

National Deaf Children's Society Cymru response to changes to current school assessment arrangements and local authority prospectus

About Us

The National Deaf Children's Society seeks to create a world without barriers for deaf children, young people and their families. We support children and young people aged 0-25 with all levels of deafness, from mild through to profound, including those with temporary hearing loss and a unilateral loss.

Monitoring the Attainment Gap

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru has valued the publication of attainment data by Additional Learning Need (ALN) type. The availability of this Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) attainment data has enabled us to monitor the attainment gap between deaf learners and their hearing peers as seen [here](#).

Deafness is not a learning disability and, as such deaf learners should be achieving on a par with their hearing peers. Unfortunately, the statistics have demonstrated attainment gaps at every key stage – including an alarming and significant widening of this gap at Foundation Stage in recent years.

National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is keen to seek assurances that within these proposed changes, a form of monitoring attainment levels by ALN type – specifically hearing impairment - will continue.

Monitoring the attainment gap is an important aspect of ensuring that our learners are accessing the support they need. This will be particularly important from the perspective of the phasing in of the ALN reforms and the Welsh Government's consideration and future review of the effectiveness of the implementation of these reforms.

Online Assessments

Given that the consultation mentions the use of personalised online assessments, the National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is keen to restate the importance of putting in place accessibility requirements for deaf students for Online Personalised Assessments. Deaf learners may use a mix of hearing, technology, British Sign Language (BSL), lip reading, and text support amongst others, meaning there is not a universal package of support that makes online assessments accessible to deaf children and young people. When it comes to online assessments, professionals should work with each individual deaf learner on their accessibility requirements prior to the online assessment being undertaken.

Any online assessment that comes with video and audio content must come with captions - this is an essential requirement for deaf students. In addition, extra time for completing online assessments may be required by deaf students.

For exams, some deaf students access modified papers where the language of questions have been edited so they are easier to read for deaf students who might have difficulties in processing written language. We expect any online assessments to also facilitate a reasonable adjustment of this nature.

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru would be happy to meet with officials to further discuss any accessibility implications arising from any plans to use online personalised assessments.

More information

National Deaf Children's Society Cymru would welcome the opportunity to discuss these points further and receive some clarifications. Please do not hesitate to contact us at campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk for further information. Many thanks for taking the time to read our response.