

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 51

Ymateb gan: Y Gymdeithas Genedlaethol i Blant Byddar

Response from: National Deaf Children's Society

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

The National Deaf Children's Society seeks to create a world without barriers for deaf children, young people and their families. We support children and young people with all levels of deafness, from mild through to profound, including those with temporary hearing loss and a unilateral loss. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the third check-up of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's inquiry into the implementation of education reforms.

CRIDE

Since the last check-up, the National Deaf Children's Society alongside partners has published our annual Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) 2023 report for Wales. The report follows an annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children. The report indicates that at present we estimate that there are 2,329 deaf children in Wales. It additionally highlights a marginal increase in Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) compared to 2022 findings, however the figure of ToDs with the mandatory qualification in employment in Wales still stands at a 17% reduction compared to 2011 figures. We hope the report aids the Committee in its deliberations. A UK-wide report which compares the situation across the four nations has also been released.

Additional Learning Needs

We continue to hear anecdotal evidence from our membership and from callers to our helpline that parents of deaf children in Wales face barriers in getting the appropriate level of support in their education during the implementation period of the Additional Learning Needs reforms. Some parents state that they have been informed that their child is not eligible for an Individual Development Plan (IDP), despite the ALN Code making specific references to the eligibility of learners with sensory loss. Many parents have also said that local provision is a major issue for them, with many having to send their children to a school that is out of county and, in some instances, out of country. We are aware of the comments of the former Minister for Education and the Welsh Language where he has stated that it will take

time for the new system to imbed and that numbers of learners eligible for ALN compared to SEN are expected to temporarily decrease during this time. However, the need for intervention as soon as possible in the early years cannot be overstated. Deaf children are placed at a significant disadvantage at the start of their education if they cannot access the level of support that they need, and it could take years for them to “catch up” to their hearing peers.

Senedd Petition

We remain concerned over the level of educational provision for deaf learners in Wales. The National Deaf Children’s Society notes that a petition to the Senedd calling for more investment into ToDs was submitted in October 2023, collecting signatures until April 2024. We have actively been supporting the petitioner, a parent of a deaf children, throughout the petition’s development. The petition has generated a significant amount of media coverage, with both BBC Wales and ITV Wales airing coverage of the petition. The petition has also received the endorsement of the Cross Party Group for Deaf Issues. We are aware that the former Minister highlighted investment into the ToD workforce and we welcome said investment, however unfortunately we have been told by ToDs that this funding is primarily aimed at keeping the workforce at the same level as it currently is rather than expanding it. It is our hope that the Petitions Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee will collaborate to address the petition’s calls; and we are willing to work with both committees to explore options to ease pressures and ensure that the workforce can meet the needs of all deaf children and young people.

BSL GCSE

We welcome the ongoing commitment shown by Qualifications Wales to create a made-for-Wales British Sign language GCSE as part of its wider reforms to GCSEs in line with the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales. We were disappointed to see the recent news that Qualifications Wales has had to delay the introduction of the GCSE, although we are understanding of the wider context in which Qualifications Wales is working and the amount of work required to account for regional BSL variations across Wales. We remain committed to working in partnership with Qualifications Wales throughout the development of the qualification.