

# Overcoming barriers to services

With the help of our dedicated campaigners and partners, we're working to overcome the social and educational barriers that hold deaf children back.

## ★ Teacher of the Deaf campaign

A Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) is a teacher with an extra qualification to work with deaf children, supporting their progress from the moment deafness is identified.

Numbers of ToDs in England have dropped by 19% since 2011, so we campaigned for the Government to take action as part of its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review. We gave evidence at two House of Commons committees and with more than

100 organisations, wrote an open letter to the Government about the campaign. We also created a letter with two parents, signed by 7,565 people, calling for more ToDs.

In March 2023, the Department for Education in England published its SEND improvement plan, which includes a commitment to a ToD apprenticeship programme. This won't be ready before 2025 – so we must make sure deaf children don't miss out on support in the meantime.

**12,116**  
dedicated people fought for change through our Campaigns Network.

**7,565**  
people signed an open letter calling for more specialist support in education.

From **2025**, a new apprenticeship for Teachers of the Deaf will launch.

## ★ Improving audiology services

In 2021, a British Academy of Audiology (BAA) report exposed serious failings in children's audiology services in Lothian. These included late identification of deafness and subsequent delayed follow-up support. As a result, many deaf children didn't get vital help when they needed it, impacting their ability to develop communication. For some, the consequences have been life-changing.

We've made sure all four governments are taking action to review and improve the quality of children's hearing services and NHS support for deaf babies and toddlers. In England, we've been appointed to a new national steering group, sponsored by the NHS England medical director.

In Scotland, we lobbied the government to set up a National Audiology Review and played a leading role in its work. We made sure the review looked at leadership, training and audiology staffing in Scotland, to help make sure similar mistakes don't happen again.

We've also supported the families who were failed, including through events in the Scottish Parliament where parents from the Families Failed by Lothian Audiology Action Group (FLAAG) could share their experiences with MSPs, and lobby for support.

