

Cover Sheet

Name and Student Number: Jo McDonough - 2408631

Assignment Number: ECEY6012

Assignment: Entrepreneurship

Part 1: Oral presentation – 10 minute business pitch.

Part 2:

Part A – Presentation materials for part 1

Part B – A critical analysis of the potential impact of your business plan/chosen concept on the development of young children to include critical reflection of your concept compared with what is currently available or accessible to young children.

Total word count: 3298

Page 3: Part 2a: Power point presentation to support oral presentation of business pitch.

Page 9: Part 2b: Evaluating the Developmental Impact of Sensory Compass: A Critical Comparison with Current Early Years Tools

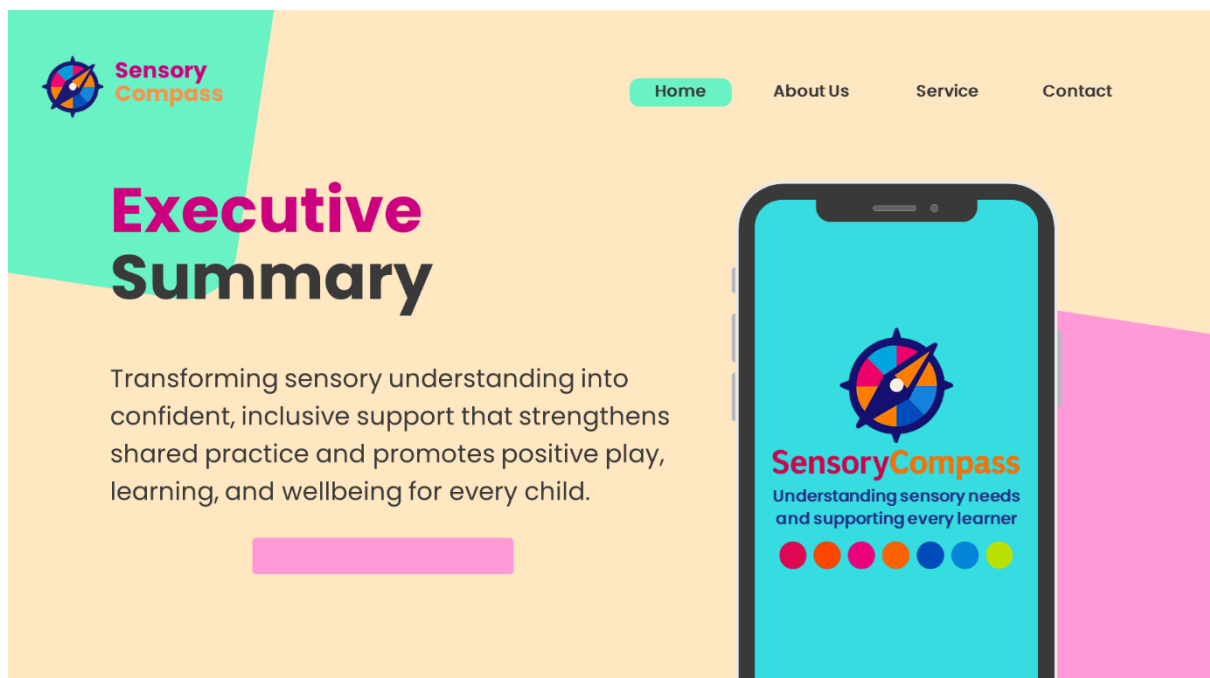
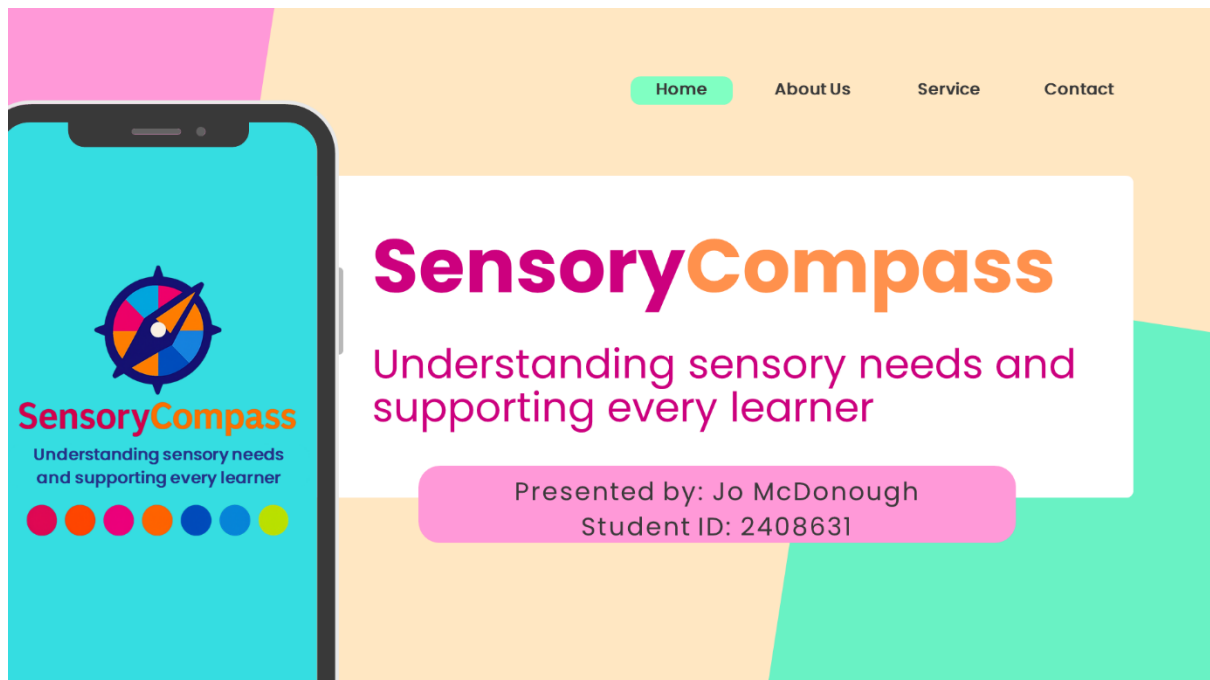
Page 18: Reference List

AI statement –

Throughout the duration of this assignment I acknowledge the use of the following

- <https://copilot.microsoft.com/chats/uWfmGxnT1d6Cv1bTnZhjv> using the following prompts:
 - To check my own text for grammatical and syntactical mistakes and for suggestions to rephrase my own work.
 - Find and summarise statistical data in relation to ALN and sensory needs in Wales.
 - Find and summarise programs in relation to school based interventions.

- To produce a colourful logo for a sensory based app, with a landing page that is clear, concise and reflects the eight sensory systems.
- <https://www.canva.com/> to create the power point, using the following prompt:
 - Business pitch power point for a new app





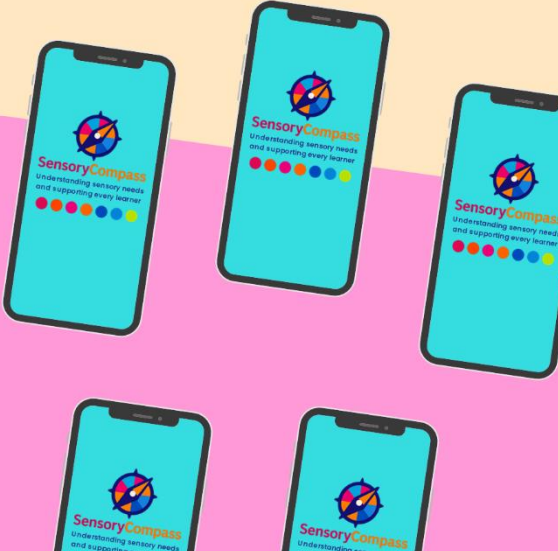
Sensory Compass

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Rationale and Innovation

- Sensory processing underpins early development
- 8–15% of typically developing children experience sensory processing differences
- Over 90% of autistic learners and 60–75% of children with ADHD experience sensory differences
- Increased practitioner workloads
- Long waiting lists and restricted access to specialised support services
- significant demands on early years settings

Nothing else available like it on the digital market



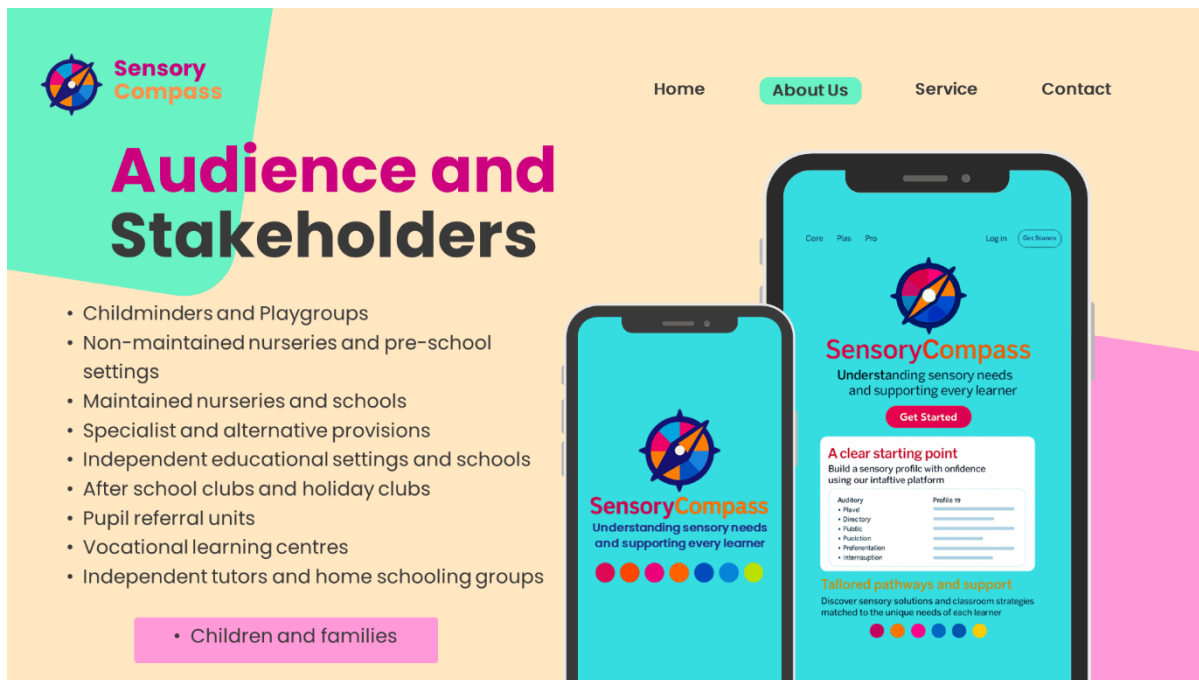

Sensory Compass

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Apps Main Features



- 1 Multi user dashboards for seamless team support, Designed for real world use by practitioners and support staff
- 2 Includes Intuitive questions linked to the eight sensory systems with no jargon, just clear insights.
- 3 Tailored strategies, sensory break ideas, and regulation tools matched to each learner's profile.
- 4 Embeds sensory regulation into daily routines/ timetables with sensory friendly setup ideas that promote inclusion.
- 5 Parent's Corner with shared plans, videos, and printable reports for OPPs/ IDPs.



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Audience and Stakeholders

- Childminders and Playgroups
- Non-maintained nurseries and pre-school settings
- Maintained nurseries and schools
- Specialist and alternative provisions
- Independent educational settings and schools
- After school clubs and holiday clubs
- Pupil referral units
- Vocational learning centres
- Independent tutors and home schooling groups

• Children and families

Sensory Compass
Understanding sensory needs and supporting every learner

Core Play Pro Login Get Started

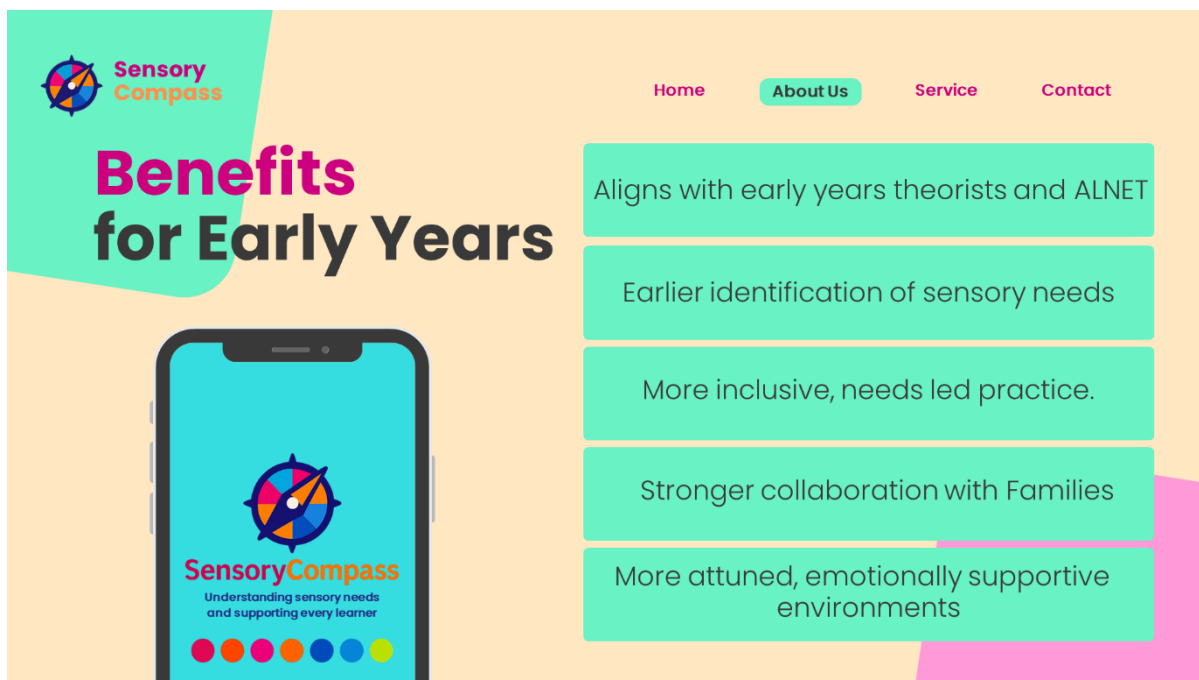
Sensory Compass
Understanding sensory needs and supporting every learner

Get Started

A clear starting point
Build a sensory profile with confidence using our intuitive platform

Auxiliary	Profile to
• Play	
• Directory	
• Public	
• Function	
• Information	
• Intervention	

Tailored pathways and support
Discover sensory solutions and classroom strategies matched to the unique needs of each learner



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Benefits for Early Years

Sensory Compass
Understanding sensory needs and supporting every learner

Aligns with early years theorists and ALNET

Earlier identification of sensory needs

More inclusive, needs led practice.

Stronger collaboration with Families

More attuned, emotionally supportive environments

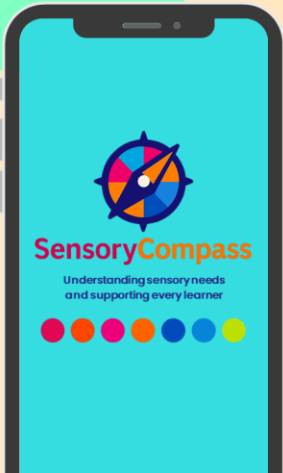


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Challenges

Developer and Stakeholders



- Available bilingually
- Turning complex theory into a simple, intuitive user experience
- The build and ongoing maintenance, so it stays reliable and up to date.
- Ensure everything aligns with current policy and guidance.
- Consider the needs of a diverse workforce with different roles, backgrounds and levels of digital experience.
- Maintain strong data security and ethical standards.
- Keeping pace with change—both policy and practice.
- To complement, not replace, specialist services.
- Ensure a scalable, evidence informed system that can grow with the sector.



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Solutions

Developer and Stakeholders

- Co design interface with practitioners, ALNCOs, and therapists – plain English, visuals and guidance
- Embedding ALNET language and workflows, ongoing reviews of policy to ensure ongoing compliance.
- User testing across varied settings, ensuring adaptable tools for varying expertise.
- Simple navigation, built in help, and optional deeper content.
- Mobile/tablet/desktop optimisation and offline functionality.
- GDPR, insurance compliant data and secure authentication.
- Modular, flexible architecture with research advisory oversight.





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Financial Considerations



Income and funding

- Funding and grants
- Charging services for access
- Free trials to encourage uptake
- Potential future revenue streams as it scales up

Optional add ons



Operational and developmental costs

- Initial build
- Research and development
- Education, advice and research
- Digital infrastructure
- Employment costs
- Insurances

Optional add ons



Growth, visibility and engagement costs

- Marketing costs
- Website development, ongoing updates
- Trade shows, exhibitions, conferences
- Climate/ environmental impact of digital infrastructure
- Sustainable choices

Optional add ons



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Subscription Price List





Core

Individual
£8 - £12 per month
£96 - £144 per year

School licence
£1200 per year

Monthly/ Yearly



Plus

Small EY Settings
£300 - £500 per year

School licence
£1500 per year

Yearly



Pro

Large EY Settings
£600 - £900 per year

School licence
£1800 per year

Yearly

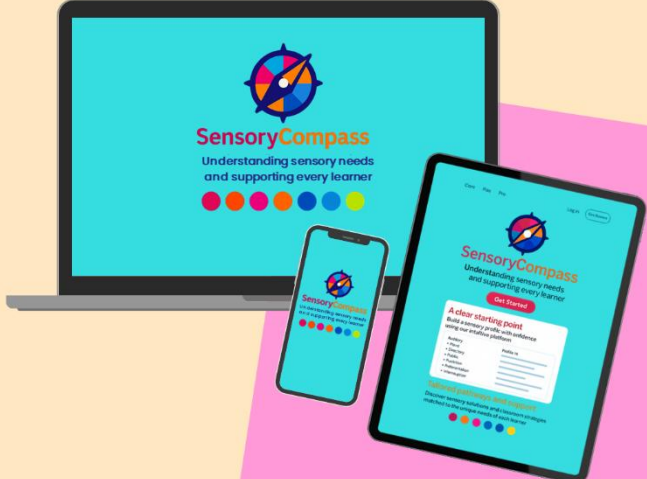


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How to Subscribe

1. Visit our website or mobile app
2. Choose your desired plan
3. Enter payment details
1. Sync across your devices

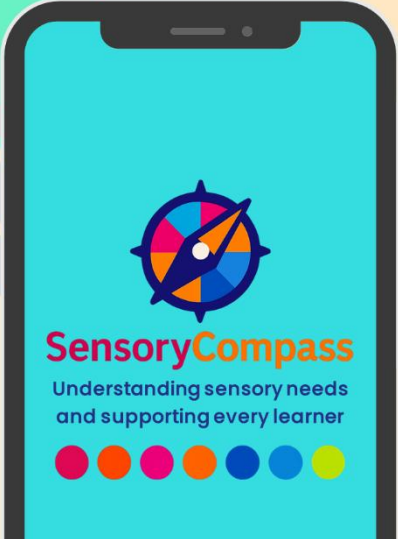


The illustration shows a laptop, a smartphone, and a tablet, all displaying the Sensory Compass app interface. The laptop screen shows the app's main page with the logo and tagline. The smartphone and tablet show a detailed view of the app's features and a 'Get Started' button.



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The illustration shows a smartphone displaying the Sensory Compass app interface. The screen shows the app's main page with the logo and tagline.

Download Now!

Evaluating the Developmental Impact of Sensory Compass: A Critical Comparison with Current Early Years Tools

Introduction

Sensory Compass is a digital assessment and guidance tool designed to support practitioners understand and respond to the sensory needs of children. Translating complex sensory information into clear, practical insights, the platform supports targeted strategies that enhance wellbeing, engagement, and learning. Through structured assessments and accessible guidance, Sensory Compass bridges the gap between everyday observation and effective intervention, strengthening practitioner confidence and knowledge enabling tailored support for each child's unique sensory profile.

Grounded in the principles of the *Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act 2018* (hereafter ALNET), the concept promotes early identification, inclusive practice, and meaningful collaboration with families. These priorities align with evidence showing that timely and appropriate sensory support is crucial for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (Ayres, 1975; Welsh Government [hereafter WG], 2021a). Unmet sensory needs can influence behaviour, participation, and long-term learning (Williams and Shellenberger, 1996; Green *et al.*, 2020).

This analysis evaluates the developmental impact of Sensory Compass, compares it with existing tools, and considers market demand, feasibility and sustainability to determine its potential contribution to early years provision.

Contextual Background

Early years provision in Wales is underpinned by strong policy commitments to inclusion, early identification and a needs led approach. The ALNET and the ALN Code for Wales (2021) place early intervention and multi agency collaboration at the centre of practice and require settings to identify and respond to needs without diagnosis (WG, 2021a; Law Wales, 2024), while the Curriculum for Wales emphasises wellbeing, engagement and holistic development reinforcing the importance of responsive pedagogy and understanding the underlying factors shaping children's learning (WG, 2024a). Sensory processing is central early development, influencing children's ability to regulate emotions, engage socially,

communicate and participate in learning (Brightwheel, 2025; Devon County Council, n.d.), with Ayres' Sensory Integration theory highlighting its role in regulation, engagement and capacity to learn. Research indicates that 8–15% of typically developing children experience sensory processing differences (Ben-Sasson *et al.*, 2019; Little *et al.*, 2018) with prevalence significantly higher among neurodivergent learners, with over 90% of autistic children and 60–75% of children with ADHD experiencing sensory differences (Ausderau *et al.*, 2016; Bijlenga *et al.*, 2017). Unrecognised sensory needs can lead to emotional distress, reduced engagement and long-term challenges in learning and behaviour (Williams & Shellenberger, 1996; Green *et al.*, 2020).

Despite clear policy intentions, Wales faces significant strain in neurodevelopmental and sensory provision, with long waits for assessments and inconsistent access to specialist support (WG, 2021a; GSR, 2022; Senedd, 2024a). Although ALNET promotes a needs-led approach, many practitioners are delivering support without structured tools and a lack of confidence to assess sensory needs effectively within settings (Little *et al.*, 2028; Estyn, 2024). Access to occupational therapy led sensory assessments, remains uneven across Wales and is largely dependent on local authority or third-sector initiatives rather than a national, standardised system with recent reports highlighting a 'postcode lottery' in access to neurodevelopmental and sensory related services (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2024; WG, 2021a; Senedd, 2024a). While some English localised resources exist, such as the Leicestershire Early Years Sensory Processing Pack and the Bury Multi-Agency Sensory Toolkit (Leicestershire County Council, n.d.; Anderton *et al.*, n.d.), Wales has no national sensory assessment tools or pathway and no mandated sensory integration training (WG, 2021a). **NAS Cymru** does provide accessible guidance, however this is advisory rather than a structured assessment framework (National Autistic Society Cymru, n.d). This gap reinforces the need for accessible, practitioner friendly, evidence informed resources such as Sensory Compass.

Proposed Concept

Sensory Compass is a digital resource designed to support practitioners to recognise and respond to children's sensory needs. It provides a clear accessible framework that helps build a holistic picture of how children engage with sensory information

across routines such as play, transitions, group activities and interactions. It supports developmental outcomes linked to emotional regulation, sustained engagement, social participation and learning readiness (Ayres', 1972; Brightwheel, 2025). The design is informed by Ayres' Sensory Integration which positions sensory processing as foundational to regulation and learning (Ayres, 1972; Nowell *et al.*, 2021) and by Bronfenbrenner's ecological and play based approach that emphasise the interaction between the environment and the activity (WG, 2022a; Hauck and Gomez, 2025).

The app's main features are designed for real world use in real world time. These include multi-user dashboards that enable seamless teamwork across practitioners and support staff, with intuitive, jargon free questions linked to the eight sensory systems, offering clear insights into each child's sensory profile. Sensory Compass generates tailored strategies, including sensory break ideas and regulation tools matched to individual learner needs and supports practitioners to embed sensory regulation into daily routines through sensory-friendly setup suggestions that promote inclusion. A dedicated Parent's Corner provides shared plans, short videos and printable reports suitable for One Page Profile's and Individual Development Plan's, strengthening communication between settings and families. Combining evidence informed sensory theory with practical digital tools, Sensory Compass offers an innovative, practitioner led approach to supporting sensory needs in the early years and beyond (Derbyshire County Council, 2023; EEF, 2023).

Developmental Impact

Sensory Compass supports cognitive development by creating sensory-attuned environments that enable children to think clearly, sustain attention and engage in learning. When sensory needs are met, children show stronger exploratory problem-solving (Howard *et al.*, 2021), richer imaginative play linked to cognitive flexibility and more effective language interaction grounded in sociocultural theory (Veraksa *et al.*, 2022; Dogru *et al.*, 2017). These findings align with evidence that self-regulation and executive function can be intentionally strengthened in early childhood when support is embedded in real-world routines (Muir *et al.*, 2023). Sensory regulation underpins executive processes, with research showing improved

working memory and inhibitory control in sensory-responsive environments (Graziano *et al.*, 2019), reinforcing the developmental value of the app's approach.

Sensory Compass strengthens social and emotional development by creating conditions that support collaboration, emotional expression, self-regulation and wellbeing. Research shows that children thrive socially when environments intentionally promote emotional awareness, communication and co-regulation, enabling them to build secure relationships and participate confidently in play (GSR, 2024). These principles reflect Bowlby's attachment theory, which highlights the role of secure, predictable relationships in giving children the confidence to explore, interact and manage emotions, and Bronfenbrenner's, which emphasises that children's social-emotional wellbeing is shaped by the quality of the environments and relationships surrounding them (Bowlby, 1988; Hauck and Gomez, 2025). Supportive, predictable environments are central to social-emotional wellbeing, with practitioners emphasising the importance of culturally responsive, inclusive practice that values children's diverse backgrounds and communication styles (WG, 2024a; WG, 2024b).

Sensory Compass aligns with these principles by tailoring strategies to individual sensory profiles, reducing overwhelm and enabling all children, including those with diverse sensory, cultural or developmental needs, to participate meaningfully. This supports wellbeing by fostering belonging, reducing stress and strengthening children's capacity for social interaction and emotional growth.

Sensory Compass supports physical development by helping practitioners create sensory rich environments that strengthen fine and gross motor skills encourage movement and promote health related well being. Early years research shows that sensory exploration underpins motor development, with movement experiences building balance, coordination and whole body control (Lucas *et al.*, 2021).

Fine-motor skills develop through repeated opportunities for manipulation, grasping and mark-making, supported by environments that reduce sensory overload and increase engagement (Cameron *et al.*, 2019). Welsh guidance also highlights the importance of active, exploratory play for physical competence and wellbeing (WG, 2024). By tailoring strategies to each child's sensory profile, Sensory Compass increases participation, confidence and physical readiness for learning.

Research highlights that early development is dynamic and interconnected, with biological emotional and environmental influences continually shaping one another (GSR, 2024; NAECY, n.d.). Strengthening self regulation can improve attention, coordination and social confidence, while sensory motor experiences support language, emotional wellbeing and peer interaction (McClelland and Cameron, 2019). Sensory Compass reflects this holistic view by supporting practitioners to identify how emotional, cognitive and physical domains interact and by supporting responses to children's sensory needs. This aligns Bronfenbrenner and Bowlby, who both emphasise secure relationships and supportive environments as foundations for learning (Hauck and Gomez, 2025). Welsh policy similarly frames development as holistic and interconnected, with the ECPLC Quality Framework centring child wellbeing, relationships and responsive environments (WG, 2024a; WG, 2024b).

Holistic approaches also require awareness of potential risks and limitations. As the app is used by adults, screen time considerations relate to practitioner workload and digital balance rather than child exposure. European research suggests wider risks including reduced hands on interactions, cognitive overload and usability challenges with uneven engagement particularly when practitioners face limited time, support or digital confidence (Polzi-Stefanec, 2021). Over reliance on digital guidance may also narrow practitioner judgement or reduce context sensitive and responsive decision making if not paired with observation and responsive practice (Livingstone and Blum-Ross, 2021, p. 221; Flear, 2019). Ensuring that Sensory Compass complements, rather than replaces, relational, play-based interaction helps maintain a balanced, developmentally appropriate approach.

Comparison with Existing Provision

Practitioners currently use a range of whole setting programmes, digital assessment tools and sensory resources. Programmes such as Thrive, Nurture Group and Zones of Regulation offer structured emotional and relational support however they provide limited sensory specific insight, meaning practitioners may identify dysregulation without understanding its sensory cause (Thrive, 2026; NurtureUK, 2013; Zones of Regulation, 2010). Digital platforms are also available, such as Tapestry and Famly, which support documentation and family communication however focus on tracking rather than interpreting sensory regulatory needs (Famly, n.d.; Tapestry, 2026).

Sensory checklists and activity resources, such as the Somerset SEND Sensory Processing Checklists and Solihull Early Years Sensory Checklist, are designed for parents or therapists, relying on diagnostic language or lack developmental nuance for early years settings. Although sensory based programmes are available, these are paper based and as sector research highlights specialist sensory programmes often require significant training, time and funding, which can limit uptake in provision, specifically in the early years sector (Schaaf and Mailloux, 2015; EEF, 2021; Sim *et al.*, 2019). This creates a gap for tools that support real time understanding of how sensory processing influences regulation, engagement and learning. Sensory Compass fills the gap in existing programmes for accessible, practitioner-friendly tools that integrate sensory understanding with holistic development and support responsive, play-based practice. The innovation lies in offering practical, practitioner centred tools that strengthen responsive decision making and support children's wellbeing across all domains. It improves current provision by giving practitioners quick, accessible ways to interpret sensory patterns and link them to regulation, engagement and learning. The concepts distinctiveness comes from integrating sensory theory and science with holistic development in a format that fits naturally with ALNET principles and everyday practice.

Additionally it supports practitioners to interpret behaviours through a sensory informed lens, enhancing capacity to adapt environments, routines and interactions in ways that promote regulation and inclusion. This positions the app as a complementary resource that enhances, rather than replacing, existing relational and curriculum frameworks.

Critically the concept depends on practitioners' willingness to observe closely, reflect on patterns and apply guidance with professional judgement. As with any digital tool, there is a risk of over reliance if prompts replace contextual understanding. Ethical considerations include avoiding deficit-based interpretations, ensuring responsible data use and maintaining sensitivity to diverse cultural and developmental experiences reflected in the EECERA Ethical Code for Early Childhood Researchers (2024) (hereafter EECERA), which emphasis respect, inclusivity and ethical responsibility in all work involving children. Accessibility and affordability are essential for equitable adoption, particularly given evidence that specialist sensory programmes can be costly and time-intensive to implement (Schaaf & Mailloux,

2015; OECD, 2021). Ensuring the tool remains inclusive, intuitive and low-cost will support its use across diverse settings.

Market Research

Market need will be explored through an ethically grounded, mixed method approach, combining quantitative data with qualitative insight from practitioners, parents, ALNCoS and early years managers. This aligns ALNET's requirement for child centred, participatory evidence gathering (WG, 2018) Community perspectives will be accessed through Flying Start and family centres. Demographic and socio-economic factors influencing demand will be analysed using Welsh data including ALN Census Data (WG, 2025a), Flying Start statistics (WG, 2025b), StatsWales deprivation profiles (StatsWales, n.d.) and CIW sector reports (WG, n.d.). This approach ensures the concept reflects the realities of Welsh settings and is supported by Estyn's guidance, which highlights combining data with practitioner perspectives (Estyn, 2024).

Competitor analysis will map existing tools and frameworks, ensuring alignment with ALNET's requirement for differentiated, needs led and non duplicative provision (WG, 2021a). Competitor comparison will include pricing, accessibility, developmental claims and user experience, drawing on sector guidance such as Centra South ALN Information (Central South Consortium, 2021). A SWOT analysis and Competitor Matrix will identify strengths, weaknesses and any areas of overlap. Gap analysis will clarify where current tools are limited, particularly sensory interpretation, and how Sensory Compass can offer distinct, ALNET aligned, needs led alternative that supports early identification and practitioner confidence.

Stakeholder perspectives will be gathered through ethical, developmentally appropriate primary research aligned with ALNET, with emphasis on voice, choice and participation (WG, 2018). Insights from parents and practitioners will be collected through focus groups, structured interviews, co-design workshops and practitioner surveys reflecting participatory expectations in the ALN code for Wales (WG, 2021a). With children, play based or observational methods will be used, following the ethical principles of the EECERA (2011). Partnerships with settings, local authorities and ALN teams will support co-development and piloting.

Sustainability Considerations

Environmental sustainability is supported through low-energy digital delivery, modular architecture, minimising material waste and aligning WG's Digital Strategy for Wales (WG, 2021b), which promotes sustainable and efficient digital practice. Ensuring the tool remains lightweight and compatible with existing devices reduces long term environmental impact and avoids unnecessary resource consumption.

Financial sustainability is achieved through a blended model combining grants and revenue generation. Early development funding may come from Digital Inclusion Wales, Innovate UK Smart Grants, Women in Innovation and ALN focussed Welsh Government innovation funding (WG, 2026). Free trials and tiered pricing plans ensure affordability. Operating as a social model strengthens long term viability by reinvesting surplus into community benefit and widening access.

Social sustainability focusses on community wellbeing, equity and Inclusion, consistent with Estyn's emphasis on high quality, inclusive practice (Estyn, 2024). Improving practitioner confidence and supporting sensory and developmental needs, the model contributes to long term social value across Welsh provision (Estyn, 2024).

Ethics and Safeguarding

Ethical and safeguarding measures centre on child protection, data security and responsible technology usage. All activity will comply with Welsh safeguarding legislation and the Keeping the Learners Safe (WG, 2022b) statutory guidance, which requires robust procedures for preventing harm and ensuring digital engagement. Digital delivery must meet GDPR and *Data Protection Act 2018* requirements, including data minimisation, encrypted storage and strict access controls (ICO, n.d.). Secure authentication, such as multi factor logins, help prevent unauthorised access, while cyber, indemnity and public liability insurance provide additional protection. Ethical use of technology is guided by EECERA (2011), emphasising informed consent, transparency and developmentally appropriate practice. No data will be collected from children without explicit consent, and all interactions must and will prioritise safety, dignity and privacy.

Conclusion

The project demonstrates clear demand for a needs led, sensory focused digital tool that supports early identification and inclusive practice across Wales. Sensory Compass will strengthen practitioner confidence and offer developmentally informed guidance grounded in child development theory, sensory integration theory and ALNET principles. The anticipated developmental impact is positive, enabling more consistent, child centred responses to sensory needs and improving experiences for children, practitioners and families. Future development should prioritise co-production with children, further adaptive and personalised features and longitudinal research to evaluate outcomes over time, ensuring continuation of meeting sector needs as practice and policy evolves.

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