

# Advice to local authorities on making the Local Offer relevant to deaf children, young people and their families

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## Introduction

This note is intended for those involved in drafting and preparing a Local Offer to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. It sets out advice from the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) on how Local Offers can be made relevant to deaf children, young people and their families.

This note has been produced with reference to part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice on special educational needs<sup>1</sup> (chapter 4) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations<sup>2</sup> which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014.

This note also draws on feedback<sup>3</sup> provided by parents of deaf children in a series of consultation events throughout 2012 and 2013. These found that, for example, one in ten parents of deaf children have moved to access better quality services for deaf children. This shows the need for local authorities to develop a high quality Local Offer and to then clearly promote it to families with deaf children in their area.

### What do we mean by deaf?

NDCS uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all levels of hearing loss or 'impairment', regardless of their level of hearing loss, use of hearing equipment or communication preference.

In meeting the requirement to publish a Local Offer, the Department for Education has said that the Local Offer should be:

1. **Collaborative;**
2. **Accessible;**
3. **Comprehensive and up to date;** and
4. **Transparent**

The following sections outline issues to consider under each of these headings. We hope that it will serve as a useful checklist for ensuring that the Local Offer empowers families and young people and improving outcomes.

### Disclaimer

In this note, we provide an NDCS summary of our understanding of what is required. It is not a substitute for legal guidance or advice. Local authorities should act independently to satisfy themselves that they are acting in accordance with their legal duties under SEND legislation.

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1530/pdfs/ukxi\\_20141530\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1530/pdfs/ukxi_20141530_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=7689](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=7689)

## 1) Collaborative

The Department for Education have been clear that local authorities **must** involve parents and children and young people in planning, developing and reviewing the Local Offer, and be able to demonstrate that they have done so. The Code also states that local authorities should take steps to ensure that their arrangements for involving children, young people and parents include a broadly representative group. SEN is not a single entity and the needs of deaf children and their families may be very different from those of, for example, autistic children and their families. Local authorities will need to take steps to ensure they effectively engage with **all** children with SEN and their families.

To ensure that you engage effectively with deaf children and young people and their families, you should consider the following questions.

<p><b>Has the local authority considered how to engage with deaf children and young people in their area? How will deaf children and young people be made aware of the opportunities to get involved?</b></p> <p>Steps will need to be taken to ensure that any engagement is inclusive, age-appropriate, meaningful and accessible to deaf children and young people across the full range of communication choices. Section 4.12 of the Code emphasises that any consultation should provide accessible content. This means:</p> <p><i>“Providing materials in different formats and tailored to meet different cognitive abilities and reading skills and supporting different communication needs, avoiding jargon and acronyms wherever possible and where this is not possible, explaining terms used.”</i></p>	
<p><b>Has the local authority considered how to engage with parents of deaf children in their area and to publicise to them the opportunity to be involved?</b> Local authorities should be aware that existing parent partnership groups may not have strong representation from parents of deaf children. Instead, Children’s Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) or a Local Deaf Children’s Society may be a better means of engaging with families with deaf children.</p> <p>Annex D provides an example of how one local authority (Blackpool) has engaged with a local parent group.</p>	
<p>A number of parents of deaf children will be deaf themselves and/or speak English as an additional language. <b>What steps will be taken to ensure they are able to effectively engage, along with other parents?</b> This should include the provision of communication support where needed.</p>	
<p><b>How will parents of deaf children be informed of their right to comment on the Local Offer throughout the year and the response made to any points they raise? Will parents be able to make comments easily in a way that is convenient to them (e.g. online)?</b></p>	

NDCS’s team of Regional Directors<sup>4</sup> can provide you with contacts for local networks in your area. NDCS may also be able to provide advice on and support effective engagement with deaf children, young people and their families.

<sup>4</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/RDs](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/RDs)

The Department for Education has also stated that local authorities should cooperate with other bodies to ensure the Local Offer is fit for purpose.

**Have you taken steps to identify the bodies with whom you should co-operate to ensure your Local Offer meets the needs of deaf children and young people?**

In terms of services for deaf children, NDCS suggests that local authorities should liaise and co-operate with the following services in developing the Local Offer:

- Audiology services for deaf children
- Cochlear implant centres
- Speech and language therapy services
- Social worker teams for deaf / disabled children
- Specialist settings for deaf children including schools with resource provisions for deaf children and special schools for deaf children, including those that are not in your area but support deaf children for which your local authority is responsible
- Specialist CAMHS for deaf children

In addition, Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) in many areas provide a forum for services working together to support deaf children.

The Department for Education has been explicit that the Local Offer should not simply be a 'yellow pages' or directory of SEN provision. Instead, through collaboration with local families and bodies, local authorities can identify where provision needs to improve. Local authorities are also subject to duties to keep SEN provision under review.

**What steps will you take to assess the sufficiency of existing provision and the extent to which it meets the needs of local deaf children, young people and their families? What account have you taken of comments made by deaf children and young people and their families?**

**How will you demonstrate how you have responded to gaps identified and the steps you will take to improve provision?**

**If there are any proposals to reorganise SEN provision, can you demonstrate to families that the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEN, in line with paragraph 4.19 of the SEND Code of Practice?**

To achieve this, NDCS recommends local authorities work with deaf children and their families to carry out a 'gap analysis' – identifying what provision currently exists, whether it is of high quality and meets local needs and, importantly, whether there are any gaps in provision that should be filled. Before a gap analysis is carried out, you will need to ensure you have the following basic information:

- the total number of deaf children and young people in your area, their age and educational placements
- the needs of the deaf children in your area, and their families. This will include information on level of deafness, communication choices, use of additional languages and additional disabilities. This should also consider the needs of deaf children at different ages – the needs

of a newborn deaf baby will be very different to that of a deaf young person preparing for adulthood.

- the educational or developmental outcomes achieved by deaf children in your area and whether they are in line with other children<sup>5</sup>.
- the provision (including resource provisions and special schools) available within and/or to your local authority; and
- how provision matches existing quality standards.

Some of this information may already have been collated by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for our area or for the local authority accessibility strategy. A number of quality standards can be drawn upon to inform any such 'gap analysis', including those on specialist teaching and support services for deaf children and young people<sup>6</sup>. The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) has developed a quality improvement pack<sup>7</sup> that can be used by local authorities for this purpose.

NDCS's team of Regional Directors<sup>8</sup> may also be able to support you in any such review.

## 2) Accessible

The Department for Education has stated that the Local Offer should be structured in such a way that relates to young people's and parent's needs (such as by broad age group or type of SEN). It should also be easy to understand, factual and jargon-free. The Local Offer should also be well signposted and well publicised.

Parents of deaf children have told NDCS that they would like information to be presented by type of need, so that they can see clearly what support is available for deaf children. They have told us that grouping together information about all children with SEN is unhelpful and means they have to wade through information that is not relevant to their own circumstances.

Some parents may also prefer information to be broken down by, for example, age groups (i.e. services for deaf children aged 0 to 5; 5 to 16 and post 16).

<b>Have you sought views from local parents of deaf children and young people on how they would like information in the Local Offer presented to them and how to ensure the presentation is relevant to them?</b>	
<b>Have you taken steps to ensure that information is presented in a way that is parent and young person-friendly<sup>9</sup> and in plain English?</b>	
Information in the Local Offer must be 'accessible', including to deaf young people and deaf parents of deaf children who speak English as an additional language (including sign language users). This may include the translation of materials into, for example, sign language video clips. <b>Has the local authority considered how it will do this?</b>	
<b>If you are unable to provide full translation of materials, can you refer people to individuals within the local authority who may be able to provide more, accessible, information on a one-to-one basis?</b>	

<sup>5</sup> The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) have developed a benchmarking tool to measure outcomes, available on their website.

<sup>6</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=4350](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=4350)

<sup>7</sup> [www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/524-qilaunch](http://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/524-qilaunch)

<sup>8</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/RDs](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/RDs)

<sup>9</sup> NDCS has produced a factsheet *How you can make your resources accessible to deaf children and young people* available to download from: [www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=9325](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=9325)

### 3) Comprehensive and up-to-date

The Code and accompanying regulations sets out what needs to be included in the Local Offer. A recent High Court ruling<sup>10</sup> found that a Local Offer is unlawful if it does not include information in line with all the requirements set out in the Code and regulations.

The following table provides a **summary** of these requirements and highlights a number of specific implications in terms of support for deaf children.

Local authorities and education settings are also subject to the Equality Act 2010 and in meeting the requirements set out below, you will also need to consider how you will ensure compliance with the duties to promote equality of opportunity and to take proactive steps to take account of a child or young person’s disability.

	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Implications</b>
1)	<p><b>Special educational, health and social care provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, including arrangements for:</b></p>	<p>The Local Offer should demonstrate the ‘continuum of support’ available to deaf children. There should be a diversity of provision to meet the diverse needs of deaf children and their families from birth, following diagnosis through the newborn hearing screening programme, to adulthood. The Local Offer should therefore highlight the availability of specialist education support services for deaf children from 0 to 25.</p> <p>Parents of deaf children will value information about settings which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already have specialist provision specifically to meet the needs of deaf children and young people.</li> <li>• Are known to be ‘accessible’ to deaf children and young people or where mainstream staff have developed expertise in deafness.</li> </ul> <p>The Code states the Local Offer must include information about provision outside of your local authority where it is being used by children and young people with SEND. The Code goes on to state that this should include “relevant and national specialist provision, such as provision for children with young people with low-incidence and more complex SEN” (section 4.4). As deafness is a low incidence disability and deaf children in your area may travel some distance to specialist provision outside your authority, you should therefore include information on specialist provision for deaf children across the country. Annex C provides a list of special schools for deaf children across England.</p>

<sup>10</sup> Child L and P vs Warwickshire County Council: [www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2015/203.html](http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2015/203.html)

1a)	Identifying particular SEN of children and young people	<p>NDCS would expect the Local Offer to clarify when and how a deaf child would be identified as having a special educational need. Under the SEND Code of Practice, it is clear that most, if not all, deaf children meet the definition of having a SEN because they require additional specialist support beyond what is normally provided in mainstream settings.</p> <p>NDCS would also expect this to include information about identification through the newborn hearing screening programme (as well as follow up support) and the process for identifying late onset deafness. Half of deaf children acquire deafness after birth and so parents will value information on what to do if they suspect their child is deaf.</p>	
1b)	Consulting with parents of disabled children and with SEN and disabled young people with SEN or disabilities	<p>The Code states that the Local Offer should publicise the ways in which the local authority will involve children, young people and their families in its development.</p> <p>As set out earlier, in part 1 of this paper, there is a need to consider specifically how deaf children, young people and their families will be consulted with and how they will be supported, given that they may not be strongly represented in existing forums.</p>	
1c)	Approaches for teaching, adaptations to the curriculum and the learning environment for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and additional learning support for those with SEN	<p>Relevant information that could be presented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptations to the physical environment to ensure that schools and colleges have good acoustics and that they are compliant with acoustic regulations.</li> <li>• Availability of teaching assistants and communication support workers and their expertise in deafness and qualifications in sign language.</li> <li>• Adaptations to curriculum for deaf children on, for example, the teaching of phonics, literacy or working memory to deaf children.</li> <li>• Ways in which post 16 study programmes are designed to meet the needs of deaf young people.</li> </ul> <p>Under the Equality Act 2010, local authorities and education settings will also be required to take steps to ensure that disabled children and young people are not placed at a reasonable disadvantage in terms of access to the learning environment.</p>	

1d)	Supporting children and young people with SEND in moving between phases of education	<p>This should include information on the steps that will be taken to ensure deaf children and young people make a 'smooth' transition to new settings by, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing deaf awareness to staff in the new setting.</li> <li>• Ensuring key information about the needs of the child and young person is transferred to the new setting.</li> <li>• Ensuring specialist equipment is in place at the new setting.</li> </ul> <p>It could also include information on opportunities for deaf children and young people to experience 'taster' or induction days prior to arriving at the new education setting.</p>	
1e)	Enabling available facilities to be accessed by disabled children and young people with SEN (including auxiliary aids)	<p>This should include information on the provision of auxiliary aids such as, for example, FM systems and radio aids. As best practice, radio aids should be made available to preschool families as well as school aged children.</p> <p>Referral processes for securing services, provision and equipment should also be clearly set out.</p> <p>Under the Equality Act, both local authorities and education settings are subject to a specific duty to provide auxiliary aids, as to well as to eliminate substantial disadvantages faced by disabled pupils. The Local Offer should set out how local authorities and schools will work together to effectively and efficiently commission, for example, FM systems and radio aids.</p>	
1f)	Assessing and reviewing pupils' and students' progress towards outcomes, including how providers work with parents and young people in doing so	<p>This should include information on the steps that will be taken to check that deaf children and young people are making adequate progress across the curriculum and that any attainment gaps between deaf and other children and young people are being minimised and eliminated.</p> <p>For deaf children and young people, particular attention will need to be paid to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language development.</li> <li>• Social development and self-esteem.</li> <li>• Independence, particularly in terms of managing hearing equipment and being assertive about own deafness.</li> </ul>	

1g)	Securing expertise among teachers, lecturers or other professionals to support children and young people with SEN or disabilities	<p>This should include information on the arrangements for ensuring mainstream teachers understand the needs of deaf children and the implications for teaching them, including differentiation of the curriculum. This might be done through, for example, INSET training, ongoing specialist advice and direct teaching if required.</p> <p>This should also include information on support and advice available to other support staff, including teaching assistants, as well as information on local policies in relation to the sign language skills of communication support workers and other staff. NDCS recommends that all communication support workers have <b>at least</b> an advanced level 3 qualification in sign language. There are also additional specialist qualifications available to teaching assistants and communication support workers.</p>	
1h)	Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the education and training provision the local authority makes for children and young people with SEN or disabilities	NDCS would expect this to include information on outcomes achieved by deaf children and young people (including those in post 16 settings) and rates of progression <sup>11</sup> . This could be aggregated to three year data if numbers of deaf children involved are relatively low.	
1i)	Activities that are available to disabled children and young people and those with SEN, including physical activities and extra-curricular activities	<p>This should set out the arrangements for providing communication support so that deaf children and young people can access mainstream facilities, where needed.</p> <p>It should also include information on any activities intended solely for deaf children and young people such as any deaf youth groups. The NDCS Buzz website (<a href="http://www.buzz.org.uk">www.buzz.org.uk</a>) contains information about accessible youth activities for deaf children and young people.</p>	
1j)	Supporting the emotional, mental and social development of disabled children and young people and those with SEN (bullying)	<p>This should include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steps taken to ensure the views of deaf children and young people are sought and acted upon.</li> <li>• Availability of peer support / deaf role models for deaf young people.</li> <li>• Measures to promote deaf awareness and prevent bullying.</li> <li>• School counselling services.</li> <li>• Access to specialist CAMHS for deaf children where needed.</li> </ul>	

<sup>11</sup> The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) outcomes project aims to support services in improving data collection on deaf children's outcomes.

1k)	Local authority's accessibility strategy	<p>NDCS would expect that an accessibility strategy would include information on how the local authority will act to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and other education settings are physically accessible to deaf children by the quality of the acoustics and the listening environments.</li> <li>• The steps that the local authority will take to ensure that deaf children of all ages have access to radio aids and other technology as needed, to support their learning and communication development.</li> </ul>
2)	<p><b>Early years, including relevant services from other agencies and support available to parents to aid their child's development at home</b></p>	<p>This should include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of support from visiting Teachers of the Deaf and other professionals (such as speech and language therapists) to parents for deaf children and their role in supporting parents and carers on language acquisition within the home.</li> <li>• Availability of any courses or direct tuition around language including, for example, access to sign language courses for families. Parents will also value information on whether there is any financial support available.</li> <li>• Access to other early year services, including Portage.</li> <li>• Children care options for parents of deaf children that are known to be accessible and/or where there is a focus on the specialist needs of deaf children from specialist staff.</li> <li>• Availability of information and support to families following diagnosis. This could include the Early Support booklet on deafness<sup>12</sup> as well as information and support provided by the National Deaf Children's Society.</li> <li>• Access to specialist social workers for deaf children for advice on, for example, specialist equipment within the home.</li> <li>• The process for identifying late onset deafness. Half of deaf children acquire deafness after birth and so parents will value information on what to do if they suspect their child is deaf.</li> </ul>
3)	<p><b>Other educational provision, including:</b></p> <p><b>special educational provision;</b></p> <p><b>local arrangements for collaboration; and</b></p> <p><b>arrangements for providing top-up funding.</b></p>	<p>Specialist support services for deaf children play a vital role in supporting deaf children and young people and their families. The Local Offer should clearly set out the role of these services, arrangements for providing support and provide contact details. You should also include information on how the service is structured, the number of staff and the qualifications held by them.</p> <p>This section should also include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If services for deaf children are funded from the High Needs block, as they are in most cases. Alternative arrangements, including traded services or charging, should be made clear.</li> <li>• If there are any arrangements for regionally commissioning of services for deaf children, recommended as a consideration by the Code of Practice for children with low incidence needs.</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> [www.ncb.org.uk/media/923196/early\\_support\\_deafness\\_and\\_hearing\\_loss\\_final\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/923196/early_support_deafness_and_hearing_loss_final_2_.pdf)

<p>4)</p>	<p><b>Health, including speech and language therapy and support for young people when transitioning to adult health care services</b></p>	<p>Parents of deaf children will find it helpful to know about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist speech and language therapy services for deaf children.</li> <li>• Programmes to support the emotional health and well-being of deaf children and support available at different tiers, including specialist CAMHS provision for deaf children (listed in Annex C).</li> <li>• Audiology services for deaf children and how audiologists will support teachers in ensuring deaf children are able to listen and learn effectively in the classroom.</li> <li>• Services for children with cochlear implants, including from specialist cochlear implant centres.</li> <li>• Local policies for supporting deaf young people with the transition from child to adult audiology services.</li> </ul> <p>The Code states that local authorities should work with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to ensure information on these services is accessible through the Local Offer. NDCS suggests local authorities also work with national commissioning bodies for audiology services.</p> <p>The Code also states that the Local Offer should build on information from Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs). Steps may be needed to ensure that JSNAs include accurate information about the numbers of deaf children and their needs.</p>	
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5)	<p><b>Social care including short breaks and support for parent carers</b></p>	<p>Parents of deaf children will find it helpful to know about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of specialist social workers for deaf children.</li> <li>• Provision of specialist equipment for use within the home, such as alerting devices, textphones, etc.</li> <li>• Accessible childcare and leisure activities for deaf children and young people, including any local deaf youth groups.</li> <li>• Support groups, including local deaf children’s societies (<a href="http://www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups">www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups</a>).</li> <li>• Support available to deaf children who may be vulnerable in other ways because of, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Being in care.</li> <li>○ Asylum seekers or have recently moved to the UK.</li> <li>○ Not in education, employment or training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Under <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance, local authorities are required to publish information about their protocols for supporting disabled children<sup>13</sup>. This should also include information about deaf children and young people and should be referenced within the Local Offer.</p> <p>Under the same guidance, local safeguarding children’s boards are also required to publish details of their ‘threshold’ policies for social care support to disabled children. This should also include information about deaf children and young people and should be referenced within the Local Offer.</p> <p>Section 4.45 of the Code highlights that the rights that disabled children, and their families, have to be assessed for social care support. This support could include the provision of equipment within the home or support around communication.</p>
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<sup>13</sup> NDCS has produced advice to local authorities and Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards on Working Together guidance, available at: [www.ndcs.org.uk/WorkingTogether](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/WorkingTogether)

<p>6)</p>	<p><b>Post-16 education and training provision</b></p> <p><b>Apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships</b></p> <p><b>Preparing children and young people for adulthood</b></p>	<p>Deaf young people and their parents will find it helpful to know about the full range of post 16 educational options. It might be useful for local authorities to work with local and national providers of careers advice to take advantage of their information on local courses and opportunities. Many deaf young people will wish to and be able to access mainstream post 16 educational options, with the right support and it is important that information in the Local Offer does not focus only on discrete programmes such as supported internships.</p> <p>Deaf young people will find it particularly helpful to know about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication support that is available to deaf young people undertaking post 16 study, who will provide this and how it will be funded.</li> <li>• Details of how to arrange support from Access to Work in moving to employment.</li> <li>• Specialist careers advice for deaf young people.</li> <li>• Details of how to apply for Disabled Students Allowance if moving on to Higher Education.</li> <li>• Information and advice to deaf young people on, for example, their rights to appeal, use Personal Budgets and so on.</li> <li>• Availability of accessible information on personal safety and becoming independent.</li> </ul> <p>Information on preparing for adulthood should include information about how deaf young people will be informed of the various opportunities and steps that can be taken to prepare for adulthood, including, for example, work experience placements and provision of accessible information.</p> <p>Deaf young people will benefit from specific regard and tailored information given the risks they may miss key information.</p> <p>Local authorities are already required to provide information and advice to young people on SEN which is independent and separately from their parents. As before, this information should be accessible and relevant to deaf young people. Any such information should complement that given by schools careers advisors. NDCS has published information about post-16 options for deaf young people at <a href="http://www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool">www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool</a>.</p>	
<p>7)</p>	<p><b>Travel to and from schools, post 16 institutions and early years providers</b></p>	<p>This should include information about specific policies in relation to the provision of transport for deaf children and young people.</p> <p>It should also include information on how deaf young people will be supported to travel independently.</p>	

8)	<b>Details of how to seek an EHC needs assessment</b>	<p>The Local Offer should also set out how families can seek an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan and how they will be supported in doing so. This could include support from the voluntary sector who can provide support including from, for example, NDCS.</p> <p>This should also include information about the availability of Personal Budgets to parents of deaf children and young people, a description of the services locally that lend themselves to being used through Personal Budgets, any policies or processes surrounding this and support available to parents and young people in making best use of Personal Budgets.</p>	
9)	<b>Arrangements for resolving disagreements and for mediation and details of making complaints</b>	<p>The Department for Education has made it clear that parents should have access to a 'one-stop-shop' around complaints and that it is clear to them how they can raise concerns. The complaints process should be streamlined and joined-up so that parents do not have to complain to different bodies about different aspects of the support provided to their child.</p> <p>The Local Offer should also make it clear how parents will be supported in making a complaint. This could include support from the voluntary sector including from, for example, NDCS.</p>	
10)	<b>Information, advice and support</b>	<p>This should identify information about voluntary and community bodies – both national and local – that can provide families with more information about deafness or act as 'independent supporters'. Some standard text on support available from the National Deaf Children's Society is included in Annex A.</p> <p>There are also a range of local groups for deaf children across England. Contact details for local groups can be found via: <a href="http://www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups">www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups</a>. Local authorities should be aware that existing Parent Carer Forums may not have strong representation from parents of deaf children.</p>	

#### 4) Transparent

The Department for Education have stated that the Local Offer **must** be clear about how decisions are made and who is accountable and responsible for them.

This should include information about any eligibility criteria for any services outlined in the Local Offer.

<p><b>What information will the Local Offer provide about eligibility criteria for specialist support services for deaf children?</b></p> <p>The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) <i>Eligibility criteria for scoring support levels</i> is known to be commonly used by many specialist services for deaf children and can be acknowledged in the Local Offer. Any references to eligibility criteria should also make it clear how support is allocated, as well as how the service determines whose needs are greater. The NatSIP document includes two examples of resource allocation frameworks which are known to be in use. NDCS understands that this document will be updated later this year.</p>	
<p><b>Have you included information about the key decision makers for services for deaf children and how to contact them?</b></p> <p>This should include the dedicated medical officer and lead for social care so that parents are clear on how health and social care provision for children with special educational needs are co-ordinated.</p>	
<p><b>Have you included information about the forums available to parents of deaf children to influence decisions about support for deaf children?</b> For example, Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) in many areas provide a forum for services working together to support deaf children.</p>	

## Working in partnership

NDCS supports parents of deaf children to ensure their children receive the support they need to make good educational progress. To ensure that this happens, NDCS's team of Regional Directors works to influence and support local decision makers on the needs of deaf children, including sharing examples of best practice.

Contact your nearest Regional Director by visiting [www.ndcs.org.uk/RDs](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/RDs) or via the NDCS Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880 (voice and text), or email [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk).

## More information

NDCS has also produced advice to local authorities, *Protecting specialist education support services for deaf children*, which includes further information on the importance of these services.

Other documents that may be helpful include:

- *Quality Standards: Specialist teaching and support services for deaf children and young people (2009)*
- *Assessing and monitoring the progress of deaf children and young people*
- *Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Children in Early Years Settings*
- *Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Children in Primary Schools*
- *Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Children in Secondary Schools*
- *Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Young People in Further Education*
- *Supporting the Achievement of Hearing Impaired Children in Special Schools*

These resources are available from the NDCS website at [www.ndcs.org.uk/professional\\_support/our\\_resources/education\\_resources.html](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/our_resources/education_resources.html).

## About us

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. NDCS helps deaf children thrive by providing impartial practical and emotional support to them and their families, and by challenging governments and society to meet their needs. 95% of our work to help deaf children is funded by the public.

### Disclaimer

In this note, we provide a NDCS summary of our understanding of what is required. It is not a substitute for legal guidance or advice and local authorities should act independently to satisfy themselves that are acting in accordance with their legal duties under SEN legislation.

## Annex A: NDCS's offer

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for every deaf child. We provide free impartial and unbiased information to families, empowering them to make informed choices for their child.

NDCS provides information on all aspects of childhood deafness and hearing loss including:

- Education
- Audiology
- Benefits
- Technology
- Communication
- Additional needs
- Parenting.

NDCS support families from initial diagnosis to adulthood across education, health and social care in a range of ways including through a Freephone Helpline, Children and Family Support Officers, specialist advisors, publications, family events and web forums, from initial diagnosis to adulthood.

Families looking for more information about how NDCS can support them and to view our extensive range of publications can visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/family\\_support](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family_support).

Families can also contact us through our NDCS Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880, [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk) or live chat at [www.ndcs.org.uk/livechat](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/livechat).

Deaf children and young people can access information, share their experiences and have fun at [www.buzz.org.uk](http://www.buzz.org.uk).

NDCS also produces a range of support for professionals working in education, health and social care to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and experience to support deaf children and their families. Professionals looking for more information on the support we offer can visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/professional\\_support/](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/)

Membership of NDCS is free and allows families and professionals full access to our website and regular email updates on our work.

NDCS uses the term 'deaf' to mean all types of hearing loss, including unilateral deafness and temporary deafness such as glue ear. We support **all** deaf children and young people, regardless of their level of deafness, how they communicate or what technical aids they use.

### Search terms

Deaf, hearing impaired, hearing loss, sign language, glue ear, communication, additional needs, helpline, family officer, benefits, disability living allowance, audiology, social care

## Annex B: What do parents of deaf children think about SEN reform?

The following excerpts are taken from a report<sup>14</sup> produced by NDCS in 2013 on what parents of deaf children think about SEN reform.

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The Department is proposing to require each local authority to establish a Local Offer, setting out what help they will provide to families with children with SEN. Parents supported proposals to improve transparency and highlighted the difficulties they had experienced in accessing relevant information about support specifically for deaf children to date.

*“We have fallen across possible choices and information quite often by chance.”*

*“I got an information pack when my child was diagnosed, but half of it wasn’t relevant to deaf children and it didn’t include information on the local deaf school.”*

We asked parents of deaf children what they wanted to see in a Local Offer from their own local authority:

- Information about specific areas of disability and specialist support and availability
- Information on support at different stages of life
- Case studies and to see other experiences
- Information on progress of children / achievement
- Communication support available
- Qualifications of staff
- Information that’s accessible and in plain English.
- Everything in one place.”

One parent felt strongly that the Local Offer was worthless unless it provided parents with information about quality of services:

*“Parents of hearing children can look at Ofsted reports but they don’t say anything about deaf children.”*

Separately, parents expressed frustration in accessing basic essentials for their deaf child. A number of parents stated that they had felt obligated to buy this additional support themselves because it wasn’t available locally.

*“We are looking to purchase privately a radio aid which hopefully will improve things for our daughter. This is a considerable sum of money for us as a family (we have one income and four children to support) but really we have no option given the fact that the Teaching Advisory Service has stated that they are ‘not resourced’ to provide this type of help to children with unilateral deafness.”*

*“We are worried about how our daughter will cope with the transition from primary school to secondary school in a couple of years time. This has really been our motivating force to privately purchase the acoustic support that our daughter needs as we are very conscious that at secondary school she will have to change classroom at every lesson and that not all classrooms will have adequate acoustics.”*

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<sup>14</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=7689](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=7689)

Other parents pointed to the consequences of there being a lack of support in their area:

*"I have had to send my daughter to a special school nearly 100 miles away and now only see her at weekends. The amount of support in this area is nearly zero."*

*"Our son left school 2 years ago, having underperformed and failed to reach his potential. We would wish him to have had the same chances as everyone else but for this to happen, he needed more specialist support... We would like deaf children in mainstream schools to receive expert trained help rather than learning assistance. There were no specialist deaf units in mainstream schools in our area and no schools for the deaf in the county. Now he is 20 and jobless, having under-performed again in a Level 3 FE course."*

In our online survey, over 1 in 10 families said they had already moved to access better services for their deaf child. 1 in 4 families would consider moving if cuts affected their deaf child but nearly two-thirds would not be able to move because of the costs involved. One family told us how their deaf son had moved between 4 different schools, involving the whole family moving from Hampshire to Lincolnshire, before they could be confident their deaf child was getting a good education. The son's father told us:

*"All of the delays my son has had to endure have had a cumulative effect on his life and where he is today. It is immeasurable how much damage has been done to his potential."*

Many felt it was unacceptable that the help that deaf children received was not always determined by what they need but by where they live and wanted to see assurances that the basic essentials would be provided everywhere.

*"Making sure all services and equipment is available to ALL deaf children which ever school they go to."*

*"Should be services that local authority should provide as standard."*

*"Want to ensure that all deaf children are entitled and financially supported to get the right educational provision for them."*

*"Models of help available should be used i.e. deaf children who attend mainstream schools need carpeting, radio aids, one to one help. This could be in a standard model. At the reviews the standard model could be used to tailor the Plan for each child."*

## Annex C: Specialist provision for deaf children in England

### Schools for deaf children in England

School	Age range	Local authority	Website
<b>East England</b>			
Heathlands School for the Deaf Residential and day school	3 - 16	Hertfordshire	<a href="http://www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk">www.heathlands.herts.sch.uk</a>
Knightsfield School Residential and day school	11 – 16+	Hertfordshire	<a href="http://www.knightsfield.herts.sch.uk">www.knightsfield.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>East Midlands</b>			
Royal School for the Deaf, Derby Residential and day	3 – 19	Derby	<a href="http://www.rsd-derby.org">www.rsd-derby.org</a>
<b>London</b>			
Frank Barnes Primary Day school.	2 – 11	Camden	<a href="http://www.fbarnes.camden.sch.uk">www.fbarnes.camden.sch.uk</a>
Blanche Neville School Day school.	5 – 16	Haringey	<a href="http://www.blancheneville.org.uk">www.blancheneville.org.uk</a>
Oak Lodge School Residential and day school.	11 – 19	Wandsworth	<a href="http://www.oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk">www.oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk</a>
<b>North West</b>			
Royal Cross Primary Day school.	4 – 11	Lancashire	<a href="http://www.royalcross.lancs.sch.uk">www.royalcross.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Royal School and College, Manchester Residential and day school.	4 – 19+	Stockport	<a href="http://www.seashelltrust.org.uk">www.seashelltrust.org.uk</a>
Thomasson Memorial School Day school.	3 - 11	Bolton	<a href="http://www.thomasson.bolton.sch.uk">www.thomasson.bolton.sch.uk</a>
<b>South East</b>			
Hamilton Lodge School and College for Deaf Students Residential and day school	5 – 16+	Brighton	<a href="http://www.hamiltonls.co.uk">www.hamiltonls.co.uk</a>
Mary Hare Primary School at Mill Hall Residential and day.	4 - 11	West Berkshire	<a href="http://www.maryhare.org.uk">www.maryhare.org.uk</a>
Mary Hare School for the Deaf Residential and day school	11 – 16+	West Berkshire	<a href="http://www.maryhare.org.uk">www.maryhare.org.uk</a>
Royal School for Deaf Children, Margate	4 - 16	Kent	<a href="http://www.rsdcm.org.uk">www.rsdcm.org.uk</a>

<b>South West</b>			
Elmfield School for Deaf Children Day school.	3 – 16	Bristol	<a href="http://www.elmfield.bristol.sch.uk">www.elmfield.bristol.sch.uk</a>
Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Children Residential and day school	5 – 16+	Exeter	<a href="http://www.exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk">www.exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk</a>
<b>West Midlands</b>			
Braidwood Trust School for the Deaf Day school.	11 - 19	Birmingham	<a href="http://www.braidwood.bham.sch.uk">www.braidwood.bham.sch.uk</a>
Longwill School for the Deaf Day School.	2 ½ - 11	Birmingham	<a href="http://www.longwill.bham.sch.uk">www.longwill.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Yorkshire &amp; the Humberside</b>			
Doncaster School for the Deaf and Communication Specialist College Residential and day	0 – 16+	Doncaster	<a href="http://www.deaf-trust.co.uk">www.deaf-trust.co.uk</a>
St Johns Catholic School for the Deaf Non-maintained residential and day	3 – 16+	Leeds	<a href="http://www.stjohns.org.uk">www.stjohns.org.uk</a>

## Resource provisions

NDCS has produced a series of mapping spreadsheets which outline other specialist provision, including resource provisions, in each region. These can be accessed online at: [www.ndcs.org.uk/family\\_support/support\\_in\\_your\\_area/services\\_in\\_your.html](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family_support/support_in_your_area/services_in_your.html)

## Deaf Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Centre	Contact details
National Centre Springfield Hospital 61 Glenburnie Road London SW17 7DJ	Tel: 020 3513 6860/6645 <a href="mailto:cornerhouse@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk">cornerhouse@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk</a>
Cambridge Centre Deaf Children, Young People and Family Service Ida Darwin Hospital Cambridge CB21 5EE	Tel: 01223 885 715 SMS: 07903 944 695 <a href="mailto:heroncourt@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk">heroncourt@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk</a>
Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Castlemill Dudley DY4 7UF	Tel: 0121 226 3616 SMS: 07917 502 790
Kent Centre Deaf Children, Young People and Family Service The Heathside Centre Heath Road Maidstone ME17 4AH	Tel: 01622 741 881 Minicom: 01622 741 881 SMS: 07912 075 078 <a href="mailto:heathside@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk">heathside@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk</a>

Manchester Outreach Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Oxford Road Manchester M13 9WL	Tel: 0161 701 4519 Minicom: 0161 701 4595 <a href="mailto:deafservicemanchester@nyypct.nhs.uk">deafservicemanchester@nyypct.nhs.uk</a>
Newcastle Outreach Benton House 136 Sandyford Road Newcastle NE2 1QU	Tel: 0191 210 6868 Minicom: 0191 231 4557 SMS: 07538 239 961 <a href="mailto:deafservicenewcastle@nyypct.nhs.uk">deafservicenewcastle@nyypct.nhs.uk</a>
Taunton Centre Somerset Foundation Partnership NHS Trust Foundation House Taunton TA2 7PQ	Tel: 01823 368 373 Minicom: 01823 368 370 SMS: 07798 667 966 <a href="mailto:ndcamhstaunton@sompar.nhs.uk">ndcamhstaunton@sompar.nhs.uk</a>
York Centre Limetrees 31 Shipton Road York YO30 5RE	Tel: 01904 726 936 <a href="mailto:ndcamhsnorth.lypft@nhs.net">ndcamhsnorth.lypft@nhs.net</a>

### London paediatric hearing services

In London, NDCS and Great Ormond Street Hospital have developed an online map of services for deaf children, available at: <http://londonhearingsservices.info/>.

We've worked hard to ensure this information in this Annex is accurate. However, details can change over time. If you spot any omissions, out-of-date information or errors, please let us know by emailing [professionals@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:professionals@ndcs.org.uk).

## Annex D: Case study

Sign Hi, Say Hi! is a parent/grandparent led charity for deaf children/young people and their families based in Blackpool and the Lancashire districts of Wyre and Fylde. Many of the members of the charity are Blackpool residents and there is ongoing work to co-produce services with the council. Blackpool is one of the first local authorities to sign up to the British Sign Language charter. The council worked with local parents to co-produce the new process required for the national changes relating to SEN and disability (SEND). This work continues, for instance, via the Joint Commissioning Board, various work streams and specific work as below.

Members of Sign Hi, Say Hi! made a significant input into the co-production of changes to SEND provision as part of the Children and Families Act. The charity continues to have input representing the views of families with deaf children and young people. Blackpool is also a partner with the University of Manchester supporting a Sign Hi, Say Hi! parent's doctoral research into improving outcomes for deaf children. The support takes the form of regular meetings and supervision, exchange of findings and access to data / meetings.

Sign Hi, Say Hi! committee members were invited to be part of the Blackpool Local Offer working group along with parents from other voluntary groups. The meetings were chaired at a senior level and it was made clear at the start that parents were equal partners in the process. Blackpool's aspiration was to change current culture and aim for a Local Offer which would be constantly improved through genuine parent and young people involvement through the whole process.

Sign Hi, Say Hi! were successful in securing a grant from the Council for Disabled Children to run a number of events for children/young people and their families to input into the development of the Local Offer. These were fun events which engaged children, young people and their families, providing opportunities for valuable feedback. The sessions were:

- 1) based around a computer programme Minecraft, in a local learning centre;
- 2) an animation training session making film; and
- 3) one in an outdoor pursuits venue.

From these sessions various issues were raised by parents, grandparents and their children and young people themselves as particular points or case studies and written up to feed back to the local authority. Blackpool took note of this feedback, proposed actions to address them and had a meeting with Sign Hi, Say Hi! committee members to discuss if the proposed actions were appropriate and met need.

An example of an issue that was resolved was a course that had been run by adult learning that was funded by central government. The course worked with deaf children / young people and their families to develop their signing. However, the funding was dependant upon the families being from Blackpool, being in the low income bracket and having qualifications under a certain level. Because of this some families were not able to attend and the course became untenable. A short term funding route has since been found, which has led to longer term funding to be secured.

Blackpool involved Sign Hi, say Hi! in reviewing feedback from parents on the Local Offer. The issues raised and suggested ways forward are available on the Blackpool's Local Offer website, in the 'you said, we did' section. The site can be found at: [www.blackpool.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/localoffer).

One issue raised by families with deaf children is concerned with the lack of access to specialist speech and language and, at the local meeting, the Head of SEN proposed to refer the question to the Blackpool joint strategic commissioning group. Whilst no decision has yet been made, families

understand where the decision is being taken and by whom and they view this as an improvement to previous working practice.

Sign Hi, Say Hi! highlighted the importance of accessibility to BSL users. All videos produced by the council as part of the Local Offer have both signed and subtitled versions and other providers are encouraged to do the same. It has been agreed to have regular feedback sessions between Sign Hi, Say Hi! and the council to enable continued co-production, to continue working together to improve the outcomes for local deaf children and families.