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Curriculum and Assessment Review
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Curriculum and Assessment Review.

This is a submission from The British Association for Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD) and the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS).

BATOD is the only professional association for Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (QToDs) in the UK. The Association represents the interests of QToDs and the children and young people they teach with a range of governments and other agencies. The Association supports QToDs and organises continued professional development (CPD) courses and national and regional meetings to provide relevant up-to-date information and to disseminate good practice. Strong links are maintained between BATOD and the UK governments, as well as voluntary bodies, especially the National Deaf Children's Society, in order to contribute to policy development in this field.

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NDCS is the leading charity for deaf children dedicated to creating a world without barriers for every deaf child. We give expert support on childhood deafness, raise awareness and campaign for deaf children's rights, so they have the same opportunities as everyone else.

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Throughout this submission we use the term deaf to describe all types and levels of hearing loss and to acknowledge that deaf learners may be using a range of communication approaches including British Sign Language (BSL), to access teaching and learning.

As part of the Special Education Consortium, we have inputted into and fully support their response to this call for evidence. As well as supporting their detailed comments we also support their view that a National Curriculum and associated assessments and



**We are the National Deaf Children's Society,
the leading charity for deaf children.**

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qualification pathways should be fully accessible to all learners, reflect their diversity and be supported by the resources and the expertise required to meet individual learners needs. As such our comments below are in addition to their response and focus on the impact and improvement, we believe are required to make the curriculum, assessment processes and qualification pathways more open, flexible and appropriate to deaf learners.

We strongly believe that how the curriculum is delivered and how deaf learners are assessed is as important as curriculum content. Many deaf learners fail to thrive in the current system not because of the curriculum content but because of how it is delivered. Deaf learners and those delivering the curriculum must have access to specialists in deafness such as Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (QToDs) who can advise on how to make curriculum content and assessments accessible and support deaf learners to access the right qualification pathways for them.

Adapting the curriculum and making the necessary adjustments to teaching and learning requires schools and colleges to be confident and robust in identifying and making the necessary reasonable adjustments so deaf learners can access teaching and learning. In addition, schools and colleges are often under skilled in understanding which access arrangements are available to learners for exams and too often families tell us that they are told that the application of an access arrangement will give the deaf learner an unfair advantage or they are unable to evidence need.

Furthermore, many deaf learners benefit from assistive technology (AT) and assistive listening technology to both access the curriculum and the access assessments for exams. The lack of a consistent offer to deaf learners and the lack of knowledge amongst schools and colleges about the benefits of AT and the offer around training and resourcing can be a substantial barrier.

Deaf learners are more likely to be using a range of communication approaches to communicate through English, or they may be communicating through BSL. Lack of awareness and expertise of how to develop deaf children's language and literacy regardless of whether they are using spoken language, sign or both, is not only a significant barrier to deaf learners access to the curriculum and future qualifications outcomes but can also prevent them from progressing - even when they have no other learning needs.

We would also add that BSL is an official language of the United Kingdom, since the passing of The British Sign Language Act in 2022 and we believe that Local Authorities, schools and colleges, as public bodies, have a duty to make their work and the curriculum fully accessible to deaf learners, including providing resources in BSL as required, if they are to protect deaf learners from discrimination when accessing education under The Equality Act of 2010.

Context

Most deaf children (83%) attend a mainstream school and learn through the National Curriculum.¹

In 2023, the national average Attainment 8 score for deaf children in 2023 was 40.8. This means their average score per subject is just under 4.1. This compares to 46.2 and 4.6 respectively for all children.

36.1% of deaf children in England achieved at least a grade 5 in both English and Maths in 2023, compared to 45% of all children.

Further education colleges continue to be the most common destination for deaf young people at 16.²

The government data about young people's destinations in England after completing 16-18 education in schools and colleges shows a large shift of students moving away from further education (10% down from 28% in 2017/18) and towards higher education institutions instead (41% up from 20% in 2017/18³)

[1] <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/professionals/research-and-data/cride-reports/>

[1] <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/9182/ndcs-note-on-attainment-data-2023.doc>

[1] <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/media/6571/post-16-data-paper-2024.docx>

Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment, and qualifications pathways

10. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways are *working well* to support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

A) curriculum

- The focus on oracy, phonics and increasing understanding of language deprivation (although it is still early days) has been welcomed by some deaf educational professionals.
- The practical models in Maths from the earliest years supports deaf learners.
- Increased use of visual support in educational settings supports some deaf learners.

B) assessment

- JCQ and Ofqual have been proactive in their engagement on deaf specific considerations for assessment access arrangements.
- The use of formulae and equation sheets for GCSE mathematics and equations for GCSE physics and combined science is strongly welcomed by members.

C) qualifications pathways

- Functional skills, Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQs) and Digital Functional Skills Qualifications (DFSQs) in FE are aimed to be relevant for the workplace, real-world, and everyday life. The content and teaching materials need to be age related. With the input from a QToD to ensure correct assessment and agreement of the learner needs, support provision, social needs, and communication preferences, the Digital Functional Skills Qualifications should offer a deaf learner the opportunity to excel and exhibit their knowledge and skills in technology, and so obtaining a qualification and building confidence for future progression.

11. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways should be *targeted for improvements* to better support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

A) curriculum

- Greater flexibility and qualified subject specialist teachers with the skills, confidence to teach and adapt content to meet learner needs
- Addressing areas of the curriculum in which teachers have become deskilled and over reliance on off the shelf products which may not be fit for purpose for example Phonics schemes, with too much focus on some content at the expense of other areas, for example phonics in reading development

- Deaf learners may benefit from more experiential opportunities for learning that is 'hands-on', based in 'real-world experiences' so they can make connections from their mental model theory towards a targeted curriculum model version.
- More emphasis on meta cognition skills which maybe more difficult for deaf learners to acquire
- More emphasis on developing executive skills in Primary to help deaf learners manage cognitive overload
- Removing the linear and age related expectations within the curriculum. Deaf learners may be very able in some areas of learning and may need consolidation and intervention in other areas of learning. This is particularly relevant to literacy which may match the learner's language level and not their age or ability in other areas of learning and development.
- There needs to be more flexibility across the curriculum so qualified teachers can consolidate learning or provide targeted intervention to accommodate a range of learning needs.
- QToDs and support staff based in post 16 settings report there is a need to allow targeted and resourced opportunities to support and develop English skills for deaf learners as many deaf learners are starting college courses with very low abilities in English but not in other areas of the curriculum.

b) assessment

- Over testing in Primary, and assessments which are inaccessible for some deaf learners such as the Phonics test, multiplication test, the SPAG element of KS2 English SAT.

c) qualifications pathways

- It is reported that for some learners whose preferred language is BSL, exams are not set up or assessed in their preferred language even though BSL is an official language in the England.
- Within the English system those learners are at a disadvantage compared to their peers in Scotland. In England, all subject specific vocabulary is fingerspelt in exams. It is not normal working practise in lessons to fingerspell the subject specific vocabulary as the use of signs articulates the concept, supports the learning of the vocabulary and concepts, and it keeps the communication relay in pace with the teaching pace.

Fingerspelling all subject specific vocabulary in exams often renders the question incomprehensible for BSL users. In some questions every other word is a subject specific word which makes questions impossible to sign with any meaning.

- Deaf learners may benefit from a range of assessment methods, for example course work, should be offered which would allow time for reflection, processing and presenting work before submission. Deaf learners who cannot access listening and speaking in exams should be able to demonstrate ability in a different way.

- Deaf learners need to have opportunities to understand and identify the access arrangements they use, and have training on effectively using them.

In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers in continuing to improve attainment, progress, access or participation for learners with SEND?

Curriculum

- The curriculum is too fast paced and too detailed for some deaf learners. There is not enough time for them to attain the key concepts soundly before the learning moves on.
- Lack of teacher knowledge about language and literacy both how to support development and make it accessible results in the attainment gap growing and ongoing language, cognition and social and emotional difficulties.
- Some teachers are unaware that BSL is vastly different from English and don't allow enough time in their teaching pace for information to be signed and for the learner to process and sign back any thoughts or answers.
- Poor implementation and tracking by school leaders of specialist recommendations. Schools and colleges should not be able to treat recommendations as mere guidance - there should be an expectation to implement unless they can demonstrate that they are not reasonable adjustments.
- Lack of investment in specialist services for deaf children who are knowledgeable in the challenges deaf learners may experience including missed learning due to not accessing the incidental teaching/modelling of language, lack of confidence in reading, difficulties with working memory and cognitive overload.
- Deaf learners are disproportionately disadvantaged if not taught by qualified teachers or subject specialist teachers. Non specialist subject teachers/ teachers without QTS may lack the ability to 'teach' beyond the specification.
- Aspirations for deaf learners can be low causing some to be 'educated' by the least skilled staff, including frequent withdrawal teaching by a support staff member instead of targeted input from a deaf specialist such as a QToD.
- In some settings the skills set of the supporting staff is significantly below recommendations. For example, a Communication Support Worker who has not achieved BSL level 3 supporting a deaf learner whose preferred language is BSL.

Access to assistive technology (AT)

- The Government focus on AT has supported the access to AT in the curriculum but there is a lack of engagement in schools and colleges with tools such as captioning that would reduce some of the concentration fatigue experienced by deaf learners.

- There is a lack of time to train deaf learners on the safe and appropriate use of AI tools that could prevent unintentional malpractice in assessments.
- Inconsistent access to and use of assistive listening devices for deaf learners in poor acoustic environments.

Assessment

- Difficult for some deaf learners to demonstrate their knowledge because assessment test a narrow skill set, for example KS2 SPAG.
- Some deaf learners are disadvantaged by online testing. For example:
 - the audio demands (no access to lip patterns) modification for timed components
 - for learners entitled to the Communication Professional (CP) access arrangement:
 - the CP has to share the learners' device because there is no second device
 - lack of time for the CP to prepare for online content especially when the language of the questions needs modification for clarity and/or the learner's ability
 - the CP is not qualified enough (ie not qualified at BSL Level 3 or above) to effectively undertake such advanced activities (modification of language in a non-specialist curriculum area that matches the receptive ability of the learner)
- This is also impacted by the lack of awareness within awarding bodies regarding language modification and deaf learners' needs especially in planning for universal inclusion by design.
- Lack of awareness in school/college settings, and advance planning with deaf learners and their parents, at the GCSE option selection stage, of access arrangements that may be required for some deaf learners as the curriculum may have inaccessible components. For example, with performance arts, music, modern foreign language, English, the listening ability and related strands in written papers may not be accessible to some deaf learners.
- Progress 8 measures may cause reluctance to disapply some deaf learners from some courses

Qualification pathway

- Lack of opportunities to support some deaf learners to achieve BSL L3 which equates to UCAS points
- Some deaf learners are being channelled into inappropriate or inaccessible qualification pathways and/or being incorrectly placed, or the school is reluctant to provide alternative pathways.
- Some deaf learners are unable to progress to the desired level of study in college, carouseling through a number of different level 1/level 2, in a loop of failure in adult learning, whilst they try to achieve the required English and/or Maths grades, which evidently impacts on self of worth, emotional wellbeing.

- Some deaf learners will continue to need access to basic English skills, even when accessing college courses, however, there may be no option for that.

15. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any *enablers* that support attainment, progress, access or participation for the groups listed above?

- Deaf learners may feel isolated within lessons and during social times. A deaf friendly environment that nurtures pupil-voice, healthy well-being and strong self-identity, enables learners to independently be part of the learning and social communities and aim for higher attainment.
- Specialist teachers and schools/colleges working together and identifying issues early
- Creating a curriculum in which all learners have opportunities to succeed
- The assessment and qualification pathways should offer a range of apprenticeships/vocational subjects, learning beyond the traditional classroom
- Deaf learners making informed decisions about exam access arrangements.
- Skilled multi agency professional team involvement around a learner including for example QToDs, specialist Speech and Language Therapists (SALTs) (as required), deaf role models, mental health practitioners

16. To what extent does the content of the national curriculum at primary level (key stages 1 and 2) enable pupils to gain an excellent foundation in a) English and b) maths? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim? Please note, we invite views specifically on transitions between key stages in section 9.

- Content for reading, writing, speaking and listening needs to be changed. For example, education recovery has shown us the importance of the range of skills required for fluent and engaged communicators and readers beyond phonic. This needs to be included in the primary curriculum to support transition for learners who have/ are at risk of delayed language and literacy.
- The same applies to Maths because key concepts are first understood in the early years through experience supported by good teaching in the moment, rather than formal teaching.
- There is limited recognition of learners who have not yet reached age expected level in reading and vocabulary - yet they are generally taught with resources that expect they are competent with both. Resources in Key Stage 1/2 are not age appropriate for the learners in secondary school who are working well-below age-related expectations which reinforces the sense of failure in learners who want to be like their peers.
- The fast paced curriculum, and lack of accommodation of reasonable adjustments and absence for catch-up when withdrawn for targeted

interventions with external specialists can cause the learner to be plateau or decline in their progress. Subject to the home environment, provision of packs to support home learning.

- There also needs to be more emphasis on phonological awareness in children and the expected development of these skills, alongside phonic awareness.
- Move away from an assessment focussed curriculum content that fosters the sense of failure in some deaf learners who are not ready for such assessments to a focus on the education of the child and preparation for secondary school life/ social understanding and implementing math and English skills in the real life world.

18. To what extent does the content of the a) English and b) maths national curriculum at secondary level (key stages 3 and 4) equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for life and further study? Are there ways in which the content could better support this aim?

- Deafness is a spectrum, and deaf learners span the range of ability. For some deaf learners the current English curriculum equips them with the tools they need to go on into FE and pursue a range of qualifications or access employment. However, for some deaf learners the current English curriculum content presents as a significant blocker to them. It either prevents them from acquiring the language knowledge and skills they are missing to function effectively in everyday life, or are too difficult for them to acquire leaving them with no useful knowledge, skills or qualification at GCSE.
- For some deaf learners a maths curriculum which contained a greater proportion of maths skills for life would be beneficial

20. How can we better support learners who do not achieve level 2 in English and maths by 16 to learn what they need to thrive as citizens in work and life? In particular, do we have the right qualifications at level 2 for these 16-19 learners (including the maths and English study requirement)?

- We agree in the importance of good maths and English skills and would welcome more 1:1 or small group support and expertise in basic skills for deaf learners attending college. This is particularly important for those deaf learners who use BSL.
- Instead of resitting when not achieved, a more basic skills English and Maths assessment to be made available.
- A suggestion of how the above could be achieved could be to make sure all learners have a good foundation of the structure of English and how to pick out important information such as on bills and widening their vocabulary. Learners could benefit from undertaking ASDAN qualifications, so they are ready for the

real world. Some members have found the Pearson functional English curriculums to be very good.

21. Are there any particular challenges with regard to the English and maths a) curricula and b) assessment for learners in need of additional support (e.g. learners with SEND, socioeconomic disadvantage, English as an additional language (EAL))? Are there any changes you would suggest to overcome these challenges?

A) Curriculum

- It is important to ensure the curriculum does not contain so much content that teachers have limited time to support pupils to develop a deep understanding of the subject, or that time for other educational experiences and the development of skills that prepare learners for life and work is reduced. Where new content is added, existing content will need to be removed to make space.
- The Government focus on assistive technology (AT) has supported the access to AT in the curriculum but there is a lack of engagement from schools with tools such as captioning, speech to text and read aloud, that would reduce some of the concentration fatigue deaf learners experience.
- The lack of awareness among teachers of the needs of deaf learners coupled with poor classroom acoustics, inadequate or non-existent connectivity between devices and assistive listening technology (ALT) increase the frequency of missed learning and mis-learning. Better access to specialist professionals eg Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, Educational Audiologists, Audiology technicians would enable connectivity issues between the AT and ALT to be resolved, appropriate solutions to be implemented. These professionals can enhance the awareness among teachers with learner specific staff training.
- School environments would benefit from acoustic audits and the use of soundfield systems, acoustic tiles and a range of low-cost solutions. Learners require explicit teaching for the effective use of assistive technology eg remote microphone technology, radio aids, soundfield systems.
- All settings required enough devices so deaf, deafblind learners have access to their own device where the audio, visual settings are set optimal to their accessibility needs. For example, compressed audio files will distort the audio quality heard through the hearing aids. When devices are shared, deaf learners waste time adjusting setting that optimally meet their accessibility needs, that generates an added layer of stress to the learning and assessment experiences.

B) Assessment

- Phonics screening – this test is either not accessible or can be extremely demanding for deaf learners, either because of the associated phonological delay because of deafness or having poor access to the English alphabetic

sounds. The phonics test does not give teachers any more information than is already known about a learner's ability to access phonics or more importantly how to support and develop literacy skills so we would suggest removing this test.

- Multiplication tests- being able to recall facts and information quickly is an important enabler, but for those pupils who have other learning needs or whose deafness is impacting on their ability to access, process and retrieve information , particularly under pressure, these types of test have limited usefulness and only reinforce well established attitudes around failure for both the learners and the school so we would suggest removing.
- Assessment - For GCSE and A level pupils with BSL as their preferred language, allowing the use of subject specific vocabulary signs in assessments instead of demanding all subject specific vocabulary be fingerspelt. This is already permitted in the Scottish examination system.

22. Are there particular curriculum or qualifications subjects where: a. there is too much content; not enough content, or content is missing;

- An oracy curriculum which caters for and includes all deaf learners regardless of their communication approach.
- More emphasis on speech, language and communication skills from KS1 through to KS4.
- Greater opportunities to study BSL as a modern foreign language at primary and specifically that the option to study BSL at GCSE come to fruition.
- More opportunities to develop BSL skills Post 16. The BSL level 3 certificate equates to 16 UCAS points.

23. Are there particular changes that could be made to ensure the curriculum (including qualification content) is more diverse and representative of society?

- Creating space and opportunity for schools and colleges to bring in elements of other curricula where they do not have the knowledge or resources. For example: The Specialist Deaf Curriculum Framework (SDCF) www.batod.org.uk/resources-category/specialist-deaf-curriculum-framework/
- Positive representation and culturally diverse examples of deaf learners, learners with other needs throughout the curriculum.
- Introduce BSL as a second language that pupils can learn from early years. Greater opportunities to study and more opportunity to learn about deaf culture as part of the BSL curriculum as a modern foreign language at primary.
- Option to study BSL at GCSE comes to fruition and continuing into Post 16 education - The BSL level 3 certificate equates to 16 UCAS points.

- Opportunities for feedback from deaf learners and specialists in deaf education.

24. To what extent does the current curriculum (including qualification content) support students to positively engage with, be knowledgeable about and respect others? Are there elements that could be improved?

- Greater awareness of deafness and deaf people with diverse needs.

26. In which ways do the current secondary curriculum and qualification pathways support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work and what could we change to better support this?

- Secondary schools may have a designated careers advisor, so this expertise could be better coordinated and implemented into lessons or content.
- There may be a lack of awareness of the rights of disabled people in the workplace. For example: Access to Work, and modifications that can support deaf learners access employment. The National Deaf Children's Society provides information and advice for young deaf people and work.

www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/education-and-learning/deaf-works-everywhere/

27. In which ways do the current qualification pathways and content at 16-19 support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work and what could we change to better support this?

- The current implemented mechanisms prevent learners from progressing and can remove choice because the deaf learners may have challenges meeting the expected levels in English and Maths.
- Currently deaf learners may end up on courses and be taught with groups of learners who have low levels of achievement or poor engagement across all areas of learning which leads to poor engagement, aspiration and mental health and well-being.

A broad and balanced curriculum

28. To what extent does the current *primary* curriculum support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

- We would welcome a greater emphasis on skills for learning including the supporting of developing meta cognition and executive skills which many deaf learners and specifically those with delayed language would benefit from.
 - Content which is specific to deaf learners – for example incorporating elements from the Specialist Deaf Curriculum Framework (SDCF)
- www.batod.org.uk/resources-category/specialist-deaf-curriculum-framework/
- Engagement with and learning from the specialist schools for the deaf to support the development of a suitable broad and balanced curriculum.

- BSL recognised as being equivalent to spoken language across all age ranges and assessed as a first language with the associated qualifications – so studied as a first language

29. To what extent do the current *secondary* curriculum and qualifications pathways support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

- As above

30. To what extent do the current qualifications pathways at 16-19 support learners to study a broad curriculum which gives them the right knowledge and skills to progress? Should anything change to better support this?

- More options to study a broader range of A levels and AS levels. The current A level curriculum choices has narrowed and there are less options to study a range of AS levels. The structure and nature of the EPQ currently does not fill this gap and disadvantages many deaf learners who benefit from the knowledge and skills a more structured AS level offers.
- The threshold of Level 4 English and maths to accessing qualification pathways can cause deaf learners who have BSL as a preferred language or have challenges with accessing English to be misplaced on inappropriate pathways or not having access to the broader curriculum that might be on offer in the college.

Key stage 4 Technical Awards

33. To what extent and how do pupils benefit from being able to take vocational or applied qualifications in secondary schools alongside more academically focused GCSEs?

- We believe we need other pathways that are concurrent with academic GCSEs for deaf learners

One of our members said:

Yes! We need to move from the idea that education can be measured in one way only and vocational courses are a step in that direction. Seeing kids on appropriate courses means that not only to they get results, but that they leave with a sense of achievement, and a head full of knowledge and understanding. I think the next step is for more vocational subjects to be recognised as equals to academic qualifications rather than the poor cousin.

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

Primary and national curriculum assessments

35. Is the volume of statutory assessment at key stages 1 and 2 right for the purposes set out above?

Deaf learners who are not able to access current assessments e.g. phonics, are at risk of poor emotional health and wellbeing. Poor performance in assessments reinforces low aspirations for deaf learners. In addition, areas not targeted by the primary assessment result in deaf learners who may benefit from additional support and learning in those areas not accessing targeted intervention(s).

37. Are there other changes to the statutory assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 that could be made to improve pupils' experience of assessment, without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system?

38. What can we do to ensure the assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 works well for all learners, including learners in need of additional support in their education (for example SEND, disadvantage, EAL)?

To ensure the assessments work well for deaf learners, specialist teachers eg QToD, should be involved in the creation of assessments, including adaptive assessments, and advising on the language modification.

Secondary assessment

40. What more can we do to ensure that: a) the assessment requirements for GCSEs capture and support the development of knowledge and skills of every young person; and b) young people's wellbeing is effectively considered when assessments are developed, giving pupils the best chance to show what they can do to support their progression?

Universal by design planning

- The inconsistency across the awarding bodies regarding design and language modification at source is problematic for deaf learners. Some awarding bodies engage consistently with the BATOD accredited language modifiers which builds confidence among professionals of the accessibility of the language in assessments.
- There is a lack of accessible support material eg all media clips having subtitles ie not requiring deaf learners to use a small sample that have been subtitled which restricts their choice in comparison to hearing peers who can access the full collection of media clips.

- In England all subject specific vocabulary is fingerspelt, which often renders the question incomprehensible for the learner who uses BSL. It is not normal working practise in the lessons to fingerspell the subject specific vocabulary as the use of signs articulates the concept, supports the learning of the vocabulary and concepts, plus it keeps the communication relay in pace with the teaching pace. The current practise in examinations places an additional demand on working memory on those learners.

The knowledge and skills of every deaf learner could be achieved with diversification of the ways in which learners are assessed in GCSE eg coursework.

43. Are there ways in which we could support pupils who do not meet the expected standard at key stage 2?

- Provide access to a pre-key skill curriculum which is more life and social skills based.
- Allow settings time and opportunity to bring in elements of other curriculums where they do not have the knowledge or resources. For example: The Specialist Deaf Curriculum Framework (SDCF) www.batod.org.uk/resources-category/specialist-deaf-curriculum-framework/
- Early intervention is key to improving outcomes so there are ways of identifying those at risk of not meeting expected outcomes, however the early years sector needs improved support, training and resourcing to be able to do this.

46. Should there be any changes to the current accountability system in order to better support progress and incentivise inclusion for young people with SEND and/or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds? If so, what should those changes be?

- Members feel schools and colleges should be supported to evidence how they have implemented specialist teacher eg QToD guidance, which requires enabling SENCos to have time to check reasonable adjustments are in place and effectively maintained.

Section 8: Qualification pathways 16-19

- 47. To what extent does the range of programmes and qualifications on offer at each level meet the needs and aspirations of learners?**
- a. Level 3**
 - b. Level 2**
 - c. Level 1 and entry level**

- Members feel the entry level and level 1 are more accessible for some deaf learners because the learners do not need GCSE English for those courses

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50. To what extent is there enough scope and flexibility in the system to support learners who may need to change course?

- The need to achieve the required English and Maths grades prevents some deaf learners undertaking their desired course options.
- Members have reported that whilst some deaf learners may need to change course, those with low self-esteem may find it difficult to admit they want to change courses as it may be self-perceived as a mark of failure, being delayed further in progress in comparison to friends/peers, not wanting to lose a 'safe' peer group, apprehension about starting again and afraid of still 'failing'.

51. Are there additional skills, subjects, or experiences that all learners should develop or study during 16-19 education, regardless of their chosen programmes and qualifications, to support them to be prepared for life and work?

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 23 states that children with a disability should get the education, care, and support they need to lead a full and independent life to the best of their ability, and to participate in their community. Developing knowledge and skills around decision-making relating to employment, finances, and safety are all essential in ensuring a deaf learner can achieve independence and meet their aspirations.
- Understanding rights, entitlements, and responsibilities in relation to money is a key factor for developing deaf learner's independence. For example, not just how to apply, but understanding any conditions or time frames around schemes such as Access to Work or Disabled Student Allowance. Deaf learners may require support to understand where and with whom responsibilities lie.
- Staying safe is a key feature that spans all work with deaf learners, with the need for them to be able to take increasing responsibility for their own safety as they progress into adulthood. Such areas for focus include Money skills/financial understanding, self care skills, mental health/mental health wellbeing skills, sexual health and education, what to do in an emergency, first aid, deaf and disability awareness, team leading.

52. How can the curriculum, assessment and wraparound support better enable transitions between key stages to ensure continuous learning and support attainment?

- Transitions in education can present a unique set of challenges for deaf learners. Due regard must be made to the relevant legislation, outlining best practice in relation to transition across the ages from birth to 25 years (where relevant) and deaf learners and their families must be fully involved.
- Careful planning is necessary to ensure that the receiving setting has made the necessary adaptations and adjustments. Understanding the deaf learner's own

access needs in different situations requires exploration. Deaf learners and their families must be consulted about their access needs, supported to develop their ability to make informed decisions, and conversations must be kept open to prevent communication breakdown. Many deaf learners will have specialist support from a Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (QToD) who should be part of the learner-centred multi-professional team involved in the wraparound support. They can deliver the learner-specific training for the receiving class/setting alongside any targeted support and opportunities to develop resilience, independence, and self-advocacy.

- Within primary, the transitions in learning content between key stages (e.g. EYFS and KS1) should be reviewed so deaf learners can make progress in the continuous learning. The curriculum needs to set out clear support for deaf learners whose progress may be affected by the transition period.
- In relation to deaf learners transitioning into further and higher education, settings should be mindful that the deaf learner may be managing the transition to adult services in other sectors eg health, social care, which may impact on their wellbeing during the transition period and subsequently impact on their ability to engage effectively in learning and assessment.

53. How could technology be used to improve how we deliver the curriculum, assessment and qualifications in England?

- The Government focus on assistive technology (AT) has supported the access to AT in the curriculum. There is a range of specialist assistive listening technology (ALT) that deaf learners use. Some deaf learners only use ALT, some, due to their learning needs and/or other additional special educational needs/disabilities require access to both. Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (QToDs) and Educational Audiologists (QToDs with additional post graduate qualification in educational audiology) have expertise in ALT and can support the effective connectivity between the AT and ALT. Ineffective set-up and maintenance can cause deaf learners to reject the technology in and outside of school. This impacts their access to the learning environment, social environment and subsequently access in their employment environment. Schools and colleges need to continue to work closely with the QToDs and Educational Audiologists, and the government bodies need to continue to work with the Assistive Listening Technology Working Group and professional associations (BATOD and the British Association of Educational Audiologists (BAEA)).
- Alongside the effective use and access to ALT, schools and colleges need financial support to access and improve the acoustic environment. The revision of the Building Bulletin 93 will be welcomed.

- Reducing some of the concentration fatigue experienced by deaf learners, and other learners including for whom English is an additional language) could be achieved by whole school/college use of live captioning technology that is available and already in schools/colleges. AI tools continue to advance and some have the ability to summarise the captioned content. Effective usage would enable the deaf learner to receive live captions in class as well enable the class teacher to provide the deaf learners with an AI summary later with the ability to share the AI summary with other professionals eg keyworker, support staff, QToD who can use it to support the deaf learner with developing their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum content.
- Teachers and specialist teachers eg QToDs need opportunities to assess the effectiveness of IT based teaching resources for deaf learners designed to support and enhance independent learning. Support to conduct peer-reviewed action-based research would allow informed decision making regarding such resources, especially as tools for deaf learners with emotional avoidance.
- All online assessment design needs to consider the accessibility needs of deaf learners. For some learners whose preferred language is BSL, the use of pre-recorded videos of the examinations questions, delivered by fluent professionals with an understanding of the subject knowledge, would allow those deaf learners access to accurate BSL content. In addition, as learners can request repetition in examinations, the pre-recorded signed content would mean they would be enabled to have independent control of what they view again, reducing any perception that requesting repetition suggests a level of ignorance.
- The use of technology for deaf learners must be in consultation with the specialist eg QToD/Educational Audiologist as some scenarios will not be accessible for example a live speaker may be required as the audio content is not accessible.

Further Views

54. Do you have any further views on anything else associated with the Curriculum and Assessment Review not covered in the questions throughout the call for evidence?

- The SEND and AP Improvement Plan set out an ambition not only to create a more inclusive school system but promote an inclusive society.
- Positive representation in the curriculum is important to deaf children, young people and their families. How a deaf learner and their community view their deafness will be individual and may change over time. Developing a positive sense of self and connecting to and being part of a wider community is key for

deaf learners, and this can be supported by incorporating content throughout the curriculum and a clear commitment to inclusion across all schools.

- Deaf learners have the right to be recognised as fully rounded individuals that need to be educated, not just measured.