



Consortium for Research in Deaf Education

## 2024 report for Scotland

### Education provision for deaf children in Scotland in 2023/24

#### Introduction

In 2024, we carried out the 12<sup>th</sup> Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children in Scotland. This is the eighth survey since a CRIDE reference group was set up to steer the work of CRIDE in Scotland. This report sets out the results of the survey for Scotland and is intended for heads of services, policy makers in local and central government and anyone with an interest in deaf education.

The survey alternates from year to year between a standard survey and a survey with a mix of core and thematic questions. The 2024 survey was the version with a mix of core and thematic questions, covering the 2023/24 academic year.<sup>1</sup> The analysis in this report is based on responses from 30 services in Scotland, covering 32 authority areas and giving a response rate of 100%.

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<sup>1</sup> Reports from previous years can be found on the National Deaf Children's Society website at [www.ndcs.org.uk/cride](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/cride) or on the BATOD website at <https://www.batod.org.uk/information/cride-reports/>.

## Interpreting the results

Services were asked to give figures for the position as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

In the survey, we acknowledge that services and children do not always fit into the boxes or options provided. Services were able to leave comments or clarify where needed throughout the survey. This report notes particular issues that emerged in some areas.

As we see later, it is clear that some services still experience difficulties in extracting data about deaf children in their area and there remain inconsistencies in how different questions are completed throughout the survey. The response rates to individual questions may sometimes vary and anomalies occasionally appear. We make every effort to investigate any inconsistencies that appear particularly strange. However, services do not always respond to such queries. The CRIDE 2023 Scotland report was republished in October 2024 when it became apparent that numbers of TODs in resource provisions had inadvertently been overstated. **As such, the results should continue to be used with caution.** Caution is also needed due to differences in response rates to individual questions and potential mistakes in data provision between surveys.

## Summary of key findings

### *Deaf children in Scotland*

- There were 3,558 deaf children. This figure of 3,558 is a reported increase of 140 (4%) from 3,418 in 2023 when 29 services responded to the survey.

### *Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People and other specialist staff*

- There were at least 176.14 fte Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) posts, of which 4% were vacant.
- Of the 168.34 fte working as TODs, 69% held the mandatory qualification, whilst 27% were in training and 4% were qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training.
- The number of teachers working as TODs has increased by 1% between 2023 and 2024. It has fallen by 23% since we started the survey in 2011.
- There were 102.43 fte specialist support staff posts (other than TODs) directly employed by services, of which 8.97 fte (9%) were vacant posts.

### *Resource provisions*

- There are a reported 16 resource provisions specifically for deaf children and young people. There were 15 reported in 2023. On average, there is one resource provision for every 222 deaf children.

### *Support following identification of deafness*

- Services stated they had received 530 referrals during the 2023 calendar year.
- 11% of referrals to services came from the newborn hearing screening programme in 2023. Of these, 73% were contacted by a TOD within two working days.
- 24% of referrals to services came from outside the newborn hearing screening programme and before a child had started statutory education. Of these, 59% were contacted by a TOD within five working days.
- 65% of referrals to services came from outside the newborn hearing screening programme and after a child had started statutory education. Of these, 52% were contacted by a TOD within five working days.
- Regardless of how the referral was made, 35% of families were offered a visit (either face to face or virtual) within ten working days of the referral.

### *Thematic questions: Early identification and early intervention pathways*

- Two services (7%) reported that when referrals are received during the summer holiday, cover arrangements are in place to enable a TOD to provide a visit to the family during the summer holidays within the same timescales as if referred during term time.
- 15 services (50%) reported that all children identified as deaf were referred to the service.
- 25 services (83%) reported that all referrals for children identified as deaf were accepted.
- Two services (7%) reported that there was a school entry hearing screening programme across the whole area covered by their service.

# PART 1: Deaf children in Scotland

## How many deaf children are there?<sup>2</sup>

Based on the responses from all 30 services, there were 3,558 deaf children. This figure of 3,558 is a reported increase of 140 (4%) from 3,418<sup>3</sup> in 2023 when 29 services responded. If the service that didn't respond in 2023 is excluded from this year's figures, this means there was an increase of 116 (3%) from 2023.<sup>4</sup>

The smallest service reported 12 deaf children living within their boundaries. The largest reported 385 deaf children. The average number of deaf children living in each service area was 119.

The following table compares the total number of deaf children living in Scotland with figures from previous years. As set out in the introduction, comparisons with earlier reports should be made with caution due to differences in the quality of the responses and response rates between the surveys.

*Table 1: Number of deaf children reported, over successive years*

	Number of children reported	Number of services that responded to the survey
CRIDE 2024	3,558	30
CRIDE 2023 (adjusted total)	3,418	29
CRIDE 2022 (adjusted total)	3,313	30
CRIDE 2021 (adjusted total)	2,841	25
CRIDE 2020	2,898	27
CRIDE 2019 (adjusted total)	3,647	30
CRIDE 2018	3,363	30
CRIDE 2017 (adjusted total)	3,174	24
CRIDE 2016	No survey issued by CRIDE	-
CRIDE 2015 (adjusted total)	2,942	29
CRIDE 2014	3,057	28
CRIDE 2013 (adjusted total)	2,842	28
CRIDE 2012	No survey issued by CRIDE	-
CRIDE 2011 (adjusted total)	2,526	26

<sup>2</sup> Services were asked to include children and young people with a permanent deafness under the age of 19, including as much as possible: all children who have a unilateral or bilateral sensori-neural or permanent conductive deafness, at all levels from mild to profound, using BSA/BATOD descriptors; all deaf children, regardless of whether they receive support from the service; children who attend education provision outside of the area but who normally live in the area. Please also note that we use the term 'permanent deafness' to include those children with a syndrome known to include permanent conductive deafness, microtia/atresia, middle ear malformation, or those who have had middle ear surgery such as mastoidectomy. It also includes those children with glue ear who are not expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 12 years, such as those born with a cleft palate, Down's syndrome, cystic fibrosis, or primary ciliary dyskinesia. Under temporary conductive deafness, we include those children with glue ear who may have been fitted with hearing aids as an alternative to grommet surgery but who are expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 12 years. Please note that for the purpose of these questions we used the term 'children' to include children and young people under the age of 20 (unless otherwise specified).

<sup>3</sup> 3,418 was the 2023 adjusted total.

<sup>4</sup> One service reported that the figures provided in 2023 were inaccurate and lower than they should have been for the numbers of children and young people with permanent deafness living in the area, and for the number of children and young people with permanent or temporary deafness on the caseload.

## Issues or gaps in the data

24 services (80%) indicated there were known issues or gaps in the data they provided for the number of children and young people. These included:

- services not holding figures for children who have left school (57% of all services)
- services only having figures for children who are receiving support from the service (47%)
- services not able to split out figures for children with permanent or temporary deafness (10%)
- other (13%). Other reasons/comments given included:
  - parents may refuse a referral to services
  - a service requested data from audiology but it was not provided
  - a service commented that they are working on improving the data held on children with conductive deafness.

The extent of these issues and gaps is a reminder that the figures generated from the CRIDE survey need to be used with caution. The data in this report are only as good as the data held and provided to us, by local authorities, and the above section raises questions about how we can improve the data collected on deaf children. At the same time, we believe that data generated through the CRIDE reports remain among the best sources of data available.

We asked services how many children were known to be eligible for the Pupil Equity Fund. Seven services provided a figure over zero in answer to this question, reporting a total of 67 children and young people. This amounts to 10% of the total number of deaf children identified in these seven areas. However, three of the seven services also commented that the data they provided was not necessarily complete. If we include only the data provided by four services that did not indicate the data was not complete, 43 children were reported to be known to be eligible for the Pupil Equity Fund, 19% of the total for these areas.

## Number of deaf children on the service's caseload

By caseload, we mean children who receive some form of support **at least once a year**. Examples of support include direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school and teachers, providing hearing aid checks, etc. We asked services to include children they supported but who do not live in the geographical area covered by their service. Children with temporary deafness could be included in the response to this question if they were on service's caseloads.

Responses from the 30 services indicate that there were at least 3,742 deaf children with permanent or temporary deafness were on caseload. This is a reported 9% increase from 2023 when 29 services reported that 3,435 deaf children were on their caseloads.

*Table 2: Number of deaf children on caseloads reported, over successive years*

Year	Number of children on caseload	Number of services
2024	3,742	30
2023	3,435	29
2022	3,493	30
2021	2,612	25
2020	2,674	27
2019	3,280	30
2018	3,328	30
2017	1,889	24
2016	No survey issued by CRIDE	-
2015	2,618 (adjusted total)	29
2014	2,773	28
2013	2,629 (adjusted total)	28
2012	No survey issued by CRIDE	-
2011	2,343 (adjusted total)	26

Services reported that 449 children on their caseloads had a temporary conductive hearing loss.

If there were 3,558 permanently deaf children living in Scotland and 3,293 on services' caseloads with permanent deafness<sup>5</sup>, there were at least 265 deaf children (7% of the total) who were not being supported by services at least once a year. It does not automatically follow that 7% of permanently deaf children were not receiving any support at all; many may be receiving support less than once a year from a service, or elsewhere from, for example, resource provisions not managed by the services.

### **How do CRIDE's figures compare to School Census figures?**

Because of the differences in how data have been collected, definitions used, and the number of areas involved, we recommend these figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

These data are published in accordance with the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act and since 2010 have included pupils with Co-ordinated Support Plans, Individualised Education Plans, Child Plans as well as those receiving 'other' types of support. These may be needs which are of short-term duration, or which do not need significant differentiation of learning and teaching to overcome barriers to learning.

The latest available data on deaf pupils in Scotland from the Scottish Pupil Census<sup>6</sup> recorded 3,847 children with additional support needs, for whom the reason for requiring additional support was a hearing impairment, in primary, secondary and special schools as at 2023, compared to the figure of 3,558 children and young people under the age of 19 reported by local authorities to CRIDE.

<sup>5</sup> The figure of 3,293 children with permanent deafness on services' caseloads is calculated by subtracting the number of children with temporary deafness on services' caseloads (449) from the number of children with permanent or temporary deafness on services' caseloads (3,742).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/> Pupil in Scotland 2023 supplementary statistics, table 1.8.

It should be noted that the CRIDE figures include children in the early years , whilst these are not included in the Scottish Pupil Census figures. However, it is noteworthy that the Scottish Pupil Census figures still report a higher number of deaf children than CRIDE.

## **PART 2: Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (TODs) and other specialist staff**

We asked how many TODs were working in different settings, including those in a peripatetic role, working in resource provisions<sup>7</sup>, working in schools for deaf children and young people, and/or working in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. We found that:

- overall, there were at least 168.34 fte teachers working as TODs in Scotland.
- 69% of these posts were occupied by fully qualified TODs, 27% were occupied by teachers in training for the mandatory qualification, and 4% were occupied by qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training.
- at the time the survey was completed, there were 7.8 fte vacant posts reported
- if the vacant posts are added to the total number of TODs in employment, this would indicate there were at least 176.14 fte TOD posts, of which 4% were vacant.

The following table provides a breakdown by type of setting.

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<sup>7</sup> In the CRIDE survey, we use the term 'resource provision' to include all schools with a resource provision, base or unit specifically for deaf children, regardless of whether staff in the resource provision are employed by the local authority or by the school.



Table 3: Number of ToD posts overall<sup>8</sup>

	<b>Working mainly as a peripatetic ToD</b> (total and percentage)	<b>Working mainly in a resource provision</b> (total and percentage)	<b>Working mainly in a special school for deaf children and young people</b> (total and percentage)	<b>Working flexibly as a peripatetic ToD, in a resource provision, in a special school for deaf children and young people, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people</b> (total and percentage)	<b>ToD posts overall</b> (total and percentage)
TODs with the mandatory qualification	66.98 (73%)	35.4 (65%)	11.5 (70%)	2.5 (47%)	116.38 (69%)
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	20.4 (22%)	18.8 (34%)	4.9 (30%)	0.8 (15%)	44.9 (27%)
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	4.66 (5%)	0.4 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (38%)	7.06 (4%)
Total - in employment	92.04 (100%)	54.6 (100%)	16.4 (100%)	5.3 (100%)	168.34 (100%)
Vacant posts	4.8 (5%)	2 (4%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	7.8 (4%)
Total – posts	96.84 (100%)	56.6 (100%)	17.4 (100%)	5.3 (100%)	176.14 (100%)

No TODs were reported as working mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children.

<sup>8</sup> Percentages for TODs with the mandatory qualification, Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within three years, and Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training are out of the total in post. Percentages for vacant posts are out of all posts.

Table 4: Number of TODs in employment overall by role (fte)

	Total TODs in post	Percentage
Working mainly as a peripatetic TODs	92.04	55%
Working mainly in a resource provision	54.6	32%
Working mainly in a special school for deaf children and young people	16.4	10%
Working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a special school for deaf children and young people, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people	5.3	3%
Total of figures given	168.34	100%

Figures for TODs in the Scottish Cochlear Implant Centre were collected in a separate survey, who reported that there was 1 TOD with the mandatory qualification in employment, and no vacant posts.

### Changes in numbers of TODs

The following tables look at changes in the number of qualified TODs in employment and posts over successive years.

It should be noted that in 2017 the CRIDE Scotland survey began to ask about TODs who work mainly in a special school for deaf children and young people, and TODs who mainly work in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. This means that figures for 2017 onwards may not be directly comparable with those from previous years.

As set out earlier, when making year on year comparisons, there are varying response rates to the surveys over the years, and anomalies can sometimes appear from year to year. CRIDE makes every effort to investigate any anomalies that appear particularly strange. Sometimes, issues only become apparent when completing analysis in the following year, as happened this year in relation to the 2023 report. Ultimately, we would like to see the Scottish Government take responsibility for ensuring there are accurate figures on the number of TODs in Scotland.

Table 5: Changes in numbers of TODs from year to year

	Number of TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment	Number of teachers working as TODs in employment	Number of services
2024	116.38	168.34	30
2023	103.64	167.24	29
2022	100	161.7	30
2021	89.91	131.89	25
2020	77.48	117.98	27
2019	99.63	151.53	30
2018	121.68	154.88	30
2017	101.15	166.5	24
2016	No survey	No survey	No survey
2015	129.5	198	29
2014	138.7	204.7	28
2013	140.6	208.5	28
2012	No survey	No survey	No survey
2011	165.3	218.1	26

Table 6: Percentage changes in numbers of TODs

	Percentage change over past 13 years (between 2011 and 2024)	Percentage change over past year (between 2023 and 2024)
Number of TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment	-30%	+12%
Number of teachers working as TODs in employment	-23%	+1%

As the above table shows, there was an increase of 12% in the number of TODs with the mandatory qualification. However, this increase (of 12.74 fte TODs) was offset by a fall in the number of TODs in training of the mandatory qualification (-3.3 fte) and qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training (-8.34 fte). This means that, overall, the number of teachers working as TODs has only increased by 1% (or 0.66%).

Over a longer-time period, the number of teachers working as TODs has fallen by 23%, since 2011. In terms of teachers who hold the mandatory qualification only, it has fallen by 30% over the same time period.

In terms of any changes of TODs in post in specific roles:

- the total of 92.04 fte peripatetic TODs in employment is up marginally from 91.84 in 2023 (a 0.2% change)
- the total of 54.6 fte TODs in resource provisions has increased from 52.2 in 2023 (a 5% increase)
- the total of 16.4 fte TODs reported as working mainly in a special school for deaf children or young people is a decrease from 18.2 fte in 2023 (a 10% decrease)

- the total of 5.3 fte TODs reported as working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a special school for deaf children, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people is an increase from 5 fte in 2023 (a 6% increase).

We found that 43% of services had seen an increase in the number of TODs in employment between 2023 and 2024, 40% of services had seen no change while 17% of services had seen a decrease.

In terms of any difficulties in recruiting TODs or supply cover over the past 12 months:

- six services (20%) reported difficulties in recruiting for a permanent post
- seven (23%) reported no difficulties
  
- seven services (23%) reported difficulties in recruiting for supply cover
- three services (10%) reported no difficulties

Combining the figures, nine services (30%) reported difficulties in recruiting to either permanent or supply posts. Comments from services around this mostly referred to a lack of qualified applicants or applicants with basic BSL skills.

### **Other specialist staff**

We found that there were 93.46 fte specialist support staff, other than TODs, employed by services, supporting deaf children. There were 8.97 fte vacant posts reported. This means there were 102.43 fte specialist support staff posts, of which 9% were vacant.

Table 7: Number of specialist support staff, by role

	Number working in this role		Vacant posts		Total
	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with staff in relevant category	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with staff in relevant category	
Pupil Support Assistants/Classroom support assistants/Learning support assistants etc	48.87 (92%)	14	4 (8%)	6	52.87 (100%)
Communication support workers etc	22.6 (86%)	10	3.8 (14%)	3	26.4 (100%)
NRCPD/SRLPDC registered BSL/English interpreters	1.2 (100%)	2	0 (0%)	0	1.2 (100%)
Deaf instructors/Deaf role models/Sign language instructors etc	12.08 (91%)	8	1.17 (9%)	2	13.25 (100%)
Educational audiologists/Audiologists in Education who do not also hold a qualification as a TOD	1 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	0	1 (100%)
Technicians et al.	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)
Speech and language therapists	0.2 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	0	0.2 (100%)
Family support workers/Liaison officers	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)
Social workers/Social workers for deaf children	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)
Other	7.51 (100%)	5	0 (0%)	0	7.51 (100%)
Total of figures given	93.46 (91%)		8.97 (9%)		102.43 (100%)

Other roles included early years practitioners, early years deaf support workers, ELC support worker, nursery nurses, and clerical administrators.

The number of posts is up from 93.87 fte in 2023.

## PART 3: Support provided

Table 8: Where services are based

	Number of services	Percentage
Based in the local authority	21	70%
Based in a school with a resource provision	3	10%
Based in a specialist school for deaf children	3	10%
Based in a special school not specifically for deaf children	2	7%
Provided by another body or organisation	0	0%
Other	1	3%
Total	30	

### Heads of services

We asked if peripatetic TODs in the service were managed by someone who is a qualified TOD or in training for the mandatory qualification. 17 services (57%) stated that they were, and 13 services (43%) stated that they were not.

Where services were not managed by a qualified TOD or TOD in training, we asked for the role of the person who was managing the service. Answers included:

- Education Manager: Inclusion and Equality
- Quality Improvement Manager for Equity and Inclusion
- Quality Improvement Officer
- Additional Support Needs Support Manager/Additional Support Needs Service Manager
- Qualified ASN teacher in the role of Principal Teacher
- Principal Teacher of Support for Learning and Inclusion
- Principal Teacher
- Headteacher with Support for Learning Diploma
- Depute Head Teacher
- Collaborative Development Officer, Inclusion & Early Years, Head Teacher.

### Number of resource provisions

In the CRIDE survey, we use the term 'resource provision' to include all schools (mainstream or special) with a resource provision, base or unit specifically for deaf children, regardless of whether staff in the resource provision are employed by the local authority or by the school.

Table 9: Number of resource provisions

	Managed by the local authority	Managed by the schools	Total
Resource provisions for primary-aged children	4	3	7
Resource provisions for secondary-aged children	5	4	9
Total	9	7	16

We found that:

- seven services (23%) had at least one resource provision for primary-aged children in their area
- eight services (27%) had at least one resource provision for secondary-aged children in their area.

The total of 16 resource provisions across Scotland is up from the 15 reported in 2023, due to a resource provision opening in 2023.

14 of the 16 resource provisions (88%) were managed by a qualified TOD.

We also looked at the number of resource provisions against the number of deaf children.<sup>9</sup> This is intended to indicate the spread of resource provisions across Scotland, relative to the overall population of deaf children. We found that, on average, there was one resource provision for every 222 deaf children. This has changed from 2023 when there was one resource provision for every 227 deaf children.

This is **not** a measure of the number of places available or individual deaf children enrolled at each resource provision; figures for places or deaf children enrolled will vary from provision to provision.

### Number of schools for deaf children

Three special schools for deaf children were reported across Scotland. All three of these schools were managed by a qualified TOD.

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<sup>9</sup> The number of children and young people with permanent deafness reported as living in the area by services.

## PART 4: Support following identification of deafness

We asked what arrangements are made in terms of the first TOD visit to the family when referrals are received during the summer holidays:

- two services (7%) reported that cover arrangements are in place to enable a TOD to provide a visit during the summer holidays within the same timescales as if referred during term time
- four services (13%) reported that cover arrangements are in place to enable a TOD to provide a visit during the summer holidays but not necessarily within the same timescales as if referred during term time
- 19 services (63%) reported that a TOD visits as soon as possible after the school holidays
- five services (17%) reported other arrangements, these included:
  - families are contacted by an educational audiologist as soon as possible to discuss when a visit will take place
  - a freelance educational audiologist may provide a visit during the summer holidays, alternatively a TOD visits as soon as possible after the holidays
  - speech and language therapist will visit during the summer holidays, and a TOD will visit as soon as possible after the holidays
  - relies on service manager being able to volunteer their time volunteers to visit new families
  - a phone call is made when referrals are received during the holiday, then a visit to home is arranged as soon as possible after.

We asked services how many referrals they received over the calendar year of 2023.

Table 10: Referrals

	Number and percentage of referrals	Number of services <sup>10</sup>
For children identified as deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme	59 (11%)	18
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and <b>before</b> they had started statutory education	128 (24%)	17
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and <b>after</b> they had started statutory education	343 (65%)	26
Total of figures given	530 <sup>11</sup> (100%)	

In terms of changes in referrals received between the calendar years of 2022 and 2023:

- the total number of referrals over the calendar year has increased from 435 to 530
- the proportion of referrals for children identified as deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme has decreased from 20% to 11%
- outside newborn hearing screening and before statutory education has increased from 22% to 24%

<sup>10</sup> This is the number of services that provided a figure over 0.

<sup>11</sup> 530 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 535.



- outside newborn hearing screening and after statutory education has increased from 57% to 65%.

We then asked how soon families were contacted and visited following the initial referral. These questions were drafted with reference to the [NatSIP Quality Standards for Sensory Support Services in England \(2016\)](#) – in particular, standards A1ii and A1iii.

We recognise there may be a range of reasons why initial contact or the first visit cannot take place within the timescales outlined by the quality standards (e.g. the family is not able to meet). It should also be noted that some services were not able to provide data for the questions on timescales for contacting families and offering visits to families.<sup>12</sup> Therefore the percentages for contact and visit timescales should not be assumed to apply to all services. It should also be noted that the extent of gaps in data varies between years, and across the four nations of the UK. For these reasons this data is not directly comparable to last year or between the countries of the UK. However, we hope that these questions will help to build a national picture of how these quality standards are being met. In response to these questions, we found that:

- of the referrals for children identified through the newborn hearing screening programme, 43 of the families were contacted<sup>13</sup> by a TOD within two working days. This amounts to 73% of the 59 children referred via this route. The corresponding figure was 41% reported in 2023
- of the referrals for children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing screening programme and before they had started statutory education, 75 of the families were contacted by a TOD within five working days. This amounts to 59% of the 128 children referred via this route. The corresponding figure was 67% in 2023
- of the referrals for children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing screening programme and after they had started statutory education, 180 of the families were contacted by a TOD within five working days. This amounts to 52% of the 343 children referred via this route. The corresponding figure was 70% in 2023
- 186 families were offered a visit (either face-to-face or virtually) from a TOD within ten working days of any referral. This amounts to 35% of the 530 children referred either through or outside the newborn hearing screening programme. The corresponding figure was 38% in 2023.

Comments from services on this included:

- several services provide visits to children in nurseries or in schools rather than in the home, sometimes alongside phone calls to parents<sup>14</sup>
- parents may prefer for children to be visited in the nursery rather than the home
- parents may not be available for or want a visit within ten days, or may prefer a phone call to a visit
- there can be delays in a referral being made and sent through to services, in one area sometimes referrals are received after hearing aids have been fitted
- other professionals sometimes being the first person to visit, e.g. a speech and language therapist, or an educational audiologist
- visits outside of the recommended timescales happening due to operational demands on a service.

<sup>12</sup> The following services did not provide full data, or provided comments that indicated their data did not directly relate to the questions: Edinburgh City, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross.

<sup>13</sup> For these questions on contact we mean actual or attempted contact.

<sup>14</sup> It isn't always clear whether services that commented on this have included all the children referred in their figures for how many were contacted or visited within the relevant timescales.

## **PART 5: Thematic questions: Early identification and early intervention pathways**

This year's CRIDE survey included some thematic questions about referrals into and accepted by education services. We asked these questions as we know that, across the UK, not all deaf children are referred into education services. We were keen to better understand if this is because the referrals are not made by audiology services or because they are not accepted by education (because of any eligibility criteria or policy in place).

When asked if there were any groups of deaf children routinely not referred into the service by audiology services (such as, children with unilateral, mild, moderate or temporary deafness, and children without a hearing aid):

- 15 services (50%) reported that all children identified as deaf were referred
- where services reported groups of children not routinely referred:
  - seven services (23%) reported that children without a hearing aid were not referred
  - four services (13%) reported that children with temporary deafness were not referred
  - five services (17%) reported that other groups of children were not referred
- where services reported other groups of children not referred, comments included:
  - children seen by ENT but not seen by audiology were not routinely referred
  - children with a mild deafness for whom hearing aids are not appropriate
  - children whose parents have made a request not to have their child referred
  - a previous lack of staff in audiology having an impact on referrals.

When asked if there were any groups of deaf children where a referral to the service (if made) would not routinely be accepted:

- 25 services (83%) reported that referrals for all deaf children were accepted
- one service (3%) reported that referrals for children without a hearing aid were not routinely accepted
- one service (3%) reported that referrals for children with temporary deafness were not routinely accepted
- three services (10%) reported that referrals for other groups of deaf children were not routinely accepted. Where services reported other groups of children where referral to the service (if made) would not routinely be accepted, comments included:
  - children attending independent schools were not supported by a service
  - a service running joint clinics for all deaf children and collectively deciding whether a referral is for ENT or a joint education/audiology clinic.

We asked services if there was a school entry hearing screening programme in place in the areas they covered:

- two services (7%) reported that there was, across the whole area covered by their service
- 22 services (73%) reported there wasn't
- six services (20%) reported that they did not know.

Services were then given an opportunity to share any insight or anecdotal views on several topics.

Services commented on how well or not referral pathways were working in their areas:

- close working with audiology
- regular meetings between TOD services and audiology services to discuss caseload
- referrals being discussed and agreed collectively
- joint clinics where families are made aware of the support TOD services can provide
- good referrals where relevant professionals know each other
- TODs can be accessed through audiology
- TODs delivering deaf awareness in all schools and settings, both routinely and on request
- an early intervention pathway for 0 to 3 year olds who have bilateral deafness, documenting the working relationship with audiology, and that includes a visual roadmap for families to explain the appointments and roles of the professionals involved.
- health visitors having received training from the service to encourage referrals to the service.
  
- gaps/delays between identification of deafness and services receiving referrals and consent forms
- some referral information being inconsistent, meaning more information needs to be sought before engaging with parents
- referrals from hospitals other than the local hospital can be sporadic
- referrals from ENT either not happening or being varied
- a service commented they would like to know about children newly diagnosed with sensorineural hearing loss sooner
- when local audiologist is absent, locums in audiology service may not routinely deal with paediatric patients
- NHS waiting lists add to education service demands
- challenges for families accessing cochlear implant teams where accommodation and travel is needed
- reports from health to education mailbox can be problematic
- reports being sent to one key person in education when that person is absent
- lack of consistency between databases in education and audiology.

On whether there had been any difference in the number or type of referrals that have been made into services since 2020, services commented on:

- increases in referrals for children with temporary conductive deafness waiting for grommet surgery, some children being fitted with hearing aids or bone conduction devices, and some not
- more referrals this year, particularly for younger children and with a wider range of deafness
- an increase in ENT referrals
- more referrals for children with mild deafness
- parents pursuing private hearing tests but waiting for NHS fitting of hearing aids or referrals to ENT. If needed the service adds them to the caseload while they wait for their NHS appointments
- increased caseloads meaning a dilution of previous support levels to pupils
- some late, very late and misdiagnosed referrals
- a lack of newborn hearing screening test referrals since 2020
- receiving referrals for children with auditory processing disorder, and ENT families telling families that a TOD should be involved
- increasing complexity of needs in pupils

- increased deaf awareness in settings resulting in requests for involvement of the service.

On any good or encouraging practice in terms of early identification and early intervention pathways, services commented on:

- good working relationships with audiology/paediatric audiology services
- good working relationships with the cochlear implant centre
- joint education and health clinic appointments for families
- working with other agencies such as speech and language therapy
- delivering training to health visitors and family nurses to promote the role of the service and strengthen multiagency working
- a strong multidisciplinary team with agreed pathways and processes for referrals and onward support
- encouraging health visitors to refer to the early years multi agency team to ensure all professionals are working together
- TODs working collaboratively to develop the use of the National Deaf Children's Society *Success from the Start* documentation and resources
- effective deaf awareness in schools leading to schools sometimes making direct referrals to services
- delivery of deaf awareness as standard to establishments after a new referral has been received
- service receiving emails immediately after a child is diagnosed/audiology sending information quickly.

On other issues or challenges that have had a significant impact on the support services are able to provide, services commented on:

- a number of primary-aged children new to the country who are profoundly deaf and have never had hearing aids or access to sign language, and have limited communication skills
- increase in the number of refugee families, transient families and children and young people who have English as an additional language being referred
- increase in the number of children referred with a unilateral deafness
- children being diagnosed late with consequential language delays
- staff absence being more prevalent since 2020
- service working to return service to the level/systems in place prior to coronavirus
- audiology not sharing information, when referring, on if the referral is for a child where identification has been significantly late or who have been misdiagnosed, only becoming aware when parent raises it
- the need for intensive communication support for pupils with late diagnosis or inaccurate diagnosis, and having to step in to provide emotional and practical support for families who have lost trust in the diagnostic process and whose relationships with NHS professionals have broken down
- reduction in social workers for the deaf
- a post for audiology head of department being vacant for three years
- challenges in communication and working relationships between health boards, and with speech and language therapy
- NHS waiting lists increasing demand for services
- poor communication from mainstream schools
- staffing issues in services such as speech and language issues and audiology.

## PART 6: Background and methodology

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in using research to improve the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children. At the time the survey was sent out, representatives included: British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People Cymru, Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, Longwill School for the Deaf, National Deaf Children’s Society, Royal School for the Deaf Derby, UCL, University of Edinburgh, former heads of services or consultants with expertise in deafness, and specialist education services for deaf children in Cambridgeshire, Camden, Kent, and Leeds.

This is the eighth year that a CRIDE Scotland reference group has been in place. Members of this group have worked to improve how the CRIDE survey fits within the Scottish education context, whilst ensuring the data collected can still be compared with the rest of the UK. Current members include: National Deaf Children’s Society, Scottish Sensory Centre, University of Edinburgh, British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, Aberdeenshire Sensory Service, Ayrshire Hearing Impairment Service, Fife Sensory Service and Highland Deaf Education Service.

The survey alternates from year to year between a standard survey and a survey with a mix of core and thematic questions. The 2024 survey was the version with a mix of core and thematic questions.

The survey was disseminated to services in Scotland in February 2024 by National Deaf Children’s Society staff on behalf of CRIDE. Where there was no response by 15 March, members of CRIDE contacted services by email and/or telephone. The table below sets out the response rate at each stage.

*Table 11: Response rate by services to the CRIDE survey*

	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>Cumulative total</b>
First deadline – 15 March 2024	23	23
Second deadline following chasers	7	30

Services were able to respond by completing an online survey. Analysis of the results using Excel and drafting of this report was largely completed by the National Deaf Children’s Society, with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE and the CRIDE Scotland reference group.

We would like to thank all services for taking the time to complete this survey and for their valuable comments and feedback, which will be used to inform the design of future surveys. The results from this survey will be used for research purposes, to influence government policy and to campaign to protect funding and services for deaf children.

If you have any feedback or questions on the results, please contact [cride.scotland@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:cride.scotland@ndcs.org.uk).

## Annex: Information by local authority

The table that follows sets out some individual data from services. Local authorities were asked to provide figures as of 31 January 2024.

Figures for TODs include TODs with the mandatory qualification (MQ) and TODs in training for the MQ or intending to train within three years.

Figures for the average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision are intended to show the spread of resource provisions across each area. It is calculated by dividing the number of children living in the area covered by a service and number of resource provisions in a service area. Where there is no resource provision in the area, this is indicated by a ratio of the population in the area to 0. Care should be used in interpreting these figures. In some cases, the ratio may be influenced by the presence of special schools in the area or other resource provisions in neighbouring areas. It should be noted that this is **not** a measure of the number of places available in or individual deaf children enrolled at each resource provision; figures for places or deaf children enrolled will vary from provision to provision.

In some cases, the number of children on the caseload with a temporary deafness is less than five. Where this happens, we have replaced the figure with a '<5' and suppressed the figure to zero in any calculations on the total caseload figure. This is indicated by an asterisk against the caseload figure.

*Table 12: Data by local authority*

	Number of permanently deaf children living in the geographical area covered by the service	Number of children with permanent or temporary deafness on the caseload for the service	Number of children with temporary deafness on the caseload for the service	TODs in the specialist peripatetic service	TODs in resource provisions	TODs mainly in a special school for deaf children	TODs working flexibly <sup>15</sup>	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Aberdeen City	148	148	7	5.5	No resource provisions reported	4.5	0	148:0
Aberdeenshire	97	97*	<5	5	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	None reported	97:0
Angus	83	83	0	2.2	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	83:0
Argyll & Bute	61	79	18	1	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	61:0

<sup>15</sup> TODs working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a special school for deaf children and young people and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people.

	Number of permanently deaf children living in the geographical area covered by the service	Number of children with permanent or temporary deafness on the caseload for the service	Number of children with temporary deafness on the caseload for the service	TODs in the specialist peripatetic service	TODs in resource provisions	TODs mainly in a special school for deaf children	TODs working flexibly <sup>15</sup>	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Clackmannanshire	43	43*	<5	1	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	43:0
Dumfries and Galloway	103	88	6	1.6	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	103:0
Dundee City	92	111	10	0.4	0.6	No schools reported	3.3	46:1
East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	203	210	25	9.2	7.6	No schools reported	0	68:1
East Dunbartonshire	100	122	32	2.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	100:0
East Lothian	55	56*	<5	1.4	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	55:0
East Renfrewshire	97	127	33	0 <sup>16</sup>	No resource provisions reported <sup>17</sup>	No schools reported	None reported	97:0
Edinburgh City	250	250	0	4.94	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	250:0
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	24	24	0	0.6	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	24:0
Falkirk	129	145	19	2	No resource provisions reported	8.1	0	129:0
Fife	288	288	22	8.3	2.4	No schools reported	0	144:1
Glasgow City	385	316	29	5	19.2	No schools reported	0	193:1
Highland	183	167	31	3.8	3.8	No schools reported	0	92:1
Inverclyde	41	88	43	2	7.8	No schools reported	0	21:1

<sup>16</sup> There were no peripatetic TODs with the MQ or in training reported by this service, there were teachers working as TODs but without the qualification and not intending to train reported by the service.

<sup>17</sup> The service originally reported resource provisions in the area, but our understanding is that there are no resource provisions specifically for deaf children in the area.

	Number of permanently deaf children living in the geographical area covered by the service	Number of children with permanent or temporary deafness on the caseload for the service	Number of children with temporary deafness on the caseload for the service	TODs in the specialist peripatetic service	TODs in resource provisions	TODs mainly in a special school for deaf children	TODs working flexibly <sup>15</sup>	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Midlothian	85	85*	<5	2.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	85:0
Moray	44	44	6	0.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	None reported	44:0
North Lanarkshire <sup>18</sup>	206	241	30	6	9.2	No schools reported	0	103:1
Orkney	15	15*	<5	1	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	15:0
Perth & Kinross	119	119	None reported	1.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	119:0
Renfrewshire	221	221	50	4.2	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	221:0
Scottish Borders	53	63	10	1.44	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	53:0
Shetland Islands	12	12*	<5	1	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	12:0
South Lanarkshire	177	211	34	4.2	3.6	3.8	0	177:1
Stirling	72	92	17	1.6	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	72:0
West Dunbartonshire	58	58*	<5	2	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	58:0
West Lothian	114	122	10	3.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	114:0

<sup>18</sup> The response from North Lanarkshire includes information from the services for primary aged children and secondary aged children. It does not include information from the providers of early years services.