

## Appendix 2 - Flintshire Hearing Support Service for Children and Young People

### Education Provision

#### 1. Service Overview

Flintshire's education support service for children and young people (CYP) with a hearing impairment is provided through the North East Wales Sensory Support Service. The service was established in December 2013 and covers the counties of Wrexham, Denbighshire and Flintshire.

Staffing within the service to support CYP with a hearing loss, comprises of 3 full time equivalent teachers of the deaf and 1.4 outreach workers. The specialist mandatory qualification is an essential requirement for staff within the service to ensure teachers are best placed to raise both academic attainment and other life skills and achievements. All outreach workers hold a signing qualification of a minimum of level 2.

Educational support is provided for CYP between the ages of 0-19. Access to the service is from diagnosis through to the point that the individual leaves school-based education. The service aims to ensure that all CYP with a hearing loss are provided with appropriate support to maximise their educational potential and independence.

#### 1.1. Referrals and Referral Process

The service assists schools and other agencies to identify as early as possible the particular needs of CYP with sensory difficulties and provide appropriate advice, support and provision for them.

The service operates an open referral policy where any concerned parties can refer CYP to the service. However, where a child has a significant sensory impairment the referral will normally come from health professionals.

Information from new born hearing screening and early referrals from health ensures CYP with a hearing loss are identified at a very early age, from birth in some cases. Early contact with the family guarantees CYP, parents and educational establishments are provided with targeted support. Older age pupils will be referred into the service either from joint audiology clinics or schools and the local authority.

#### 1.2. Numbers on Caseload and Referrals

Academic Year	Numbers on Caseload	Referrals	Source
2012-13	95 including 5 pre school	9	8 medical /1 LA
2013-14	112 including 10 pre school	17	16 medical /1 LA

2014-15	92 including	6 pre school	8	7 medical /1 LA
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The table above provides numbers of hearing impaired CYP in Flintshire supported by the service for the last three years.

### **1.3. Criteria for involvement**

CYP who have a sensory impairment and who have been referred to the service will be entitled to the service's specialist input if the young person meets the following criteria:-

- They have a medical diagnosis of hearing deficit or such a diagnosis is believed to be likely or imminent.
- They are resident or attend a school within Flintshire, Denbighshire or Wrexham.

## **2. Nature of support provided**

In order to determine appropriate levels of support required to maximise learner's educational potential, nationally agreed eligibility criteria is used across the service. This criteria also informs the nature of support and the staffing levels required across the service as well as ensuring that there is an equality of caseload for its staff based on the number of visits throughout the year rather than numbers of children.

### **2.1. Early Years Provision**

The service seeks to foster good working relationships with parents of pre-school children in order that early intervention will initiate a shared responsibility for the holistic needs of the child. Parents are offered regular home visits which may involve:

- Emotional support for the family
- Appropriate communication strategies
- Training in hearing aid use and care
- Refer to NDCS for advice and support
- Monitoring the progress of children using development profiles/assessments
- Educational advice and guidance regarding appropriate provision
- Multi agency visits and meetings

Staff working on specific programmes will encourage families to work in partnership with sensory support staff to achieve the best outcomes for their child.

Staff work closely with the regional hearing and listening support coordinator

from health to work together on language planning for pre-school children with a severe or profound hearing loss. During the last academic year, the pre-school health coordinator has provided additional support for temporary staff working within the service.

## **2.2. School Aged Provision**

Whilst the service will continue to support schools there is a commitment to build school's capacity and initiate a shared responsibility to meeting the needs of hearing impaired pupils.

Sensory support staff make regular visits based on criteria for support, to monitor CYP's progress and provide ongoing advice on the educational implications of the hearing loss, including curriculum differentiation appropriate to individual need. The aim of the service is to assess the needs of individual pupils and to suggest strategies to promote learning. A range of assessment will be provided by the service and will concentrate on functional hearing and the impact of the sensory loss on their learning.

Children and young people with a high level of hearing loss receive direct teaching in specialist skills and curriculum areas, e.g. signing, phonics language structure, working memory skills, as well as independent use of specialist equipment as appropriate to individual need. Programmes of work are developed and progress is regularly reviewed through Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Training is provided to schools to ensure that all staff involved recognise the particular needs of hearing impaired pupils. This will be at both a formal and informal level as appropriate. Information may be provided on the implications of specific conditions relating these to placement, support and staff experience etc.

A range of information sheets/booklets produced by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is used to support pre-school and school age placements.

Documents relating to support for sensory pupils e.g. Deaf Friendly Checklists, specific hearing disorders and classroom management, are available on Local Authority Moodle sites.

## **2.3. Resource Provision**

Currently there are two resource provisions within mainstream schools for pupils with a severe and profound hearing loss. The secondary provision is located at the Alun High school, Mold and the primary provision at Bryn Gwalia CP, Mold.

The resource provisions provide learning/signing support in mainstream lessons from a teacher, or curriculum support worker (CSW) which is appropriate to each child's hearing and other learning needs. Specialist

tuition from qualified teachers of children with hearing impairment is also provided as appropriate.

#### **2.4. Specialist Equipment**

The service aims to ensure that hearing impaired CYP have access to appropriate specialist equipment to assist their learning and independence. Following audiological recommendations the service provides a loan service to schools for FM systems to enhance their independent access to the teacher's voice and reduce the need for adult signing support. Staff keep up to date with advances in this technology to ensure that pupils are provided with the most appropriate systems available.

#### **2.5. Bilingual support**

Bilingual support through the medium of Welsh is available for sensory impaired pupils, families and schools. Bilingual reports are made available as required along with the translation of any documentation into Welsh.

#### **2.6. Transition**

On transfer to another school or key stage, an enhanced transition plan is put in place. Advisory teachers provide advice in the form of reports and attend multi-agency meetings where appropriate. Recommendations are drawn up including parental and pupil involvement to ensure their views are included. In-Service Training (INSET) to school based staff is provided to support effective transition. Additional visits to the school of transfer also take place.

Hearing support staff will, where appropriate, spend increased time in schools on transfer providing advice to subject staff to increase confidence and ownership of support.

The Children's hearing support working group (CHSWG) brings together health and education professionals to safeguard the smooth transition of pupils into formal education. Staff work closely with the pre-school hearing and listening advisor to provide a seamless transition from health to educational responsibility.

### **3. Multi Agency working**

Building capacity in schools is a fundamental aim of the Service; the service works in close collaboration with families, other educational services, Children's Services, Health and 3rd Sector organisations to support the needs of hearing impaired CYP. This collaborative working ensures that a seamless approach to supporting the needs of CYP and their families is in place. Representation and involvement with the following facilitate effective partnership working:-

- CYP's Integrated Disability Service (CIDS) referral panel
- Home Advisory Service

- Audiology and ENT Consultants
- Children's hearing support working Group (CHSWG)
- Joint Paediatric hearing Assessment Audiology Clinic
- National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)
- Deaf Access Wales (youth club)
- Wales Council for the Deaf (funding)
- Cambrian Trust (deaf charity funds lap-tops for pupils)
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)
- Inclusion Support Service
- Pre-school hearing impaired team (PHIT)
- Hearing Speech and Language Team (SALT)

#### **4. Achievements**

Activities to promote wellbeing and bring hearing impaired learners together are an important element of the work provided, with both resource and mainstream learners accessing a wide variety of social activities including Welsh rugby training (during which one student was invited to train with the team in Cardiff), cinema and ten pin bowling visits. After school youth clubs at the Alun Resource are also open to mainstream and resource pupils as well as those Year 6 learners who will be attending the resource in the following September.

A strength and added value of the resource is the quantity and quality of deaf awareness and pastoral care which aims to give students a good understanding of their own deafness and to promote a positive self-image with an 'I can do anything attitude'. A weekly sign language club, signing choir, theatre workshops, a 30 hour British Sign language Welsh Baccalaureate course, deaf awareness weeks, shared social events with Wrexham resource students & Chester Deaf Activity Group and art therapy are some of the activities which contribute towards this aim.

Supporting pre-school children with a hearing loss is an essential part of the service role and is in keeping with the WG's aim to give all children a flying start in life. During the last academic year stronger links with Health have been developed for hearing impaired pre-school children with integrated care pathways being developed and case reviews being explored between teachers of the Deaf (ToD ) and audiology teams

A family Makaton signing group has been set up with Speech and Language therapists to provide support for parents of hearing impaired pre-school learners across the region.