

Good Practice Guide for Radio Aids

QS 2 There is an identified budget and clear accountability for funding personal radio aids where the candidacy criteria are met.

There is often confusion surrounding the budget for provision of specialist equipment. There is no single nationally accepted system. Support services sometimes retain a budget centrally for supplying, replacing and servicing radio aids. If management of a resource provision is delegated to a school then the budget for equipment might be an agreed part of that arrangement.

Whatever the context and situation there should be clarity and certainty about money to provide and service radio aids with recognition of equipment life span, repair and replacement costs. Careful stocktaking and close liaison with audiology clinics are vital to prevent pupils being without their systems and to ensure prevention of wasted Direct Audio Input shoes or incompatibility when hearing aids are changed.

The radio aid is a recognized device for inclusive practice and to ensure equal opportunities for learning. It is considered to be a reasonable adjustment that provides the child with access to information. Without this a child is likely to be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their normally hearing peers. A radio aid may be regarded as an auxiliary aid under the Equality Act 2010¹; as such it cannot be sacrificed as part of financial cuts.

Since much time and money are invested in radio aids there should be good evidence to show benefits for pupils in both learning and social and emotional outcomes. Ongoing evaluation of systems, including pupil voice is good practice.

¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission Equality Act 2010 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 24 January 2017).

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NDCS produce a factsheet *The Equality Act and Your Deaf Child's Education in England, Scotland and Wales* and a booklet *Know Your Rights: Getting support from your local council* (different versions are available for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) both of which indicate that a radio aid is a 'reasonable adjustment' to enable a child equal access to sound and speech in contexts that are less favourable for the deaf.