Definitions for Impairments and Severe Impairments

1. LEARNING AND MENTAL FUNCTION
An indication of whether or not the individual has an impairment of learning and/or mental function i.e. Learning Disability, Specific Learning Difficulty, Concentration Impairment, Sleep Impairment Or Behaviour Impairment.

Learning Disabilities
An indication of whether or not the individual has learning disabilities, i.e. needs more support than their peers to understand new and/or complex information, learn new skills and to have a level of independence appropriate for their chronological age.
Learning difficulties is a significant lifelong condition, which is present prior to the age of eighteen and which has a significant effect on a person’s development. This does not include specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
A severe impairment of intellectual functioning is indicated by an IQ of less than 55. In the absence of formal psychometric assessment, this would be indicated by a requirement for extensive and pervasive support for adaptive and social functioning. In children this would be in keeping with cognitive function at a level of approximately half the child’s chronological age or less.

Specific Learning Difficulty
An indication of whether or not the individual has specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, etc.
This should be a diagnosis given by a relevant professional following appropriate expert assessment.
A severe difficulty is indicated by the need for a high level of support to realise their full potential, e.g. learning support, Information Technology, scribe, additional time for task completion

Concentration Impairment
An indication of whether or not the individual has difficulty in sustaining concentration at the level appropriate for their chronological age.
Severe difficulty with concentration results in a significant impact on the ability to learn or complete every day tasks and activities. As a result, the individual requires a high level of support, or frequent modification of activities, to realise their full potential.

Sleep Impairment
An indication of whether or not the individual has difficulty with falling or staying asleep.
This data standard is intended to capture individuals who have deficiencies of sleep, rather than disorders resulting in excessive sleep.
Severe difficulty is such that the lack of sleep has a significant impact on daytime activities, and/or on the quality of life of other household members.

Behaviour Impairment.
An indication of whether or not the individual displays behavioural problems not normally expected for their chronological age. Whilst this might include challenging behaviour it would also include a wider range of behaviours that might present as less challenging. This is not intended to capture purely emotional difficulties.

A severe behavioural problem is such that the behaviour impacts significantly on the life of the individual and others, and/or requires modification to situations or activities on a frequent basis.
2. COMMUNICATION
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation of their ability to understand and express themselves, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.

Language Comprehension Impairment Indicator
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation of their ability to understand spoken language, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.

A limitation in the understanding of spoken language has an impact on communication because spoken language is the majority form of communication in our society. This data standard therefore captures not only those with limitations in intrinsic receptive language, but also those whose comprehension of spoken language is limited by hearing impairment.

Indications of severe difficulty may include: predominant use of situational clues/familiar contexts; consistent requirement for supportive strategies, e.g. use of non-verbal cues such as gestures or symbols. In young children this would be in keeping with understanding of spoken language at a level of approximately half the child’s chronological age or less.

Language Expression Impairment Indicator
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation of their ability to express themselves using spoken language, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.

A limitation in the use of spoken language has an impact on communication because spoken language is the majority form of communication in our society. This data standard therefore captures not only those with limitations in intrinsic expressive language, but also those whose use of spoken language is limited by hearing impairment or motor difficulty.

Indications of severe difficulty may include: a primary mode of communication other than speech; requirement for support in communicating with unfamiliar people or in unfamiliar contexts; for younger children, a level of expression at a level of approximately half the child’s chronological age or less.

Social Communication/Interaction Impairment Indicator
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation of their ability to communicate/interact socially with others, including peer group, as appropriate for their chronological age, language ability and mode of communication.

Mode of communication includes signing, communication aids, etc. Severe difficulty may be characterised by impairment in interacting/using communication for social purposes at a level that impacts on the development of friendships, working and personal relationships in every day life.

3. MOTOR SKILLS
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation of movement, posture, balance, co-ordination and or fine motor skills, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.

Gross Motor Skills Impairment Indicator
An indication of whether or not the individual has an impairment in their maintenance of posture, and/or movements of the neck, limbs or trunk.

This indicator should be considered within the context of expectations for chronological age and excludes impairment of fine motor skills.

A severe impairment is such that the individual is unable to maintain posture or perform gross motor tasks, without support from another person, despite the provision of appropriate aids or adaptations.
**Mobility Impairment Indicator**
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation of their ability to move about appropriately for their chronological age, without the use of aids or adaptations or support from another person.
This indicator should be considered within the context of expectations for chronological age.
A **severe** impairment is such that mobility is sufficiently impaired for the individual to be unable to move about without support from another person, even when using aids or adaptations.

**Fine Motor Skills Impairment Indicator**
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation in their ability to use their hands for fine motor tasks, such as grasping, manipulating, or releasing objects, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.
This indicator should be considered within the context of expectations for chronological age.
A **severe** impairment is such that fine hand use is sufficiently impaired to be unable to carry out the majority of fine motor tasks with their hands without support from another person, despite the provision of appropriate aids or equipment.

4. **SELF CARE**
An indication of whether or not the individual has a limitation in their ability to perform routine self-care tasks, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.

**Toileting Impairment Indicator**
An indication of whether or not the individual has difficulties with toileting (bladder or bowels) taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.
A **severe** impairment is such that the individual requires assistance with toileting from another person despite the provision of appropriate aids or equipment, e.g. nappies, incontinence items, hoist and stoma bags.

**Feeding Impairment Indicator**
An indication of whether or not the individual has difficulties with feeding (either the process of getting food or drink to the mouth, or the process of eating/drinking/swallowing), taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.
A **severe** impairment is such that the individual requires significant assistance in feeding (the process of getting food or drink to the mouth) despite the provision of appropriate aids or equipment. Alternatively, the individual requires non-oral feeding (supplementary or total) due to difficulties with the process of eating/drinking/swallowing.

**Dressing Impairment Indicator**
An indication of whether or not the individual has difficulties with dressing, taking into account the level appropriate for their chronological age.
A **severe** impairment is such that the individual is dependent on another individual for assistance with most of the tasks of dressing.
Requiring clothes to be set out before dressing, or assistance with fastenings, would not be considered as severe. Expectations for chronological age must also be taken into account.

**Awareness of Danger Impairment Indicator**
An indication of whether or not the individual has impaired awareness of common hazards, taking into account expectations for chronological age.
A **severe** difficulty with awareness of danger would mean that the individual requires supervision by another person in all situations to maintain safety.
5. **HEARING**
An indication of whether or not the individual has a hearing problem.
Hearing loss and deafness is usually measured by finding the quietest sounds someone can hear using tones with different frequencies – which are heard as different pitches.
**Severe** difficulty with hearing is categorised by a level of hearing impairment sufficient to have a major impact on ability to make sense of sounds including speech without the use of supports/equipment, e.g. hearing aids, signing.
It may also be categorised by a hearing loss of greater than 70dB in the better ear averaged over 250Hz, 500Hz, 1000Hz, 2000Hz and 4000Hz.

6. **VISION**
**Definition:** A description of whether or not the individual has a sight problem.
The definition of normal vision in children is dependent on their age.
For children of 7 years and over normal vision is a corrected (i.e. measured with glasses on) visual acuity of 0.000 LogMAR (6/6 Snellen) or better using both eyes, at a distance, with no visual field loss and no identified cerebral visual impairment.
From age 3-6 years a corrected visual acuity of 0.200 (6/9) or better can be accepted as normal.
Under 3 years (and particularly under 1 year) norms vary depending on the age of the child and the type of test used. Generally under 3 years a corrected visual acuity of 0.400 (6/15) does not cause any functional difficulty.

**Definition of visual impairment (from Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People VINCYP)**

- Best corrected visual acuity (both eyes open) equal to or worse than 6/18 or 0.5 logmar
- Requires N18 print or larger to read comfortably
- Visual field loss with both eyes open which significantly affects function
- Any eye movement disorder which significantly affects visual function
- Any form of cognitive visual dysfunction due to disorders of the brain which can be demonstrated to significantly affect function

**Severe impairment of vision**
Severe difficulty with vision would be categorised by the requirement for a high level of support from equipment (audio materials, Braille, low vision aids, long cane etc) or from another person in order to make sense of visual information.
It may also be categorised as a corrected visual acuity no better than 1.00 (6/60) using both eyes at distance and/or visual fields reduced to less than 20% regardless of whether caused by ocular or brain dysfunction such as cerebral visual impairment.

For Further Information see [http://www.vincyp.scot.nhs.uk/vincyp](http://www.vincyp.scot.nhs.uk/vincyp)