Consortium for Research in Deaf Education

2019 report for Northern Ireland

CRIDE report on 2018/19 survey on educational provision for deaf children in Northern Ireland

Introduction

In 2019, the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) carried out its ninth annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children. It covers the 2018/19 academic year[1]. This report sets out the results of the survey for Northern Ireland and is intended for policy makers and anyone with an interest in deaf education. We would like to thank the head of service in Northern Ireland for responding to the survey and for her ongoing feedback and clarification.

Summary of key findings

- There are at least 1,417 deaf children in Northern Ireland - a reported decrease of 16% over the past year. The service reports that this reduction is due mainly to a more consistent approach to recording children with recurrent temporary deafness.
- 78% of school-aged deaf children attend mainstream schools. 3% attend mainstream schools with resource provisions. 19% attend other special schools, not specifically for deaf children.
- 26% of deaf children are recorded as having an additional special educational need.
- 4% of deaf children use an additional spoken language other than English in the home.
- Of children who have a severe or profound hearing loss, 83% mainly communicate using spoken English only in school or other education settings as their main language, 6% mainly use spoken English together with signed support whilst 2% mainly use British Sign Language.
- There are at least 29 Teacher of the Deaf posts, of which 10% were vacant. Of the 26 staff working as Teachers of the Deaf, 97% held the mandatory qualification.
- The number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment fell by 11% over the past year. It has fallen by 28% since the CRIDE survey started in 2011.
- 35% of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50 and thus are likely to retire in the next 10 to 15 years.
- Peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf have an average theoretical caseload of 58 deaf children.
- There are three resource provisions across Northern Ireland.

[1] Reports from previous years can be found on the BATOD website at www.batod.org.uk/information/cride-reports/ or on the National Deaf Children's Society website at www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE.

Interpreting the results

There is one service in Northern Ireland covering the five different regions. The service was asked to give figures for the position as of 31st January 2019. It was stated by the service that data should be treated with caution, as it is believed that in the past there were different interpretations of questions and possible double counting when the survey was completed by five different services. Efforts have been made to improve quality and consistency of data collection across the whole service, and the view of the service is that this year's response establishes a robust baseline.

The survey acknowledges that services and children do not always fit into the boxes or options provided. The service was able to leave comments or clarify where needed throughout the survey.

Please note that all percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Please also note that where the number of deaf children for any category is fewer than 5, '<5' appears. In some cases, the total has been rounded up or down, as indicated by an asterisk. This is to avoid any risk of individual children being identified. In some cases, this means that totals in individual tables will not always generate the same sum total.

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PART 1: Deaf children in Northern Ireland

How many deaf children are there?

In 2019, the service was asked to give details of deaf children living in Northern Ireland.[2]

Based on the original response from the service covering the five regions across Northern Ireland, there are 1,374 deaf children. We have since established that this figure did not include 43 deaf children in a special school for deaf children in Ireland. **This means that the total number of deaf children in Northern Ireland is 1,417**. This is down from 1,642 in 2017/18, a reported decrease of 16%.

The service has fed back that, since the service was merged from five into one service, work to improve the quality and consistency of the data on deaf children continues.

The following table compares the total number of deaf children living in Northern Ireland with figures from previous years. As set out in the introduction, comparisons with earlier reports should be made with caution. In particular, it does not appear that children in special schools for deaf children have been included in previous years.

Table 1: Number of deaf children reported, over successive years

	Number of children reported
CRIDE 2019	1,417
CRIDE 2018	1,687
CRIDE 2017	1,553
CRIDE 2016	1,497
CRIDE 2015	1,336
CRIDE 2014	1,574
CRIDE 2013	1,481
CRIDE 2012	1,249
CRIDE 2011	1,238

[2] The service was asked: How many children with a permanent deafness live in the geographical area covered by your service? The answer below should include: All children who have a unilateral or bilateral sensori-neural or permanent conductive deafness, at all levels from mild to profound, using BSA/BATOD descriptors. Children with temporary deafness should not be included in your response to this question, and all deaf children, regardless of whether they receive support from the service. Please note that for the purpose of this section of the survey we use the term 'children' to include children and young people up to the age of 19 years, 11 months (unless specified in the question). Please also note that we use the term permanent deafness to include those children with a syndrome known to include permanent conductive deafness, microtia/atresia, middle ear malformation, or those who have had middle ear surgery such as mastoidectomy. It also includes those children with glue ear who are not expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 10 years, such as those born with a cleft palate, Down's syndrome, cystic fibrosis, or primary ciliary dyskinesia. Under temporary conductive deafness, we include those children with glue ear who may have been fitted with hearing aids as an alternative to grommet surgery but who are expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 10 years.

What the survey tells us about the population of deaf children in Northern Ireland

The tables below provide breakdowns by age, level of deafness, and education setting. Please note that the figures in this section do not include any deaf children in Jordanstown special school.

Table 2: Number of children living in the area, by age

Age group	**Number of deaf children reported**	**Percentage of total**
Early years/pre-school	229	17%
Primary-aged	590	43%
Secondary-aged	555	40%
Post-16 up to the age of 19	No response	0%
Total	1,374	100%

Table 3: Number of children living in the area, by level of deafness

Level of deafness	**Number of deaf children reported**	**Percentage of total (where known)**
Unilateral	323	24%
Mild	329	24%
Moderate	411	30%
Severe	138	10%
Profound	166	12%
Total (excluding 'not known')	1,367	
Not known	7	
Total (including 'not known')	1,374	

Table 4: Number of children, living in the area, by educational setting

Type of setting	Number	Percentage of total	Percentage of total school-aged children (i.e. excluding pre-school children and young people post-16)
Supported only at home – pre-school children	181	13%	
Early years setting – pre-school children	48	3%	
Supported at home – of school age and home educated	<5	0%	0%
Mainstream state-funded schools	895	65%	78%
Mainstream independent (non-state-funded) schools (for example, Eton)	0	0%	0%
Resource provision in mainstream schools	36	3%	3%
Special schools for deaf pupils (whether state funded or non-maintained)[3]	No response	0%	0%
Other special schools, not specifically for deaf children (whether state funded or non-maintained)	212	15%	19%
All other post-16 provision (**not** including school sixth form colleges)	0	0%	
Total	1,375*		
Total (excluding pre-school children and other post-16 provision and 'other')	1,145*		

Incidence of Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD)

The service reported that there are 19 deaf children in Northern Ireland with ANSD, 1% of all deaf children.

Due to newborn hearing screening protocols, ANSD is only reliably diagnosed in babies following test procedures undertaken in those who have spent time in Neonatal Intensive Care Units and is not diagnosed following the screen used in the 'well baby' population. Universal newborn hearing screening has been in place across the UK since 2006. Figures provided through the newborn hearing screening programme indicate that around 1 in 10 congenitally deaf children have ANSD. This suggests therefore some under-reporting by the service. This is probably due to under-identification of ANSD in older deaf children – those who did not receive newborn screening because they were born before the roll-out of universal screening in 2006, those 'well babies' who passed screening and were identified later, and those with acquired/progressive deafness who have not been tested for ANSD.

Incidence of additional special educational needs (SEN)

The service reported that the number of deaf children with an additional special educational need apart from deafness, regardless of whether this need is recognised as a 'primary' or' secondary' need, is 360. This is 26% of the total of deaf children.

The service was asked to give a breakdown by type of additional SEN, using the classification set out in DENI guidance for schools.[4]

[3] Please note, the response from the service did not include the 43 children known to be at Jordanstown School special school.
[4] www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/recording-children-special-educational-needs-guidance-schools

Table 5: Number of deaf children with an additional SEN, by type of SEN

	Number of deaf children with an additional SEN	**Percentage of deaf children with an additional SEN (where type of additional SEN known)**	**Percentage of all deaf children**
Dyslexia/SpLD (DYL)	8	2%	1%
Dyscalculia (DYC)	0	0%	0%
Dyspraxia/DCD	0	0%	0%
Mild Learning Difficulties (MILD)	<5	1%	0%
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	47	13%	3%
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	66	18%	5%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)	16	4%	1%
Social, Emotional and Behavioural (SEBD)	5	1%	0%
ADD/ADHD (ADD)	7	2%	1%
Speech and Language Difficulties (SL)	<5	1%	0%
Autism (AUT)	41	11%	3%
Aspergers (ASP)	0	0%	0%
Blind (BL) or Partially sighted (PS)	6	2%	0%
Multi-sensory impairment (MSI)	<5	1%	0%
Physical (e.g. Cerebral Palsy (CP), Spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH), Muscular dystrophy (MD) or Significant accidental injury (SAI))	44	12%	3%
Medical Conditions/Syndromes (e.g. Epilepsy (EPIL), Asthma (ASTH), Diabetes (DIAB), Anaphylaxis (ANXS), Down (DOWN), Mental Health Issues (MHI), etc.)	109	30%	8%
Other	<5	1%	0%
Total	360	100%	26%

The figures suggest that the most common additional SEN is a medical condition/syndrome, followed by severe learning difficulties. This is in contrast to when we last asked this question in 2017 when the most common additional SEN was moderate learning difficulty, followed by severe learning difficulties.

Separately, research[5] from 1996 suggested that 40% of deaf children have another "clinical or developmental problem". However, this research uses a wide definition of additional "problems" (including, for example, eczema and cerebral palsy) whereas SEN is normally understood to refer to where children have a learning difficulty or disability, which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The definition of learning difficulty or disability 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 age in schools within the local authority area. Again, the figures are therefore not directly comparable with those from CRIDE.

[5] Fortnum, H. Davies, A. (1997) Epidemiology of permanent childhood hearing impairment in Trent Region, 1985-1993 *British Journal of Audiology*, 1997, 31, 409-446

Deaf children with cochlear implants and bone conduction hearing devices

The service reported that 158 children (11% of deaf children) have at least one cochlear implant, up slightly from 8% when this question was asked in 2017.

Eligibility for a cochlear implant is generally restricted to those with a severe to profound hearing loss (and who do not receive adequate benefit from hearing aids). We saw earlier in table 3 that there are 304 children with a severe or profound hearing loss. Whilst this can only be a rough approximation, it can be estimated that 52% of children with severe or profound hearing loss have at least one cochlear implant. If one were to make an assumption that nearly all children with cochlear implants are those with a profound hearing loss, this percentage would rise to 95%.

The service also reported that 30 children (2% of deaf children) have a bone conduction device. This is the same percentage as when the question was asked in 2017.

Additional languages

The service was asked to provide the number of deaf children living in the area that are known to have English as an additional spoken language at home. There were 58 children known to have English as an additional spoken language (4% of the total deaf children reported).

The service was then asked to provide a breakdown of the total number of children who have a **severe or profound bilateral hearing loss**, living in the area, according to which languages are mainly used at school/other education setting. It should be stressed that the use of spoken/sign language in education may not always match the use of spoken/sign language within the home or the child's own preferences.

Table 6: Number of severely/profoundly deaf children, by languages mainly used at school/other educational setting

Language	Total	Percentage of responses (where known)
Spoken English	242	83%
British Sign Language	7	2%
Spoken English together with signed support	18	6%
Other combination	25	9%
Total known	292	
Not known	12	
Total including not known	304	

Deaf children who are new to the country

The service was also asked about the number of deaf children that were known to be from 'newcomer' families, having arrived to the service from outside of the UK or Ireland in the past year. There were 17 deaf children known to be newly arrived. This is around 1% of the adjusted total of deaf children.

Deaf young people post-16

The service was asked how many deaf young people left school at the end of the 2017/18 academic year and their post-school destinations. We also asked how many deaf young people had a transition plan that was informed by a Teacher of the Deaf. The service was not able to respond to these questions though they indicated that they hoped to be able to do so in the future.

Separately, we also asked the service if they support deaf young people in further education or other post-school destinations. It was stated that the service gives advice and transition plans.

Number of deaf children on the service's caseload

CRIDE also asked about deaf children on the service's caseload. By caseload, we mean children who receive some form of support **more than once a year**. Examples of support included direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school and teachers, providing hearing aid checks, etc. Children with temporary deafness are also included in this question.

At least 1,662 deaf children with permanent or temporary deafness were on the service's caseload in total. The service stated that 733 deaf children were seen more than once a year, and 874 were seen once a year. The corresponding caseload figure of children seen more than once a year from 2018 was 926.

CRIDE asked the service how many of the children on their caseload had a temporary conductive hearing loss. There were 207 children with temporary conductive deafness supported by the service. Of these, 55 children were seen more than once a year, and 152 were seen once a year.

How do CRIDE's 2019 figures compare to School Census figures?

Because of the differences in how data have been collected and different definitions used, CRIDE recommends the following figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

School Census figures for 2018/19 identify 1,067 deaf children within the education system. Of these, 758 had a mild or moderate hearing loss and 309 had a severe or profound hearing loss. This represents a decrease of 5 from 2017/18 when the corresponding figure was 1,072 deaf children. The CRIDE survey has identified 1,145 deaf children, which suggests that the School Census is capturing 93% of deaf children identified by CRIDE.

Separately, the School Census reports that 489 have a statement. This equates to roughly half (46%) of the deaf children identified by the School Census and around 43% of those identified by CRIDE.

PART 2: Teachers of the Deaf and other specialist staff

The survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf are working in different settings, including those in a peripatetic role and/or working in resource provisions. Figures are 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.

CRIDE also separately asked about Teachers of the Deaf who work mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. The service in Northern Ireland did not identify any Teachers of the Deaf who fell into this category. Nor did the service identify any Teachers of the Deaf who worked flexibly between a peripatetic role and other settings.

It should also be noted that the figures below do not include Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children, auditory implant centres, charities or any other settings.

In total, there are at least 26 teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in Northern Ireland in a peripatetic role or in a resource provision, of which 25.2 (97%) were Teachers of the Deaf who were fully qualified and 0.8 (3%) were in training.

At the time the survey was completed, there were 3 fte vacant posts. If the vacant posts are added to the total number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment, this would indicate there are at least 29 fte Teacher of the Deaf posts, of which 10% are vacant.

The following table provides a breakdown of Teachers of the Deaf in employment by type of setting.

Table 7: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment overall

	Working mainly as a peripatetic Teacher of the Deaf (total and percentage)	**Working mainly in a resource provision (total and percentage)**	**Teacher of the Deaf posts overall (total and percentage)**
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	22.2 (97%)	3 (3%)	25.2 (100%)
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	0.8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0.8 (100%)
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	23 (88%)	3 (12%)	26 (100%)

We asked about additional qualifications held by Teachers of the Deaf. The service reported that two Teachers of the Deaf, both working in a peripatetic role, had an additional qualification as an educational audiologist. No Teachers of the Deaf with an additional post-graduate qualification in early years support for deaf children were identified.

The following table looks at changes in the reported number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment and posts over successive years.

Table 8: Changes in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf from year to year

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification in employment	34.9	29.6	30	28.6	30.6	32.6	29.3	28.4	25.2
Number of teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in employment	37.3	34.2	35	32.6	34.4	33.4	30.1	29.2	26
Number of vacant posts	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	3
Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (including vacancies)	38.6	34.2	35	32.6	34.4	33.4	31.1	34.2	29

Table 9: Percentage change in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf

	Percentage change over past 7 years (between 2010/11 and 2018/19)	Percentage change over past year (between 2017/18 and 2018/19)
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification in employment	-28%	-11%
Number of teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in employment	-30%	-11%
Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (including vacant posts)	-25%	-15%

CRIDE asked if the service had experienced difficulties in recruiting Teachers of the Deaf to either permanent posts or for supply cover over the past 12 months. There were reported difficulties in recruiting for both, attributed to a lack of qualified applicants for permanent and cover posts.

Age profile of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf

We asked about the age profile of Teachers of the Deaf. This was in response to continuing concerns that the number of newly recruited Teachers of the Deaf is significantly lower than the number of Teachers of the Deaf retiring from the profession. If true, this could potentially lead to a 'capacity crunch' where there are insufficient numbers of Teachers of the Deaf to meet the needs of future deaf children.

The following table indicates that 34% of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 49 and, hence, likely to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. In the previous year's report, this figure stood at 54%.

Table 10: Age profile of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf

	Number of peripatetic teachers	Percentage of total
Aged 49 or under	15	65%
Aged between 50 and 59	5.4	23%
Aged between 60 and 64	2.6	11%
Aged 65 or over	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf caseloads

This section looks at the theoretical caseloads of each visiting Teacher of the Deaf by looking at the number of deaf children living in the area who are not already in specialist provision (regardless of whether they are receiving support or not). There are a range of views on both the usefulness of this and how best to calculate this ratio. Points to consider include:

- areas that are large or rural may, by necessity, have more visiting Teachers of the Deaf than areas that are small and urban because of the need to allow for travel time
- areas in which there are specialist units or special schools may have fewer visiting Teachers of the Deaf because it has been assumed that deaf children with most need are already in specialist provision
- services that are better able to reliably record and identify how many deaf children, including those over 16, are in their area may appear to have heavier caseloads than services which have only given a figure for the number of deaf children they 'know' about
- the theoretical caseload does not tell us about the outcomes achieved by deaf children in the area.

In simple terms and for consistency across all parts of the UK, CRIDE calculates the theoretical caseloads by dividing the number of permanently deaf children living in any given area and in non-specialist provision[6] by the number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf who are qualified or in training for the mandatory qualification[7]. This will include some deaf children in some areas who are not being actively supported by the service.

The CRIDE survey results show that each visiting (peripatetic) Teacher of the Deaf has a theoretical average caseload of 58 deaf children.

Other specialist staff

The survey responses suggest that there are four fte other specialist staff in total, all of whom were reported as working in resource provisions. These were all Teaching assistants/Classroom support assistants.

[6] This includes deaf children reported as being: supported at home (e.g. home educated or pre-school), in early years settings, in mainstream state funded schools, in mainstream independent schools, other special schools (i.e. those for disabled children more generally) or in post-16 provision. This excludes deaf children reported as being in mainstream schools with resource provision or special schools for deaf children.

[7] This excludes any teachers who are working as Teachers of the Deaf but who are not qualified nor in training.

PART 3: Support provided

Number of resource provisions

We asked the service about the number of resource provisions (whether in mainstream or special schools). Two primary resource provisions and one secondary resource provision were reported. This is unchanged from previous years.

Eligibility criteria/frameworks

The service reported that there had not been any changes to their support allocation between the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years.

The service reported that they use the NatSIP Eligibility Framework for Scoring Support Levels (2017) to help determine the level of support provided by Teachers of the Deaf to children. The framework includes two examples for how support could be provided. The service reported that they used example two to determine the quantity of support that a child will receive.

Quality standards

The service was asked to report which quality standards they used to review service development. It was reported that the following were used:

- NatSIP: Quality Standards for Sensory Support Services in England (2016)
- NDCS Quality Standards: Early years support for children with a hearing loss, aged 0 to 5 (England)
- Newborn hearing screening programme quality standards
- NatSIP Quality Improvement Support Pack (2016).

We then asked if they had shared the findings of any such audits or any work they had done in relation to the above quality standards with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership or its Locality Planning Groups over the past year. The service reported that it had not.

Outcomes

The service reported that they do not collect data on educational outcomes achieved by deaf children at the end of Key Stage 4, though they plan to do so in future.

PART 4: Background and methodology

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in using research to improve the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children. At the time the survey was sent out, representatives included: the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), consultants with expertise in deafness, City, University of London, the Ear Foundation, the National Deaf Children's Society, the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP), the former head of Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, Mary Hare School, the specialist education service for deaf children in Kent and Norfolk, University of Edinburgh, University of Leeds and UCL.

The survey was designed and created by members of CRIDE. The CRIDE survey alternates between a full and a shorter survey from year to year. In 2019, a full survey was issued.

The survey was sent to the Education Authority in February 2019 by National Deaf Children's Society staff on behalf of CRIDE.

Analysis of the results and drafting of this report was largely completed by the National Deaf Children's Society, with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE.

CRIDE would like to thank the service for taking the time to complete this survey. 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 cride@ndcs.org.uk.