



Consortium for Research in Deaf Education

2014 report for Northern Ireland

CRIDE report on 2014 survey on educational provision for deaf children in Northern Ireland

Introduction

In 2014, the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) carried out its fourth annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children in the 2013/14 financial year¹. This report sets out the results of the survey for Northern Ireland and is intended for heads of services, policy makers in local and central government and anyone with an interest in deaf education.

Following the third survey, CRIDE decided that future surveys would alternate between a shorter survey with a smaller number of core questions and the full survey. CRIDE also decided that in the years of a shorter survey, a small number of thematic questions on topical issues or concerns would be included. The 2014 survey is a shorter survey and includes thematic questions on the age profile of Teachers of the Deaf in the light of concerns over capacity gaps in the future. It also includes thematic questions around sign language provision.

Summary of key findings

- There are over 1,500 deaf children in Northern Ireland, a reported increase of 6% over the past year.
- 29% of deaf children identified by CRIDE have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are over 32 teachers employed as Teachers of the Deaf. Of these, around 28 are qualified as Teachers of the Deaf with the remaining in training.
- The number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf has declined by 5% in the past year and by 18% since the first CRIDE survey in 2011.
- Just under half (46%) of all Teachers of the Deaf are due to retire within the next 10 to 15 years.
- There is just 1 Teacher of the Deaf in Northern Ireland with a Level 3 qualification in British Sign Language.

Responses were received from five services in Northern Ireland, covering 5 Education and Library Boards. This means that this CRIDE survey achieved a response rate of 100% for the second year running.

¹ Previous reports can be found on the BATOD website at www.batod.org.uk/index.php?id=/resources/survey or on the NDCS website at www.ndcs.org.uk/cride.

Using the results

The CRIDE report can be used in the following ways:

- Heads of schools and services for deaf children can draw on comparable demographic findings when preparing for internal and external audits of local provision. Having access to annual data can assist in ensuring that deaf children are identified and provided for effectively.
- For managers, the data set can reliably inform strategic planning relating to staffing and staff training matters - trends can be identified that inform these discussions.
- Researchers into deaf education who contribute to evidence-based practice will have access to relevant, useful information about the population being studied.
- Parents of deaf children and deaf young people will find the report useful and informative in establishing what national provision for deaf children looks like.

CRIDE would like to take the opportunity to thank all services for taking the time to respond, despite the considerable time constraints many services are subject to.

Interpreting the results

Though we believe the quality of the data has improved, some services still report difficulties in extracting data about deaf children in their area and there remain inconsistencies in how different questions are completed throughout the survey. **Therefore, the results should continue to be used with caution.**

Throughout the report, we have highlighted any notable differences between the findings from this survey and that of previous CRIDE surveys. **Again, caution is needed in making comparisons due to slight changes to how some questions were phrased from year to year and also differences in response rates between surveys.**

For the purpose of this survey, 'deaf children' were defined as all children and young people up to the age of 19 with sensorineural and permanent conductive deafness, using the descriptors provided by the British Society of Audiology and BATOD. We used the word 'deaf' to include all levels of deafness, from mild to profound.

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PART 1: Number of deaf children in Northern Ireland ('belonging' and 'supported')

How many deaf children are there known to 'belong'?

Services were asked to give details of deaf children "belonging" to the service. "Belonging" was defined as: all deaf children who live in the Education and Library Board (ELB). 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.

Based on responses from five services covering five ELBs, the total number of deaf children in Northern Ireland is **1,574**. This is up from 1,481 in 2012/13 amounting to a 6% increase over the past year and 27% over the past four years (when 1,238 were reported as belonging in 2010/11). It is difficult to be certain about the extent to which this increase is due to changes in demography, increase in numbers of deaf children being diagnosed or improvements in reporting. The smallest number of children being supported by a service was 187 and the largest was 451. The average was 315.

Deaf children receiving support from services

We asked about deaf children who are supported by the service. Examples of support given were direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school and teachers, provision of hearing aid checks, etc. Based on responses from five services, our survey indicates that at least 1,227 deaf children receive support from their local service, amounting to an increase from last year of 12% where 1,097 deaf children were reported as receiving support, but a decrease of 4% over four years (when 1,277 were reported as supported in 2010/11). The smallest number of children being supported by a service was 143 and the largest was 427. The average was 245.

Assuming the figures are broadly comparable, if there are 1,574 deaf children who live in Northern Ireland, there are at least 347 deaf children who are not being supported by the services. In other words, the figures suggest that 78% of deaf children receive support from their local service. It does not automatically follow that 22% of deaf children are not receiving any support at all; many may be receiving support elsewhere from, for example, special schools for deaf children or resource provisions not managed by the service.

How do CRIDE's 2014 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.

The School Census

School Census figures for 2013/14 identify 1,021 deaf children within the education system. Of these 745 had a mild/moderate hearing loss and 246 had a severe or profound loss - this represents an increase from 2011/12 when the corresponding figure was 981 deaf children. The CRIDE survey has identified 1,574 deaf children of school-age in education, which suggests that the School Census is capturing around, at most, 65% of deaf children captured by CRIDE. This is

likely to be due to the School Census only recording whether a child is deaf when the deafness is the primary need and if / how they have been recorded as having a special educational need.

Of the 1,021 deaf children recorded by the School Census in 2011/12, the Census reports that 464 have a statement (this equates to roughly 46% of the deaf children identified by the School Census and 29% identified by CRIDE).

Other figures

The 2014 CRIDE survey population figure, taking into account the non-responses, is broadly in line with information received from other sources such as a response from the Northern Ireland Education Minister to an Assembly question (AQW 2968/11-15) asked on 6 November 2011. The Education Minister stated that his department was aware of 1,416 deaf children in Northern Ireland.

Prevalence data

Using prevalence data, 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-2010 from the Office of National Statistics. The estimates include deaf children with all types and levels of permanent hearing loss, including unilateral.

PART 2: Teachers of the Deaf and other specialist staff

Our survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf there are who are employed by the local service, including those in a peripatetic role, and working in resource provisions. Figures are 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. We did not ask about Teachers of the Deaf in special schools, cochlear implant centres and other settings and therefore the figures below do not provide a complete picture of the total population of Teachers of the Deaf in Northern Ireland.

Based on information from five services, in total, there are at least 32.6 (FTE) Teachers of the Deaf posts in employment in Northern Ireland. Of these 88% are occupied by a fully qualified Teacher of the Deaf. There were no vacant posts reported at the time of the survey.

Table 1: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment overall

	Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (FTE)	Percentage of total
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	28.6	88%
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	4.0	12%
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0.0	0%
Total (n=5)	32.6	

Table 2: Changes in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf from year to year

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14		Change since last year	Change over 4 years
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification in employment	34.9	29.6	30	28.6		- 5%	- 18%
Number of teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in employment	37.3	34.2	35	32.6		- 13%	- 17%

There has been a 5% decline in the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment over the past year and a much larger reduction over the past four years of 18%. Given, as this report showed earlier, there has been no corresponding decrease in the number of deaf children being reported, these figures are of concern. It is possible that there has been an increase in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf working in other settings which is not captured within this survey but it is CRIDE’s view that this is unlikely.

The following sections look in more detail at the numbers of Teachers of the Deaf employed in a peripatetic role or in resource provisions.

Age profile of Teachers of the Deaf

The CRIDE 2014 included a question on the age profile of Teachers of the Deaf. This was in response to concerns that over the past few years the number of newly recruited Teachers of the Deaf is significantly lower than the number of Teachers of the Deaf retiring from the profession. If true, this could potentially lead to a ‘capacity crunch’ where there are insufficient numbers of Teachers of the Deaf to meet the needs of future deaf children.

Table 3: Age ranges of Teachers of the Deaf (in employment or in training)

	Number of teachers (FTE)	Percentage of total
Aged 49 or under	17.4	54%
Aged between 50 and 59	13.8	43%
Aged between 60 and 64	0.8	3%
Aged 65 or over	0	0%
Total	32	

Figures include Teachers of the Deaf in peripatetic (visiting) services and resource provisions. Not all services were able to provide totals equalling their total number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment or in training - there are around 0.6 FTE Teachers of the Deaf unaccounted for in these figures.

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 2014. 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 not designated for deaf children.

Table 4: Number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf in employment

	Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (FTE)	Number of services with staff in relevant category
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	26.8	5
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	4	2
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0	0
Total (n=5)	30.8	

In terms of fully qualified visiting Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification, the numbers within each service ranged from 0.8 at the smallest to 9.6 in the largest. The average number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf (with the mandatory qualification) per service is 5.4 (FTE).

Table 5: Difficulties in recruitment of visiting Teachers of the Deaf over the past 12 months

	Number of services that sought to recruit	Number of services that had difficulties recruiting	Percentage of services that sought to recruit that had difficulties recruiting
Difficulties in recruiting for permanent post	2	0	0%
Difficulties in securing supply cover	2	0	0%
Difficulties in recruiting for temporary post / fixed term contract	1	0	0%

Sign language qualifications of Teachers of the Deaf

CRIDE 2014 also asked about the sign language qualifications of visiting Teachers of the Deaf.

Table 6: Sign language qualifications of visiting Teachers of the Deaf (in employment or in training)

	Number of teachers (FTE)	Percentage of total	Number of services with staff in relevant category
No qualification	6.8	25%	4
BSL Level 1	15.6	58%	5
BSL Level 2	3.6	13%	3
BSL Level 3 or above	1.0	4%	1
Total	27		

Not all services were able to provide totals equalling their total number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment or in training, there are around 3.8 FTE ToDs unaccounted for.

Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions

The survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf were employed in resource provisions for deaf children, both where resource provisions were managed centrally by the Education and Library Board (ELB) and where managed 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). Again, we did not ask about other specialist staff in special schools, cochlear implant centres and other settings and therefore the figures below do not provide a complete picture of the total population of specialist staff in Northern Ireland.

Table 7: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions managed by the ELB or the school

	Number of teachers (FTE) in resource provision managed by the ELB	Number of services with staff in relevant category	Number of teachers (FTE) in resource provision managed by the school	Number of services with staff in relevant category
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	0	0	1.8	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 (n=3)	0		1.8	

There is an overall reduction in numbers between the above table and the corresponding figures from last year (overall down from 5.8). The results indicate fewer Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions managed by the ELB in 2012/13 (when there were 5.8 ToDs in resource provisions managed by the ELB), but more Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions managed by the school (up from 0 to 1.8). It should be noted that not all ELBs provided information about numbers of Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions.

There were no vacancies reported in resource provisions, either managed by the ELB or directly by the school.

Other specialist staff

Our survey suggests that there is only 1 FTE specialist support staff, other than Teachers of the Deaf, supporting deaf children in Northern Ireland in a peripatetic role (speech and language therapist). No other specialist staff were reported as working in resource provisions

The number of specialist staff overall is less than in 2012/13, when 3 FTE Teaching assistants were reported as working in resource provisions and 6.3 the year before.

Services managing support staff based in schools to support named pupils

We also asked if services manage teaching assistants or other support staff based in schools to support named pupils. All five of the services said they did not. This is consistent with findings from 2012/13.

Resource provisions providing outreach support to other schools

When asked if the resource provision provided outreach support to other schools, one service replied yes, one replied no and one did not provide an answer. This is an increase from last year, when none of the services provided outreach.

Where outreach support was provided, this amounted to 0.1 full time equivalent staffing time total across all of the services who responded. The actual figure may be higher; some services reported that they provided outreach services without giving a rough figure.

PART 3: The impact of CRIDE reports

This is the fourth CRIDE survey, so we wanted to find out if and how services have been using the reports, and what impact the CRIDE reports have.

We asked services if they had read reports of previous CRIDE surveys. Of the five services that answered, four had read previous reports, and one had not.

If services had read the reports, we asked them to tell us if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the reports and then how they had used the reports:

Table 8: CRIDE report statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The reports are clear and easy to understand	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
The results provide information that is useful in informing discussions on local provision for deaf children	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
The results provide information that is useful in understanding provision across England for deaf children	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Services were asked how they have used the CRIDE reports. Only one provided a response and indicated that it had been used to get an overall picture across Northern Ireland.

PART 4: Concluding thoughts

In this section we reflect on some of the findings from the 2013/14 survey as well as our observations on the survey itself.

1. The 5% decline in the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in the past year is of considerable concern, particularly given that the number of deaf children being reported by CRIDE is increasing by 6%.
2. In the next 10 to 15 years, significant number of Teachers of the Deaf will be retiring. Members of CRIDE are concerned that insufficient steps are being taken to ensure an adequate supply of new Teachers of the Deaf to replace them.
3. It is clear that the School Census continues to significantly under-represent the number of deaf children. CRIDE calls on the Government to take action to improve data collection.
4. It is pleasing and reassuring to see that most services see the CRIDE survey and reports as useful and valuable. It is clear that the decision to move to alternating shorter / full surveys has been welcomed.

PART 5: 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. At the time the 2014 survey was issued, representatives included: the [British Association of Teachers of the Deaf](#) (BATOD), [City University London](#), the [Ear Foundation](#), the [Ewing Foundation](#), [Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children](#), [Kent County Council](#), [London Borough of Barnet](#), the [National Deaf Children's Society](#) (NDCS), [National Sensory Impairment Partnership](#) (NatSIP), [Mary Hare School](#), [Sheffield City Council](#), and [UCL](#).

The survey was designed and created by members of CRIDE. Following feedback from services, it was decided to move to a shorter survey in 2014, with short / full surveys alternating in future years.

The survey was disseminated to services in Northern Ireland in March by NDCS on behalf of CRIDE. Services were asked to respond by 4 April. Where there was no response by this time, members of CRIDE contacted services by email and telephone.

The table below sets out the response rate at each stage.

Table 10: Response rate by services to the CRIDE survey

	Number of responses	Cumulative total
First deadline – 4 th April	4	4
Second deadline following chasers	1	5

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.

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.

Annex A: Information about individual specialist support services for deaf children

The table shown in Annex A sets out some individual data from services when originally provided in spring 2014. CRIDE's intention to publish this data was indicated when services were first asked to complete the survey. It is CRIDE's intention to expand the publication of individual service data in the future.

Please note that figures for Teachers of the Deaf include vacant posts.

Service	Number of deaf children belonging	Number of deaf children supported	Number of full time equivalent (fte) Teachers of the Deaf in the specialist peripatetic service	Number of full time equivalent (fte) Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions managed centrally by the ELB	Number of full time equivalent (fte) Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions managed directly by the school
Belfast ELB	238	220	5.4	n/a	n/a
North Eastern ELB	451	427	9.6	0	1
South Eastern ELB	428	173	8	-	-
Southern ELB	270	264	5	n/a	n/a
Western ELB	187	143	2.8	0	0.8

Notes:

- '-' indicates that no response to the relevant question was received.
- 'n/a' indicates that the service does not have resource provisions.