

Meet the BATOD NI committee

BATOD Northern Ireland (NI) wishes to express thanks to BATOD NI members who stepped down in the last academic year and had held a range of roles within recent years – Clare Bateson, Chair, Leslie Greehy, Judith Boal and Mary Gordon

BATOD NI committee, due to the uniqueness of the Republic of Ireland BATOD membership context, has been pleased to welcome new BATOD NI committee member: Madeline Hickey, Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD), Specialist Lead-Sensory for Policy and Practice Development, National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

Co-Chair of BATOD Northern Ireland – **Conor Mervyn**. Conor is a QToD for the Education Authority Sensory Service. He is a D/deaf QToD (cochlear implant and hearing aid user, and communicates bilingually in BSL and speech) and has previously worked as a peripatetic QToD in Glasgow and London, and was the Teacher in Charge of a Hearing Support Centre (primary school) in London before returning home.



Conor Mervyn

He also is a member of the BATOD National Executive Council (NEC) and D/deaf Teachers of the Deaf UK group. Conor was a founder member and former co-ordinator of the Scottish deaf teachers support group, which has grown from strength to strength.

BATOD NI Secretary, **Rebecca Millar**, stepped down from the NEC role in September 2021. Rebecca was also a Chair of BATOD NI for six years.



Rebecca Millar

Margaret-Anne Christie – Treasurer of BATOD NI for five years. She is a QToD, and taught in mainstream primary for eight years until offered a temporary position in a hearing impaired unit, which later closed. She was transferred to another hearing impaired unit for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in Belfast where she has been for eight years now.



Margaret-Anne Christie

Denise Geary is a QToD. She has worked for the Education Authority's Sensory Service since 2012 and is based in Derry/Londonderry. Denise previously worked as an English teacher and SENCo. She also has a PGDip in Special Needs from Queen's University.



Denise Geary

Sharon O'Neill, a recent QToD and Con Powell Scholarship past student.

A former technical writer, Sharon was introduced to a ToD

who was working with her friend's daughter. That was the point at which she decided that this was the profession she really wanted. Having sought advice from several experts in both teaching and deaf education, she gained a qualification as a teaching assistant, which allowed her to gain valuable classroom experience. She then completed a Masters in Early Childhood Development. Having gathered enough qualifications and experience, she was accepted by Stranmillis University College and completed her PGCE in 2017. After spending another year gathering experience as a qualified teacher, she was accepted by Leeds University and completed the Masters in Deaf Education.



Sharon O'Neill

Sharon feels that the Con Powell Scholarship was integral to the process of becoming a QToD, not only because it provided much needed financial support, but also because of the guidance and advice provided by her mentor, Joyce Sewell-Rutter.

Lauren Millar is a Deaf Qualified Teacher of the Deaf working for the Education Authority Sensory Service. Lauren previously worked for 7 years as a Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 class teacher in Blanche Nevile Primary school for deaf children in London. She held the position of SENCO within the school for the last two years before returning home to Northern Ireland. Lauren obtained her Teacher of the Deaf qualification at Leeds University and is currently completing her Masters degree in Deaf Education. Lauren is a member of BATOD and ADY (Action Deaf youth) board of governors for Northern Ireland.



Lauren Millar

Anne Penny is a QToD at Glengormley High School Resource Provision.

Anne is a former business studies teacher who found her vocation working with deaf children. She completed her postgraduate training through Mary Hare and, since 2007, she has been managing an auditory oral resource base within a mainstream secondary school on the outskirts of Belfast.



Anne Penny

Teresa Quail is a QToD and Educational Audiologist. She was the Head of Specialist Teaching Service in a local

authority in England before returning home to Northern Ireland. She works part-time as a co-National Executive Officer, Magazine Editor and Advertising Manager with BATOD.

Since September 2019 Teresa has supported the Ewing Foundation as a Con Powell Scholarship mentor for ToDs in training. From October 2020 Teresa has worked part time as the CPD lead for Deaf Education with the Scottish Sensory Centre/University of Edinburgh. In July 2021 Teresa was also appointed as Chair of the British Association of Educational Audiologists (BAEA).



Teresa Quail

Julie Graham is a Deaf QToD and works for a Northern Ireland deaf charity Action Deaf Youth.

Frances Stroud is a QToD and works for Jordanstown School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired.

Education for deaf children and young people in NI

For readers who are not familiar with Northern Ireland and the education-related provision available, the following information summarises the Northern Irish context, including recent and present changes.

We are very grateful to our National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) NI colleague, Helen Ferguson, for much of the information below. Our Southern Irish BATOD members will be sharing their context in a future article.

Education and services related to supporting deaf children and young people vary across the world. Within the UK, each of the four countries is responsible for their country's education system. NI has one education authority – EANI www.education-ni.gov.uk.

Until a few years ago the service operated under five education library boards. The QToDs in the EANI have close working relationships with the resource bases and Jordanstown School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired. <https://www.eani.org.uk/deafhi>

For NI the Act within the law is the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (NI) 2016 (currently the full citation is 'The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as amended by The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016'). The Code of practice (CoP) explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges within each country. The Department for Education Northern Ireland has completed the third stage of the SEND Review consultation. The draft of the new Code can be found at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-sen-code-practice>. The date of implementation has been postponed from September 2021 and a new date is to be confirmed.

The terminology for children and young people (CYP) with disabilities varies across the UK. In NI, like England, deaf CYP are categorised under Special Educational Needs and Disability, whereas the category in Scotland is Additional

Support for Learning/Additional Support Needs and it is changing to Additional Learning Needs in Wales.

Within the NI education settings the coordinator role for those supporting CYP with additional needs is referred to as Learning Support Co-ordinators, not SENCOs/SENDCos. These co-ordinators have many key duties and their role is critical in ensuring that CYP with additional needs and disabilities within an education setting receive the support they need. For some learners, that mandatory support may be outlined in a legal document, ie, an education plan prepared by local authorities. In Northern Ireland these are personal learning plans for all children with SEN (replacing individual education plans) and statements of SEN for children at Stage 3.

Northern Ireland has the lowest compulsory school starting age in Europe: children who have reached the age of four on 1st July start school the following September. The provision of early years funding to access nursery/pre-school settings differs across the countries. In NI, the Pathway Fund is available to early years providers <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/pathway-fund-2021-2023>. The profile of this Foundation Stage varies across the four countries. In NI, it includes Primary 1 and 2.

Across the UK the Code of Practice (CoP) covers children identified as having an additional need, which can be from birth. The philosophy of early intervention applies across each country. In NI it is known as Learning to Learn. (The education authority [EA] did a consultation on a new Early Years Framework for children with SEN in 2018, but no new policy document has been implemented.)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de-a-framework-for-ey-education-and-learning-2013.pdf>

The quality assurance of education provision is judged by inspectors within Northern Ireland's Education and Training Inspectorate.

The curriculum standards are determined within each country and the responsibilities in NI lie with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The exam access arrangements in NI are guided and overseen by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Northern Ireland still has the General Teaching Council (GTCNI).

Legislation relating to British Sign Language varies across the four countries. In Northern Ireland work is underway on a new Sign Language Act which will have significant implications for access to sign language in educational settings, but it is not yet in force.

The Equality Act does not cover NI. In NI, the Disability Discrimination Act 2010 remains in place.

Charity partners include Action Deaf Youth (ADY), the NDCS and the British Deaf Association (BDA). ■



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The cover features a collage of five photographs: two women standing outdoors, a boy and a woman at a table with cards, a man signing, a woman with a child, and a child holding dolls.