**Radio aids in policy & practice**

**Anecdotal feedback (anonymous)**

**September 2019**

* *We manage our own budget and give radio aids to all the children that meet our criteria, preschool to leaving school.  We do not have insurance for any of the radio aids.  In the budget we ‘allow’ more for preschool and early years as we need to buy the integrated system and locks and it is more likely that things will get lost or broken.*

*This works well for us as we have a budget for it and we are a really small authority with a relatively small number of children and young people.*

* *Specifically in regards to pre-school, there is great benefit to fitting such technology and the parents being more part of the management and success. Where possible we may offer a home visit or attend our parent group or online parent Facebook group to discuss getting more from such equipment and how parents can buy various adaptors to get more connect ability and uses from the equipment provided if they wish. To date, because of an excellent level of training to parents, more equipment is actually lost in schools than out of school and this shows the value of carrying out parent focused training and support. Furthermore, there is no evidence that there is a need for investigating insurance for parents provided with equipment.*
* *Our parents have occasionally asked if they can insure the equipment, but it is not possible to insure something that does not belong to you. We have a pre-school and a school-age form for the parents to sign when the HICYP is allocated a radio aid system. It details the cost and the need for care to be taken. We take the hit for lost or broken equipment and although it does happen, it is not that common. All the Learning Support Assistants s are trained to care for equipment and the HICYP and their family and school are made aware of the importance of the equipment to the child. As well as that, the equipment is under warranty for repairs for two years. We share the cost of radio aid systems with health (Hospital Trust) and they pay for the receivers and we pay for the transmitters. Health has a radio aid policy that includes notes about replacement receivers following their being lost*
* *We have pre-schoolers currently trialling radio aids and some have completed trial and have been issued with radio aid systems (trial equipment is usually Inspiro and ROGER Inspiro, when the equipment is issued it is usually ROGER Touchscreen). At the moment all of our pre- schoolers are offered a radio aid trial as required. We have a stock of trial equipment due to a radio aid equipment refresh in 2018. All of the radio aid equipment is currently funded by the Council’s Hearing Impaired Service within the Children, Adults and Health. We are in the process of reviewing how the radio aid equipment is funded locally and are looking at the possibility of sharing the cost with Health (Audiology Departments).*
* *We simply reviewed available research evidence and made the decision at service level. We are currently exploring joint commissioning for integrated receivers*
* *We are finding that some schools/settings are unable to add the equipment to their insurance as they don’t own it.  In this instance schools/settings are asked to cover the cost of replacement from their school budget. Parents/carers are not expected to cover loss/damage – our service takes the hit for that, but we do expect that they sign up to look after it. I would recommend that any sensory team compiling a loan agreement takes advice from their legal department, which is what we did.*
* *We have a policy that if the child is in an educational setting and we believe as a Service that the child would benefit from the use of a radio aid then we ask the setting to provide the first £1000 towards the cost of the equipment. The cover of any replacement would be the responsibility of the setting and not us as a Service. For pre-school children we do provide one or two radio aids but not many. I am currently working with health to look at a plan for joint commissioning /funding to provide radio aids were necessary. We have identified a number of issues that this could bring up and one of them is about the responsibility for insurance for the equipment. As far as I am aware, if we buy the equipment it would be the property of our service and as such the families would not be able to insure it as a third party. There is also the mater of spares and repairs who would be responsible for this as well. There are a lot of factors and I would also be very interested to know what other services like ours are doing and would be more than happy to work with others on this, as I said before, we have probably been looking at the exact same things.*
* *We have provided families with systems for home use after trialling NDCS systems where there is a clearly identified need, using the same criteria as appears in our audiology policy for schools. The teacher of the deaf will take a range of factors into account, including age, consistency of hearing aid use, radio aid readiness, functional listening abilities, attention, speech and language development and the listening environment when making a decision. We may have to operate a waiting list for available systems should this become necessary, but so far this has not been an issue*
* *Historically we have referred pre-school children to the NDCS technical trial or if this has not been appropriate undertaken our own trial and referred the family to sources of funding to cover the cost of the equipment. However I confirm that we will be reviewing our approach and will directly fund the cost of equipment moving forward*.
* *We have corporate insurance*
* *We include radio aid information in our local offer*