

# The benefits of BATOD

Paul Simpson highlights the wide range of BATOD's activities as well as the professional opportunities for members and the work done on their behalf

Every year BATOD produces an Annual Report to be presented to members in advance of the Annual General Meeting. The report usually describes one or two specific aspects of the year's activity such as collaboration with other bodies including the government, members' participation in the Association, work on access to examinations or supporting members in their Continuing Professional Development.

Recent communications with some members have indicated that not all (we have 1292 mainly Full members at the time of writing) are aware of the full extent of BATOD's activities. This short article aims to update members on the current range.

The benefits of BATOD membership fall into two categories – tangible and intangible. We are delighted that in the era of increasing online publication the hard copy of the Association magazine is still highly prized by members. Their feedback is that they appreciate the range of content – both the thematic articles (recently these have included language development, family support and practical audiology) and the variety of other articles (topics have included deaf children overseas, inclusion and music and communication) as well as the articles updating members on general BATOD activities such as accounts of regional, national and international conferences. In addition to the magazine there is Deafness and Education International, a peer reviewed Journal which is of particular value to Teachers of Deaf in training but also which serves to enhance and support members' professional development throughout their careers. We are all aware of how quickly the field changes and it is vital in the interests of the deaf children and their families that Teachers of Deaf keep up to date with the latest developments in language, audiology and education in general. Evidence-based research with its practical implications is crucial and the Journal provides this.

We are pleased with our new website which has already attracted new members. The initial feedback has been very positive and it is being widely used for research purposes (access to magazines and journals going back many years), our new CPD area, new job opportunities for Teachers of Deaf (still the most visited page) and a range of news items, blogs and articles. The history section of the website continues to develop and members are encouraged both to consult it and, where possible, submit contributions to further enhance it.

In addition to these three key elements, members also have access to reduced fees for national and regional conferences and other events. These provide development opportunities but also the equally beneficial networking possibilities which are vital to colleagues working in isolated circumstances eg resource bases

with only one ToD or peripatetic teachers.

In addition to these tangible benefits, BATOD also offers its members – and the profession as a whole – other benefits which are less tangible but no less important for the professional life of all Teachers of Deaf and the children and young people with whom they work. Members' subscriptions, apart from allowing us to provide the benefits described earlier in this article, permit the association to function – to meet at national level, to support representation at meetings and to fulfil its various financial obligations as a member of consortia and other bodies. This infrastructure permits BATOD to play an important role on the national Deaf Education stage. This is because we have the great majority of practising Teachers of Deaf in our membership, perhaps up to 80% (some are also members of other bodies) – BATOD is the sole UK-wide association of Teachers of Deaf. Thus the Department for Education, Ofqual and other organisations know that when they wish to consult with or ask questions of the profession, BATOD is the body to approach. It is critical therefore that we continue to display high Teacher of the Deaf membership so as to be seen to be representing the great majority of the profession across the country.

One of the key annual submissions BATOD makes on behalf of its members is to the School Teachers Review Body in connection with pay and conditions. On occasion we have given oral evidence to the Review Body. In our submissions we concentrate on aspects specific to Teachers of Deaf such as the SEND allowances. All our submissions can be read on the BATOD website.

Another key area is the close and long-standing involvement we have had with Ofqual and the Joint Council for Qualifications in relation to all aspects of access arrangements. Every year we are one of a small group of organisations asked to comment on the document of regulations for the forthcoming year's access arrangements. We have found them very responsive to comments and suggestions from members of the profession and they have always sought to facilitate our requests rather than object to them. At times we agree that suggestions would not be acceptable as they may affect the validity of the assessments.

Over many years, despite the challenges of dealing with changing government personnel, BATOD has developed a good relationship with the Department for Education again as representatives of the whole profession. This has permitted us to maintain strong support for the mandatory qualification (including through our work with the Ovingdean Hall Foundation in providing scholarships for teachers wishing to train as ToDs each year but not working in schools or services), as well as contributing to a

range of consultations of specific relevance to deaf children and Teachers of the Deaf. Needless to say, our comments are not always taken on board but they have the weight of the profession behind them and this has an important influence on the Government. This is strengthened by our collaboration with services, schools and other organisations through the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) which also has strong links with the government and on whose reference group BATOD sits. We are at the heart of links between teachers of sensory impaired children and the Government policy makers.

BATOD also plays a key role in some other important consortia such as CRIDE (the Consortium for Research in Deaf Education) and the Deaf Education Support Forum which BATOD chairs.

Very strong links are also maintained with the National Deaf Children's Society and we have recently renewed a strong rapport with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists in particular over our joint protocol on Teachers of the Deaf working with Speech and Language Therapists. In each case colleagues are aware that BATOD speaks with the voice of the profession.

How can we say this? BATOD is run entirely by its members. Through our regional and national committees

of which there are eight and our National Executive Council (NEC) on which 12 elected members sit (six elected each year; members put themselves up for re-election every two years until they have completed six years when they must step down for at least a year) as well as officers of the Association and representatives from each of the eight regions and nations, all decision making takes place. You can directly influence the association and the work it does to support the profession and deaf children and young people by participating in these bodies.

If you are interested in joining your local group, perhaps even joining the committee, the details are always to be found in the magazine. You can also, providing you are a full member, stand for one of the six elected places on the NEC every year. Watch out for the nomination forms in the September magazine each year. You can make a difference. Please consider participating – we need you! ■



*Paul Simpson is the National Executive Officer of BATOD*

## BATOD was there representing you...

Between the NEC meetings, members of BATOD attend various meetings that are of particular interest to Teachers of the Deaf. This list is not exhaustive. Your representatives at the meetings listed (as known at the time of writing) included: Andrea Baker, David Canning, Sue Denny, Steph Halder, Emma Parker, Elizabeth Reed-Beadle, Jackie Salter, Paul Simpson, Alison Weaver.

Date	External participants	Purpose of meeting	Venue
<b>September</b>			
8	Specialist Support Professionals for Deaf Students	Initial workshop	UCLAN, Preston
10	CRIDE	Regular meeting	Frank Barnes School, London
14	Roma research project	Steering meeting	County Hall, Sheffield
18	DfE	Validation of overseas qualifications	Telephone
19	FLSE	National SEND forum	Bevis Marks, London
20	NDCS	Regular liaison meeting	NDCS, London
21	NatSIP	Reference and Project Groups	SENSE
21	University of Manchester	Farewell to Wendy McCracken	University of Manchester
<b>October</b>			
1	Deaf Education Support Forum	Regular meeting	NDCS, London
3	NatSIP	HOSS working day	Wesley House, London
5	Ofqual	Access Consultation Forum	Ofqual, Coventry
6	FEAPDA	Council meeting	Luxembourg
16	UK Children's radio aid group	Regular meeting	University College London
16	Communication Trust Consortium	Regular meeting	ICAN Office, London

Please inform the National Executive Officer, Paul Simpson, if you know of any meetings where you feel representation on behalf of Teachers of the Deaf would be of benefit. Although there is no guarantee that BATOD would be able to attend every meeting, situations could be monitored and the interests of ToDs represented.

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