

Independent special post-16 institutions (ISPIs)

May 2020

Response by the National Deaf Children's Society Cymru



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.

We support deaf children and young people with all levels of hearing loss from mild to profound, including those with a unilateral loss (hearing loss in one ear) and temporary hearing loss.

Our Response

Within Wales, there are no specialist schools or colleges for deaf people. The vast majority of deaf pupils attend mainstream school/college in Wales, some with specialist resource bases. However, there will always be some deaf learners who's individual needs are such that they require and benefit from provision at a dedicated specialist college or sixth form for deaf students. There are no specialist schools or colleges for deaf learners in Wales, so these learners attend specialist provision in England.

In light of this, The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is keen to ensure that the new system for registering IPSIs does not present any potential barriers or complications for ensuring that a specialist deaf school/college in England can be named as a placement on a deaf child's Individual Development Plan.

For this reason, we are concerned by the following section of the guidance:

Under the 2018 Act, the Welsh Ministers will be required to publish a list of ISPIs in Wales and England and amend this from time to time. The aim of having a published list of ISPIs in Wales and England is to help provide local authorities with assurance that the educational provision provided at those establishments listed will be sufficient to meet the reasonable needs for education and training of young people with ALN.

The 2018 Act defines an ISPI as an institution which provides education or training for persons over compulsory school age and is specially organised to provide such education or training for persons with ALN. However, an ISPI cannot be:

- (a) an institution within the further education sector,*
- (b) an independent school included in the register of independent schools in Wales,*

*(c) an independent educational institution which has been included in the register of independent educational institutions in England or
(d) a 16 to 19 Academy.*

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is aware that some specialist deaf provisions attended by young deaf people from Wales are encapsulated within category c, such as The Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education. We wish to seek assurance that institutions excluded from the Wales list for this reason, will still be available as placements for local authorities in Wales by virtue of the fact that they are listed under section 41 of the Children's and Families Act in England.

We believe it is essential that children in Wales remain able to attend specialist placements at a deaf school/college where this is appropriate for their individual needs. As such, we not only request assurance in relation to the above, but also clarity within the guidance so that deaf children are not disadvantaged in accessing specialist provision.

We also seek clarification on what efforts have been/will be made to highlight/promote the new registering system to institutions in England so that they are aware of the new process in good time. It should be acknowledged that numbers of children from Wales attending specialist provision across the border due to low incidence needs can, low in number, infrequent and ad-hoc. However, it is important that this does not create barriers for local authorities placing a child at the provision that is best able to meet their needs – either because that provision is not currently listed or because it is bureaucratic to list a school at relatively short notice.

More information

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our point for clarification further with the Welsh Government. Please contact us at campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk.