

# CHSWG Update Report

Term and Year: Summer 2023 (2)

## Every Moment Counts: our 2023 to 2028 strategy

For all children the early years are a crucial time, but for deaf children this is even more true given the impact deafness can have on language development, communication and social skills.

It's clear that supporting deaf children during those early years is where we can make the biggest impact and set them up for life. The evidence is so compelling that it forms the basis of our 2023 to 2028 strategy.

Our new five-year plan is all about making every moment count – from the time a child's deafness is identified to their first day at school and beyond. We're here to transform the futures of as many deaf children and young people as possible, in the UK and around the world.

**Join us in our fight to deliver change where it matters most.**

[Every Moment Counts: our 2023 to 2028 strategy](#)

[Watch a full BSL translation on YouTube](#)

## Information on National Deaf Children's Society national campaigns (UK wide)

### Teachers of the Deaf

#### Teachers of the Deaf (England)

Teachers of the deaf play a vital role in supporting deaf children and their families. They give advice to parents of deaf children, visit deaf students at school or college, and train teachers and schools on deaf awareness.

Two thirds of deaf children in England are already behind their peers in the first year of school. The SEND review must address this with 200 extra Teachers of the Deaf (England) Deaf children (65%) are almost twice as likely as all children (34%) to complete their first year of school without having achieved a 'good level of development' according to recent [Government statistics](#). Teachers of the deaf can help bridge this gap. Yet the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf across England has fallen to its lowest level on record. There are 19% fewer Teachers of the Deaf in England than in 2011.

We continue to call on the Government through the SEND review for 200 extra Teachers of the Deaf so families get the support they need to help their deaf child succeed. We have a [video](#) that explains how important teachers of the deaf are.

#### **Senedd Committee Inquiry on equal access to education and childcare for disabled children and young people (Wales)**

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The Children, Young People and Education Committee in the Welsh Parliament are considering the question 'Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare?'. They have taken some oral evidence from organisations and are considering how this inquiry will develop. NDCS gave evidence to the inquiry on 7 June and raised the issue of the decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf and the critical importance of this workforce. For further information and to watch the recording click [here](#).

## Scotland Tonight feature on falling specialist Teachers of the Deaf numbers (Scotland)

There was an in depth [feature](#) on Scotland's most watched current affairs TV show on the challenges in deaf pupils getting the support they need. The programme featured Megan, a deaf young person who shared why her Teacher of the Deaf is instrumental in providing her with support. Mark Ballard, Head of Policy and Influencing for NDCS in Scotland explained our concerns about the 40% fall in Teacher of the Deaf numbers.

## Audiology

We know it is critical that deaf babies are identified as soon as possible to ensure they are enabled to pick up the key building blocks of language and communication, whether through speech, sign language or a mixture of both. Late identification can have a severely detrimental impact upon deaf children's learning, attainment, life-chances and wellbeing. In the worst cases, the ramifications can be felt for the rest of their lives. NDCS continues to try to influence decision makers and work with providers to improve the quality of audiology provision for children.

## Northern Ireland Paediatric Audiology Forum (Northern Ireland)

In Northern Ireland, NDCS asked the Department of Health for assurance that failings in paediatric audiology that had been identified in other nations were not occurring in Northern Ireland. A letter has now gone out from the Department of Health to all Health and Social Care Trusts asking for specific data from audiology services. NDCS is pleased to hear that the Paediatric Audiology Forum has been reconvened after a 3-year hiatus. It is led by a Senior Commissioning Manager within the Department of Health. We expect that they will focus very quickly on service quality and planning strategic improvements to children's hearing services.

## National project on Improving the Quality of hearing services for children (England)

NHS England noted that 5 audiology services had identified significantly fewer deaf babies referred from the newborn hearing screen than would be expected. An audit of the early diagnostic Auditory Brainstem Response testing at these sites was conducted. The audit examined ABR tests undertaken on babies referred from the newborn hearing screen since 2018 and found examples of testing not performed according to national guidance, and misinterpretation of test results. This led to some deaf babies being discharged or incorrectly managed.

Subsequently at least three services have temporarily closed their ABR service, while seeking support to restart safely. All Trusts identified have been working to contact families affected and recall children for retesting. NDCS continue to support the sites in managing these incidents.

The Chief Scientific Officer at NHS England set up a Steering group to improve the quality of early diagnostic testing in England. NDCS has a place on the Steering group and representation on all the working groups. Previously NDCS have called for clearer clinical leadership of paediatric audiology, mandatory external

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quality assurance against quality standards, better data collection from services, and a review of the workforce in audiology, including the training of paediatric audiologists. We are pleased these are all areas under scrutiny by the current NHSE working groups and hopeful that strong recommendations leading to meaningful changes will be made.

## British Sign Language

### British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE consultation (England)

On Thursday 15 June the Department for Education published a public consultation seeking views on draft subject content for a British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE to be created for schools to teach in England. NDCS' Youth Advisory Board started the 'Right to Sign' campaign back in 2017 to call for a BSL GCSE and the rights of deaf young people to have the same opportunities as their hearing peers. The consultation is a massive step forward.

By responding to the Department for Education's [consultation](#) and showing your support you will be helping us demonstrate the importance of this GCSE and the strength of feeling behind it, which will ensure it remains a priority for the Government to deliver the course as quickly as possible. We will continue to keep the pressure on the Government to ensure the first cohort can begin their studies by no later than September 2025.

### Forthcoming consultation on the British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan (Scotland)

The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to raise awareness of BSL and provide access to services for those using the language. The BSL National Plan sets out how the Scottish Government and other public bodies will promote the use of the language and is central to delivering on the aspirations of the Act.

The second National Plan will cover 2023-29. The Scottish Government is required to consult on the BSL National Plan with deaf and deafblind people, as well as other BSL users. This means the consultation process must be made accessible in BSL, as well as allowing contributions to be made in BSL. This consultation will take place during July and August, and as part of this NDCS will be engaging deaf children, their parents and education professionals. If you would like more information, please get in touch on [lois.drake@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:lois.drake@ndcs.org.uk).

## Research

### Voices at the centre of NDCS transformation – meeting the needs of deaf children, young people, and their families.

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We're going to transform how we work to make sure we achieve our ambition. To do this, the voices of deaf children, young people and families will be at the centre of the journey.

We will listen and understand the experiences and needs of deaf children, young people, and their families as we review existing services and inform the design of new and exciting ones that allow us to have greatest reach.

If you are a parent of a deaf child or a deaf young person and would like your experience to inform the design and development of NDCS's products and services and be part of this exciting journey, then please contact us so we can keep you up to date with future opportunities to get involved. Please email [Emma.Papakyriakou@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:Emma.Papakyriakou@ndcs.org.uk)

## Resources and training

### New and updated resources

- We've refreshed our [What are you feeling? booklet](#) with lots of new activities, illustrations and colouring pages. Members can download or order this item for free.
- We've created new [Disability Living Allowance](#) and [Personal Independence Payment](#) template letters that parents and deaf young people can use to ask for supporting evidence from education and health professionals.
- We've separated out information about [choosing a deaf-friendly school](#) by country to make it easier for people to find information relevant for them.

### Free e-learning modules

Our free e-learning modules are a great way to improve your knowledge and achieve CPD credits at a time and place to suit you. They take from 10 minutes to one hour to complete. [Find out more.](#)

We have recently launched a brand-new e-learning module: [Introduction to Childhood Deafness.](#)

### Early Years Networking Groups

Our online networking groups take place four times a year and are specially created for practitioners who work with children in the early years. [Find out more.](#)

### Upcoming dates for CPD accredited training workshops

Our expert trainers deliver interactive workshops that will help you support deaf children and young people to achieve their potential:

[Raising a Deaf Child Facilitator Training](#) 18 and 25 January 2024, 1pm to 2.30pm, £70

This workshop will enable you to confidently deliver our Raising a Deaf Child programme with the families you work with.

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[Supporting Deaf Children in Early Years Settings](#) 9 March 2024, 10am to 11.30am, £40

Learn how to fully include deaf children in the life of your early years setting.

[Healthy Minds](#) (Northern Ireland) 4 and 5 September 2023, 6.30pm to 9.30pm

Learn how to run activities to help support the emotional health and wellbeing of deaf children and young people.

[Deaf Awareness for Early Years Practitioners](#) 21 March 2024, 6pm to 7.30pm, £20

Learn how to confidently support children with hearing loss in your setting.

## Live chat

[Live chat](#) is our free, online service for you to contact our Helpline team easily. We are here to support deaf children and young people, their families and the professionals supporting them.

We are available to chat Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 12:30pm (excluding bank holidays). There may be times that we are offline for staff training. If this is the case please check back later or send an [email or text](#) for us to pick up when we are back online. Find out about the [topics](#) we can help with.

## Jobstart (Northern Ireland)

People working with deaf teenagers/concerned about transitions into employment may be interested to know that the Jobstart Scheme has just started up again in Northern Ireland, with consideration given to the specific needs of deaf young people. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/jobstart-scheme>

## Events and support for parents, deaf children and young people (UK wide)

### Events for families

There is a broad range of in person and online events on offer including New to Hearing Loss in person and online events, Baby and Toddler sessions, information and advice sessions as well as online courses including Happy Hands sessions (formerly known as Baby Sign). [Find out more here](#).

Contact

Email us at [localengagement@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:localengagement@ndcs.org.uk)