

# Comprehensive Spending Review

## Submission by the National Deaf Children's Society

September 2020



### Summary

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Coronavirus is likely to widen existing inequalities for deaf children and young people, unless the Government invests in the specialist education support they receive, as well as the support available to them to enter employment and achieve independence.

This submission:

- sets out the case for investing in and protecting funding for specialist education services for deaf children and increasing post-14 funding for disadvantaged young people
- outlines how HM Treasury can ensure the Plan for Jobs can better support disabled young people into work.

### Key facts

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- There are around 45,000 deaf children and young people across England<sup>i</sup>.
- There's been a 15% increase since 2015 in the number of deaf children identified as needing special educational needs support<sup>ii</sup>.
- Over 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents<sup>iii</sup> who have no prior experience of deafness. These parents rely on advice from specialist Teachers of the Deaf to support their child's language and communication skills.
- Around 80% of deaf children<sup>iv</sup> attend mainstream schools, where they may be the only deaf child. Teachers of the Deaf play a key role in helping all teachers to understand how to differentiate the curriculum and provide effective support.
- Despite the fact that deafness in itself is not a learning disability, deaf children underachieve throughout their education. In their GCSEs, deaf children achieve, on average, a whole grade less in each subject than other children<sup>v</sup>.

### Specialist education support services

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Specialist education services for deaf children are small teams of experts working in education. These services usually employ a team of peripatetic or 'visiting' Teachers of the Deaf who provide advice and support to deaf children, families and other education professionals. These services are usually commissioned by the local authority and funded through the High Needs block (itself, part of the Dedicated Schools Grant).

Evidence commissioned by the Department for Education<sup>vi</sup>, reports from Ofsted<sup>vii</sup> and an international literature review<sup>viii</sup> all indicate that Teachers of the Deaf and specialist education services for deaf children play a crucial role in advising mainstream teachers and ensuring that the needs of deaf children are met.

Teachers of the Deaf:

- have developed specialist expertise in deafness that mainstream teachers are unlikely to acquire or retain

- play a key role in the early years. 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. 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<sup>ix</sup>. 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
- 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 can be seen as being at the forefront of early intervention. 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 education 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
- deaf young people under-achieving compared to their hearing peers (even though deafness is not in itself a learning disability)
- deaf young people failing to make a successful transition to independent adulthood.

We have been tracking local authority spending on specialist education services for deaf children since 2011. Whilst the Government has provided additional funding for the High Needs block in recent years, our evidence shows that it is not reaching the front-line services that deaf children rely on:

- earlier this year, 41% of services told us they planned to cut or freeze their budget in 2020/21, with £1.1 million being lost. In these areas, budgets are being cut by an average of 7%
- since 2014, over a third of services (34%) have reduced their budgets, with over £6.3m being lost in these areas. On average, these local authorities have cut their budgets by 17%.

This data was collected before the coronavirus lockdown. We anticipate that the picture will have significantly worsened since the spring in light of additional funding pressures generated by the coronavirus lockdown.

These cuts are having an impact on the front-line services that deaf children receive. For example, in 2019, there were 903 qualified Teachers of the Deaf working in a peripatetic role or in resource provisions. This total has fallen by 15% since 2011.<sup>x</sup>

Research also indicates that the average caseload for each Teacher of the Deaf has risen from 44 children to 62 between 2013 and 2019<sup>xi</sup>. In addition, a survey<sup>xii</sup> of over 600 Teachers of the Deaf in January 2019 found that:

- 85% feel their workload has increased since 2014, with 56% saying it has increased significantly

- 58% reported there was less support for deaf children now, compared to 2014.

We have separately provided evidence to the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) review on this issue. In the meantime, the **Comprehensive Spending Review can help to ensure that deaf children receive early intervention support they need by investing in local authority specialist education services for deaf children, whilst also ensuring that high needs funding is provided in a way which recognises the implications of sensory impairment as a low incidence need.** We believe consideration should be given to ring-fencing a portion of the high needs block for local authority specialist education services. We believe it would be a tragedy if additional high needs funding was used by local authorities to, for example, fund barristers to challenge parents in SEND Tribunals.

### *Investing in the specialist SEND workforce*

Issues around funding have also been compounded by supply issues. Many services are telling us that they cannot recruit new qualified Teachers of the Deaf. In 2019, 41% of services reported difficulties in recruiting new Teachers of the Deaf or arranging supply cover over the previous 12 months<sup>xiii</sup>. A 2016 report<sup>xiv</sup>, funded by the Department for Education, found that lack of funding for training is a major factor inhibiting the supply of new Teachers of the Deaf.

In addition, over half of Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50 and hence are due to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. We fear that the current supply issues will only worsen.

We believe a national systemic approach is needed to address this growing crisis. There is little incentive for local authorities to be proactive in ensuring there are sufficient numbers of Teachers of the Deaf being trained to meet future needs. Many will not be able to meet the financial cost of training new staff whilst also employing someone who has yet to retire.

**The Comprehensive Spending Review should invest in the specialist SEND workforce by establishing a new Teacher of the Deaf bursary scheme.** We have estimated that a one-year central bursary scheme for Teachers of the Deaf could be delivered at a cost of **up to £1.3m<sup>xv</sup>**, 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.

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.<sup>xvi</sup>

## **Post-14 funding**

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It will also be important to ensure adequate funding for deaf young people post-16. SEND funding for mainstream post-16 providers is provided where a young person has been commissioned a place using high needs funding. In practice, this means that, in many areas, colleges will only receive funding for young people if they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Government figures suggest that more than 85% of deaf young people<sup>xvii</sup> do not have an EHC plan. If SEND funding is, in practice, restricted to those with an EHC plan, this means that a large number of deaf young people are less likely to get the support they need to access the curriculum, such as a radio aid to help with additional amplification, or note takers.

Research<sup>xviii</sup> published in 2015 already indicated concerns in this area. For example, it found that one quarter of deaf young people did not gain any qualification whilst in further education. In addition, deaf young people were twice as likely to drop out as their peers.

Whilst colleges receive 'disadvantage' funding which can be used to meet the needs of disabled young people without an EHC plan, it is not restricted to this purpose and nor do we believe it is set at a sufficient level. We believe the **Comprehensive Spending Review should significantly increase disadvantage funding for post-16 providers and/or to review how funding is distributed so that deaf 16-19 year olds without EHC plans can get the support they need.**

## **Supporting deaf young people into employment**

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of lockdown, economists expect there to be a significant recession and a large increase in unemployment. Young people are expected to be hit hard, with estimates of an additional 640,000 18-24 year olds finding themselves unemployed this year alone<sup>xix</sup>.

Research has shown that the impact of previous recessions on those who have recently left full-time education has been more severe compared to others. Unemployment can put a young person's health, well-being and security at risk. It can also scar their employment and pay for years ahead.

Disabled people experience significantly higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity compared to non-disabled people. In 2019 there was a 29 percentage point gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people<sup>xx</sup>. In a challenging job market, there is evidence to suggest that disabled people are more likely to be adversely affected<sup>xxi</sup>.

Disabled young people are not helped by poor quality careers support in schools and colleges. Research such as that by the National Deaf Children's Society's Young People Advisory board has found careers advice is not specialist enough and there is a lack of support to enter the workforce.<sup>xxii</sup> In normal times, young disabled people can struggle to make a successful transition from education to work and are more likely to 'churn' in further education.

Disabled young people now face a double barrier of much greater competition for jobs and ongoing disability discrimination. This could undermine the progress of the last few years towards narrowing the disability employment gap and the aims of the Government's Disability Strategy.

On 8 July 2020 the Chancellor unveiled a Plan for Jobs which included a number of initiatives to deliver targeted support to young people seeking work this year which we welcome.

We are keen to prevent disabled young people from being disproportionately affected by the economic downturn. We believe that current support for disabled young people to make the transition to employment is too limited, even for normal times. For example, the number of Supported Internships is low and there are no clear referral pathways to secure employment support after leaving education. We believe that the Plan for Jobs can be enhanced to include additional measures specifically for disabled young people, helping to prevent a generation of disabled people being left behind by this crisis.

**The Comprehensive Spending Review provides an opportunity to ensure that the Plan for Jobs benefits disabled young people.** It can do this by taking the following actions:

1. The Kickstarter scheme is made open to a wider group than just those claiming Universal Credit (e.g. those with Education, Health and Care plans and on Employment Support Allowance).
2. Align Kickstarter placements with supported internships schemes to enable the number of internships to expand to meet demand.

3. Doubling the number of Disability Employment Advisors in line with the doubling of work coaches to ensure sufficient capacity to provide effective support.
4. New careers advisors who work with disabled people to receive training to enable them to provide tailored support for disabled people.
5. Extend the pre-existing £1,000 incentive payments to employers and training providers of young apprentices with Education, Health and Care plans to any disabled young person taking an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship.
6. Speed up decision-making for those applying to Access to Work to ensure that young people on Kickstarter work placements receive the support and technology they require from the beginning of their placements.
7. Ensuring that online job-finding support services are accessible and relevant to disabled job-seekers through consulting with organisations representing disabled young people. Our organisations would be happy to support.
8. Take-up of the schemes are tracked so that the Government knows how many disabled young people are accessing them. Data is made available publically with breakdown by type of disability.

These recommendations have been developed in collaboration with: Disability Rights UK, Leonard Cheshire, Genius Within, the Thomas Pocklington Trust, the National Development Team for Inclusion, Natspec, the Institute for Employment Studies, and the Council for Disabled Children.

## Contact

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE). CRIDE report on 2018/19 survey on educational provision for deaf children in England. [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE)

<sup>ii</sup> Figure calculated using Department for Education reports on special educational needs data. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2018>. The number of children in primary, secondary or special schools where hearing impairment was identified as the primary special educational need rose from 19,350 in 2015 to 22,344 in 2019.

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

<sup>iv</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE). CRIDE report on 2018/19 survey on educational provision for deaf children in England. [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE)

<sup>v</sup> 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>.

<sup>vi</sup> 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).

<sup>vii</sup> 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)

<sup>viii</sup> 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)

<sup>ix</sup> 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)

<sup>x</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE). CRIDE report on 2018/19 survey on educational provision for deaf children in England. [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE)

<sup>xi</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE). CRIDE report on 2018/19 survey on educational provision for deaf children in England. [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE)

<sup>xii</sup> Survey results available on request.

<sup>xiii</sup> Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE). CRIDE report on 2018/19 survey on educational provision for deaf children in England. [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE)

<sup>xiv</sup> [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)

<sup>xv</sup> More detail on how this has been costed can be found in our proposal paper: [www.ndcs.org.uk/media/4877/tods-bursary-revised-proposal-august-2019.docx](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/4877/tods-bursary-revised-proposal-august-2019.docx)

<sup>xvi</sup> 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/787417/Research_on_the_Educational_Psychologist_Workforce_March_2019.pdf)

<sup>xvii</sup> Drawing on data from Department for Education response to Freedom of Information requests submitted by the National Deaf Children's Society, we estimate that 13% of deaf young people in year 12 have an EHC plan. Data is taken from 2015/16 academic year.

<sup>xviii</sup> Young, A et al. Deaf young people in further education. 2015. The University of Manchester/National Deaf Children's Society. Available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/research](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/research).

<sup>xix</sup> [www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/class-of-2020/](http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/class-of-2020/)

<sup>xx</sup> [commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/](http://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/)

<sup>xxi</sup> [www.disabilityatwork.co.uk/research-areas/in-work-disability-gaps/all-in-it-together-the-impact-of-the-recession-on-disabled-people/](http://www.disabilityatwork.co.uk/research-areas/in-work-disability-gaps/all-in-it-together-the-impact-of-the-recession-on-disabled-people/)

<sup>xxii</sup> [www.ndcs.org.uk/media/5665/dwe-yab-report.pdf](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/5665/dwe-yab-report.pdf)