**General election 2019**

**Key issues for deaf children**

Deafness isn’t a learning disability, and with the right support, a deaf child can achieve as much as a hearing child. However deaf children on average are falling a whole grade behind their hearing peers in their GCSEs

71% of deaf children in NI attend mainstream schools, where they may be the only deaf child. Teachers, staff and parents need specialist support from Teachers of the Deaf. The Education Authority has now developed a single Sensory Service across Northern Ireland, which offers opportunities for consistent access and improvement.

However, since 2011, the number of Teachers of the Deaf in Northern Ireland has fallen by 19% despite a 36% increase in the number of deaf children. We need a new bursary scheme to train the next generation of Teachers of the Deaf.

**There are over 1,600 deaf children across Northern Ireland**

Unemployment among deaf people is more than double that of hearing people. We’re launching a new campaign to improve careers support for deaf young people – will you support us?

Hearing aids don’t fully restore hearing, but are vital for thousands of deaf children to make the most of the hearing they have. Hearing aids are provided by children’s audiology services.

There are plans to introduce quality standards for children’s audiology clinics but, 6 years after the launch of adult standards, we are still waiting. We need an end to delays so that parents can be sure that their child is getting a good service and they can play their part in improving services.

Every child has the right to develop language and communication. Many deaf children use technology called radio aids to help them hear conversations and take part in family life. In Northern Ireland only children who are failing in school are guaranteed access to radio aids, despite being entitled to these in Further or Higher Education.

We want to see radio aids for deaf pre-school children to use at home.

Take a look at our website to find your nearest group: [www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/local-support-groups/find-your-nearest-local-group/](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/local-support-groups/find-your-nearest-local-group/)