

CRIDE report on 2011 survey on educational provision for deaf children in Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) conducted a UK-wide survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children in the 2010/11 financial year. This report summarises the results of the survey for Northern Ireland¹ and is intended for heads of services, policy makers in local and central government and anyone with an interest in deaf education.

Responses were received from 5 services in Northern Ireland, covering the 5 Education and Library Boards (ELBs), giving a response rate of 100%. However, not all services consistently gave responses to all the questions, as set out throughout this note. As such, the results should be used with caution.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

- There are at least 1,238 deaf children in Northern Ireland.
- 30% of deaf children have some form of additional special educational need (SEN).
- Around 8% of deaf children have a cochlear implant.
- 97% of deaf children in Northern Ireland communicate orally using English.
- Over three quarters - 77% - of school-aged deaf children attend mainstream provision, of whom a small portion attend mainstream schools with resource provision for deaf children. 22% of deaf children attend special schools (for children with needs other than deafness).
- There are over 37 Teachers of the Deaf in Northern Ireland, of whom 27 work in a peripatetic role. There appears to have been a 7% reduction in the number of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

This note has 6 parts, as set out below:

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¹ Reports for other parts of the UK are available at www.ndcs.org.uk/data.

PART 1: Overall number of deaf children in Northern Ireland (“belonging”)

Services were asked to give details of deaf children “belonging” to the service. “Belonging” was defined as: all deaf children who live in the ELB area².

Services were also asked to include details of all children with sensorineural and *permanent* conductive deafness³, using the descriptors provided by the British Society of Audiology and BATOD.

Please note that where the number of deaf children for any category is 5 or fewer, we have substituted the figure with an asterisk. This is to avoid any risk of individual children being identified.

How many deaf children are there?

When giving figures for numbers of deaf children belonging, services were asked to break this down by level of deafness and age group.

Not all respondents gave complete figures. Some services gave a “total” figure which differed from the sum of their component figures. This was often because the service could not provide a complete age breakdown. Where this has happened, and as appropriate, we have used the higher figure. We refer to this as the “adjusted total”. In practice, the difference between the adjusted and unadjusted totals was virtually non-existent.

Based on responses from 5 services covering 5 ELBs, the adjusted total number of deaf children in Northern Ireland is **1,239**. Unadjusted figures are set out below.

What the survey tells us about the population of deaf children in Northern Ireland

The below tables provide breakdowns by age, level of deafness. No services have reported any children being in post 16 education (but not in school). Further Education provision is the responsibility of individual Further Education Colleges, and not of the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland, so these children will not be known to the services. For this reason alone, the total figure for the number of deaf children and young people in Northern Ireland is likely to be an underestimate.

Table 1: Number of children belonging, by age

Age group	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total
Preschool	176	14%
Primary	579	47%
Secondary	410	33%
Post 16 in school	73	6%
Post 16 not in school but in education	0	0%
Total	1,238	

² This includes deaf children who live within the ELB boundary but attend schools outside of the ELB. It excludes deaf children who live outside of the ELB but attend schools within the ELB.

³ We are aware that a number of services also support children with temporary deafness and will consider inclusion in the next survey.

Table 2: Number of children belonging, by level of deafness

Level of deafness	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total
Unilateral ⁴	210	17%
Mild	391	32%
Moderate	359	29%
Severe	140	11%
Profound	138	11%
Total	1,238	

Incidence of additional special educational needs (SEN)

Based on figures from the 5 services, there are 370 deaf children with an additional SEN. This is 30% of the adjusted total of deaf children. The incidence of additional SEN varies between services, but the average number of children with additional SEN in each service that responded to the survey was 74, with answers ranging from 24 to 189.

Research⁵ from 1996 suggested that 40% of deaf children have additional needs. However, this research uses a wide definition of additional needs (including, for example, eczema and cerebral palsy) whereas SEN is normally understood to refer to where children have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The definition of learning difficulty includes where children have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same in age in schools within the local authority area.

Deaf children with cochlear implants

The results indicate there are 98 deaf children across Northern Ireland with cochlear implants. This is 8% of the adjusted total of deaf children, with answers ranging between 2 and 40 deaf children with cochlear implants.

Table 5: Number of deaf children belonging with cochlear implants, by age group

Age	Total with cochlear implants	Total deaf children	Percentage of total within each category
Pre-school	20	177	11%
Primary aged	44	579	8%
Secondary aged	31	410	8%
Post 16	*	73	*
Total	98	1,239	8%

Additional languages

Table 6: Number of deaf children, by main language spoken in family

Language	Total	Percentage of responses (where known)
English only	1,177	97%
Sign language only	*	*
English and sign language	11	1%
English and other spoken language	19	2%
Total known	1,211	

The results suggest that only a small minority of deaf children in Northern Ireland communicate using sign language on its own or in combination with English.

⁴ Unilateral refers to a hearing loss in just one ear.

⁵ Fortnum et al. (1996) *Health service implication of changes in aetiology and referral patterns of hearing impaired children in the Trent region.*

At the end of part 2, we compare how these figures for the number of deaf children compare with other sources.

PART 2: Number of deaf children supported

Earlier, we looked at the number of deaf children who “belong” or live in an Education and Library Board (ELB). We also asked about deaf children who are supported⁶ by the service; this section sets out our analysis of these figures. As before, figures were adjusted to accommodate any anomalies with the submitted figures (i.e. where the sum of component figures was higher than the given total). As before, response rates varied for each individual question within this section.

Based on responses from all 5 services, our survey indicates that at least **1,277** deaf children receive support from their local service.

What do we know about the population of deaf children being supported?

The tables below break down the results by age, type of educational provision and ELB.

Table 7: Number of deaf children being supported, by age group

Age group	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total
Preschool children	175	14%
Primary aged children	592	46%
Secondary aged children	434	34%
16+ young people who are in school	76	6%
16+ young people who are not in school but in education (e.g. Further Education)	0	0%
Total	1,277	

We note that the number of deaf children being supported by services is slightly higher than the number of deaf children belonging in Northern Ireland. The most likely explanations for this are that there has been double counting of some children or that services in Northern Ireland support some deaf children who live outside of Northern Ireland.

The figures confirm that deaf children in education but not in school are not supported by services in Northern Ireland.

⁶ Examples of support given were direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school, teachers, provision of hearing aid checks, etc.

Table 9: Number of deaf children, by type of educational provision

Type of educational provision		Number of deaf children	Percentage of total
In local authority	Supported at home (e.g. babies or home educated)	95	9%
	Mainstream state funded schools	685	65%
	Independent (non state funded) mainstream schools	*	*
	Resource provision in mainstream schools	18	2%
	Special schools for deaf pupils	*	*
	Other special schools	209	20%
Out of local authority	Resource provision in mainstream schools	12	1%
	Mainstream state funded schools (including academies)	20	2%
	Special schools for deaf pupils but maintained by LA	*	*
	Independent or special schools (non state funded) ⁷	*	*
	Other special school	*	*
Other	Other (e.g. Pupil referral units)	0	0%
Total		1,052	

Table 10: Breakdown of types of educational provision (regardless of whether in or out of local authority)

Type of educational provision (regardless of whether in or out of local authority)	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total	Percentage of total school-aged children (i.e. excluding children supported at home)
Supported at home (e.g. babies or home educated)	95	9%	-
Mainstream provision (including academies)	705	67%	74%
Mainstream provision: resource provision	30	3%	3%
Special schools for deaf pupils or independent schools	12	1%	1%
Other special schools	210	20%	22%
Other (e.g. Pupil referral units)	0	0%	0%
Total	1,052		
Total (excluding children supported at home)	957		

A large proportion of deaf children in Northern Ireland – 1 in 5 – attend special schools for children with needs other than deafness or independent schools.

How do CRIDE's figures compare to figures from other sources?

As set out below, caution needs to be used when comparing CRIDE's figures with other sources, given the differences in how data has been collected and the different definitions used. CRIDE recommends that these figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

Estimates based on prevalence figures

NDCS estimates there are over 1,300 deaf children in Northern Ireland. This estimate has been calculated using known data on the prevalence of deafness and population estimates from mid-2007 from the Office of National Statistics. The estimates include deaf children with all levels of hearing loss, including unilateral, and who have a permanent loss.

⁷ The survey question was ambiguous on whether the independent school is a school for deaf children. This will be rectified for future versions of this survey.

Pupil census figures

Figures provided by the Department of Education in a Northern Ireland Assembly Question in October 2011 suggest there are a total of 1,416 deaf children who are in contact with a Teacher of the Deaf. It is not clear why the figure given in response to the CRIDE survey is lower than that collated by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

PART 3: Teachers of the Deaf

Our survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf there are working in different settings, including those in a peripatetic role and working in resource bases. Figures are often expressed as Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts; a 0.5 Teacher of the Deaf FTE post could, for example, indicate that a person spent half of the standard “working week” as a Teacher of the Deaf.

In total, there are at least 37.3 “Teachers of the Deaf” in Northern Ireland. Of these 94% are fully qualified.

Table 14: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment overall

	Number (FTE)	%
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	34.9	94%
Teachers in training, or intending to train for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	2.4	6%
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0	0%
Total	37.3	

Table 15: Number of Teacher of the Deaf vacancies overall

		Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (FTE)	Percentage of total
Vacancies	Post frozen	1.3	100%
	Currently advertised	0	0%
	Advertised but no suitable candidate	0	0%
Total		1.3	

Teachers of the Deaf in a peripatetic role

Our survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf were working in the specialist peripatetic service as of January 2011. In other words, how many “visiting” Teachers of the Deaf were working in each service. Visiting Teachers of the Deaf normally visit deaf children in “non-specialist” provision – i.e. pre-school deaf children, deaf children in mainstream schools or in a special school for disabled (rather than deaf) children.

Table 16: Number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf in employment

	Number of teachers (full time equivalent)
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	24.8
Teachers in training or intending to train for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	2.4
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0
Total	27.2

Table 17: Number of visiting Teacher of the Deaf vacancies

		Number of teachers (FTE)	Number of services
Vacancies	Post frozen	1.3	1
	Currently advertised	0	0
	Advertised but no suitable candidate	0	0

The average number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf per service is 5.4.

We asked if services had sought to recruit visiting Teachers of the Deaf over the past 12 months. 2 services sought to recruit TODs in past 12 months and reported no difficulties recruiting

Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions

The survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf were employed in resource provisions for deaf children and whether they were employed centrally by the ELB or directly by the school.

Respondents were asked to exclude time spent on other school duties (such as time as the school's SEN co-ordinator, for example).

Table 18: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions employed by the ELB or the school

	Number of teachers (FTE) in resource provision employed by the local authority	Number of services with staff in relevant category		Number of teachers (FTE) in resource provision employed by the school	Number of services with staff in relevant category
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	7.6	2		2.5	2
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	0	0		0	0
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0	0		0	0
Total	7.6			2.5	

There were no vacancies in resource provisions.

PART 4: Other specialist staff

Our survey suggests that there are at least 24 specialist support staff, other than Teachers of the Deaf, supporting deaf children in Northern Ireland. The most common role is teaching assistant followed by communication support worker.

Table 21: Number of specialist support staff overall, by role

	Number (FTE)	% of total
Teaching assistants / Classroom support assistants etc	22	91.6
Communication support workers / Interpreters / Communicators etc	1	4.2
Clinical audiologist	1	4.2
Total	24	100.0

The one clinical audiologist that was reported was listed under 'other' by one service for peripatetic staff. None of the following categories were reported:

- Deaf instructors / Deaf role models / Sign language instructors
- Educational audiologists / Technicians etc
- Speech and language therapists
- Family support workers

The majority of services no longer directly manage teaching assistants or other support staff based in schools to support named pupils. Therefore, nearly all teaching assistants and other specialist staff are working in resource provisions.

Table 22: Services still directly managing teaching assistants or other support staff in schools

Response	Number	% of those who responded
Yes	1	25
No	3	75
Total responses	4	

Resource provisions

When asked if the resource provision provided outreach support to other schools, 2 replied yes and 2 replied no. 1 service did not give a response. Where outreach support was provided, this amounted to 5.2 full time equivalent staffing time.

PART 5: Allocation of resources

Use of standardised eligibility criteria

4 out of 5 services use a standardised method for determining the level of support given to deaf children. Of these 4, 1 service referred to NatSIP⁸ while the other 3 stated they used locally developed criteria.

Application of eligibility criteria

The survey sought general information about the type of service provided for different categories of deaf children and young people. It was recognised that this could only be a crude estimate of services offered and the amount of support an individual child would receive would be determined by a range of factors, including professional judgement, and not just the degree of deafness. Services were able to tick more than one option for each group of deaf children.

⁸ National Sensory Impairment Partnership: <http://www.natsip.org.uk/>

Table 21: Support provided by type of deafness

Type of need	Type of deafness	Number of services that provide no direct support	Number of services that provide annual, one-off or occasional visit	Number of services that provide allocated ToD and regular visits (i.e. more than once a year)
Primary and permanent need	Bilateral severe or profound sensorineural deafness	0	0	5
	Bilateral moderate sensorineural deafness	0	2	5
	Bilateral conductive deafness	0	2	5
	Bilateral mild or high frequency only sensorineural deafness	0	3	4
	Unilateral deafness (sensorineural or conductive)	0	5	2
Additional and permanent need	Bilateral severe or profound sensorineural deafness	0	2	5
	Bilateral moderate sensorineural deafness	0	3	5
	Bilateral conductive deafness	0	4	2
Other	With temporary conductive deafness as a primary or additional need	1	5	2
	In special schools other than schools for the deaf	0	5	4
	With auditory neuropathy	2	2	1
	With auditory processing difficulty/disorder	3	0	0

Funding arrangements – peripatetic services

In terms of funding arrangements, the majority of peripatetic specialist support services appear to be funded centrally by the ELB, as shown below.

Table 25: Funding arrangements for peripatetic specialist support services

Funding is...	Number of services
Held centrally by the ELB (including funding held by the ELB to purchase hearing support services from other ELBs or external agencies e.g. SENSE) ⁹	4
Other	1
Total	5

No services said that the funding was delegated to schools in their area.

Funding arrangements – resource provisions

CRIDE also sought information on the funding arrangements for resource provisions.

Table 27: Funding arrangements for resource provisions

Funding for resource provision is...	Number of services
Held centrally by the ELB	2
Combination of central and delegated	1
Not applicable	2
Total	5

No services said that the funding for resource provisions was delegated to schools. The one service that stated that funding is both central and delegated also told us a service level agreement did not exist.

⁹ Respondents were asked to include funding held by the local authority to purchase hearing support services from other local authorities or external agencies

Staffing changes

In the context of concerns over spending reductions, the survey asked about changes to budgeted staff levels over the past three years. The table below indicates a 7% reduction in the number of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf between 2009/10 and 2010/11 based on responses from 4 services. Figures for other staff clearly do not reflect those working in resource provisions and it is unclear whether there have been any staffing changes there.

Table 26: Staffing changes between 2009/10 and 2010/11, where known in both years

Staff	Year	Number of staff	Number of services that responded
Teachers of the Deaf	2009/10	24.0	4
	2010/11	22.3	4
Other staff	2009/10	1.0	3
	2010/11	1.0	3

Other changes

The survey also looked at any changes between 2009/10 and 2010/11 to a) non staffing budgets and b) eligibility criteria / overall quality of the service

Table 32: Changes to non staffing budgets

Changes to non staffing budgets	Number of services
Increase	0
Decrease	0
No change	3
Cannot separate budget figures for the Hearing Impairment team	2
Total responses	5

Table 33: Changes to eligibility criteria and overall quality

Changes to eligibility criteria / overall quality	Number of services
For the better	0
For the worse	2
No	3
Total responses	5

Where respondents highlighted any changes for the worse, they were asked to give more information. Responses referred to reduced staffing and increased caseloads.

PART 6: Background and methodology

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in improving the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children through research. Representatives include: the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), the Ewing Foundation, the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), the Ear Foundation, schools and services for deaf children, and university researchers.

The survey was designed and created by members of CRIDE. It was piloted on a small number of services and amended based on feedback from these services. The surveys were then disseminated to other services in February 2011 by NDCS Northern Ireland on behalf of CRIDE. Services were asked to respond by the 31st March 2011. Where there was no response by this time, NDCS Northern Ireland and members of CRIDE engaged in two rounds of "chasers" by email and telephone. Following this, as a last resort, Freedom of Information requests were sent out to the remaining services who had not responded in June 2011.

Services were able to respond by completing an online survey or a Word document of the survey.

Analysis of the results using Excel and drafting of this report was largely completed by NDCS with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE. NDCS has taken every step to ensure this report accurately reflects what services have told us. Any errors are the responsibility of NDCS alone.

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 professionals@ndcs.org.uk.