

CRIDE report on 2011 survey on educational provision for deaf children in Wales

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) conducted a UK-wide survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children in the 2010/11 financial year. This report summarises the results of the survey for Wales¹ and is intended for heads of services, policy makers in local and central government and anyone with an interest in deaf education.

Responses were received from 16 services in Wales, covering 20 local authority areas. No response was received at all from 2 services; a response rate of 91%. 2 local authorities chose to provide separate responses even though they provide a joint service. This resulted in some duplication in the figures given to us. We have therefore adjusted the response and our analysis to accommodate this. It should also be noted that not all services consistently gave responses to all the questions, as set out throughout this note. As such, the results should be used with caution.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Responses indicate there are at least 2,755 deaf children in Wales, more than previous figures have suggested.
- Around 17% of deaf children have some form of additional special educational need.
- Around 5% of deaf children have at least one cochlear implant.
- 5% of deaf children communicate using sign language to some extent. 7% use a spoken language other than English.
- 91% of deaf children are in mainstream settings (of which 8% are in mainstream schools with resource provision).
- There are at least 76 Teachers of the Deaf working in Wales, of which 95% are fully qualified to work with deaf children.
- There are at least 66.8 other specialist staff working with deaf children. The majority of these are teaching assistants.
- Though the number of reported staffing cuts are relatively low, 88% of services have reported that the eligibility criteria for the service and/or the overall quality of the service has changed for the worse in the past year.

This note has 6 parts, as set out below:

PART 1: Overall number of deaf children in Wales (“belonging”)	2
PART 2: Number of deaf children supported	5
PART 3: Teachers of the Deaf	7
PART 4: Other specialist staff	8
PART 5: Allocation of resources	10
PART 6: Background and methodology	14

¹ Reports for other parts of the UK are available online at www.ndcs.org.uk/data

PART 1: Overall number of deaf children in Wales (“belonging”)

Services were asked to give details of deaf children “belonging” to the service. “Belonging” was defined as: all deaf children who live in the local authority².

Services were also asked to include details of all children with sensorineural and **permanent** conductive deafness³, using the descriptors provided by the British Society of Audiology and BATOD.

Please note that where the number of deaf children for any category is 5 or less, we have substituted the figure with an asterisk. This is to avoid any risk of individual children being identified.

How many deaf children are there?

When giving figures for numbers of deaf children belonging, services were asked to break this down by level of deafness and age group.

Not all respondents gave complete figures. Some services gave a “total” figure which differed from the sum of their component figures. In most cases, this was because the service could not provide a complete age breakdown. Other services did not give a figure in this section but later gave a figure for the number of deaf children on caseloads in their area. Where this has happened and as appropriate, we have used the higher figure, or any figures given in the notes or elsewhere in the response to avoid underestimating the number of deaf children and to ensure that our figures are as accurate as possible. We refer to this as the “adjusted total”.

Based on responses from 16 services covering 20 local authorities, the adjusted total number of deaf children in Wales is **2,775**. Unadjusted figures are set out below, though in practice the differences are relatively minor.

What the survey tells us about the population of deaf children in Wales

The below tables provide breakdowns by age, level of deafness and local authority.

Table 1: Number of children belonging, by age

Age group	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total
Preschool	271	10%
Primary	1,496	54%
Secondary	853	31%
Post 16 in school	124	5%
Post 16 not in school but in education	11	0.4%
Total	2,755	

² This includes deaf children who live within the local authority boundary but attend schools outside of the local authority. It excludes deaf children who live outside of the local authority but attend schools within the authority.

³ We are aware that a number of services also support include children with temporary deafness and will consider inclusion in the next survey.

Table 2: Number of children belonging, by level of deafness

Level of deafness	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total
Unilateral ⁴	256	9%
Mild	1,194	43%
Moderate	830	30%
Severe	239	9%
Profound	230	8%
Total	2,749	

A number of services were unable to consistently provide information on the level of deafness of the deaf children belonging to the service, particularly for deaf children over the age of 16.

Incidence of auditory neuropathy

10 services gave a figure in response to a question on how many deaf children had auditory neuropathy in their area. It is not always clear whether other services did not give a figure because they do not have any children with auditory neuropathy or because they do not know whether they do. Based on these responses, there are 22 deaf children in Wales with this condition, 0.8% of all deaf children (adjusted total).

Incidence of additional special educational needs (SEN)

13 services were able to tell us how many deaf children had an additional SEN. Based on these responses, there are 482 deaf children with an additional SEN. This is 17% of the adjusted total of deaf children. The incidence of additional SEN varies between services but the average number of children with additional SEN in each service that responded to the question was 37.

Research⁵ from 1996 suggested that 40% of deaf children have additional needs. However, this research uses a wide definition of additional needs (including, for example, eczema and cerebral palsy) whereas SEN is normally understood, through the SEN Code of Practice, to refer to where children have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The definition of learning difficulty includes where children have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same in age in schools within the local authority area.

Deaf children with cochlear implants

All 16 services were able to provide information about how many deaf children had a cochlear implant⁶. Based on these responses, there are 130 deaf children across Wales with cochlear implants. This is 5% of the adjusted total of deaf children.

Table 3: Number of deaf children belonging with cochlear implants, by age group

Age	Total with cochlear implants	Total deaf children	Percentage of total within each age group category
Pre-school	19	271	7%
Primary aged	64	1,496	4%
Secondary aged	43	853	5%
Post 16	4	135	3%
Total	130	2,755	5%

⁴ Unilateral refers to a hearing loss in just one ear.

⁵ Fortnum et al. (1996) *Health service implication of changes in aetiology and referral patterns of hearing impaired children in the Trent region*.

⁶ Though not all services gave a figure for each age group.

Additional languages

Table 4: Number of deaf children, by main language spoken in family

Language	Total	Percentage of responses (where known)
English only	1,489	86%
Sign language only	17	1%
English and sign language	70	4%
English and other spoken language	114	7%
Other ⁷	34	2%
Total known	1,724	
Reported "not known"	20	

13 services provided information for at least some part this question⁸. Of those that did respond, many were unable to identify the language of all deaf children in their area. There are around 1,000 deaf children who are unaccounted for in the above figures, so these figures should be used with particular caution.

A key failure of the survey for Wales is that it did not include an option to give Welsh as a main language. We apologise for this; it will be remedied in future surveys.

At the end of part 2, we compare how these figures for the number of deaf children compare with other sources.

⁷ Respondents were not asked to state what other languages were spoken.

⁸ Though not all services gave a figure for each language.

PART 2: Number of deaf children supported

Earlier, we looked at the number of deaf children who “belong” or live in a local authority; we also asked about deaf children who are supported⁹ by the service. This section sets out our analysis of these figures. As before, figures were adjusted to accommodate any anomalies with the submitted figures (i.e. where the sum of component figures were higher than the given total). As before, response rates varied for each individual question within this section.

Based on responses from all 16 services, our survey gives an adjusted total of at least **2,638** deaf children who receive support from their local service.

What do we know about the population of deaf children being supported?

The tables below break down the results by age, type of educational provision and local authority.

Table 5: Number of deaf children being supported, by age group

Age group	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total
Preschool children	277	11%
Primary aged children	1400	53%
Secondary aged children	849	32%
16+ young people who are in school	88	3%
16+ young people who are not in school but in education (e.g. Further Education)	10	0.4%
Total	2,624	

Assuming the figures are broadly comparable, if there are 2,775 deaf children (adjusted total) who live in Wales, there are at least 151 deaf children who are not being supported. In other words, the figures suggest that 95% of deaf children receive support¹⁰.

Table 6: Number of deaf children, by type of educational provision

Type of educational provision	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total	
In local authority	Supported at home (e.g. babies or home educated)	271	10%
	Mainstream state funded schools	1,878	72%
	Independent (non state funded) mainstream schools	28	1%
	Resource provision in mainstream schools	164	6%
	Special schools for children with needs other than deafness	189	7%
Out of local authority	Resource provision in mainstream schools	30	1%
	Mainstream state funded schools	31	1%
	Special schools for deaf pupils but maintained by LA	12	0.5%
	Independent or special schools (non state funded) ¹¹	9	0.3%
	Special schools for children with needs other than deafness	8	0.3%
Other	Other	*	*
Total	2,624		

⁹ Examples of support given were direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school, teachers, provision of hearing aid checks, etc.

¹⁰ This is higher than anticipated by CRIDE. We suspect that the number of deaf children belonging is actually higher than earlier indicated. However, we have no easy way of confirming this from these results.

¹¹ The survey question was ambiguous on whether the independent school is a school for deaf children. This will be rectified for future versions of this survey.

Table 7: Breakdown of types of educational provision (regardless of whether in or out of local authority)

Type of educational provision (regardless of whether in or out of local authority)	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total	Percentage of total school-aged children (i.e. excluding children supported at home)
Supported at home (e.g. babies or home educated)	271	10%	-
Mainstream provision	1,909	73%	81%
Mainstream provision: resource provision	194	7%	8%
Special schools for deaf pupils or independent schools	49	2%	2%
Special schools for children with needs other than deafness	197	8%	8%
Other	*	*	*
Total	2,624		
Total (excluding children supported at home)	2,354		

If the figures for children supported at home (which we believe are likely to be mostly pre-school deaf children) are excluded, the results suggest that 89% of school-aged deaf children are educated in mainstream settings (of which 8% are in resource provision). A very small number (2%) attend special schools for deaf children. There are no special schools for deaf children in Wales, so these children will be attending schools in other parts of the UK.

How do CRIDE's figures compare to figures from other sources?

As set out below, caution needs to be used when comparing CRIDE's figures with other sources, given the differences in how data have been collected and the different definitions used. CRIDE recommends that these figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

In this case, caution is particularly needed given that the figures suggested by the CRIDE survey are much higher than suggested by other sources (despite the fact that it is missing responses from several services). This has come as a considerable surprise to CRIDE. The reported figures have been checked and a number of services have individually reported much higher figures than on previous occasions. It will only become clear through repeated surveys whether the higher number given by CRIDE is accurate (and that other figures have been underestimating the number of deaf children) or that some error has crept into the reporting of figures on this occasion.

Estimates based on prevalence figures

Prevalence figures and population estimates (taken from the Office of National Statistics for the UK) have given an estimated figure of 2,000 deaf children in Wales. Given the lower population in Wales, there is room for greater variability in such figures. The estimates include deaf children with all levels of hearing loss, including unilateral, and who have a permanent loss.

School Census figures

Figures provided by the Welsh Government, based on school census figures indicate that there were 1,709 deaf children in 2011/12. This refers to children where deafness has been formally recorded. It includes children with all levels of deafness and those for whom deafness is not a primary need.

PART 3: Teachers of the Deaf

Our survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf there are working in different settings, including those in a peripatetic role and working in resource bases. Figures are often expressed as Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts; a 0.5 Teacher of the Deaf FTE post could, for example, indicate that a person spent half of the standard “working week” as a Teacher of the Deaf.

In total, there are at least¹² 76 “Teachers of the Deaf” in Wales. Of these 95% are fully qualified. At the time the survey was completed, there were no vacant posts.

Table 8: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment overall

	Number of teachers (FTE)	Percentage of total
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	72	95%
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	2	2.5%
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	2	2.5%
Total	76	

Teachers of the Deaf in a peripatetic role

Our survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf were working in the specialist peripatetic service as of January 2011. In other words, how many “visiting” Teachers of the Deaf were working in each service. Visiting Teachers of the Deaf normally visit deaf children in “non-specialist” provision – i.e. pre-school deaf children, deaf children in mainstream schools or in a special school (for children with needs other than deafness).

Table 9: Number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf in employment

	Number of teachers (full time equivalent)	Number of services with staff in relevant category
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	40	16
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	0	0
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	2	2
Total	42	

In terms of fully qualified visiting Teachers of the Deaf, the numbers within each service ranged from 0.5 at the smallest to 7.6 in the largest. The average number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf per service is 2.7.

We asked if services had sought to recruit visiting Teachers of the Deaf over the past 12 months. 5 indicated they had, of which 2 reported difficulties in recruiting. In both of these cases, references were made to a lack of suitably qualified candidates.

Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions

The survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf were employed in resource provisions for deaf children and whether they were employed centrally by the local authority or directly by the school.

¹² CRIDE is also aware that a number of Teachers of the Deaf are employed by special schools for deaf children and cochlear implant centres, though the total number is unknown.

Respondents were asked to exclude time spent on other school duties (such as time as the school's SEN co-ordinator, for example).

Table 10: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in resource provisions employed by the local authority or the school

	Number of teachers (FTE) in resource provision employed by the local authority	Number of services with staff in relevant category		Number of teachers (FTE) in resource provision employed by the school	Number of services with staff in relevant category
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	15.3	6		16.7	5
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	2	2		0	0
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0	0		0	0
Total	17.3			16.7	

PART 4: Other specialist staff

Our survey suggests that there are at least 66.8 specialist support staff, other than Teachers of the Deaf, supporting deaf children in Wales. The most common role is teaching assistant followed by communication support worker.

Table 11: Number of specialist support staff overall, by role

	Number of staff (FTE)	% of total
Teaching assistants / Classroom support assistants etc	57.8	87%
Communication support workers / Interpreters / Communicators etc	7	10%
Deaf instructors / Deaf role models / Sign language instructors etc	0	0%
Educational audiologists / Technicians etc	1.5	2%
Speech and language therapists	0.5	1%
Family support workers	0	0%
Total (excluding "Others")	66.8	

The majority of services that answered the question no longer directly manage teaching assistants or other support staff based in schools to support named pupils.

Table 12: Services still directly managing teaching assistants or other support staff in schools

Response	Number	Percentage of those who responded
Yes	0	0%
Some but not all	2	29%
No	5	71%
Total responses	7	

Numbers of other specialist staff

The survey asked about numbers of other peripatetic specialist support staff (excluding any teaching assistants or other support staff based in schools to support named pupils).

Table 13: Number of peripatetic specialist support staff, by role

	Peripatetic role			Resource provisions		
	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with staff in relevant category	Percentage of total	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with staff in relevant category	Percentage of total
Teaching assistants / Classroom support assistants etc	9.9	5	66%	47.9	9	93%
Communication support workers / Interpreters / Communicators etc	3	2	20%	4	2	27%
Deaf instructors / Deaf role models / Sign language instructors etc	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Educational audiologists / Technicians etc	1.5	2	10%	0	0	0%
Speech and language therapists	0.5	1	3%	0	0	0%
Family support workers	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Total (excluding "Others")	14.9			51.9		

Resource provisions

When asked if the resource provision provided outreach support to other schools, 2 (25%) replied yes and 6 (75%) replied no. Where outreach support was provided, this amounted to 2.4 full time equivalent staffing time.

PART 5: Allocation of resources

Use of standardised eligibility criteria

15 services use a standardised method for determining the level of support given to deaf children. 1 did not have a standardised method.

Services were asked to specify in an open-ended question what method was used. The answers have been categorised as follows:

- NatSIP¹³ (or largely based on) – 5 services
- Locally developed – 6 services
- SERSEN¹⁴ – 1 service
- SESIP¹⁵ – 3 services

The NatSIP criteria are largely based on SERSEN's, which in turn are largely based on SESIP's. The survey therefore indicates that, where a standardised method is being used, 9 (or 60%) of services are using NatSIP or similar as a basis on which to determine the level of support given to deaf children.

¹³ National Sensory Impairment Partnership: <http://www.natsip.org.uk/>

¹⁴ South East Region Special Educational Needs Partnership

¹⁵ South Eastern Sensory Impairment Partnership

Application of eligibility criteria

The survey sought general information about the type of service provided for different categories of deaf children and young people. It was recognised that this could only be a crude estimate of services offered and the amount of support an individual child received would be determined by a range of factors, including professional judgement, and not just the degree of deafness.

Services were able to tick more than one option for each group of deaf children.

Table 14: Type of support provided by type of deafness

Type of need	Type of deafness	Number of services that provide no direct support provided	Number of services that provide annual, one-off or occasional visit	Number of services that provide allocated ToD and regular visits (i.e. more than once a year)	No response
Primary and permanent need	Bilateral severe or profound sensorineural deafness	0	0	16	0
	Bilateral moderate sensorineural deafness	0	1	16	0
	Bilateral conductive deafness	0	3	15	0
	Bilateral mild or high frequency only sensorineural deafness	0	3	15	0
	Unilateral deafness (sensorineural or conductive)	1	8	7	0
Additional and permanent need	Bilateral severe or profound sensorineural deafness	0	1	15	0
	Bilateral moderate sensorineural deafness	0	2	15	0
	Bilateral conductive deafness	1	3	14	0
Other	With temporary conductive deafness as a primary or additional need	2	11	5	0
	In special schools other than schools for the deaf	0	4	13	1
	With auditory neuropathy	3	4	8	2
	With auditory processing difficulty/disorder	3	9	4	2

Funding arrangements – peripatetic services

In terms of funding arrangements, the majority of peripatetic specialist support services appear to be funded centrally by the local authority, as shown below.

Table 15: Funding arrangements for peripatetic specialist support services

Funding is...	Number of services	Percentage of all services who responded
Held centrally by the local authority ¹⁶	14	88%
Delegated to a special or mainstream school with a resource provision that then provides outreach to other schools	0	0%
Delegation to individual schools in the local authority who decide whether to purchase specialist support from the local authority	0	0%
Other	2	12%
Total	16	

Responses in the ‘other’ category generally indicated some form of combination of the previous options.

Funding arrangements – resource provisions

CRIDE also sought information on the funding arrangements for resource provisions.

Table 16: Funding arrangements for resource provisions

Funding for resource provision is...	Number of services	Percentage of those where applicable
Held centrally by the local authority	4	27%
Delegated to schools	4	27%
Both central and delegated	2	13%
Not applicable	5	33%
Total responses	15	

Table 28: Use of service level agreements by resource provisions

Where funding is delegated, does a contract / service level agreement exist?	Number of services	Percentage of those where applicable
Yes	3	50%
No	3	50%
Not applicable	9	

¹⁶ Respondents were asked to include funding held by the local authority to purchase hearing support services from other local authorities or external agencies

Staffing changes

In the context of concerns over spending reductions, the survey asked about budgeted staff levels over the past three years. We asked how many Teachers of the Deaf were employed in 2009/10, 2010/11 and whether there are any proposed or planned changes for 2011/12. Some services were unable to give information for each year. To ensure meaningful comparisons can be made, we have excluded partial responses in the below tables.

Table 17: Staffing changes in each year between 2009/10 and 2011/12 (proposed), where known in each year

Staff	Year	Number of staff	Number of services who responded
Teachers of the Deaf	2009/10	26.25	12
	2010/11	25.75	12
	2011/12 (planned or proposed if known)	26.15	12

There is a possibility that the above results are skewed through inclusion only of those services who were able and/or willing to give planned or proposed figures for 2011/12. The below table therefore only includes services that gave information for both 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Table 18: Staffing changes between 2009/10 and 2010/11, where known in both years

Staff	Year	Number of staff	Number of services who responded
Teachers of the Deaf	2009/10	38.35	14
	2010/11	37.15	14

The responses indicate relatively minor staffing changes, suggesting that Wales is relatively well insulated from staffing cuts so far, compared to other parts of the UK. When looking at the individual results, 3 services indicated they would be making a staffing cut, whilst 1 indicated it would be increasing their staffing rolls. These changes have largely offset each other.

Other changes

The survey also looked at any changes between 2009/10 and 2010/11 to a) non staffing budgets and b) eligibility criteria/overall quality of the service

Table 19: Changes to non staffing budgets

Changes to non staffing budgets	Number of services	Percentage of those who responded and who could separate budget figures
Increase	2	20%
Decrease	1	10%
No change	7	70%
Cannot separate budget figures for the Hearing Impairment team	6	-
Total responses	16	

Table 20: Changes to eligibility criteria and overall quality

Changes to eligibility criteria / overall quality	Number of services	Percentage of those who responded
For the better	1	6%
For the worse	14	88%
No	1	6%
Total responses	16	

A very large portion of services have reported changes for the worse when it comes to eligibility criteria and/or overall quality of the service. Where respondents highlighted any detrimental changes, they were asked to give more information. However, only one service took the opportunity to do so, and indicated a reduction in visits to some deaf children. It is therefore difficult to know exactly what changes are occurring for the worse.

PART 6: Background and methodology

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in improving the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children through research. Representatives include: the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), the Ewing Foundation, the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), the Ear Foundation, schools and services for deaf children, and university researchers.

The survey was designed and created by members of CRIDE. It was piloted on a small number of services and amended based on feedback from these services. The surveys were then disseminated to other services in the February 2011 by NDCS's Country Director for Wales on behalf of CRIDE. Services were asked to respond by the 31st March 2011. Where there was no response by this time, members of CRIDE chased for a response. Following this, as a last resort, Freedom of Information requests were sent out to the remaining services who had not responded around the 27th June 2011. No further responses were accepted for inclusion in the analysis for this note after the end of September.

Services were able to respond by completing an online survey or a Word document of the survey. A Welsh translation was made available on request.

Analysis of the results using Excel and drafting of this report was largely completed by NDCS with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE. NDCS has taken every step to ensure this report accurately reflects what services have told us. Any errors are the responsibility of NDCS alone.

We would like to thank all services for taking the time to complete this survey and for their valuable comments and feedback, which will be used to inform the design of future surveys. The results from this survey will be used for research purposes, to influence government policy and to campaign to protect funding and services for deaf children.

If you have any feedback or questions on the results, please contact professionals@ndcs.org.uk.