

11th January, 2018

As a founder member of CRIDE (Consortium for Research in Deaf Education), BATOD (British Association of Teachers of the Deaf) shares the concern of other members about the continuing reduction in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf which the recently published 2017 report has shown. Coupled with the age profile which means that over half of Teachers of the Deaf are likely to retire in the next ten years it is imperative that the supply is addressed as a matter of urgency. Already there is evidence that deaf children are in some areas receiving less support from specialist Teachers of the Deaf.

This is occurring at a time of severe financial pressures on LAs affecting education, health and social care provision which has also led to the restructuring of specialist services and reductions in support to deaf children.

It is clear that some LAs are now struggling to appoint Teachers of the Deaf even where the funds are available.

There continues to be an attainment gap between deaf children and their hearing peers which will only increase if specialist support from Teachers of the Deaf and educational audiologists with the mandatory qualification is diminished. Furthermore, it is clear that there is significant under-reporting of deaf children's attainments. The CRIDE report shows that the school Census is failing to capture around 42% of deaf children.

It is essential that an urgent initiative is put into place, alongside a recruitment drive, to provide bursaries and funding support to training courses to allow interested teachers to undertake the mandatory training. BATOD urges the Department to meet with CRIDE to discuss ways forward so that this vulnerable group of children and young people can be given the support they need.

Stuart Whyte, President

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