The City of York Specialist Teaching Team: Deaf and Hearing Support Team

Advice and Guidance: Supporting the communication needs of d/Deaf Children and Young People who use sign in schools and settings in York

This policy describes the principles and practice that the City of York local authority's Deaf and Hearing Support Team recommend regarding the support provided for Deaf children and young people in Early Years settings, mainstream schools and post 16 maintained further education colleges.

This policy has been written with reference to:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (January 2015)
- The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) publication: 'Effective working with Teaching Assistants in School'
- The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Quality Standards (Resource provisions for deaf children and young people in mainstream schools 2015)

And following consultation with:

- The British Association for Teachers of the Deaf (BAToD)

It is recognised that every d/Deaf child is a unique individual. The Deaf and Hearing Support Team's Communication Policy recognises the importance of children and young people (CYP) being able to access the curriculum and develop as socially independent and competent learners. It also recognises that support is always based on the individual needs of CYP.

In the context of the guidance from the voluntary sector that provide support and advice to d/Deaf children and their families, and the national professional associations, it is recommended that the support provided for d/Deaf children and young people in York will be at least consistent with the standards recommended by these groups and the support provided in other local authorities. It should be noted that this is a guidance document that describes the recommendations of the City of York local authority and it is the responsibility of each school or educational setting to determine the appropriate level of support for each child or young person. It is an expectation of the local authority that schools and settings would consult the

Deaf and Hearing and Support team regarding appropriate levels of support.

The following describes the City of York local authority's guidance regarding the communication support that should be provided for d/Deaf children and young people with differing sign communication needs, when attending a setting/school in the City.

Where d/Deaf CYP receive additional support in mainstream schools and other educational settings they will be supported by staff employed directly by the school or setting. Members of the local authority's Deaf and Hearing Support Team will offer their support and guidance to schools and settings with the recruitment, training and support for staff in this support role.

In the context of the advice provided by the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BAToD), the Deaf and Hearing Support Team recognise that the skills required to provide successful support for d/Deaf children are more than competent and confident signing:

> *…….a specific sign language qualification is not sufficient to ensure that deaf children's educational needs will be met so careful assessment of the skills of the professionals involved should be carried out. It is important that subject knowledge and teaching skills are also considered because sign language alone will not secure access to the curriculum, effective learning and good progress.*
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> BAToD Sign Qualification Position 2016

The local authority recognises that in addition to being a confident and competent user of sign language, the member of staff providing support must be able to support and challenge the child in their learning and be able to successfully work as a member of the school's wider learning support team.

In the context of national guidance, the following sections describe the local authority's guidance to schools on the support that is provided to children who are d/Deaf and use sign in some form within their communication.

Children for whom sign is their first language

We aim to ensure that children who use British Sign Language as a first language are provided with support to allow them full access to learning.

In accordance with the guidance produced by the National Deaf Children's Society, the local authority expects that Teaching Assistants supporting

d/Deaf children in mainstream primary schools have BSL Level 3 (British Sign Language) or equivalent, i.e. BSL language users who although do not have a BSL qualification are identified as competent sign users.

When a mainstream primary school has been unable to recruit someone with a BSL Level 3 qualification, the local authority's advice is that a potential appointee must have a minimum BSL Level 2 qualification with the expectation that they will achieve a BSL Level 3 qualification within two years of appointment.

It is the local authority's advice that Teaching Assistants supporting d/Deaf children and young people in mainstream secondary schools must have a minimum qualification of BSL Level 3 or equivalent and have made a commitment to work towards a BSL Level 6 qualification within 3 years of appointment.

For children in Early Years settings we expect staff to have a minimum qualification of BSL Level 2.

The local authority recognise that schools and other settings have a responsibility to promote the professional development of all staff, including those that are newly appointed. Therefore, it is recognised that in supporting the professional development of new staff there may be times when staff below the standard (described above) are present in the classroom. It is the local authority's advice that an appropriately qualified member of staff will also be present.

It is the local authority's aspiration that schools make appropriate provision to enable all d/Deaf children who use BSL as a first language, to have a formal qualification in BSL by the time they leave school.

Children for whom sign is not their first language

For children whose first language is spoken language but who would benefit from access to some use of sign in school we expect staff to have a minimum of BSL Level 2.

In order to promote the professional development of newly appointed staff there may be times when staff below this standard (BSL Level 2) are present in the classroom. On these occasions it is expected that an appropriately qualified member of staff will also be present.

Recruitment

Teaching Assistants working with d/Deaf children and young people in

mainstream schools are employed directly by the school. However, members of the Deaf and Hearing Support Team would expect to be consulted regarding the recruitment process, will provide advice and support and would wish to be involved in the selection and interview process.

For those CYP for whom BSL is a first language, the Deaf and Hearing Support Team recommend that a Deaf first language BSL user is part of the interview process in order to assess the appropriateness of a candidate's signing. Following consultation with the school, the Deaf and Hearing Support Team are able to arrange for a suitably qualified member of the Deaf community to support the school in this capacity.

Continuing Professional Development

In order to maintain and develop the awareness of the needs of d/Deaf children and staff signing skills, members of the Deaf and Hearing Support Team are committed to providing a range of support and training and development opportunities for staff supporting d/Deaf children in schools and other settings. These activities will include:

- on-going 1 to 1 mentoring.
- training and advice from members of the Deaf community, including Deaf colleagues from across the region working in a range of different professional settings.
- regular school based individual, group or whole staff training and awareness raising activities.
- local training events targeted on specific needs, e.g. the use of communication technology.
- information about local, regional and national training events.

In addition, the Deaf and Hearing Support Team will respond to specific training requests from local educational settings.

Supply cover

Where school staff are absent the school is responsible for finding a suitably qualified teaching assistant to provide cover at all times. The Deaf and Hearing Support team are able to provide the school or setting with contact details of appropriate staff. On occasions where a suitably qualified member of staff cannot be found, a member of the deaf and hearing Support team may be able to provide cover on a short term basis, dependent on other committments. In exceptional circumstances for a pupil in a secondary school, the LA will fund an interpreter to provide short term support.

Use of Interpreters for Deaf families

In order to provide equality of access, the school or educational setting has a responsibility for providing an Interpreter for Deaf parents / carers (of d/Deaf or hearing children)for visits and activities where communication and the parents' understanding of the school event is critical in supporting and promoting their child's education and / or welfare, e.g.

- School meetings about their d/Deaf and/or hearing child e.g. Parents' Evenings, or similar consultation or information sharing meetings.
- Education, Health and Care Plan review meetings.
- Interim review meetings.

The Deaf and Hearing Support Team are able to provide schools and settings with the contact details for Interpreters who would be able to support these meetings and events.

By mutual agreement

between the family and school/setting, it may be decided to use the signing skills of staff on site for some informal school events.

The Local Authority has a responsibility for providing an Interpreter for Deaf parents / carers for formal meetings between the parents and Local Authority staff which are organised and coordinated by the Local Authority with regard to the child's education / welfare. These will include support provided for transition visits