

HabVIUK Conference Wednesday 5th March 2025

We're pleased to announce that the annual HabVIUK conference will be held on Wednesday 5 March in the West Midlands. The conference will be held at the **Copthorne Hotel Merry Hill – Dudley DY5 1UR**. Priced at £50 for HabVIUK members (£100 for non-members), this year's conference is in-person and will include a buffet lunch, tea and coffee and a choice of 3 practical workshops, as well as 2 keynote speakers. **The focus of the conference is on supporting vision impaired children and young people to overcome the additional challenges that they may face and sessions include wheelchair mobility, ILS, introduction of early concepts, language and fine motor skills, early communication and apps for orientation, plus learning about how ECLOs and habilitation professionals can work together for the needs of children with a vision impairment.**

We hope it will offer our members the opportunity to chat with others whilst learning more from the excellent speakers that we have on offer. The hotel is easily accessible by car (with a large free car park) or on public transport then taxi from Sandwell and Dudley or Cradley Heath stations. The taxi ride from Sandwell and Dudley station is about 20 minutes. Hotel rooms are available directly through the hotel - approximately £130 including breakfast or there are cheaper options including premier inn and travelodge within a 3-4 mile radius.

Keynote presentations:

Talia Treen, ECLO from Birmingham Children's Hospital and Geraldine Carragher ECLO from Good Hope and Heartlands Hospital

Talia and Geraldine will be giving an overview of the role of the ECLO, as well as what happens at a child's appointment and how best habilitation specialists can support parents and families pre and post visit.

Mary Pullen from Mobility to Habilitation - a retrospective

Mary Pullen, who is soon leaving the field of habilitation, will be giving us a retrospective insight into how the field of mobility, orientation and independence has changed since she started 40 years ago.

Workshops

Workshop choices are as follows - Please choose your top three choices of 5 workshops from the drop down boxes when purchasing tickets:

1) Early Concepts, Language , Fine Motor Skills and Tactile Discrimination - Cath Cox and Sarah Jones, Priestley Smith School

A workshop looking at how hab specialists can use elements of the Tactile Discrimination programme developed by Priestley Smith School to support a child's language, concepts and fine motor skills and ensure that each child has the building blocks to support their understanding and access to the world around them

2) Carousel of Independent Living Skills - Fiona Broadley, Chair of HabVIUK and Specialist Habilitation Lecturer at Birmingham City University

Fiona will lead a practical ILS workshop incorporating a carousel of most requested ILS activities (where practicable). Session will include the opportunity to both "have a go" under blindfold and support someone with limited or no vision. If you select this option you will be contacted regarding preferred carousel activities.

3) Navigating Independence: Travel and Navigation Apps - Tommy Dean, Guide Dogs

Tommy Dean from Guide Dogs will talk about the best and most accessible travel apps and headphones for use with wayfinding apps including benefits/drawbacks, safety considerations, prerequisite skills and techniques for assessing suitability. If you choose this workshop, please bring your Iphone if you have one!

4) Early Sensory Play and Communication for children with sensory needs - Anne Cheesbrough from SENSE

Anne will be exploring early communication for children with sensory needs and the play activities that hab specialists can build into their programmes. Anne is an MSI practitioner with years of experience of working with children with a range of complex needs.

5) Supporting young people in wheelchairs to access and interact with their environments - Mary Pullen, Consultant Habilitation Specialist and Sharn Pateman Habilitation Specialist

Mary and Sharn are going to share their programme of wheelchair mobility training and give suggestions as to how children and young people in manual and powered wheelchairs can become more engaged in and responsible for their travel around their school and/or home environment. It will include video footage of a cyp using a long cane in a powered wheelchair in a variety of environments.

Conference Programme 2025

Time		Room
9am -9:30am	Arrivals and registration	Earls reception
9:30-9:45	Welcome from the HabVIUK chair	Earls 1
9:45-10:25	ECLO – the role of the ECLO and what is involved in an eye clinic for parents and children	Earls 1
10:25-11:25	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early Concepts, Language , Fine Motor Skills and Tactile Discrimination - Cath Cox and Sarah Jones, Priestley Smith School 2. An ILS Carousel run by Fiona Broadley 3. Navigating Independence: Travel and Navigation Apps - Tommy Dean, Guide Dogs 4. Sensory play for complex needs early years – Anne Cheesbrough 5. Supporting young people in wheelchairs to access and interact with their environments - Mary Pullen, Consultant Habilitation Specialist and Sharn Pateman Habilitation Specialist 	Rooms to be advised on the day
11:25-11:45	Tea and Coffee break	Earls reception
11:45-12:45	Your 2 nd workshop choice from the options given above	
12:45-1:45	Full buffet lunch served in Earls reception Break out rooms -	Newbolt Hackett Earls 2
1:45-2:45	Your 3 rd workshop choice from the options given above	As above
2:45-3:25	From Mobility to Habilitation - a retrospective	Earls 1
3:25-3:35	Conference Close	Earls 1
3:35-4:15	Annual General Meeting	Earls 1

All bookings must be made via Eventbrite, please seek permission from your employer to book if you wish to claim your booking fee back from them. Refunds are only available until 14 days before the event and incur an admin fee.

<https://HabVIUKconference2025.eventbrite.co.uk>

Tickets are on sale from 11am Wednesday 8th January 2025