

Draft Professional Standards for Assisting Teaching in Schools



National Deaf Children's Society Cymru

March 2019

About Us

The National Deaf Children's Society is the national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

In referring to deaf, we refer to all levels of hearing loss including mild to profound, unilateral and temporary.

Response

Many deaf children and young people rely on the support of Teaching Assistants in schools. The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru believes it is imperative that Teaching Assistants are supported and encouraged to hold an appropriate skillset.

At present, many Teaching Assistants working to support communication for deaf pupils who use sign language (often known as Communication Support Workers) have only a very basic level of BSL. It is logical that the quality of a deaf child's communication support as well as the quality of teaching directly contributes to that child's ability to learn and achieve their potential. As such, it is of great concern that existing systems and structures do little to encourage the development of BSL skills among Teaching Assistants working as Communication Support Workers. This is a concern shared by the Children's Commissioner for Wales and outlined within the *A Year of Change* report ([see page 20](#)).

It is a positive step to see the emphasis on general professional learning within the Draft Professional Standards for Assisting Teaching in Schools. However, we believe further, more directive action from the Welsh Government is required to ensure that Teaching Assistants who support deaf pupils and those who use sign language have an appropriate BSL skillset (a level 3 qualification as a minimum).

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru also believes that the Education Workforce Council could play a crucial role in improving recording of Communication Support Workers and their BSL skillset.

Further information

If you would like further information on the points raised within this response, please do not hesitate to get in contact at campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk.