

Guidance for teachers writing a letter in support of a Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claim for a deaf child

Points to remember

- The overall aim of the letter is to explain the extra care and attention the deaf child needs to support their communication.
- It's important to make it clear if the extra help and attention they require is frequent and/or continual throughout the day at school.
- Comparisons with hearing peers are useful as the decision makers at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have to compare the needs of a child under 16 with the needs of a non-disabled child of the same age to help them decide eligibility.
- Don't worry about being negative – a DLA claim is about help the child needs, and comments about how well they're doing at school aren't helpful!

Examples of things to include

- Explain how all language has to be actively taught to a deaf child (British Sign Language (BSL), English etc.), as they can't pick up information by listening as hearing children can and do on a daily basis.
- Explain what support from a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD), support worker or other children is needed.
- State how many hours of support is given per day, and how many days per week.
- Explain how lessons are delivered and what communication support is needed.
- State if the child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or other learning support plan.
- Explain the likely impact on the child if they did not have additional support.
- Give details about how exams may need to be modified or delivered differently to accommodate the child.
- Explain how they access sport, PE, swimming, and other activities. Give any examples of when classmates and friends have to explain, maybe repeatedly.
- Give details of communication support provided throughout the school day.
- Explain about the need for an acoustically friendly environment such as carpeted floors and low ceilings and the difficulties caused if this is not available.
- Detail how often handouts are provided prior to lessons to aid the child, communication support worker or notetaker.
- Explain about the use of radio aids and hearing aids and their management such as cleaning, fitting, testing or replacing tubing.

- Outline any extra tutorials in deaf people's life skills (specific PSE lessons – instruction in the use of the textphone, guidance with shopping or other life skills).
- Give details of any extra work in English, maths or other subjects which has to be done with the student.
- Explain about supervision and communication required at break times and after-school activities.
- Say if the child has an escort to and from school each day, if transport is provided by the local authority and why this is required.
- Give details of deaf awareness training given to all staff in school (not just teaching staff).