**No deaf child left behind – proposal for a central bursary scheme to cover the training costs of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf**

**Summary**

This paper proposes the introduction of a bursary scheme to fund the training costs of Teachers of the Deaf in England.

We believe a central bursary scheme is needed for the following reasons:

* there has been an 11.5% decline in the number of qualified or trainee Teachers of the Deaf in England since 2011
* 32% of services in England are reporting difficulties in recruiting Teachers of the Deaf or supply cover over the previous 12 months[[1]](#footnote-1)
* over half of all Qualified Teachers of the Deaf are due to retire in the next 10 to 15 years
* research by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) has uncovered evidence that local authorities are failing to plan for future workforce needs.

A central bursary scheme could be delivered at a cost of up to £3.3 million over a three-year period and would send a powerful signal of the government’s commitment to ensuring deaf children get the specialist support they need.

**Background – how this paper has been prepared**

This paper has been jointly produced by the National Deaf Children’s Society and the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD).

Many of the figures used in this report are taken from reports produced by the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE), who carry out an annual survey of local authorities across England.[[2]](#footnote-2) Unless stated otherwise, data on numbers of Teachers of the Deaf will include:

* Teachers of the Deaf who are working in a peripatetic role, in a resource provision and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children[[3]](#footnote-3).
* Teachers of the Deaf who hold the mandatory qualification **or** who are in training. We have included trainee Teachers of the Deaf as most will be working as a Teacher of the Deaf while they undergo training.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Teachers of the Deaf working in England.

This paper also draws from:

* A survey of Teachers of the Deaf carried out by the National Deaf Children’s Society, with support from BATOD, in January 2019. This received 625 responses from across the UK.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* *A report on the factors promoting and inhibiting the successful supply of specialist teachers of children with sensory impairment*[[6]](#footnote-6)(2016) by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP).
* Anecdotal evidence from individual Teachers of the Deaf and managers. This includes evidence collected through the Heads of Sensory Services (HOSS) forum, managed by NatSIP.

**Background – deaf education**

There are more than 45,000 deaf children across England.

Deafness is a low incidence disability. This means that most mainstream teachers will not be teaching a deaf child at any one time and may only do so occasionally. They will have relatively few opportunities to apply any knowledge or expertise they have previously acquired related to effective practice in teaching or supporting deaf children. Around 80% of deaf children attend mainstream schools,

In addition, most deaf children (over 90%)[[7]](#footnote-7) will be born to hearing parents who have no prior experience of deafness.

Qualified Teachers of the Deaf are teachers who have gained an additional qualification (usually known as the ‘mandatory qualification’) in teaching deaf children. They provide specialist expertise to those professionals and families when they need it. In the early years, they play a key early intervention role in providing advice to families about language and communication in the key developmental years. They also play a key role in helping all teachers to understand how to differentiate the curriculum and provide effective support, as well as directly providing one-to-one teaching and support to children.

Over half (52%) of Teachers of the Deaf work in a ‘peripatetic’ or visiting role, providing support to families in the early years and to deaf children and their teachers in mainstream schools. Around 27% work in resource provisions and 17% in special schools for deaf children.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Evidence commissioned by the Department for Education[[9]](#footnote-9), reports from Ofsted[[10]](#footnote-10) and an international literature review[[11]](#footnote-11) have talked of the importance of the Qualified Teacher of the Deaf role. Parents of deaf children also regularly affirm the importance of this role in consultation exercises and surveys with the National Deaf Children’s Society, as the following quote shows:

*“Our [Teacher of the Deaf] is the only member of staff who truly understands and liaises with all the team involved with our son, from audiologist, SLT [speech and language therapist], teachers to our family. Communication between services would not exist if it was not for them. They know the specific and very individual needs of my child as they know him very well… All the staff from nursery, pre-school and school have been very impressed with our Teacher of the Deaf and feel they would not have been able to support our son as well without their input.”*

**Background – the mandatory qualification**

In England, legislation requires that teachers of classes of deaf children (i.e. those in resource provisions or special schools) must hold the mandatory qualification or be in training to gain the qualification within three years. It is also strongly recommended in statutory guidance[[12]](#footnote-12) that peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf, working for the local authority specialist education service for deaf children, hold the qualification.

The mandatory qualification is usually acquired after two-years of part-time study, leading to a post-graduate diploma. A small number of teachers undertake it as one year’s full-time study. There are four providers of the qualification across England – Mary Hare/University of Hertfordshire and the Universities of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester[[13]](#footnote-13).

Most will be working as an unqualified Teacher of the Deaf whilst undergoing training. Indeed, 14% of Teacher of the Deaf posts are filled by trainee Teachers of the Deaf.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The mandatory qualification is one of the few mechanisms available to maintain the status and quality of Teachers of the Deaf, as well as the support available to deaf children. It provides parents of deaf children with the assurance that the support their child receives will be informed by expertise in deafness – this is an assurance that is not available to parents of, for example, children with autism.

**Background – numbers of Teachers of the Deaf**

The table below looks at changes in the number of qualified or trainee Teachers of the Deaf since CRIDE began in 2011.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015[[15]](#footnote-15)** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Total** | 1,153.7 | 1,125.6 | 1,110.3 | 1,071.3 | 1,117.85 | 1,047.18 | 1,037.35 | 1,020.62 |

In summary, this shows that:

* there has been an 11.5% decline since 2011 in the number of qualified or trainee Teachers of the Deaf
* the yearly decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf has averaged at 1.7%.

In addition, the number of vacant posts at any one time has averaged 43 since 2011.[[16]](#footnote-16)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| **Number of vacant posts** | 34 | 44.5 | 40.8 | 45.8 | 45.6 | 60.9 | 44.65 | 30.8 |

As noted at the start of the paper, 32% of services in England reported to CRIDE that they had experienced difficulties in recruiting Teachers of the Deaf or supply cover over the previous 12 months.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Finally, there is also compelling evidence around the age profile of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf[[18]](#footnote-18).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Number of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf** |
| **Aged 49 or under** | 276.8 (43%) |
| **Aged between 50 and 59** | 307.55 (48%) |
| **Aged between 60 and 64** | 54.5 (8%) |
| **Aged 65 or over** | 3.8 (1%) |
| **Total** | 642.65 (100%) |

These figures suggest that 57% of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50 and hence are due to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. We recognise – as the above shows – some may choose to take late retirement and continue to work beyond the age of 60. However, we have no way of modelling or predicting exactly how many are likely to do so. In addition, our data is not granular enough to establish the exact ages of Teachers of the Deaf.

Looking at the age profile of mainstream teachers, it seems clear, from analysis of data from the 2017 School Workforce Census, that the age profile of Teachers of the Deaf is significantly higher. Whilst 57% of Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50, the corresponding figure for teachers in state-funded schools is 17%.[[19]](#footnote-19) We also note from the School Workforce Census that the number of teachers has risen by 3% from 440,000 to 451,900 between 2011 and 2017.

*Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children*

Data on numbers of Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children is collected on an ad hoc basis by CRIDE and so (unless stated otherwise) are not included in the above section. Figures from 2016 suggested there are around 251.7 Teachers of the Deaf across Great Britain working in special schools for deaf children. Provisional figures from 2018 suggest this has fallen to approximately 230[[20]](#footnote-20). This indicates that the trend towards fewer Teachers of the Deaf exists across the sector. This is also supported by figures which show that the number of deaf children in special schools is falling[[21]](#footnote-21). It should also be noted that two special schools for deaf children have closed in recent years[[22]](#footnote-22).

*Numbers currently in training*

From contacting the four training providers in England, we understand that 113 teachers graduated as Qualified Teachers of the Deaf in summer 2018 and that 96 are expected to graduate in summer 2019, and 94 in 2020. Over three years, this has averaged out at 101 in each year. However, anecdotal evidence from training providers suggests there are concerns about numbers for future courses with some reporting that they are receiving fewer enquiries.

From talking to training providers and services, our understanding is that the attrition or drop-out rate among Teachers of the Deaf is relatively low.

**Why central action is needed**

Both the National Deaf Children’s Society and BATOD take the strong view that Teachers of the Deaf play a key early intervention role in ensuring that deaf children achieve good language and communication skills, make good progress in schools and make a successful transition into adulthood. We are concerned that falling numbers of Teachers of the Deaf will lead to a rationing of support, particularly to children with perceived ‘lesser’ needs. In our view, this will result in families and mainstream teachers finding it harder to access expert advice on supporting deaf children and ultimately depress deaf children’s attainment in education. This is likely to have longer-term costs, both in terms of the potential need for more costly remedial interventions later in life and/or greater demand for specialist placements. It will also likely reduce deaf young people’s employment prospects.

The previous section provided figures showing a significant decline in the numbers of Teachers of the Deaf. However, there is little evidence that local authorities are taking action in response.

As set out in the following section, our evidence shows that there is little incentive for local authorities, particularly smaller ones, to be proactive in ensuring there are sufficient numbers of Teachers of the Deaf being trained to meet future needs. Many will no longer be able to meet the financial cost of training new staff whilst also employing someone who has yet to retire.

In 2016, NatSIP published a paper on the supply of specialist teachers of children with sensory impairments.[[23]](#footnote-23) This paper drew from the views of 54 Heads of Sensory Services, 74 trainee Teachers of the Deaf or Teachers of the Vision Impaired, 15 newly qualified Teachers and the training providers of the mandatory qualification across the UK.

This paper identified the lack of funding to cover the costs of training as a major factor inhibiting the supply of Teachers of the Deaf. As one Head of Service stated:

*“We have a significant number of people due to retire in the next two or three years but can no longer pay to train local teachers in advance of this to be available to take their places.”*

More recently, we asked members of the Heads of Sensory Services (HOSS) forum in February 2019 for views on how easy/difficult it was for them to fund the training of a new Teacher of the Deaf. We were particularly interested in whether schools/services were funding this in advance or anticipation of a post becoming vacant (e.g. if they knew that someone was planning to retire within two years). Responses included:

*“We couldn’t train in advance as the teachers who want to train would first have to be interviewed and offered the post. If the person was in mainstream school then there would be issues about releasing them for training and teaching placements prior to them leaving their current position.”*

*“The local authority (LA) does not have any funding available to fund training even when a post has become vacant. Managers of a services within this LA need to fund training from within their allocated budgets. This has not been possible given the funding required to fund a 2 year course, attendance at study days, time and expenses for visits and resources.”*

*“We have to wait until we have appointed before funding is available. From the LA’s point of view there is no vacancy until the post is an actual vacancy... Until a person is appointed I think it would be difficult to tie them into working for the LA on completion of their qualification.”*

We also received the following response from a head of a special school for deaf children:

*“This is a very pressing issue for us as a special school for deaf children. It is exceptionally rare now that we are actually able to appoint anyone who already has the mandatory qualification, especially if also looking for a subject specialism and expertise in British Sign Language. Our focus has switched to ‘growing our own’ and retention of staff. Whilst we have had a lot of success regarding this, there is still a pressing need for more teachers because of the growth of the school and changes e.g. through maternity leave. In the past we have seen significant numbers of staff training whilst employed by us then move on to peripatetic work. They continue as Teachers of the Deaf which is great but the financial impact of training has been borne by the school.*

*Funding is becoming increasingly difficult… In the past we have had large contributions from the LA to support this but more recently the university fees only have been covered and we have been advised not even this may be supported in the future. We therefore have a chunk of our school budget every year allocated to Teacher of the Deaf training.”*

Many respondents indicated that they themselves would make use of any bursary scheme to fund the training costs of new Teachers of the Deaf. Many spoke of the impact this would have in terms of reducing pressures on their budgets and/or allowing more CPD opportunities for existing Teachers of the Deaf.

*Other factors*

We also believe that the decline in special schools for deaf children and resource provisions has also compounded this issue. CRIDE has found that there has been a 8% decline in the number of resource provisions for deaf children since 2016, falling from 260 to 240 in two years. In addition, since 2015, two special schools for deaf children have closed. The longer-term decline is much more stark. We believe that there were around 75 special schools and 500 resource provisions in 1982.

It can be argued that one of the side-effects of this long-term decline has been to reduce the number of schools that might have previously have funded the training of new Teachers of the Deaf. In other words, there is less volume and slack in the system.

Separately, one specific issue that the NatSIP paper, mentioned earlier, identified was around changes to the relationship between the local authority and schools with resource provisions over time. With the trend to schools becoming academies, as well as changes to school funding, schools with resource provisions are now less likely to be directly managed by the local authority. A number of Heads of Services reported that they were less able to influence decisions about recruitment in those resource provisions, and that was a high rate of vacant posts in resource provisions. The paper found that the delegation of funding to resource provisions was leading to a “diffusion of responsibility” around future workforce planning, with local authorities and schools not working together as effectively on the future training of Teachers of the Deaf as they might have done before.

We believe that headteachers in schools that host resource provisions are less likely to see themselves as having a responsibility to train new Teachers of the Deaf. In addition, they will also be subject to other funding pressures within the school.

*Other reasons for the decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf*

A decline in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf might not be seen as concerning if there was slack ‘capacity’ within the workforce, or if Teachers of the Deaf were being deployed or used in a more efficient or productive way.

We do not believe this is the case for a range of reasons. For example, CRIDE figures around the ‘theoretical caseload’[[24]](#footnote-24) of Teachers of the Deaf suggest that they are being asked to support more and more children. In 2017, the theoretical caseload for each Teacher of the Deaf was 60. This was an increase from 2015 when it stood at 49 and from 2013 when it stood at 44.

In addition, conversations with services suggest a trend towards rationing of services. In particular, it is clear that it many areas, support for children with mild and unilateral hearing loss is being cut back (despite research[[25]](#footnote-25) showing the challenges that this group of children still experience). Some services have also reported a trend away from children being placed/educated in specialist provision, which is putting greater pressure on peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf.

This is supported by the findings from our short survey of Teachers of the Deaf in January 2019, which attracted responses from 625 Teachers of the Deaf. In particular, we found that:

* 85% reported that their workload had increased since 2014, of which 56% reported it had increased significantly.
* 87% stated that they had to work additional hours to keep up with their workload.
* 58% of respondents felt there was less support available for deaf children now, compared to in 2014. Common themes that emerged in the qualitative responses to this question included less support for children with a unilateral, mild or moderate hearing loss, or glue ear; young people in further education; and those without an Education, Health and Care plan.

We also know from CRIDE that the reported number of deaf children is rising. This may be down to better reporting by local authorities. However, it is also possible that there has been a genuine demographic increase. There is also good reason to believe that the population of deaf children is becoming more heterogeneous – i.e. we are seeing more deaf children with additional needs (children who previously would not have survived beyond birth) and from families who have migrated to this country.

We also know there is considerable unmet need. For example, in our experience, relatively few specialist education services provide support to deaf young people in post-16 settings, despite the shift to a 0 to 25 SEND framework in the 2014 SEND Code of Practice. Anecdotally, we also hear from many services that they do not have the capacity to do more to deliver interventions to promote the emotional wellbeing of deaf children and young people. Such interventions may well help prevent more serious problems from emerging later in life.

Finally, we also know that, whilst there have been improvements over the long-term, deaf children still underachieve throughout their education compared to their hearing peers – at GCSE level, children with a hearing loss as their primary special educational need achieved an average Attainment 8 score of 39.2 compared to 49.8 for children with no identified special educational need. Progress 8 scores also suggest that deaf children fall behind during secondary education compared to children on the same starting ability.[[26]](#footnote-26)

In light of the arguments made in this section, and given the alarming figures shown earlier, we believe a national systematic approach and the establishment of a central bursary scheme is needed to address this issue.

**How a central bursary would work – detail**

*How many Teachers of the Deaf are needed?*

Identifying the ‘optimum’ numbers of Teachers of the Deaf is challenging. There is little research on what is an appropriate caseload for a Teacher of the Deaf. In addition, Teachers of the Deaf will be likely to have very different caseloads depending on, for example, geographical factors, whether there is already any specialist provision in the area and the individual needs of the deaf children and families they are supporting.

This paper proposes a ‘stem-the-tide’ approach which would look to cover existing costs of training new Teachers of the Deaf, whilst funding additional numbers to stem anticipated reductions in the next three years. The below sets our modelling on how many places would need to be funded.

We know that:

* Based on data from the training providers (as shown on page 4), the average number of trainees graduating as a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf is expected to average out at 101 between 2018 and 2020. Again, it should be noted that most trainees will be working as Teachers of the Deaf whilst undergoing the mandatory qualification.
* The average number of vacant posts over the past 7 years has been running at 43 a year (as shown on page 3).

However, the above doesn’t take into account the ongoing downwards push on numbers of Teachers of the Deaf. We have seen an average yearly decrease of 1.7% in the number of Teachers of the Deaf since 2011. If this continues, we can expect to see a decline of 17 to 18 Teachers of the Deaf in each year over the next three years[[27]](#footnote-27).

Taking these figures together, as the following table shows, this indicates a need to fund 132 to 133 places a year or 398 over three years.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| To maintain existing numbers in training | 101 | 101 | 101 |
| To address existing number of vacant posts | 43 (or 14 a year) | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| To address a yearly 1.6% decline | 17 | 18 | 18 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total | 132 | 133 | 133 |
| Total over three years | 398 | | |

*The cost of a bursary*

The table below provides current figures for the cost of a two-year post-graduate qualification.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Training provider | 2018/19 costs |
| Mary Hare/University of Hertfordshire | £7,800 |
| University of Birmingham | £8,004 |
| University of Leeds | £8,000 |
| University of Manchester | £7,600 |
| Average | £7,851 |

We asked the four training providers about the likely cost of the qualification in future years. They were unable to give us any exact figures or make confident predictions. However, one informed us that they understood their university would be applying a 12% increase in future years to reflect wider growing pressures on the university budget. The others expected costs to rise in line with inflation. At the time of writing, inflation was running at 2.4% and we have used this figure for the following projections. We would welcome advice on whether an alternative projection might be more appropriate.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| Expected average cost of course[[28]](#footnote-28) | £8,039 | £8,232 | £8,430 |
| Number of places to fund | 132 | 133 | 133 |
| Expected total cost each year | £1,061,204 | £1,094,905 | £1,121,183 |

The total cost over three years would be **£3,277,292**.

It is important to be clear that the above would cover the cost of university fees only, and does not include the additional costs involved in training as Teachers of the Deaf. In particular, it does not include travel/accommodation costs for trainee Teachers of the Deaf nor does it include any costs around supply cover for schools/services. This paper assumes that these costs will be covered by schools, services or individual trainee Teachers of the Deaf.

It should also be noted that, as we do not have long-term figures for the number of Teachers of the Deaf in special schools for deaf children, we have not attempted to model the impact of the decline that we’ve seen in these schools into the above projections. This means that it is likely that the above projections slightly understate the actual funding needed.

*How the bursary could be issued*

We propose that the fund run for at least three years, with decisions on any further expansion taken in 2021, following a review of how the fund has worked and the impact it has had. By this time, it is possible that the funding costs can be recovered through the apprenticeships fund (see later).

In line with the approach taken for the Educational Psychology Funded Training Scheme, we would suggest eligibility criteria along the following lines.

Those wishing to undertake the training should:

* have already qualified as teachers
* have at least one year’s experience of working as a teacher[[29]](#footnote-29)
* be able to provide two references
* be resident in England
* have been accepted at one of the four training providers in England
* commit to working as a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf for two years post-qualification or to repaying part of the training costs if they leave within two years.

The bursary would be open to applications from services or schools, as well as individuals who are seeking to become Teachers of the Deaf.

We anticipate it should be possible to start issuing grants for courses starting in September 2019. We anticipate though that the bulk of applications would come in 2020 and 2021.

We have been reassured by the training providers that they would seek to maintain the quality of those qualifying as Teachers of the Deaf. They have the iterated the long-term importance to them of maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

We propose that a panel of representatives from the National Deaf Children’s Society and BATOD be set up to review applications to the bursary and approve them against the above criteria.

*Evaluation*

We will work with the four Teacher of the Deaf training providers in England to monitor the number of people applying to train to be Qualified Teachers of the Deaf, as well as numbers expected to graduate in each year.

Future CRIDE surveys will also enable us to determine if the bursary has had an impact in increasing the overall number of Teachers of the Deaf and/or the number of vacant posts. It is CRIDE’s intention to continue a separate annual survey of special schools for deaf children in 2019 and thereafter.

We will also ask services, either through CRIDE or through another survey, if services had made use of the bursary, whether they had experienced any difficulties or challenges in accessing the bursary, and the impact it has made.

These evaluation activities can be carried out alongside existing planned activities at no additional cost. The National Deaf Children’s Society would take the lead in reporting to and updating the Department for Education on how the bursary is being spent. We would cover these administrative costs through our own resources.

**Other points and considerations**

*Apprenticeships*

We anticipate that the need to continue to fund the training costs of new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf will continue beyond three years. We are keen to explore whether the training costs could be recouped through the apprenticeships fund. We are not aware of any reason why teachers cannot train to be Qualified Teachers of the Deaf as level 7 apprentices.

We recognise that any new apprenticeship would have to be employee-led. This could be done through NatSIP, which already includes representatives from special schools and services and which is already undertaking a review of the mandatory qualification.

Initial discussions over this with training providers and heads of services have been encouraging. However, we recognise that setting up a new apprenticeship pathway is not an easy task and we anticipate it will take time to develop the case and then for the training providers to make the necessary changes.

*Sharing costs with schools/services*

We considered whether the bursary could be run on the basis that costs be shared between the Department for Education and local authorities and/or special schools/resource provisions. We do not believe this would be an effective approach for the following reasons:

* There is a national need for new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf. Given that deafness is a low incidence need, it is important that there is maximum flexibility in where they work and in what settings.
* Given wider pressures on local authority budgets, it may be a challenge for some local authorities to make this commitment.
* Our past experience suggests that local authorities, particularly smaller ones, are not always well-placed to take a long-term view on future staffing needs in this area.

We also considered whether the bursary fund should cover the training costs where local authorities or providers were already planning to cover these costs. As set out earlier, around 100 teachers are already training to be Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and most of these will be funded by the local authority/provider. Initially, we proposed that we would only take applications from individuals or from small services where an argument was convincingly made that they could not cover the training costs themselves. Ultimately, however, we concluded that it would be very difficult to distinguish between ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ candidates in this way, and that some services/providers may try to work around any such criteria.

In addition, we are also aware of the wider spending pressures that services are subject to and that even large services and schools are struggling to cover the training costs of new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf. On this basis, we propose that the fund seeks to cover the prospective costs of training new Qualified Teachers of the Deaf over the next three years.

*Loans to students undertaking a Masters qualification*

In developing this paper, we were asked if trainee Teachers of the Deaf could seek funding instead from government loan schemes for those studying for a Masters (MA) qualifications.

The specification for the mandatory qualification itself does not specify what level the qualification should be at. This is left to the discretion of the training providers who have all consistently established that it should be at least a post-graduate diploma qualification, with an option to have a more advanced MA qualification. As far as we are aware, all providers offer both options.

Currently, training for most Teachers of the Deaf is funded by the school/service. Schools/services elect to do this as the shortage of qualified Teachers of the Deaf means they are finding it extremely challenging to recruit someone who already holds the qualification. From their perspective, it is cheaper and quicker to gain the mandatory qualification through the diploma. There is therefore less incentive for them to fund a further year to allow a Teacher of the Deaf to complete a dissertation and gain a MA qualification.

The MA option is likely to appeal more to the minority who are self-funding, and they may be interested in applying for a government loan.

However, whilst we believe a career as a Teacher of the Deaf is extremely worthwhile and exciting, we are concerned that relatively few people would elect to take on this cost. In addition, we believe that trainee Teachers of the Deaf would only be incentivised to do this if there was no other funding available. We obviously would not want to discourage schools/services from covering the costs of training in favour of requiring teachers to take out loans, given the impact it would have on deaf children and families needing support from a Teacher of the Deaf.

*Existing review of the mandatory qualification*

The Department for Education has already asked NatSIP to carry out a review of the content of the mandatory qualification. However, our understanding is that it is unlikely that any major changes will be made to the actual content of the course until 2020. We feel that waiting until the review is complete risks leaving it too late to address the emerging shortfall in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf.

As set out earlier, we recommend that NatSIP be specifically tasked with looking at whether the qualification could be taught as an apprenticeship to help support the future sustainability of this qualification.

*Promoting the Qualified Teacher of the Deaf role*

We believe that being a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf is an exciting career pathway that may appeal to a large number of teachers. Working with BATOD, the National Deaf Children’s Society would also meet the costs of promoting and disseminating information about the fund to prospective Qualified Teachers of the Deaf. We would look to the four training providers for support from this. Where possible, we would also look to link up with existing information portals for prospective mainstream teachers, including those run by the Department for Education.

**Conclusion**

Over the past year, there has been much discussion in Parliament around the overall quality of support to children with special educational needs and disabilities. MPs have raised concerns in a number of debates. More recently, the Education Select Committee has received evidence from the National Deaf Children’s Society of significant concerns by parents of deaf children on deaf education. We believe that investment in Qualified Teachers of the Deaf will do much to alleviate these concerns, as well as providing the Department for Education with an opportunity to send a powerful signal that they recognise the importance of this role in terms of supporting deaf children’s education.

1. 22% of services said they had difficulties in recruiting for a permanent post whilst 26% reported difficulties in recruiting for supply cover. The 32% figure refers to those who experienced difficulties in either. See page 9/10 of the CRIDE England 2018 report, available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 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. Current members include: Angela Deckett (National Deaf Children’s Society), Bob Denman (NatSIP), Fiona Kyle (City, University of London), Merle Mahon (UCL), Stevie Mayhook (consultant), Ian Noon (National Deaf Children’s Society), Rachel O’Neill (University of Edinburgh), Jackie Salter (University of Leeds), Karen Simpson (former Head of Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children), Paul Simpson (BATOD), Karen Taylor (Norfolk),Simon Thompson (Mary Hare),Tina Wakefield (Ear Foundation) and Suzanne Wilkins (Kent). Full reports from CRIDE are available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE). Figures from year to year should be used with caution given the differences in response rates that can occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. CRIDE started asking for data on number of Teachers of the Deaf in special schools or colleges not specifically for deaf children in 2016. This means that figures from pre and post 2016 are not directly comparable. However, it should be noted that the inclusion of these teachers did not lead to an overall increase in the total recorded by CRIDE. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This raises a range of other issues around how these trainee Teachers of the Deaf are supervised and supported whilst supporting deaf children. However, we regard these issues as outside the scope of this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. We are not able to segment the responses to include only those from England. However, we expect that the majority of responses will be from Teachers of the Deaf working in England. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers](http://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Mitchell, R.E. and Karchmer, M.A. Chasing the Mythical Ten Percent: Parental Hearing Status of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in the United States. *Sign Language Studies*. 2004. 4: 138–163. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Other settings that Teachers of the Deaf work in will include special schools or colleges not specifically for deaf children, cochlear implant centres and charities. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Carroll, J. et al (2017) SEN support: A rapid evidence assessment. Department for Education. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-support-in-schools-and-colleges](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-educational-needs-support-in-schools-and-colleges). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. In the Ofsted Communication is the Key (2012) report, Ofsted stated when deaf children progressed well, it was because services were underpinned by a good understanding of the need for specialist services for deaf children and a strong commitment to maintain them. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/communication-is-the-key](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/communication-is-the-key) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A review by Marc Marschark stated that: “The learning styles and needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students differ sufficiently from those of their hearing peers to require specialised programming and teaching methods or strategies if children are to achieve their full potential. Special assistance thus is also required for teachers.” [www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1\_NCSE\_Deaf.pdf](http://www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/1_NCSE_Deaf.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Statutory guidance also requires that a Teacher of the Deaf be involved in any Education, Health and Care needs assessment of a deaf child. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The qualification can also be acquired at the University of Edinburgh. There are no training providers in Wales or Northern Ireland. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This figure includes Teachers of the Deaf working in special schools for deaf children. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The figure for 2015, where the number of Teachers of the Deaf increased, goes against the longer-term trend. We believe this is largely down to a spike in the number of trainee Teachers of the Deaf in that year – as the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf was relatively unchanged in that year. It should also be noted that response rates to the survey can vary from year to year. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Given what we know about the reductions in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf, it could be considered surprising that the vacancy rate is not higher. However, we are aware of a number of instances where local authorities have simply over time ‘deleted’ posts when they have been unable to fill them. In other cases, posts have been ‘frozen’, pending a review of the service. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 22% of services said they had difficulties in recruiting for a permanent post whilst 26% reported difficulties in recruiting for supply cover. The 32% figure refers to those who experienced difficulties in either. See page 9/10 of the CRIDE England 2018 report, available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Whilst these figures only apply to peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf, we have not reason to believe that the age profile is dissimilar in other types of Teachers of the Deaf. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017>. Our figures were calculated using figures found in table 4. We calculated that 327,800 teachers (men and women) were under the age of 50, 69,300 between 50 and 59 and 9,700 over 60, giving percentages of 82%, 15% and 2% respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This is an approximate figure as we do not yet have a Great Britain-wide figure for 2018, nor are we able to breakdown the 2016 figure to give an England only-figure. We know that in England, there are currently 211 Teachers of the Deaf working in special schools. We also know that in Scotland in 2017, there were 19 Teachers of the Deaf working in special schools, giving an approximate total of 230. There are no special schools for deaf children in Wales. The one special school in Northern Ireland did not respond to our survey in 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. According to CRIDE, there were 1,660 deaf children in special schools for deaf children in 2011, falling to 1,038 in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Penn school closed in 2015 whilst the Royal School for Deaf Children in Margate closed in 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. [www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers](http://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/supporting-the-si-workforce/report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers/1040-a-report-on-the-factors-promoting-and-inhibiting-the-successful-supply-of-specialist-teachers) [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Theoretical caseloads for peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are calculated by dividing the number of permanently deaf children living in any given area and in non-specialist provision by the number of visiting Teachers of the Deaf who are qualified or in training for the mandatory qualification. We recognise that this is a crude measure but it allows for comparisons over time. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Archbold, S. et al. Experiences of Young People with Mild/Moderate Hearing Loss: Views of parents and teachers*.* 2015. Ear Foundation. Available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/research](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/research). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The National Deaf Children’s Society’s summary of government statistics on deaf children’s attainment data is published at: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/3468/ndcs-note-on-attainment-data-2018.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. More precisely, our figures indicate we would see a decline of 17.26, 17.55 and 17.84 respectively in each of the next three years. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Figures shown in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. At the discretion of the training provider, this would be waived for deaf trainee Teachers of the Deaf who have stated an intention to only work in specialist placements. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)