**No deaf child left behind – a revised proposal for a central bursary scheme to cover the training costs of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf (August 2019)**

**Summary**

This paper proposes the introduction of a bursary scheme to fund the training costs of Teachers of the Deaf in England. This is a revised proposal that responds to feedback provided by the former Children’s Minister, Nadhim Zahawi.

We continue to believe a central bursary scheme is needed for the following reasons:

* there has been an 11.5% decline in the number of qualified or Teachers of the Deaf in training in England since 2011
* 32% of services in England are reporting difficulties in recruiting Teachers of the Deaf or supply cover over the previous 12 months[[1]](#footnote-1)
* over half of all Qualified Teachers of the Deaf are expected to retire in the next 10 to 15 years
* research by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) has uncovered evidence that local authorities are failing to plan for future workforce needs. Local authorities tell us that they do not always have the funding to train the next generation of Teachers of the Deaf.

A world in which there are fewer Teachers of the Deaf is likely to result in more:

* parents of deaf children struggling to communicate effectively with their child
* deaf children starting school with poor language
* mainstream teachers struggling to differentiate their teaching for deaf children or not knowing how to use hearing technology
* deaf children being more likely to require a specialist placement and/or an Education, Health and Care plan
* local authorities at risk of being unable to meet statutory requirements around assessments for an Education, Health and Care plan for a deaf child.

We believe that the Educational Psychology Funded Training Scheme - where the Department for Education is providing £31.6m of funding for 600 places over the next 3 years - provides a precedent for a Teacher of the Deaf bursary. Like educational psychologists, Teachers of the Deaf play a key multi-agency role that supports schools and the wider community around a child. In both cases, many are employed by local authorities. And, in both professions, there is evidence of unmet demand, along with significant challenges around recruitment and the funding of training for the next generation.[[2]](#footnote-2)

A one-year central bursary scheme for Teachers of the Deaf could be delivered at a cost of **up to £1.3m**, a fraction of that allocated to educational psychologists. It would send a powerful signal of the government’s commitment to ensuring the 45,000 deaf children across England get the specialist support they need.

It should be seen as part of a wider package of interventions, bringing together key partners with an interest in ensuring deaf children and their families receive the specialist support they need. This package would include:

* supporting work by the sector to develop a new Teacher of the Deaf apprenticeship pathway, which would help put funding for Teacher of the Deaf on a more sustainable footing over the long-term. We believe that a one-year bursary scheme is needed as a stopgap solution while an apprenticeship scheme is set up.
* work by the National Deaf Children’s Society and the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) to promote Qualified Teachers of the Deaf as an exciting and rewarding career, as part of a specialist SEND route for mainstream teachers, and linking with existing Department for Education initiatives in this area
* continuing work by BATOD to emphasise the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), including the development of a new online CPD log
* promoting the government loan scheme for Masters, for Teachers of the Deaf who take the Masters route to qualify and who self-fund. However, as only a minority of Teachers of the Deaf take this route, and given the incentives around how the qualification is currently acquired, this is unlikely to be a viable means of driving up the number of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf in the short-term.

**Background – how this proposal has been developed**

This proposal has been jointly developed by the National Deaf Children’s Society and the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD).

Many of the figures used in this report are taken from reports produced by the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE), who carry out an annual survey of local authorities across England.[[3]](#footnote-3) Unless stated otherwise, data on numbers of Teachers of the Deaf will include:

* Teachers of the Deaf who are working in a peripatetic role, in a resource provision and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children[[4]](#footnote-4).
* Teachers of the Deaf who hold the mandatory qualification **or** who are in training. We have included Teachers of the Deaf in training as most will be working as a Teacher of the Deaf while they undergo training.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* Teachers of the Deaf working in England.

This paper also draws from:

* A survey of Teachers of the Deaf carried out by the National Deaf Children’s Society, with support from BATOD, in January 2019. This received 625 responses from across the UK.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* *A report on the factors promoting and inhibiting the successful supply of specialist teachers of children with sensory impairment*[[7]](#footnote-7)(2016) by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP).
* Qualitative evidence from individual Teachers of the Deaf and managers. This includes evidence collected through the Heads of Sensory Services (HOSS) forum, managed by NatSIP.

**Background – deaf education**

There are more than 45,000 deaf children across England.

Deafness is a low incidence disability. Government figures indicate that 57% of schools have no deaf children in them at any one time, whilst 22% only have one deaf child enrolled[[8]](#footnote-8). This means that most mainstream teachers will not be teaching a deaf child at any one time and may only do so occasionally. They will have relatively few opportunities to apply any knowledge or expertise they have previously acquired related to effective practice in teaching or supporting deaf children. In relation to deaf children and other low incidence needs, an approach which relies only on upskilling all mainstream teachers is unlikely to be effective and can be seen as poor value for money.

Around 80% of deaf children attend mainstream schools. In addition, most deaf children (over 90%)[[9]](#footnote-9) will be born to hearing parents who have no prior experience of deafness.

Peripatetic Qualified Teachers of the Deaf can be seen as a **unique and innovative response to the ‘low incidence challenge’**. They:

* have developed specialist expertise in deafness that mainstream teachers are unlikely to acquire or retain. This expertise is gained through an additional qualification (usually known as the ‘mandatory qualification’) in teaching deaf children.
* play a key role in the early years and can be seen as being at the forefront of early intervention for deaf children. Uniquely, compared to other teachers, Teachers of the Deaf work directly with families, providing key advice on language and communication in the key developmental years.
* can provide specialist advice and support to teachers in an effective and efficient way, helping them to understand how to differentiate the curriculum and promote inclusion, as well as directly providing one-to-one teaching and support to children when needed.
* are again unique in being trained to work as a key worker, fulfilling a multi-agency role that involves engaging with other health and social care professionals working around a deaf child. Teachers of the Deaf also signpost families to other key support (such as Disability Living Allowance).

Teachers of the Deaf also have a key statutory role; advice from a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf is required for any assessment for an Education, Health and Care plan[[10]](#footnote-10).

Over half (52%) of Teachers of the Deaf work in a ‘peripatetic’ or visiting role, providing support to families in the early years and to deaf children and their teachers in mainstream schools. Other Teachers of the Deaf work in resource provisions (27%) and in special schools for deaf children (17%).[[11]](#footnote-11)

Evidence commissioned by the Department for Education[[12]](#footnote-12), reports from Ofsted[[13]](#footnote-13) and an international literature review[[14]](#footnote-14) have talked of the importance of the Qualified Teacher of the Deaf role. Our analysis of Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspections reports into local area SEND provision indicate that, where deafness is mentioned in a report, support for deaf children is cited as a relative strength 84% of the time[[15]](#footnote-15). This is strikingly high when you consider that around half of all areas (49%) have been asked to produce written statements of action to improve.

Separately, parents of deaf children also regularly affirm the importance of this role in consultation exercises and surveys with the National Deaf Children’s Society, as the following quote shows:

*“Our [Teacher of the Deaf] is the only member of staff who truly understands and liaises with all the team involved with our son, from audiologist, SLT [speech and language therapist], teachers to our family. Communication between services would not exist if it was not for them. They know the specific and very individual needs of my child as they know him very well… All the staff from nursery, pre-school and school have been very impressed with our Teacher of the Deaf and feel they would not have been able to support our son as well without their input.”*

**Background – the mandatory qualification**

The mandatory qualification provides parents of deaf children with the assurance that the support their child receives will be informed by expertise in deafness. It is one of the few mechanisms available to maintain the status and quality of the support provided by Teachers of the Deaf to deaf children and their families.

In England, legislation requires that teachers of classes of deaf children (i.e. those in resource provisions or special schools) must hold the mandatory qualification or be in training to gain the qualification within three years. It is also strongly recommended in statutory guidance that peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf, working for the local authority specialist education service for deaf children, hold the qualification.

The mandatory qualification is usually acquired after two-years of part-time study, leading to a post-graduate diploma. A small number of teachers undertake it as one year’s full-time study. There are four providers of the qualification across England – Mary Hare/University of Hertfordshire and the Universities of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester[[16]](#footnote-16).

Most will be working as an unqualified Teacher of the Deaf whilst undergoing training. Indeed, 14% of Teacher of the Deaf posts are filled by Teachers of the Deaf in training.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Background – numbers of Teachers of the Deaf**

The table below looks at changes in the number of qualified or Teachers of the Deaf in training since CRIDE began in 2011.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015[[18]](#footnote-18)** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Total** | 1,153.7 | 1,125.6 | 1,110.3 | 1,071.3 | 1,117.85 | 1,047.18 | 1,037.35 | 1,020.62 |

In summary, this shows that:

* there has been an 11.5% decline since 2011 in the number of qualified or Teachers of the Deaf in training
* the yearly decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf has averaged at 1.7%.

In addition, the number of vacant posts at any one time has averaged 43 since 2011.[[19]](#footnote-19)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Number of vacant posts** | 34 | 44.5 | 40.8 | 45.8 | 45.6 | 60.9 | 44.65 | 30.8 |

As noted at the start of the paper, 32% of services in England reported to CRIDE that they had experienced difficulties in recruiting Teachers of the Deaf or supply cover over the previous 12 months.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Finally, there is also compelling evidence around the age profile of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf[[21]](#footnote-21).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Number of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf** |
| **Aged 49 or under** | 276.8 (43%) |
| **Aged between 50 and 59** | 307.55 (48%) |
| **Aged between 60 and 64** | 54.5 (8%) |
| **Aged 65 or over** | 3.8 (1%) |
| **Total** | 642.65 (100%) |

These figures suggest that 57% of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50 and hence are due to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. We recognise – as the above shows – some may choose to take late retirement and continue to work beyond the age of 60. However, we have no way of modelling or predicting exactly how many are likely to do so. In addition, our data is not granular enough to establish the exact ages of Teachers of the Deaf.

Looking at the age profile of mainstream teachers, using data from the 2017 School Workforce Census, it seems clear that the age profile of Teachers of the Deaf is significantly higher. Whilst 57% of Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50, the corresponding figure for teachers in state-funded schools is 17%.[[22]](#footnote-22) We also note from the School Workforce Census that the number of teachers has risen by 3% from 440,000 to 451,900 between 2011 and 2017.

*Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children*

Data on numbers of Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children is collected on an ad hoc basis by CRIDE and so (unless stated otherwise) are not included in the above section. Figures from 2016 suggested there were around 251.7 Teachers of the Deaf across Great Britain working in special schools for deaf children. Figures from 2018 show that this has fallen to 228. This indicates that the trend towards fewer Teachers of the Deaf exists across the sector. This is also supported by figures which show that the number of deaf children in special schools is falling[[23]](#footnote-23). It should also be noted that two special schools for deaf children have closed in recent years[[24]](#footnote-24).

*Numbers currently in training*

From contacting the four training providers in England, we understand that 113 teachers graduated as Qualified Teachers of the Deaf in summer 2018 and that 96 are expected to graduate in summer 2019, and 94 in 2020. Over three years, this has averaged out at 101 in each year. However, anecdotal evidence from training providers suggests there are concerns about numbers for future courses with some reporting that they are receiving fewer enquiries.

From talking to training providers and services, our understanding is that the attrition or drop-out rate among Teachers of the Deaf is relatively low.

**Why central action is needed**

Both the National Deaf Children’s Society and BATOD take the strong view that Teachers of the Deaf play a key early intervention role in ensuring that deaf children achieve good language and communication skills, make good progress in schools and make a successful transition into adulthood. Any decline in numbers of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf should raise significant alarm bells.

In particular, we are concerned that falling numbers of Teachers of the Deaf will lead to a rationing of support, particularly to children with perceived ‘lesser’ needs. In our view, this will result in families and mainstream teachers finding it harder to access expert advice on supporting deaf children and ultimately depress deaf children’s attainment in education. This is likely to have longer-term costs, both in terms of the potential need for more costly remedial interventions later in life and/or greater demand for specialist placements. It will also likely reduce deaf young people’s employment prospects.

The previous section provided figures showing a significant decline in the numbers of Teachers of the Deaf. However, there is little evidence that local authorities are taking action in response.

As set out in the following section, our evidence shows that there is little incentive for local authorities, particularly smaller ones, to be proactive in ensuring there are sufficient numbers of Teachers of the Deaf being trained to meet future needs. Importantly, **many will be unable to meet the financial cost of training new staff whilst also employing someone who has yet to retire.**

In 2016, NatSIP published a paper on the supply of specialist teachers of children with sensory impairments.[[25]](#footnote-25) This paper drew from the views of 54 Heads of Sensory Services, 74 Teachers of the Deaf in training or Teachers of the Vision Impaired, 15 newly qualified Teachers and the training providers of the mandatory qualification across the UK. This paper identified the lack of funding to cover the costs of training as a major factor inhibiting the supply of Teachers of the Deaf. As one Head of Service stated:

*“We have a significant number of people due to retire in the next two or three years but can no longer pay to train local teachers in advance of this to be available to take their places.”*

More recently, we asked members of the Heads of Sensory Services (HOSS) forum in February 2019 for views on how easy/difficult it was for them to fund the training of a new Teacher of the Deaf. We were particularly interested in whether schools/services were funding this in advance or anticipation of a post becoming vacant (e.g. if they knew that someone was planning to retire within two years). Responses included:

*“We couldn’t train in advance as the teachers who want to train would first have to be interviewed and offered the post. If the person was in mainstream school then there would be issues about releasing them for training and teaching placements prior to them leaving their current position.”*

*“The local authority (LA) does not have any funding available to fund training even when a post has become vacant. Managers of a services within this LA need to fund training from within their allocated budgets. This has not been possible given the funding required to fund a 2 year course, attendance at study days, time and expenses for visits and resources.”*

*“We have to wait until we have appointed before funding is available. From the LA’s point of view there is no vacancy until the post is an actual vacancy... Until a person is appointed I think it would be difficult to tie them into working for the LA on completion of their qualification.”*

We also received the following response from a head of a special school for deaf children:

*“This is a very pressing issue for us as a special school for deaf children. It is exceptionally rare now that we are actually able to appoint anyone who already has the mandatory qualification, especially if also looking for a subject specialism and expertise in British Sign Language. Our focus has switched to ‘growing our own’ and retention of staff. Whilst we have had a lot of success regarding this, there is still a pressing need for more teachers because of the growth of the school and changes e.g. through maternity leave. In the past we have seen significant numbers of staff training whilst employed by us then move on to peripatetic work. They continue as Teachers of the Deaf which is great but the financial impact of training has been borne by the school.*

*Funding is becoming increasingly difficult… In the past we have had large contributions from the LA to support this but more recently the university fees only have been covered and we have been advised not even this may be supported in the future. We therefore have a chunk of our school budget every year allocated to Teacher of the Deaf training.”*

Many respondents indicated that they themselves would make use of any bursary scheme to fund the training costs of new Teachers of the Deaf. Many spoke of the impact this would have in terms of reducing pressures on their budgets and/or allowing more CPD opportunities for existing Teachers of the Deaf.

More recently, we’ve become aware of difficulties in Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F). As a result of a decision by Kensington & Chelsea local authority to end a joint working arrangement, H&F have gone from sharing four Qualified Teachers of the Deaf to now having none. Recruitment is now underway but the service has struggled to attract Teachers of the Deaf who are already qualified. Whist the factors causing this situation are unique, the fact that H&F have so far been unable to recruit a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf should be seen as indicative of the wider challenges that local authorities are facing. It will also result in deaf children in the area being taught by someone who is in training (and without day-to-day supervision from a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf from within the local authority) in the short-term.

*Other factors*

We also believe that the decline in special schools for deaf children and resource provisions has also compounded this issue. CRIDE has found that there has been an 8% decline in the number of resource provisions for deaf children since 2016, falling from 260 to 240 in two years. In addition, since 2015, two special schools for deaf children have closed. The longer-term decline is much starker. We believe that there were around 75 special schools and 500 resource provisions in 1982.

It can be argued that one of the side-effects of this long-term decline has been to reduce the number of schools that might have previously have funded the training of new Teachers of the Deaf. In other words, there is less volume and slack in the system.

Separately, the NatSIP paper, mentioned earlier, identified a specific issue around changes over time to the relationship between the local authority and schools with resource provisions. With the trend to schools becoming academies, as well as changes to school funding, schools with resource provisions are now less likely to be directly managed by the local authority. A number of Heads of Services reported that they were less able to influence decisions about recruitment in those resource provisions, and that there was a high rate of vacant posts in resource provisions.

The paper found that the delegation of funding to resource provisions was leading to a “diffusion of responsibility” around future workforce planning, with local authorities and schools not working together as effectively on the future training of Teachers of the Deaf as they might have done before. We believe that headteachers in schools that host resource provisions are less likely to see themselves as having a responsibility to train new Teachers of the Deaf. In addition, they will also be subject to other funding pressures within the school.

*Other considerations*

A decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf might not be seen as concerning if there was slack ‘capacity’ within the workforce, or if Teachers of the Deaf were being deployed or used in a more efficient or productive way.

We do not believe this is the case for a range of reasons. For example, CRIDE figures around the ‘theoretical caseload’[[26]](#footnote-26) of Teachers of the Deaf suggest that they are being asked to support more and more children. In 2017, the theoretical caseload for each Teacher of the Deaf was 60. This was an increase from 2015 when it stood at 49 and from 2013 when it stood at 44.

In addition, conversations with services suggest a trend towards rationing of services. In particular, it is clear that it many areas, support for children with mild and unilateral hearing loss is being cut back (despite research[[27]](#footnote-27) showing the challenges that this group of children still experience). Some services have also reported a trend away from children being placed/educated in specialist provision, which is putting greater pressure on peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf.

This is supported by the findings from our short survey of Teachers of the Deaf in January 2019, which attracted responses from 625 Teachers of the Deaf. In particular, we found that:

* 85% reported that their workload had increased since 2014, of which 56% reported it had increased significantly.
* 87% stated that they had to work additional hours to keep up with their workload.
* 58% of respondents felt there was less support available for deaf children now, compared to in 2014. Common themes that emerged in the qualitative responses to this question included less support for children with a unilateral, mild or moderate hearing loss, or glue ear; young people in further education; and those without an Education, Health and Care plan.

We also know from government statistics that the number of school-aged deaf children identified as having special educational needs has risen by 15% since 2015[[28]](#footnote-28). This increase is greater than that seen for all children with SEN (1%) and all children (5%). Figures from CRIDE also indicate there has been a demographic increase in the number of deaf children. There is also good reason to believe that the population of deaf children is becoming more heterogeneous – i.e. we are seeing more deaf children with additional needs (children who previously would not have survived beyond birth) and from families who have migrated to this country.

We also know there is considerable unmet need. For example, in our experience, relatively few specialist education services provide support to deaf young people in post-16 settings, despite the shift to a 0 to 25 SEND framework in the 2014 SEND Code of Practice. Anecdotally, we also hear from many services that they do not have the capacity to do more to deliver interventions to promote the emotional wellbeing of deaf children and young people. Such interventions may well help prevent more serious problems from emerging later in life.

Finally, we also know that, whilst there have been improvements over the long-term, deaf children still underachieve throughout their education compared to their hearing peers – at GCSE level, children with a hearing loss as their primary special educational need achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 39.2 compared to 49.8 for children with no identified special educational need. Progress 8 scores also suggest that deaf children fall behind during secondary education compared to children on the same starting ability.[[29]](#footnote-29)

In light of the arguments made in this section, and given the alarming figures shown earlier, we believe a national systematic approach and the establishment of a central bursary scheme is needed to address this issue.

**Responding to the Minister’s feedback – why a bursary is still needed in the short-term**

In his letter of 11 July 2019, the then Children’s Minister, Nadhim Zahawi, stated that other sources of funding may become available that could negate the need for a bursary. We explore these alternative sources below:

*Apprenticeships*

We agree with the Department that the creation of a new apprenticeship pathway for Teachers of the Deaf could provide a long-term solution to some of the issues around funding. We are committed to working with others in the sector and the Institute of Apprenticeships to make this happen as soon as possible. However, we are still concerned that it will take up to two years before this is available as a source of funding. This is because:

* It will take time for the sector to come together and progress this. Whilst we believe there is lots of goodwill and enthusiasm for this proposal, apart from the staffing provided by the National Deaf Children’s Society, there is no additional capacity available to develop a new apprenticeship standard. Stakeholders will be engaging with the Institute of Apprenticeships on top of their existing day-to-day responsibilities.
* We believe it will take time for the existing Teacher of the Deaf training providers to amend the way they deliver their courses, to ensure it can be delivered as a higher level 7 apprenticeship.

Funding a bursary for one year will provide a ‘stopgap’ solution to the decline in Teachers of the Deaf until a new apprenticeship pathway can be fully rolled out.

*Loans to students undertaking a Masters qualification*

The Minister raised the possibility that Teachers of the Deaf in training could seek funding instead from government loan schemes for those studying for a Masters (MA) qualifications.

We do not feel this presents a viable short-term solution to the decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf. Specifically, we do not feel that the incentives currently line up in a way that would make this an attractive proposition to Teachers of the Deaf in training:

* Most teachers currently gain the Teacher of the Deaf qualification by undertaking a post-graduate diploma.
* The post-graduate diploma qualification is, in most cases, funded by the school or service. Schools/services elect to do this as the shortage of qualified Teachers of the Deaf means they are finding it extremely challenging to recruit someone who already holds the qualification.
* In our view, the main reason why Teachers of the Deaf do not go on to gain the Masters qualification is because there is no incentive for the school or service to fund this. The only difference between a post-graduate qualification and the Masters is that the latter involves a year to carry out a dissertation. There is no substantive difference in terms of course content.
* Whilst a minority do elect to self-fund their training to become a Teacher of the Deaf (and so may be interested in taking out a loan for a Masters qualification), we feel that it would not be in the financial interests of the majority of other would-be Teachers of the Deaf in training to take out additional debt at a relatively late stage in their career, particularly when there is a high chance that they can wait for a school or service to fund their training instead.

We asked training providers[[30]](#footnote-30) about the numbers already undertaking the MA option. Information was provided in different ways, but it was clear that the MA option was relatively less common:

* One training provider reported that, of those who had graduated in the past two years, 4 out of 41 students had undertaken the MA option. Of these 4, 2 were self-funded and 2 were employer-funded.
* The second provider stated they had 5 Teachers of the Deaf undertaking the MA option, with some being self-funded and others employer-funded.
* The third provider reported that 4 had undertook the MA option in the past year. They noted that they had 12 doing so this year but felt that this was a unique cohort. Of this 12, only 2 were self-funding the entire qualification through a loan. 5 had been employer-funded for the post-graduate diploma element but were self-funding the additional MA element. Others were either employer or charity-funded or international students.

To put these figures into context, approximately 100 teachers graduate as Teachers of the Deaf each year.

We understand that there is nothing to stop current Teachers of the Deaf in training from seeking funding from the government loan scheme, and we are committed to promoting this as an option. Information about this is already included on the BATOD website. However, as above, we do not feel it’s a viable long-term solution.

**Revised proposal**

The original proposal sought funding for a Teacher of the Deaf bursary over a three year period. We recognise that a new apprenticeship pathway could be developed within that period. However, we still believe there is an interim need for a bursary, until this new apprenticeship pathway becomes live. We would therefore like to submit a revised proposal for a smaller bursary that would meet the costs of new Teachers of the Deaf over one year.

As shown earlier, we know that:

* Based on data from the training providers, the average number of trainees graduating as a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf is expected to average out at 101 between 2018 and 2020. Again, it should be noted that most trainees will be working as Teachers of the Deaf whilst undergoing the mandatory qualification.
* The average number of vacant posts over the past 7 years has been running at 43 a year.
* There has been an average yearly decrease of 1.7% in the number of Teachers of the Deaf since 2011. If this continues, we can expect to see a further annual decline of around 17 to 18 Teachers of the Deaf[[31]](#footnote-31).

Taking these figures together, as the following table shows, this indicates a need to fund 161 places in the next year.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | One year |
| To address existing number of vacant posts | 43 |
| To address a yearly 1.6% decline | 17 |
| To maintain existing numbers in training | 101 |
|  |  |
| Total | 161 |

The table below provides current figures for the cost of a two-year post-graduate qualification.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Training provider | 2018/19 costs |
| Mary Hare/University of Hertfordshire | £7,800 |
| University of Birmingham | £8,004 |
| University of Leeds | £8,000 |
| University of Manchester | £7,600 |
| Average | £7,851 |

We asked the four training providers about the likely cost of the qualification in future years. They were unable to give us any exact figures or make confident predictions but the majority expected costs to rise in line with inflation[[32]](#footnote-32). At the time of writing, inflation was running at 2% and we have used this figure to project that the average course of course will be **£8,014** in 2019/20. If the bursary was used to fund places in 2020/21, the cost may rise to **£8,174**.

For simplicity, we have rounded down to an average cost of **£8,000** in making the below projections.

To fund 161 places, the cost of a one-year bursary would be **£1,288,000**.

We would be happy to explore with officials the exact number of training places that a bursary could fund. We feel that the minimum should be 60 places if a bursary is to cover the costs of filling the existing number of vacant posts and to address the yearly 1.6% decline. The cost of a bursary to fund 60 places would come to **£480,000**.

It is important to be clear that the above would cover the cost of university fees only, and does not include the additional costs involved in training as Teachers of the Deaf. In particular, it does not include travel/accommodation costs for Teachers of the Deaf in training nor does it include any costs around supply cover for schools/services. This paper assumes that these costs will be covered by schools, services or individual Teachers of the Deaf in training.

It should also be noted that, as we do not have long-term figures for the number of Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children, we have not attempted to model the impact of the decline that we’ve seen in these schools into the above projections. This means that it is likely that the above projections slightly understate the actual funding needed.

*How the bursary could be issued*

We propose that the fund run for at least one year or until the bursary has been depleted. Within a year, we would expect to have a clearer sense of progress being made with a new apprenticeships pathway.

In line with the approach taken for the Educational Psychology Funded Training Scheme, we would suggest eligibility criteria along the following lines.

Those wishing to undertake the training should:

* have already qualified as teachers
* have at least one year’s experience of working as a teacher[[33]](#footnote-33)
* be able to provide two references
* be resident in England
* have been accepted at one of the four training providers in England
* commit to working as a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf for at least two years post-qualification or to repaying part of the training costs if they leave within two years.

The bursary would be open to applications from services or schools, as well as individuals who are seeking to become Teachers of the Deaf.

We propose that a panel of representatives from the National Deaf Children’s Society and BATOD be set up to review applications to the bursary and approve them against the above criteria.

*Evaluation*

We will work with the four Teacher of the Deaf training providers in England to monitor the number of people applying to train to be Qualified Teachers of the Deaf, as well as numbers expected to graduate in each year.

Future CRIDE surveys will also enable us to determine if the bursary has had an impact in increasing the overall number of Teachers of the Deaf and/or the number of vacant posts. It is CRIDE’s intention to continue a separate annual survey of special schools for deaf children in 2019 and thereafter. We will also ask services, either through CRIDE or through another survey, if services had made use of the bursary, whether they had experienced any difficulties or challenges in accessing the bursary, and the impact it has made.

These evaluation activities can be carried out alongside existing planned activities at no additional cost. The National Deaf Children’s Society would take the lead in reporting to and updating the Department for Education on how the bursary is being spent. We would cover these administrative costs through our own resources.

We would be happy to explore with the Department what other evaluation activities could be carried out.

**Other points and considerations**

*Sharing costs with schools/services*

We considered whether the bursary could be run on the basis that costs be shared between the Department for Education and local authorities and/or special schools/resource provisions. We do not believe this would be an effective approach for the following reasons:

* There is a national need for new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf. Given that deafness is a low incidence need, it is important that there is maximum flexibility in where they work and in what settings.
* Given wider pressures on local authority budgets, it may be a challenge for some local authorities to make this commitment.
* Our past experience suggests that local authorities, particularly smaller ones, are not always well-placed to take a long-term view on future staffing needs in this area.

We also considered whether the bursary fund should cover the training costs where local authorities or providers were already planning to cover these costs. As set out earlier, around 100 teachers are already training to be Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and most of these will be funded by the local authority/provider. Initially, we proposed that we would only take applications from individuals or from small services where an argument was convincingly made that they could not cover the training costs themselves. Ultimately, however, we concluded that it would be very difficult to distinguish between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ candidates in this way, and that some services/providers may try to work around any such criteria.

In addition, we are also aware of the wider spending pressures that services are subject to and that even large services and schools are struggling to cover the training costs of new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf. On this basis, we propose that the fund seeks to cover the prospective costs of training new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf for one year.

**Developing a package of support**

As set out earlier, we believe that a one-year bursary scheme should be seen as part of a wider package of support to raise the numbers of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and so ensure deaf children receive the specialist support they need. In particular, a one-year bursary should be seen as a ‘stop-gap’ solution while the sector works to develop a new Teacher of the Deaf apprenticeship pathway, which would help put funding for Teacher of the Deaf on a more sustainable footing.

We are committed to making the most of the opportunity provided by a bursary. In particular, we are both committed to undertaking work to promote the Teacher of the Deaf role as an exciting and rewarding career. We believe it is a pathway that may appeal to a large number of teachers. We would also meet the costs of promoting and disseminating information about the fund to prospective Qualified Teachers of the Deaf, and would look to the four training providers for support from this. Where possible, we would also look to link up with existing information portals for prospective mainstream teachers, including those run by the Department for Education.

In addition:

* BATOD will continue work to emphasise the importance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), including the development of a new online CPD log. BATOD will also continue work to re-establish a mentoring scheme for new Teachers of the Deaf
* The National Deaf Children’s Society is committed to reviewing our training offer to Qualified Teachers of the Deaf, following the completion of the current review of the Mandatory Qualification.

**Conclusion**

We believe that Qualified Teachers of the Deaf are at the forefront of early intervention for deaf children. As set out in our original proposal, we believe that investment in Qualified Teachers of the Deaf will do much to alleviate concerns around the decline in numbers, as well as providing the Department for Education with an opportunity to send a powerful signal that they recognise the importance of this role in terms of supporting deaf children’s education.

1. 22% of services said they had difficulties in recruiting for a permanent post whilst 26% reported difficulties in recruiting for supply cover. The 32% figure refers to those who experienced difficulties in either. See page 9/10 of the CRIDE England 2018 report, available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As set out in Department for Education report *Research on the Educational Psychologist Workforce:*  <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/787417/Research_on_the_Educational_Psychologist_Workforce_March_2019.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 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. Current members include: Angela Deckett (National Deaf Children’s Society), Bob Denman (NatSIP), Fiona Kyle (City, University of London), Merle Mahon (UCL), Stevie Mayhook (consultant), Ian Noon (National Deaf Children’s Society), Rachel O’Neill (University of Edinburgh), Jackie Salter (University of Leeds), Karen Simpson (former Head of Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children), Paul Simpson (BATOD), Karen Taylor (Norfolk), Simon Thompson (Mary Hare),Tina Wakefield (Ear Foundation) and Suzanne Wilkins (Kent). Full reports from CRIDE are available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE). Figures from year to year should be used with caution given the differences in response rates that can occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. CRIDE started asking for data on number of Teachers of the Deaf in special schools or colleges not specifically for deaf children in 2016. This means that figures from pre and post 2016 are not directly comparable. However, it should be noted that the inclusion of these teachers did not lead to an overall increase in the total recorded by CRIDE. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This raises a range of other issues around how these Teachers of the Deaf in training are supervised and supported whilst supporting deaf children. However, we regard these issues as outside the scope of this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. We are not able to segment the responses to include only those from England. However, we expect that the majority of responses will be from Teachers of the Deaf working in England. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers](http://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Figures provided by the Department for Education to the National Deaf Children’s Society following a Freedom of Information request. More detail is available in a National Deaf Children’s Society briefing note on what government data on SEN says: [www.ndcs.org.uk/media/4719/note-on-data-on-special-educational-needs-and-deaf-children.docx](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/4719/note-on-data-on-special-educational-needs-and-deaf-children.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Mitchell, R.E. and Karchmer, M.A. Chasing the Mythical Ten Percent: Parental Hearing Status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in the United States. *Sign Language Studies*. 2004. 4: 138–163. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See section 6(2) of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (2014) [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/regulation/6/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/regulation/6/made) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Other settings that Teachers of the Deaf work in will include special schools or colleges not specifically for deaf children, cochlear implant centres and charities. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Carroll, J. et al (2017) SEN support: A rapid evidence assessment. Department for Education. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-support-in-schools-and-colleges](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-support-in-schools-and-colleges). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In the Ofsted Communication is the Key (2012) report, Ofsted stated when deaf children progressed well, it was because services were underpinned by a good understanding of the need for specialist services for deaf children and a strong commitment to maintain them. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/communication-is-the-key](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/communication-is-the-key) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. A review by Marc Marschark stated that: “The learning styles and needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students differ sufficiently from those of their hearing peers to require specialised programming and teaching methods or strategies if children are to achieve their full potential. Special assistance thus is also required for teachers.” [www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1\_NCSE\_Deaf.pdf](http://www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1_NCSE_Deaf.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Deafness is mentioned in 59% of inspection reports. Figures correct at time of writing (16 August 2019). Analysis available on request. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The qualification can also be acquired at the University of Edinburgh. There are no training providers in Wales or Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. This figure includes Teachers of the Deaf working in special schools for deaf children. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The figure for 2015, where the number of Teachers of the Deaf increased, goes against the longer-term trend. We believe this is largely down to a spike in the number of Teachers of the Deaf in training in that year – as the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf was relatively unchanged in that year. It should also be noted that response rates to the survey can vary from year to year. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Given what we know about the reductions in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf, it could be considered surprising that the vacancy rate is not higher. However, we are aware of a number of instances where local authorities have simply over time ‘deleted’ posts when they have been unable to fill them. In other cases, posts have been ‘frozen’, pending a review of the service. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 22% of services said they had difficulties in recruiting for a permanent post whilst 26% reported difficulties in recruiting for supply cover. The 32% figure refers to those who experienced difficulties in either. See page 9/10 of the CRIDE England 2018 report, available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Whilst these figures only apply to peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf, we have not reason to believe that the age profile is dissimilar in other types of Teachers of the Deaf. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017>. Our figures were calculated using figures found in table 4. We calculated that 327,800 teachers (men and women) were under the age of 50, 69,300 between 50 and 59 and 9,700 over 60, giving percentages of 82%, 15% and 2% respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. According to CRIDE, there were 1,660 deaf children in special schools for deaf children in 2011, falling to 1,038 in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Penn school closed in 2015 whilst the Royal School for Deaf Children in Margate closed in 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. [www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers](http://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Theoretical caseloads for peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are calculated by dividing the number of permanently deaf children living in any given area and in non-specialist provision by the number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf who are qualified or in training for the mandatory qualification. We recognise that this is a crude measure but it allows for comparisons over time. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Archbold, S. et al. Experiences of Young People with Mild/Moderate Hearing Loss: Views of parents and teachers*.* 2015. Ear Foundation. Available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/research](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/research). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Figures are taken from the School Census and refer to children where hearing impairment is the primary special educational need. More detail is available in a National Deaf Children’s Society briefing note on government data on SEN: [www.ndcs.org.uk/media/4719/note-on-data-on-special-educational-needs-and-deaf-children.docx](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/4719/note-on-data-on-special-educational-needs-and-deaf-children.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The National Deaf Children’s Society’s summary of government statistics on deaf children’s attainment data is published at: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/3468/ndcs-note-on-attainment-data-2018.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. We received responses from three of the four training providers. The fourth was unable to respond in time due to annual leave. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. More precisely, our figures indicate we would see a decline of 17.26, 17.55 and 17.84 respectively in each of the next three years. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. One provider informed us that they understood their university would be applying a 12% increase in future years to reflect wider growing pressures on the university budget. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. At the discretion of the training provider, this would be waived for deaf Teachers of the Deaf in training who have stated an intention to only work in specialist placements. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)