CFVI effectively.

"Continue to embed further into our service provision, with a good understanding from all of the team. (Lots of staff changes over the past 8 terms)."

(QTVI, Local Authority)



Local and national policy challenges and opportunities

The respondents in the evaluation surveys identified local and national policy challenges which impacted upon the extent to which they were able to implement the CFVI during the first three years since launch. These can be summarised as:

- Pressures on school budgets/overall funding
- Available time in the school day to work with children and young people and other professionals
- Limited recognition of vision impairment education specialists within special school settings
- Having to align service provision to local policies/issues, which might not always be compatible with the aspirations of the CFVI
- Importance of a formal recognition of student achievements

Respondents also identified future policy priorities, which include:

- Importance of the support provided by QTVIs and Habilitation specialists being recognised as statutory
- Importance of the CFVI being made statutory (i.e. referred to in statutory guidance)
- A need for ringfenced funding for children and young people with vision impairment.

Conclusions

Longitudinal UK-wide surveys and case studies have enabled the project team to track the implementation of the CFVI during the first three years since launch and to evaluate how successfully it has been embedded and used by educational services. The findings of this summary report highlight many positive outcomes. We have found that the CFVI has been used in a wide range of contexts and with different stakeholders. Users of the CFVI have identified various ways that the CFVI has had a positive impact on their service provision and they have provided a clear consensus that they anticipate it will have a positive impact in the future. Users have expressed their overall satisfaction with the CFVI, and there has been an opportunity to respond to any identified limitations through the second edition of the CFVI. Positively, the majority of those who have provided feedback on their experience of using the CFVI intend to continue using it and have identified plans for how they intend to continue to enhance this work.

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and accompanying
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www.rnib.org.uk/cfvi