



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH

# Post-school Transitions of People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

**Final report**

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## Notes

### Language used in the report

<b>Deaf and hard of hearing people</b>	The term <i>deaf and hard of hearing</i> is used to denote people with all types and degrees of hearing loss. When discussing administrative and survey data on people with hearing loss, we use the terms employed in the respective datasets (i.e., <i>hearing impairment, deaf/hearing impairment, deaf/partially hearing, difficulties in hearing</i> ), which tend to reflect a medical, rather than social model of disability. Similarly, when reporting figures published by official bodies, such as the Office for Disability Issues, we use the terms employed in the original reports.
<b>Disabled people</b>	According to the Equality Act 2010, disabled people are people with physical or mental impairments that have substantial and long-term adverse effects on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
<b>Pupils with additional support needs</b>	According to the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, a child or young person has additional support needs if they would be unable to benefit from school education without the provision of additional support. This category includes, but is not limited to, pupils with disabilities.

## Section 1 Patterns of transition

### Introduction

For all young people, the process of transition to adulthood is likely to present a series of risks and challenges. This is especially likely to be the case for young people who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), who may face additional environmental and attitudinal barriers linked to the challenges of communicating in a hearing world. In this section, we provide a brief overview of the literature on post-school transitions, patterns of educational outcomes and post-school destinations drawing on a range of administrative data and policy on post-school transitions. We also provide an overview of the structure of the report. Appendices 1 and 2, which are published as a separate document, present a fuller review of official statistics and policies.

### The nature of transition to adulthood

As discussed by Riddell (2009), earlier work on youth transitions tended to assume that young people moved in an uncomplicated manner from childhood, characterised by dependency on family and participation in full-time education, into the world of adulthood, characterised by stable employment, an independent home, financial independence and adult relationships. The life course was thus viewed as a series of stages which were linear, cumulative and non-reversible, with youth as the stage between childhood and adulthood. In recent years this view of discrete states and smooth transitions has been challenged. The modern labour force is required to be flexible, working across different tasks and with varying patterns of work, as production demands. Demands of the flexible labour market may, of course, be extremely problematic for workers who have few qualifications and are in low-skilled work. A further consequence of a flexible and unstable labour market is the relatively recent expectation that education is no longer confined to the early years of life. People of working age are expected to use lifelong learning to retrain and upskill throughout their active years. Transition is therefore no longer seen as a single stage process, but as multi-layered and on-going (Ecclestone, Biesta and Hughes, 2010), with changes in the labour market and post-school education having consequences for the development of adult identity and other markers of adulthood such as establishing an independent home and forging social relationships outside the family.

The more complex view of transition coincided with and was partly informed by the global economic restructuring of the late 1970s, which was driven by the massive increase in oil prices and, in many developed economies, made traditional industries such as mining and manufacturing suddenly appear to be uneconomic. One of the consequences of this economic restructuring was the loss of many male-dominated manual jobs and the virtual collapse of the traditional youth labour market (Bynner and Roberts, 1991; Riddell, 2009; Heinz, 2009). Up to that point, young people could leave school at the minimum leaving age and undertake five year apprenticeships leading into relatively stable trades or a series of unskilled jobs (Bynner and Roberts 1991; Roberts, 2009). In 1975, 60% of 16 year olds were in full time employment, but eight years later only 18% were (Riddell 1998, p. 190). The erosion of opportunities in the youth labour market has continued following the economic recession which was triggered by the financial crash of 2007. As a result of the long-term decline in youth employment, extended transitions have become the norm, with young people engaged in a period of 'training' for up to ten years after the compulsory school leaving age. For some 50% of any cohort, this extended transition takes place in and through higher education while, for much of the other 50%, this takes place through the ever extending net of vocational qualifications, part training,



part extended job interview. This extended transition has been formalised in law so that parents are duty-bound to provide support for any child up to the age of 25 years who is undertaking education or training (Riddell, Baron and Wilson, 2001).

In the following sections, we provide a brief overview of the educational qualifications and post-school destinations of young people who are DHH compared with their hearing peers. As well as describing transitional arrangements in school, we also outline the various forms of post-school support which are available through education, employment, training and the welfare system. As noted above, further details are available in the Appendices, which are published as a separate document.

This research combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to illuminate broad patterns and individual experiences. The quantitative findings draw on a range of different sources, including the Scottish Government, Higher Education Statistics Agency, Department for Work and Pensions, Labour Force Survey, Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services and Skills Development Scotland. Qualitative data are drawn from in-depth interviews with 30 young people who are DHH, and who volunteered to participate in the study. As explained in Section 2, the case study sample is not representative of the total population, and is skewed towards those from more advantaged backgrounds and with higher levels of qualification, reflecting the characteristics of those who volunteered to participate. We believe that there is considerable strength in the mixed methods approach adopted because of its combination of breadth and depth. The use of official statistics allows us to comment on whether individual experiences are typical or atypical, whilst the qualitative data provides the insights which are necessary to understand and explain the broad patterns indicated by the statistical data. We are careful in all cases to indicate the source of the data, so that the reader can make a judgement about its reliability and validity.

### **Educational qualifications of young people who are DHH**

We do not have data on the total number of DHH pupils in Scottish schools. The Scottish Government publishes statistics on the number of pupils in publicly-funded schools who receive support for learning under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004<sup>1</sup>. In 2011/12, 2,253 pupils received support for hearing impairment (i.e., 0.34% of all pupils in publicly-funded schools in Scotland). The same year, 135 of these pupils left publicly-funded schools. These figures do not include DHH pupils in independent schools and DHH pupils in publicly-funded schools who do not have support plans.

School leavers' educational qualifications are a major determinant of their post-school trajectories. Figure 1.1 provides a comparison of the educational outcomes of school leavers<sup>2</sup> who are DHH and school leavers with no additional support needs (ASN). The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is used as the basis for reporting attainment (Table 1.1). It is evident that young people who are DHH are much less likely to obtain five Highers (SCQF Level 6) and Advanced Highers (SCQF Level 7). This indicates that they are almost half as likely to qualify for entry into higher education. At the same time, young people who are DHH are much more likely to leave school with low qualifications or no qualifications. See Appendix 2 for a more detailed explanation of school leavers' attainment.

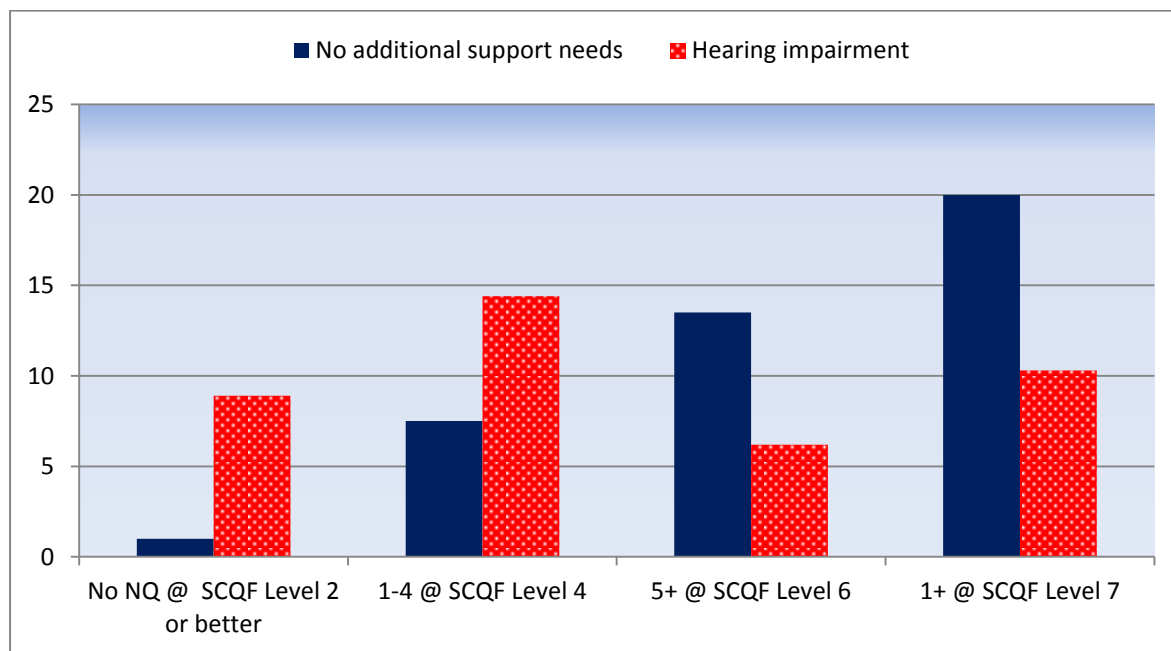
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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2 for more information on the pupils with additional support needs in publicly-funded Scottish schools.

<sup>2</sup> In Scotland, the statutory school leaving age is 16 (i.e., the end of S4). However, most young people choose to stay in school past their statutory leave date. The 2011/12 School Leaver Destination Return showed that 81% of all school leavers left school at the end of S5 or S6 (SDS, 2013).

These data need careful interpretation, since some young people who are DHH also have additional support needs such as learning difficulties, and therefore would not be expected to achieve at the same level as their non-disabled peers. However, for young people who are DHH but do not have other learning difficulties, questions arise about the extent to which schools are helping them to fulfil their academic potential.

**Figure 1.1: Highest qualifications of Scottish school leavers with no support needs and leavers with hearing impairment, as percentage of all qualifications obtained by each group, 2011/12**



SOURCE: ATTAINMENT AND LEAVER DESTINATIONS, SUPPLEMENTARY DATA. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2013a)

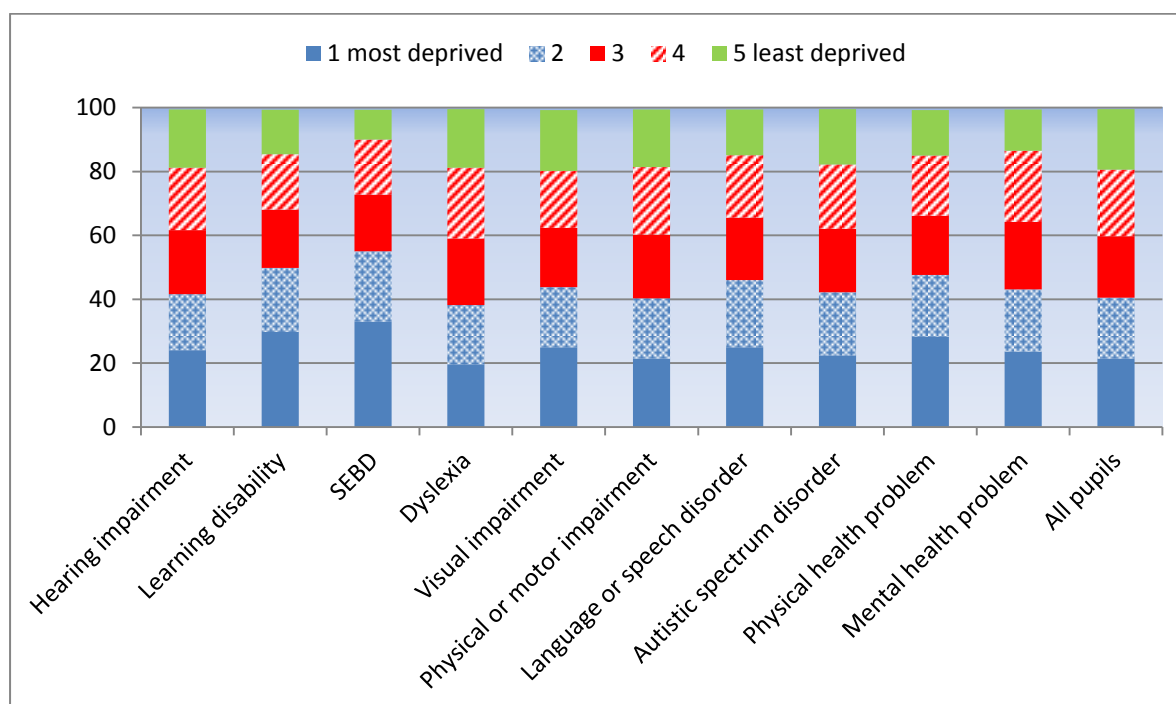
1. This figure shows a selection of all qualifications; therefore reported percentages do not add up to 100.
2. Where data are not disclosed due to low numbers (below 5) we have allowed for two pupils in order to show that some pupils achieved qualifications at a particular level.

**Table 1.1: Qualifications in Scottish schools and SCQF levels**

SCQF level	Qualification
Level 7	Advanced Higher at A-C
Level 6	Higher at A-C
Level 5	Intermediate 2 at A-C; Standard Grade at 1-2
Level 4	Intermediate 1 at A-C; Standard Grade at 3-4
Level 3	Access 3 cluster; Standard Grade at 5-6
Level 2	Access 2 cluster

We know that there is a strong association between socio-economic background and educational attainment (Hills et al., 2010; Wyness, 2013), so it is possible that these differentiated levels of educational attainment might be explained by the socio-economic backgrounds of young people who are DHH. However, our analysis of Scottish Government data shows that young people who are DHH are relatively evenly spread across different neighbourhoods as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (see Figure 1.2). This contrasts with young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD), who are much more likely to live in the most deprived areas.

**Figure 1.2: Percentage of pupils with additional support needs and all pupils in Scottish publicly-funded schools by deprivation quintile, 2012**



SOURCE: DATA SUPPLIED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, APRIL 2013

1. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009 is used here.
2. This figure shows only a selection of all support categories.

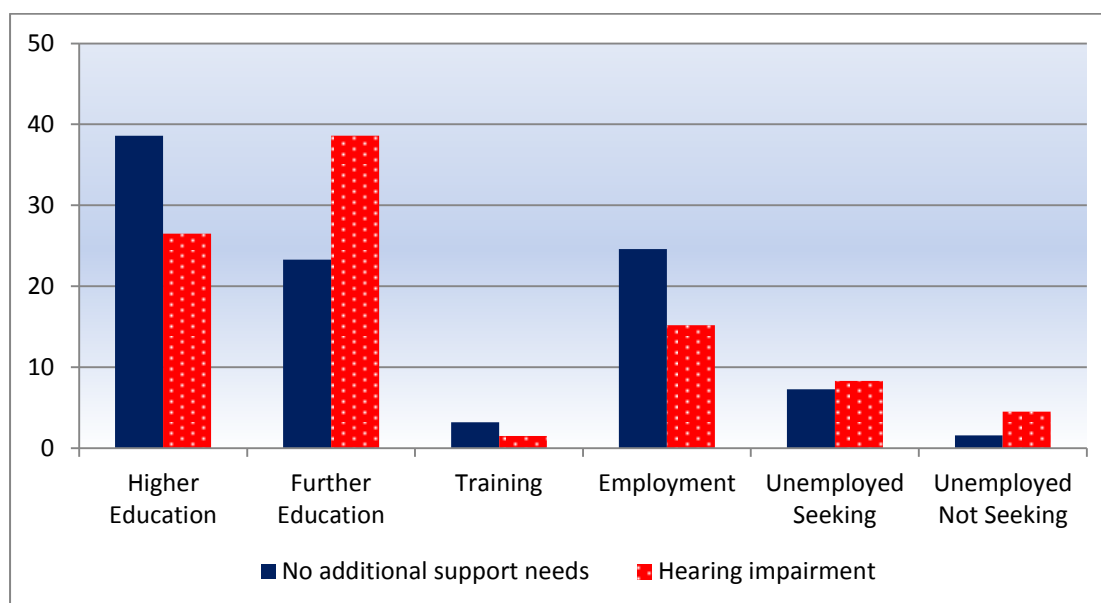
### Post-school destinations

Lower school qualifications are reflected in different post-school destinations (see Figure 1.3). The statistics show that nine months after leaving school, school leavers<sup>3</sup> who are DHH are less likely to be in higher education, employment or training, and much more likely to be in further education. School leavers who are DHH are also more likely to be unemployed and seeking work or unemployed and not seeking work. The latter group is likely to include those with multiple impairments.

It is important to note here that compared with school leavers with other types of additional support needs, DHH young people were the least likely to be unemployed and seeking work or unemployed and not seeking work. See Appendix 2 for a more detailed comparison with school leavers with other types of additional support needs and for an overview of DHH school leavers' destinations in the past five years.

<sup>3</sup> In Scotland, the statutory school leaving age is 16 (i.e., the end of S4). However, most young people choose to stay in school past their statutory leave date. The School Leaver Destination Return showed that in 2011/12 only 19% of school leavers left school at the end of S4 (SDS, 2013). The statistics published by the Scottish Government on attainment and leaver destinations refer to all school leavers, irrespective of whether they left school at the end of S4, S5 or S6.

**Figure 1.3: Destinations of Scottish school leavers with no support needs and leavers with hearing impairment, as percentage of all leavers in each group, 2011/12**



SOURCE: ATTAINMENT AND LEAVER DESTINATIONS, SUPPLEMENTARY DATA. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2013a)

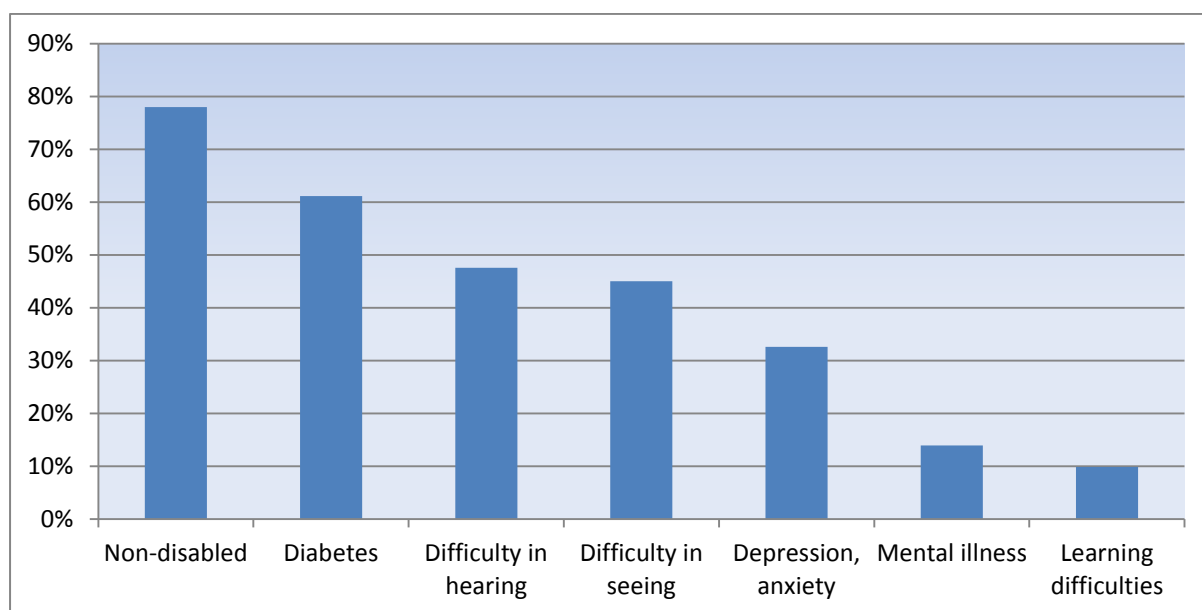
1. These are the destinations of school leavers 9 months after leaving school.
2. Where data are not disclosed due to low numbers (below 5) we have allowed for two pupils in order to show that some school leavers were in those particular destinations.
3. There were no hearing-impaired school leavers in Activity Agreements and Voluntary Work; these categories were not included in the figure.
4. Because of undisclosed figures and rounding up of percentages, numbers may not add up to 100%.

### Employment outcomes of people who are DHH

These different post-school pathways have major implications for future life chances, particularly employment and economic status, of people who are DHH compared with others. Labour Force Survey data may be used to compare the employment status of working age people who are DHH with other groups of disabled people and the non-disabled population (see Figure 1.4). Whereas the estimated employment rate of the non-disabled population was around 78% in 2012, the employment rate of those with 'difficulty in hearing' was around 48%. It is also interesting to note that the estimated employment rates of people with difficulties in hearing were lower than those of people with physical health conditions, but markedly higher than those of people with mental health conditions and learning difficulties. Between 2010 and 2012, the Office for Disability Issues reported average employment rates ranging between 46% and 55% for people with difficulties in hearing.

In 2012 people who are deaf or hard of hearing were the largest category of Access to Work recipients (see Figure 1.5). Access to Work is a non-means tested GB Government programme geared towards assisting with the employment support needs of disabled people. Reviews of government employment support programmes have highlighted the importance of Access to Work in facilitating the working lives of disabled people (Sayce, 2011). It can be used for a range of purposes in the work place, such as support workers and special aids and equipment. In 2012/13, individuals with difficulty in hearing were the largest group of recipients, accounting for 18% of all Access to Work clients. See Appendix 2 for details on Access to Work spending and the numbers of DHH recipients since 2010.

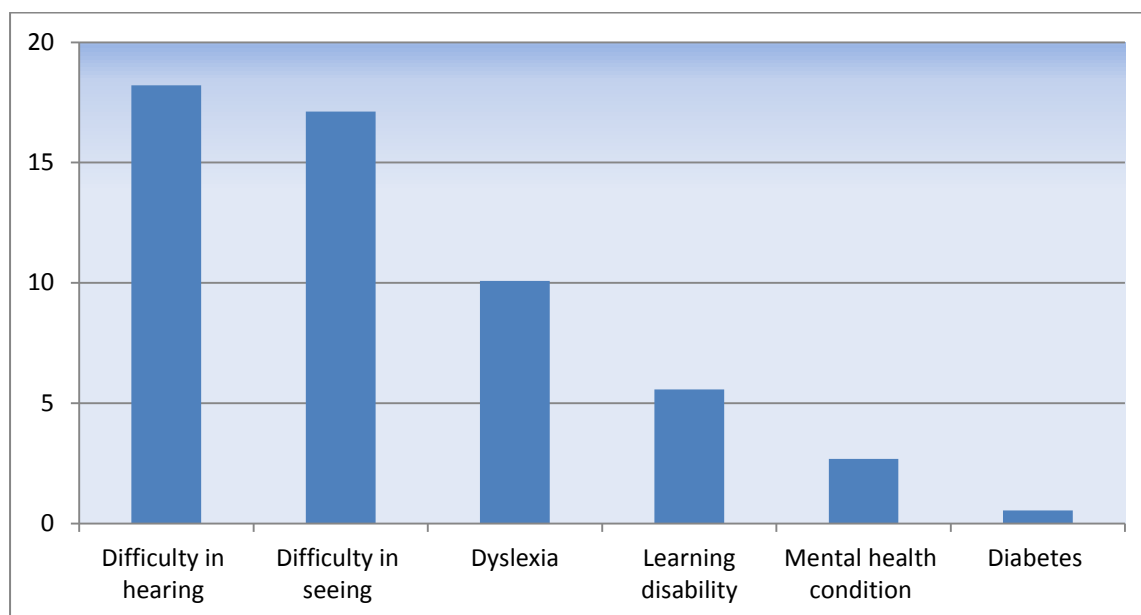
**Figure 1.4: Employment rates of working-age people in Great Britain by type of impairment, 2012**



SOURCE: THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2012 QUARTER 2

1. This figure shows only a selection of the types of impairment in the Labour Force Survey.
2. Employment rates cover both employees and self-employed people.
3. Respondents who experienced multiple difficulties were asked to identify their main impairment.

**Figure 1.5 Access to Work recipients by type of impairment, as percentage of total, 2012/13**



SOURCE: ACCESS TO WORK. OFFICIAL STATISTICS, DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (2013a)

Note. This figure shows only a selection of the 20 impairment categories of Access to Work recipients.

At the same time, it is important to note that the employment status of disabled people is strongly associated with their level of education. In the next section we will see that the employment rates of university graduates who are DHH are similar to those of non-disabled graduates (Figure 1.6). Therefore the marked difference between the employment rates of all working-age people who are DHH and those of non-disabled people (i.e., 48% vs. 78% in 2012, Figure 1.4) suggests that DHH people who do not have higher education degrees have very low employment rates.

Furthermore, the National Equality Panel (Hills et al., 2010) showed that the labour market penalty associated with having no qualifications has increased over time for all groups but particularly for disabled people. In 1974-76, more than three quarters of disabled men with no qualifications were in employment, compared with only a third in 2001-2003. There has also been a decline, albeit less marked, in the employment prospects of disabled men with higher qualifications over time. In 1974-76, 93% of this group were in employment, but by 2001-2003 this figure had fallen to 75%. In the next section we will see the employment rates of university graduates who are DHH.

### Higher education outcomes

Recently there has been an increase in the number of higher education students who declare a disability. In 2002/3, 5% of all first year UK-domiciled undergraduates declared a disability, while by 2011/12 this figure has risen to 9%. However, the proportion of students who declared deafness or hearing impairment remained relatively stable: 0.30% in 2002/3 and 0.27% in 2011/12.

Studies of the experiences of disabled undergraduates, including students who are DHH (Riddell et al., 2005; Fuller et al., 2009), report that they encounter a range of barriers including restricted social networks and academic pressure due to inaccessible learning materials. Most students who disclose a hearing impairment receive Disabled Students Allowance, which is payable directly to the student to assist with the additional costs of studying for a degree. Students who claim the Disabled Students' Allowance have lower drop-out rates than disabled students who do not claim the allowance and non-disabled students (see Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2: Non-continuation rates of full-time first degree students at UK higher education institutions after their first year, 2004/5 to 2009/10**

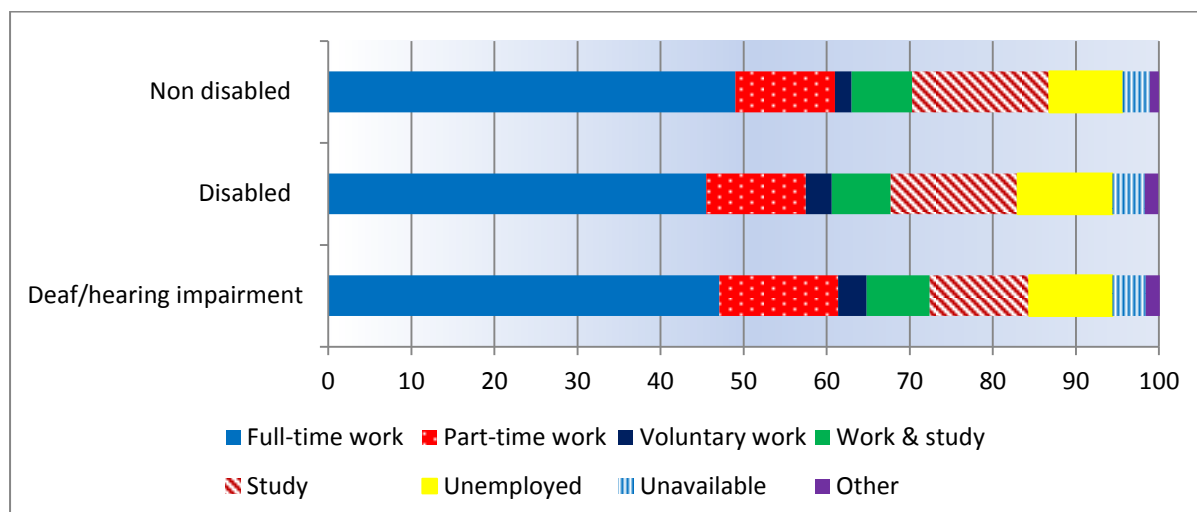
	Disabled students not in receipt of DSA	Disabled students in receipt of DSA	Non-disabled students
<b>2004/05</b>	8.6	5.0	7.2
<b>2005/06</b>	8.6	5.6	7.1
<b>2006/07</b>	8.5	6.0	7.4
<b>2007/08</b>	9.3	5.3	7.2
<b>2008/09</b>	8.4	5.0	6.5
<b>2009/10</b>	9.1	5.5	7.2

SOURCE: ANALYSIS OF HESA STUDENT RECORDS BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND, PUBLISHED BY THE OFFICE FOR DISABILITY ISSUES (2012)

Note. These figures do not include mature students (i.e., students older than 21 on 30<sup>th</sup> September of the year they entered higher education).

As noted above, students who are DHH have much better employment outcomes compared with students with other disabilities. It is also interesting to note that, compared with those undertaking vocational qualifications or training, far more is known about their experiences and outcomes. Figure 1.6 shows that the employment rates of graduates who are DHH and non-disabled graduates are very similar, although DHH graduates are slightly more likely to be in part-time employment. They are also less likely to undertake further study compared with non-disabled graduates.

**Figure 1.6: Destinations of DHH graduates, compared to disabled and non-disabled graduates, as percentage of all graduates in each group, 2009/10**



SOURCE: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? AGCAS DISABILITY TASK GROUP (2012)

According to the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), the outcomes for graduates who are DHH are generally positive. In 2012, compared with other groups of disabled graduates, they had the lowest unemployment levels, the highest rates of full-time and part-time employment and the highest levels of success in obtaining management and administrative positions. See Appendix 2 for the types of occupations of DHH graduates and for a five-year overview of their destinations compared with those of non-disabled graduates and graduates with other disabilities.

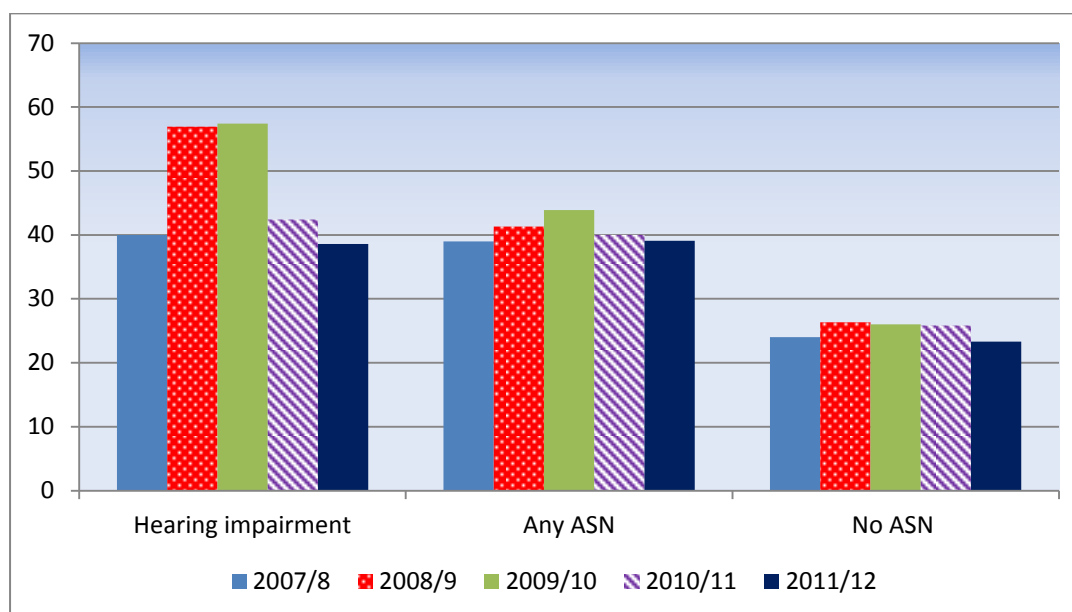
This success is likely to be attributable both to the high skill levels of DHH graduates but also to their relatively high socio-economic status, which provides access to social networks which facilitate access to the professions, internment positions and so on. Analysis of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (Riddell et al., 2005) shows that disabled young people in higher education reflect the relative social advantage of the majority of higher education students, in particular those in pre-1992 universities, where 80% have parents in professional and managerial occupations.

### Further education outcomes

As noted in Figure 1.3, the majority of school leavers who are DHH move into further education (39% of all school leavers who are DHH compared with 23% of school leavers who do not have ASN). Despite the fact that college is the most common post-school destination, students who are DHH make up a small proportion of the total college population (0.55% of all students in further education in 2010/11, according to data published by the Scottish Funding Council). Despite the fact that many young people who are DHH move from school to college, very little is known about their experiences and outcomes, and administrative data is scarce.

Figure 1.7 shows that further education has been the most common post-school destination of school leavers who are DHH in the past five years. Proportionally more school leavers who are DHH entered further education than both school leavers with ASN as a group and school leavers with no ASN.

**Figure 1.7: Proportions of hearing-impaired school leavers from publicly-funded Scottish schools who entered further education institutions, compared with proportions of leavers with any ASN and with no ASN, 2007/8 to 2010/12**



SOURCE: INITIAL SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS DATA SETS, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013)

At the time of writing, the college sector is under-going major reorganisation following the publication of the Griggs report on the governance of Scotland's colleges in 2012 (Scottish Government, 2012h). According to a report published by Audit Scotland (2013), in 2011/12 there were 37 incorporated colleges. By the end of 2013, this number will have been reduced to 21, and in April 2014 colleges will become public bodies. This is likely to mean that they will be unable to carry over reserves from one financial year to the next, possibly affecting their ability to invest in services such as student support. In 2011/12, their income fell by nine per cent in real terms, including a £56 million cut in Scottish Funding Council funding, which is their main income source. Over the next two years, Scottish Funding Council funding will continue to fall.

Further education students who are DHH may be enrolled for a range of Scottish Vocational Qualifications at different levels or in extension (or 'special') programmes which focus on life skills. The majority of students with significant learning difficulties in addition to hearing impairments enrol in extension programmes. Riddell, Baron and Wilson (2001) explored the experiences of young people with learning difficulties in Scottish colleges and concluded that 'special' programmes tended to lead into a revolving cycle of training, with little chance of moving into mainstream education or employment. We are unable to comment on the relative outcomes of students who are DHH on specific programmes compared with other young people due to lack of data.

Support for disabled students is organised and funded differently in colleges compared with universities. Students on higher education courses may receive the Disabled Students' Allowance, which may be pooled or used by the disabled person to purchase the support they need. By way of contrast, additional support for disabled college students is included in the grant to the institution by the Scottish Funding Council. It is up to the college to decide how funds should be used. Some colleges, such as John Wheatley, have a relatively high proportion of students who are DHH (1.3% of the total student body) and are known to provide higher levels of support.

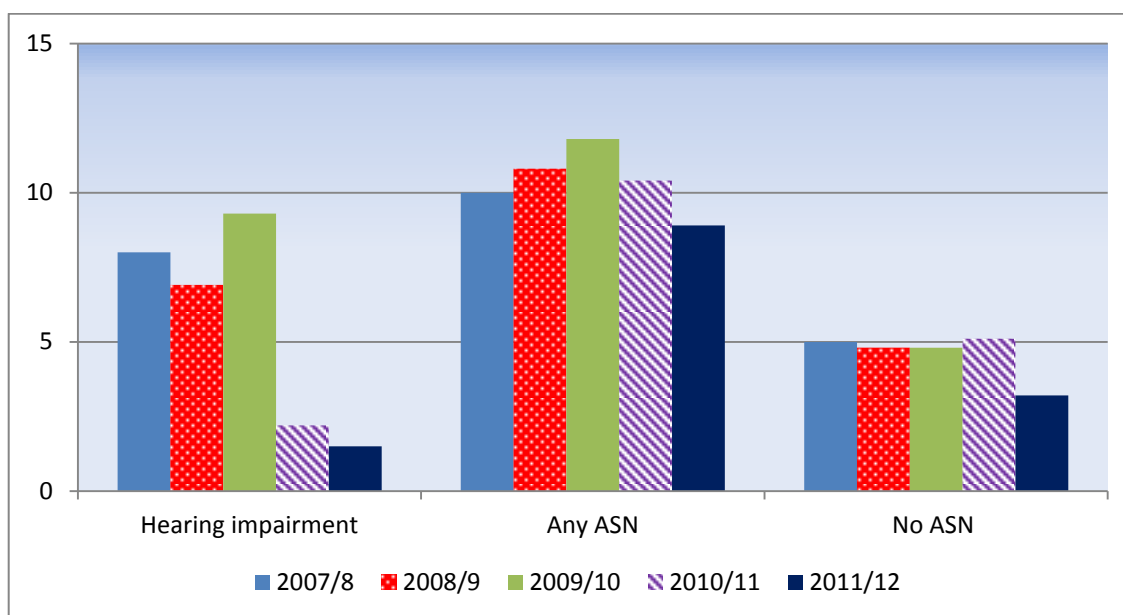


### Training programmes

There is also a lack of information on the experiences and outcomes of young people who are DHH who move from school into training courses funded by the Scottish Government via Skills Development Scotland. However, it is evident that there was a drop in participation in 2010/11. It is important to note here that the Scottish Government figures on participation rates on training programmes do not include young people on Modern Apprenticeships. These are counted under employment (see Table A3 in Appendix 2).

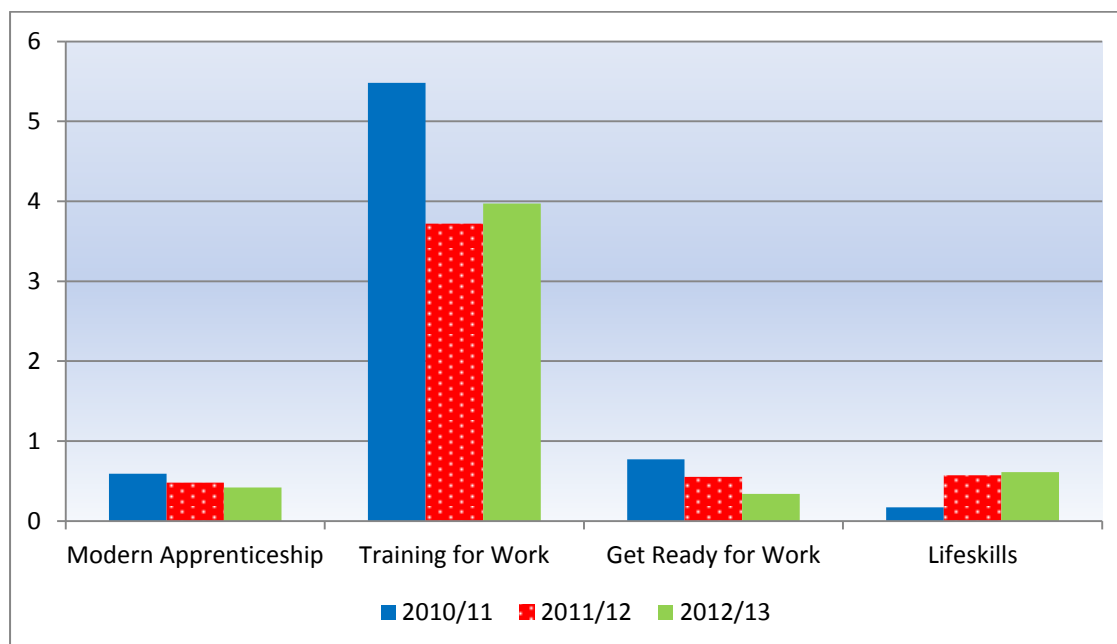
Administrative data collected by Skills Development Scotland are available on participation in different types of training programme by disability status (see Figure 1.9), but these are not broken down in relation to young people who are DHH. See Appendix 1 for more information about the training programmes offered by Skills Development Scotland.

**Figure 1.8: Proportions of hearing-impaired school leavers from publicly-funded Scottish schools who entered training programmes, compared with proportions of leavers with any ASN and with no ASN, 2007/8 to 2010/12**



SOURCE: INITIAL SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS DATA SETS, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013)  
 Note. Where data are not disclosed due to low numbers (below 5) we have allowed for 2 pupils in order to show that some school leavers enrolled on training programmes.

**Figure 1.9: Disabled people on National Training Programmes as of 31st March, as percentage of total number of people on each programme, 2010/11 to 2012/13**



SOURCE: DATA SUPPLIED BY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND, APRIL 2013

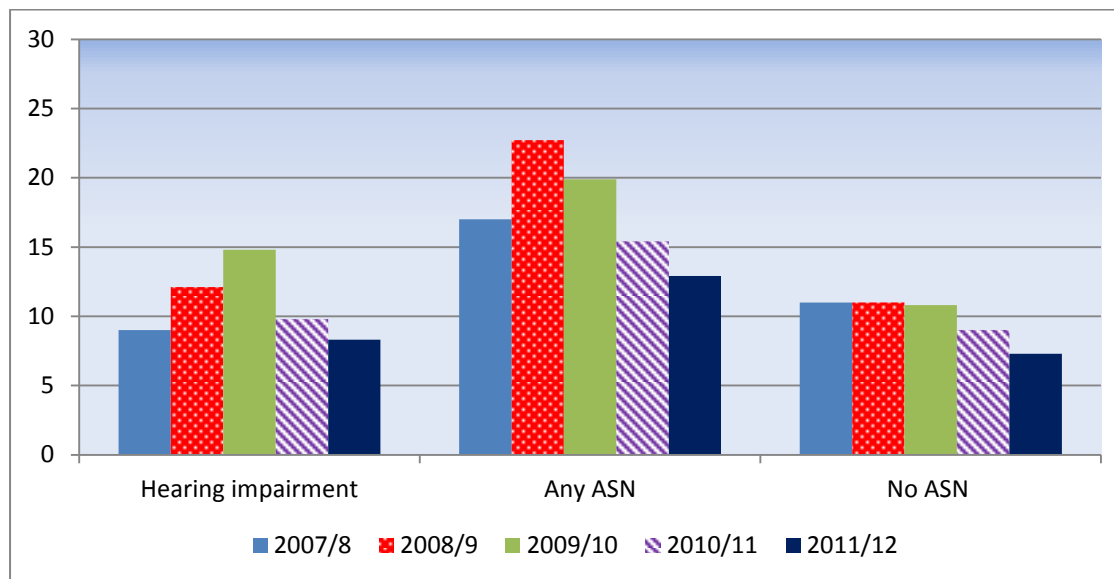
1. Disability information is based on self-assessment.
2. Modern Apprenticeships figures include all ages (16-19 and 20+) and all qualification levels.

### Unemployment rates of school leavers who are DHH

In the Scottish Government’s statistics on school leavers, a distinction is drawn between those who are actively seeking employment and those who are not (see Figures 1.10 and 1.11). About 10% of school leavers who are DHH are unemployed and actively seeking work, a similar proportion to those with no additional support needs. Just over 2% are unemployed and not seeking employment. This group includes those who are not available for work due to illness, significant disabilities, or who are full-time carers for young children, as well as those who are not registered as unemployed and are not claiming any benefits.

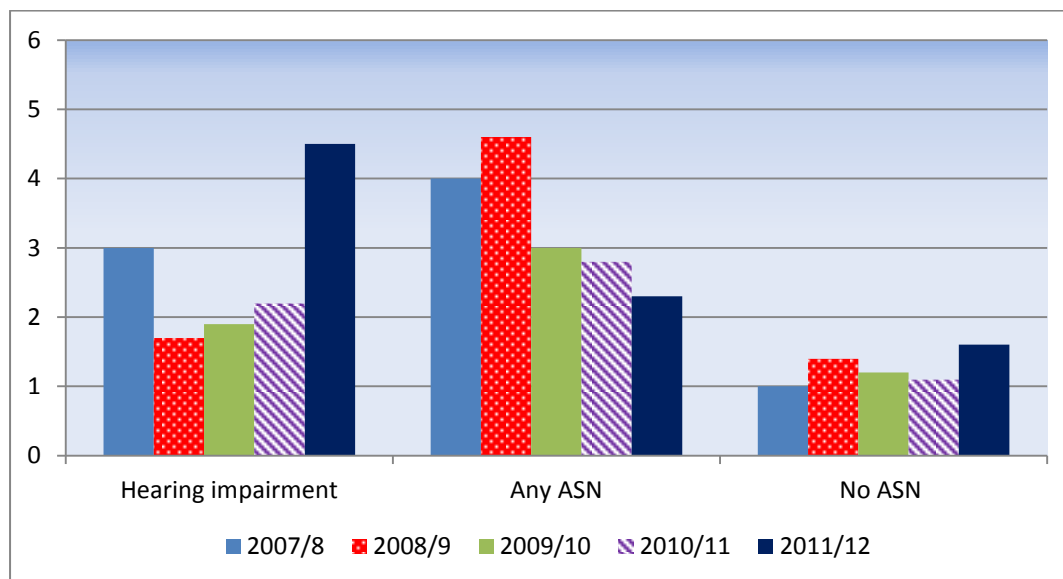
The Government is extremely concerned about the risk of social exclusion for school leavers who are disengaged from education, employment and training (referred to as the More Choices, More Chances group in Scotland and the NEET group in England). Following the financial crash of 2007, youth unemployment rose and even though there are some signs of economic recovery, youth unemployment remains high. Various initiatives have been developed aimed specifically at preventing young people from falling into the category, such as the Getting it Right for Every Child (GRFEC) initiative and the Youth Employment Strategy (Scottish Government, 2012). Once young people are disengaged from the labour market, their risk of poverty and early mortality increases. However, very little is known about the experiences of young people who are DHH who are either looking for work or who are experiencing longer term unemployment.

**Figure 1.10: Proportions of hearing-impaired school leavers from publicly-funded Scottish schools who were unemployed and seeking employment or training, compared with proportions of leavers with any ASN and with no ASN, 2007/8 to 2010/11**



SOURCE: INITIAL SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS DATA SETS, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013)

**Figure 1.11 Proportions of hearing-impaired school leavers from publicly-funded Scottish schools who were unemployed and NOT seeking employment or training, compared with proportions of leavers with any ASN and with no ASN, 2007/8 to 2010/11**



SOURCE: INITIAL SCHOOL LEAVER DESTINATIONS DATA SETS, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013)

Note. Where data are not disclosed due to low numbers (below 5) we have allowed for 2 pupils in order to show that some pupils achieved qualifications at a particular level.

### Policy responses to school transitions of young people who are DHH

Under the terms of the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** as amended, Future Needs Assessments were made mandatory for all young people with special education needs. These were multi-disciplinary, led by social work and took place about eighteen months before a young person left school. Discussions leading up to the passage of the **Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland)**

**Act 2004** suggested that the system of future needs assessment was too bureaucratic, and the decision on whether a formal meeting or series of meetings was required should be left to the school in discussion with the young person and their parents.

Schools' duties with regard to post-school transition planning are specified in the related **Code of Practice** (Scottish Government, 2009b and 2010f). According to the Code of Practice, transitional duties apply to all young people who:

- *have a co-ordinated support plan*
- *are in a specialist placement such as a specialist unit or a day or residential special school*
- *have additional support needs arising from a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995<sup>4</sup>*
- *are otherwise at risk of not making a successful transition* (Scottish Government, 2010f, p. 108).

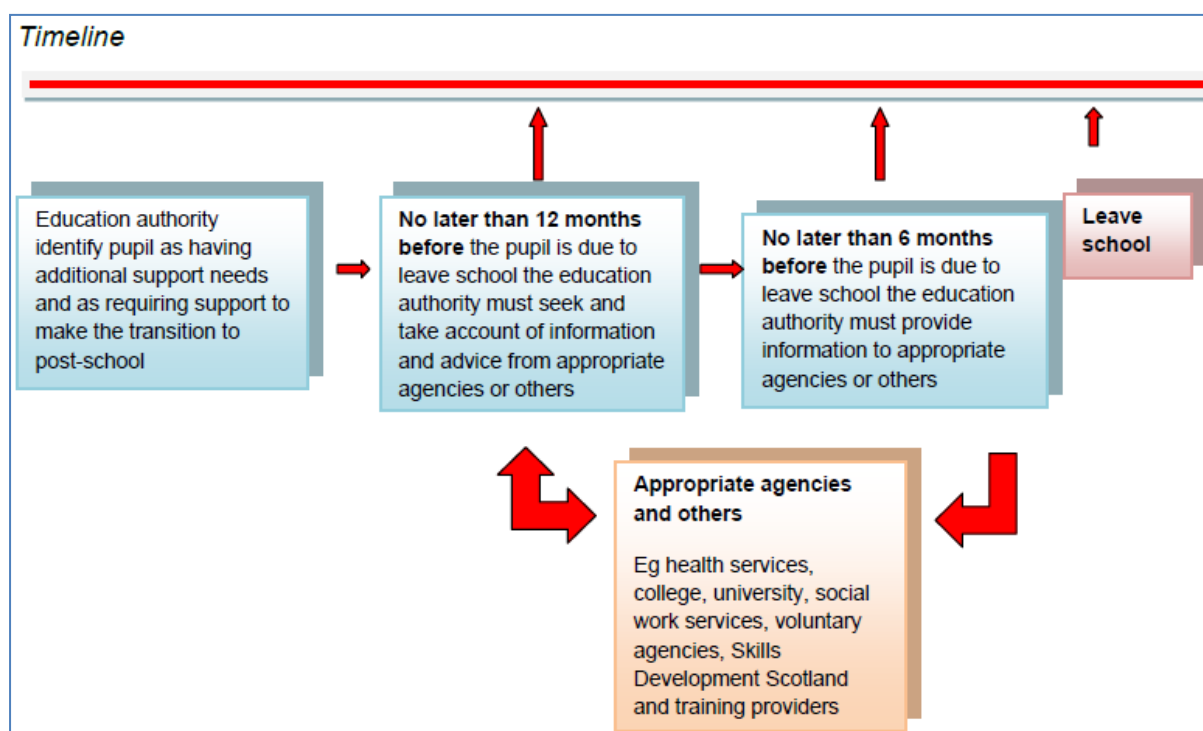
It is important to note that the Code of Practice has the status of non-statutory guidance and leaves a considerable amount of discretion to the school with regard to the management of transitional arrangements.

Although schools play a central role in managing the post-school transitions of young people with ASN, there is a strong emphasis on multi-agency work with all those involved in supporting young people with ASN (e.g., health services, social work services, voluntary agencies, Skills Development Scotland, colleges and universities). Good communication between the school leavers, their parents and all the supporting agencies is considered essential to the planning process. However, commentators have pointed out that the multi-agency model, although generally appropriate and helpful, may fail to take into account the 'cultural differences between children's and adult services' (Stalker and Moscardini, 2012).

The Code of Practice makes recommendations with regard to the minimum timescales for transition planning (outlined in Figure 1.12), while acknowledging that it is often better to start planning at an earlier point in the young person's secondary schooling, perhaps prior to making subject choices for externally validated courses. Schools are required to have clear arrangements in place **at least 12 months before the expected school leaving date**. The purpose of these arrangements is to ensure that the additional support and other services provided in the period leading to the young person leaving school are appropriate, and that there is a good match between the needs of the young person and options for subsequent support. In order to make arrangements, schools must request information and advice from agencies which may be involved with the young person on leaving school. They are advised to do so with the consent of the young person, and by seeking and taking account of the young person's and parents' wishes. Schools also need to ensure that the young person has enough information and understanding of the options available in order to make an informed decision. And finally, schools have the duty to inform relevant agencies of issues such as the expected school leaving date, the nature of the young person's support needs, and any provision the local authority may make (e.g., through social work or housing), **at least 6 months before school leaving date**. However, research has shown that schools fail to take into account the views and wishes of disabled young people and their parents because transition planning often starts too late (Stalker and Moscardini, 2012).

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<sup>4</sup> Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has since been replaced by the Equality Act 2010.

**Figure 1.12: Post-school transition planning for young people with ASN**

SOURCE: SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING: CODE OF PRACTICE (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, 2010f)

The arrangements are required to be clear, so that the young person and all those involved 'know exactly what is happening, when it is happening, and who is responsible' (Scottish Government, 2010f, p. 120). The Code recommends that transition is coordinated by a relevant person known to the young person and their family, and the effectiveness of the arrangements is monitored, and if necessary reviewed, by a lead person.

In February 2012, Scottish Ministers reported to the Scottish Parliament for the first time on the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (As Amended) (Scottish Government, 2012j). The report noted that between 2009 and 2011 the Scottish Government examined post-16 transition strategy and practice of local authorities and key partner organisations, and found that 'post-16 transitional planning [...] represents a very mixed picture across Scotland' (p. 26). They found variation in the way local authorities identified children and young people with ASN, in the effectiveness of partnership work, and in the monitoring and tracking of young people through transitions. Although authorities generally followed a staged intervention approach, the approach adopted differed from authority to authority. Another interesting finding was that examples of effective transitional planning were mostly seen in special schools. The report concluded that 'there remains scope for improvement in transition planning for young people with additional support needs' (p. 36).

Documents such as *Opportunities for All* (Scottish Government, 2012e) and *Supporting Young Scots into Work: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2012a) aim to increase youth employment by ensuring that 'every 16-19 year-old in Scotland who is not in work, a Modern Apprenticeship or education will be offered a place in education or training' and by 'supporting young people at different points of their journey to employment'. In 2010/11 school leavers who are DHH entered positive destinations in the highest proportion amongst leavers with ASN (see Figure A13 in Appendix 2). It is important to note that their most common destination is further education, and there are indications that those with further education qualifications do not do as well on the labour market. This is suggested by the discrepancy between the low employment rates of all

working-age people who are DHH and the high employment rates of DHH people who hold higher education degrees. This underscores the need for adequate post-school transition planning for school leavers who are DHH. At the same time, there is a need for adequate support in post-16 education and training, so that young people who are DHH complete their qualifications and have an equal chance of competing for jobs in the labour market.

In this report, case studies are used to explore the success of transitional arrangements instituted at school level and followed through by post-school education and training providers.

## Structure of the report

**Section 2** describes the case study methods used in the research, summarises the research questions and provides an overview of the young people who feature in the case studies. **Section 3** outlines the school background of the case study young people, including earlier transitions, whilst **Section 4** explores transition planning at school level and its outcomes. **Section 5** discusses the experiences of young people who move from school into higher education, whilst **Section 6** presents the post-school experiences and outcomes of young people who move into a college course or a training programme. **Section 7** investigates the employment experiences of young people who are DHH, drawing out the differences between graduates and those with lower educational qualifications. In **Section 8**, we explore the experiences of those who are unemployed, some of whom have previously participated in education or training and some of whom have never worked. **Section 9** presents data on the attainment of other markers of adulthood such as independent living and social relationships and the way in which these are affected by different post-school destinations. In **Section 10**, we present a summary of findings, broad conclusions, policy recommendations and ideas for future research.

At the beginning of each section we list the key findings from the review of official statistics in Appendix 2, in order to provide a context for the findings from the case studies. At the end of each section we highlight further questions which emerge from the data.

## Patterns of transition: summary

- Post-school transitions have become more complex and drawn-out over time and are less likely to lead straight into employment.
- The post-school destinations of school leavers who are DHH differ from those of young people who are not DHH.
- Young people who are DHH are more likely to take a college course on leaving school, and are less likely to move into higher education, employment or training. They are slightly more likely to be unemployed.
- Higher education graduates who are DHH are somewhat less likely to be in employment than non-disabled graduates.
- Compared with other disabled groups, they are the most successful in finding graduate-level employment.
- Disabled Students Allowance, payable to the individual person, is only available to those on higher education courses.
- College students do not have a personalised learning support allowance.
- Cuts in college funding are likely to have an impact on support in college over coming years.
- People who are DHH in the working age population are more likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people.
- Compared with other disability groups, people who are DHH have relatively high employment rates and receive the largest number of Access to Work payments.

## Section 2 Methodology

### Introduction

The present study analysed the educational and employment outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing young people in Scotland, by looking at their transitions from compulsory schooling to training, employment, further and higher education. The following research questions were addressed:

- What are the post-school destinations of DHH young people in Scotland and how do they compare with those of non-disabled young people and young people with other types of additional support needs?
- How do DHH young people's post-school destinations impact on their ability to achieve other important markers of adulthood, such as independent living arrangements and the formation of independent relationships?
- What barriers are encountered by DHH young people in accessing post-school education, employment and training opportunities?
- What factors promote 'successful' post-school transitions?

To address these questions, we drew on two strands of data, which were analysed in light of recent trends in Scottish and UK legislation and policy regarding human rights, education, training, employment and benefits. These strands were:

(1) a comparative secondary analysis of official statistics on the post-school education, employment and training destinations and outcomes of young people who are DHH, young people with additional support needs, and young people with no additional support needs;

(2) semi-structured interviews with 30 people aged 18-24, who are DHH.

### Methods

The semi-structured interviews focused on the young people's personal background, school background, post-school transition planning and experiences of post-school education, training and employment (see interview schedule in Appendix 3). We also asked the participants to discuss issues related to their identity and social network and their plans for the future.

Most interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respondents' preferred mode of communication (i.e., spoken English or British Sign Language). The interviews with young people who preferred to use British Sign Language (BSL) were carried out by a Deaf researcher, who is a proficient BSL user. Three respondents expressed their preference to answer questions in writing. They received the interview schedule by e-mail, and upon completion were asked to answer some follow-up questions so as to ensure that their data were as rich as those elicited through face-to-face interviews.

The semi-structured interview format allowed the interviewers to vary the order in which questions were asked and ask further questions which seemed relevant. This flexibility suited the purpose of the study, which was to focus on specific aspects of young people's transitions and at the same time interpret these events in the wider context of their life histories from primary school to present.

This allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences. It also allowed the emergence of issues which were not included in the original interview schedule.

The interviews took place at the University of Edinburgh, at institutions where participants studied, or, in some cases, in participants' homes. Permission was sought to audio-record the spoken interviews and videotape the signed interviews. In the case of a young person with Down's syndrome, the parent was interviewed along with the young man. The audio recordings were transcribed and the videotaped BSL interviews were translated into English by the Deaf interviewer. Transcripts were then analysed thematically.

## Participants

Potential participants were contacted by mail and e-mail. Some were members of the National Deaf Children's Society; others were young people who had taken part in previous research conducted by the University of Edinburgh and had expressed interest in taking part in subsequent research. Requests were sent to all potential participants, irrespective of their socio-demographic characteristics. Everyone who offered to take part in the study was interviewed.

At the same time, we wanted to make sure that the characteristics of the participants reflected the socio-demographic characteristics of the wider population of 18-24 year-olds who are deaf or hard of hearing. As this study aimed to examine DHH people's experience of transition in light of educational attainment and employment outcomes, the participants' current employment status (or main current activity) was considered a key characteristic in participant selection. We interviewed young people who were at various stages of their transition from school to employment (e.g., students, jobseekers and young people in employment or training). We made efforts to recruit participants from underrepresented groups, such as young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) or were at risk of becoming disengaged. We also collected information on participants' other socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, preferred method of communication, presence/absence of other support needs, socio-economic status, urban/rural residence and local authority. As a consequence, the sampling method used in this study is mainly convenience sampling, with some elements of purposive sampling.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of participants' socio-demographic characteristics, school background and patterns of transition, while Table 2.2 shows the spread of the participants across key characteristics.

Table 2.2 shows that the participants were mostly:

- white (28 out of 30)
- oral, with limited or no knowledge of sign language (25 out of 30)
- from urban areas (11 were from large urban areas and 11 from suburban areas)
- from socially advantaged areas (16 were from the least deprived areas, the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- university-educated (half were university-educated: nine were in higher education at the time of the interview and six had graduated).

Some of these characteristics may reflect the characteristics of the wider DHH population (for instance, we expect that most DHH people in Scotland are white and live in urban areas). However, the participants' level of education was significantly different from that of the wider population. In 2011/12, 27% of all DHH state school leavers entered higher education (see Figure 1.3 in Section 1), while half of the participants in this study were university students or graduates. Another significant feature of our sample is the high proportion of young people from socially-advantaged areas: half of



our participants and their families lived in areas which fell in the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile of SIMD (the least socially deprived areas in Scotland), while only 18% of the wider DHH population live in such areas. This shows that a significant proportion of the young people who volunteered to take part in the study were university-educated and came from affluent backgrounds. However, young people from less socially advantaged backgrounds were also represented in the study and their views and experiences are given equal prominence in the discussion of findings.

*Gender, age and ethnicity.* There were slightly more women than men: 17 out of 30 were women. The participants were between 18 and 24 years old, and the average age was 21. There were slightly more 23 year-olds (9 out of 29). There were only two people from non-white ethnic groups, in both cases Asian.

*Highest qualifications on leaving school.* People who left school with at least one Advanced Higher were over-represented in the sample: one third of our participants left school with Advanced Highers or the equivalent, while attainment data (see Figure 1.1) shows that less than 3% of DHH school leavers of publicly-funded schools achieve Advanced Highers each year (i.e., less than five DHH school leavers each year). This suggests that a significant proportion of all deaf 18-24 year-olds who left school with Advanced Highers took part in this study. Seven participants left school with Highers and seven with Intermediate 1. Only three participants left school with Intermediate 2. One young person with complex needs left school with Access level qualifications.

*Age on leaving school<sup>5</sup>.* Most young people left school after their 6<sup>th</sup> year (21 out of 30). Four young people left school in their 5<sup>th</sup> year and five in their 4<sup>th</sup> year.

*Post-school education.* More than half of the young people interviewed were or had been in higher education at the time of the interview (16 out of 30). Seven people were or had been in further education. An equal number were or had been on Get Ready for Work and Modern Apprenticeship training programmes. Two participants had not gained any qualifications since leaving school.

*Main current activity.* The participants' main current activities were as follows:

- Students in post-16 education represented the largest group of interviewees (12 out of 30). Out of the 12, nine were in HE (seven at pre-1992 HE institutions and two at post-1992 HE institutions); two were on vocational courses in college (FE); one interviewee with complex needs was on a personal development course in college.
- Those in employment represented the next largest group (nine out of 30). Two were in graduate-level occupations and seven in non-graduate occupations. Seven were in full-time employment, and two worked part-time.
- Three people were on training programmes (Modern Apprenticeships).
- Four people were looking for work.
- Two individuals were unemployed and not looking for work: one person was a full-time carer of a young child, and the other person had stopped looking for work and was planning to go back to college in the near future.

*SIMD.* In order to measure the relative level of deprivation of the area where a participant lived, we used the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD2012). SIMD is an index of neighbourhood deprivation based on seven different aspects of deprivation: employment, income, health, education, access to services, crime and housing. We used the quintile ranking, in which quintile 1

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<sup>5</sup> In Scotland, the statutory school leaving age is 16 (i.e., the end of S4). However, most young people choose to stay in school past their statutory leave date. The 2011/12 School Leaver Destination Return showed that 81% of all school leavers left school at the end of S5 or S6 (SDS, 2013).

denotes the most deprived areas and quintile 5 the least deprived. Each participant was given an SIMD code based on their home postcode. When we interviewed students who lived away from family, we asked for their parents' postcode. As discussed above, people from socially advantaged backgrounds were over represented in the sample. More than half came from the least deprived areas (16 out of 30 were in the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile), while only four young people came from areas at the opposite end of the spectrum (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles).

There were significant demographic differences between higher education students, further education students and young people on training programmes. Higher education students were a highly socially advantaged group. The majority lived in the least deprived areas (the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile of the SIMD) and there were no students from the most deprived areas (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles). By comparison, further education students were a less socially advantaged group (half of them came from areas in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles). They also had a higher incidence of complex support needs. Those in training were even less socially advantaged (most of them came from areas in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quintiles) and, similar to further students, had a high incidence of complex support needs.

*Urban/rural residence.* Similar to the SIMD classification, we used the participants' home postcodes to determine whether they came from urban or rural areas. We used the Scottish Government 6-fold Urban-Rural Classification, in which 1 stands for large urban areas, and 6 for remote rural areas (see Table 1). All types of areas were represented in our sample, although most participants came from urban areas (22 out of 30).

*Local authority.* Participants came from 14 different local authorities. Edinburgh was slightly over-represented (five out of 30).

*Degree of hearing loss.* The information on the participants' degree of hearing loss is incomplete, as many young people did not know their unaided hearing levels. However, we can state with some confidence that all degrees of hearing loss were represented in the sample (from mild to profound), and that most participants had severe to profound hearing loss. Seven out of 30 had cochlear implants.

*Preferred method of communication.* Most participants (22 out of 30) communicated orally and had little or no knowledge of British Sign Language (BSL). Three young people could use both BSL and speech, but preferred to communicate orally. Five participants communicated mainly using BSL or Sign Supported English.

Three participants were children of deaf adults (CODA). Two had mothers who were deaf or hard of hearing and communicated orally; one young woman had Deaf parents and grandparents and her home language was BSL.

*Complex support needs.* Eight of the 30 participants had other support needs besides hearing loss, such as: social-emotional and behavioural difficulties; learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia; visual impairment; motor and speech disorders.

**Table 2.1: Participants' key characteristics**

Pseudo nym	Socio-demographic characteristics				Communication method <sup>6</sup>	School background	Transition pattern	Highest qualification	Employment status <sup>7</sup>	Living arrangements
	Age and ethnicity	Other ASN	SIMD 2012 <sup>8</sup>	Urban/rural classification <sup>9</sup>						
Sophie	21 white	-	4	5 (accessible rural)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → University → Employment	HE graduate	Employed (graduate level)	With parents
Emily	24 white	SEBD	3	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → University → Employment → Post-graduate studies	Postgraduate degree	Looking for work	With father
Jack	24 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (Year 6) → University	HE graduate	Looking for work	With parents
Madhat	24 Asian	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (Year 6) → College (FE) → Employment	SVQ Level 3	Employed (non-graduate level)	With parents
Riley	23 white	-	5	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (Year 6) → University	HE graduate	Postgraduate student	On his own
Ava	23 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary → Mainstream secondary with HID (Year 6)	School (Year 6) → University (dropped out) → College (HE) → University	HND	HE student	With parents
Lucy	23 white	Mobility difficulties	5	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → University (dropped out) → University → Employment	HE graduate	Employed (graduate level)	With parents
James	23 white	-	1	1 (large urban)	BSL	Deaf primary school → Mainstream secondary with HID	School (year 4) → College (HE) (dropped out) → College (FE)	NVQ Level 3	FE student	With partner

<sup>6</sup> Participants who could use both sign language and speech indicated their preferred communication method.

<sup>7</sup> Graduate-level occupations are occupations which require a graduate degree.

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Index of Deprivation 2012 (SIMD2012) is a measure of the relative level of deprivation of the area where the respondent lived. We used the quintile ranking: the most deprived areas are in quintile 1 and the least deprived are in quintile 5.

<sup>9</sup> We used the Scottish Government 6-fold Urban-Rural Classification, which is as follows: 1 (large urban); 2 (other urban); 3 (accessible small town); 4 (remote small town); 5 (accessible rural) and 6 (remote rural).

Table 2.1 (continued)

Pseudo nym	Socio-demographic characteristics				Communi- cation method	School background	Transition pattern	Highest qualification	Employment status	Living arrangem- ents
	Age and ethnicity	Other ASN	SIMD 2012	Urban/rural classification						
Logan	21 white	-	5	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 5) → College (HE) (no qualification) → University	Highers	HE student	Shared accommo- dation
Juzar	23 Asian	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary with HID and secondary with HID	School (year 6) → College (HND) (dropped out) → College (FE) → Employment	SVQ Level 2	Employed (non-graduate level)	With parents
Isla	20 white	-	3	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → University (dropped out) → Employment and part-time HE study	Highers	Employed (non-graduate level) Part-time HE student	With parents
Lily	23 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → University → Various internships and short-term contracts	HE graduate	Looking for work	With parents
Jessica	20 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → Gap year (employment) → University	Advanced Highers	HE student	Shared accommo- dation
Amelia	19 white	SEBD and dyslexia	3	5 (accessible rural)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 4) → various training programmes and seasonal work	Intermediate 1	Looking for work	With mother
Leah	23 white	-	1	2 (other urban)	BSL	Deaf primary and secondary → Mainstream secondary with HID (years 2 - 4)	School (year 4) → College (FE) → Employment → Full- time carer	SVQ Level 3	Unavailable for employment	With partner
Mia	19 white	-	1	4 (remote small town)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary schools	School (year 4) → College (FE) (dropped out) → GRfW → Modern Apprenticeship and part-time work	Modern Apprenticeship Level 2	Apprentice	With mother
Karen	18 white	-	2	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → GRfW → College (FE)	Intermediate 2	FE student	With mother

Table 2.1 (continued)

Pseudonym	Socio-demographic characteristics				Communication method	School background	Transition pattern	Highest qualification	Employment status	Living arrangements
	Age and ethnicity	Other ASN	SIMD 2012	Urban/rural classification						
Gillian	19 white	Learning difficulties	5	5 (accessible rural)	speech	Mainstream primary with HID and secondary with HID	School (year 5) → College (FE) → Various work placements → Part-time employment	Intermediate 2	Employed (non-graduate level)	With parents
Ethan	18 white	-	4	6 (remote rural)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → University	Advanced Higher	HE student	Shared accommodation
Chloe	21 white	-	5	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary with HID and secondary with HID	School (year 6) → University and part-time employment	Advanced Higher	HE student	Shared accommodation
Harry	21 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	BSL	Deaf primary schools → Selective school for the deaf in England (Years 7 -13)	School (year 13) → College (HE) (dropped out) → Jobseeking and casual work	A-levels at C	Unemployed	With parents
Ruby	20 white	SEBD and sight loss	3	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	Excluded from school (year 5) → GRfW → Modern Apprenticeship → Employment	MA Level 3	Employed (non-graduate level)	With parents
Alex	19 white	-	3	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → Modern Apprenticeship	Intermediate 2	Apprentice	With mother
Oliver	23 white	Down's syndrome	5	3 (accessible small town)	speech	Special primary and secondary schools	School (year 6) → College (Personal Development)	SVQ Level 1	FE student	With mother
Max	20 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 6) → Gap year (voluntary work) → University	Advanced Highers	HE student	Shared accommodation
Erin	23 white	-	4	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary → Mainstream secondary with HID (year 6)	School (year 6) → Employment → College (HND) (dropped out) → Part-time employment	Intermediate 2	Employed (non-graduate level)	With parents
Tyler	18 white	Speech disorder	5	2 (other urban)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 5) → Modern Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 2	Apprentice	With parents

**Table 2.1 (continued)**

Pseudo nym	Socio-demographic characteristics				Communication method	School background	Transition pattern	Highest qualification	Employment status	Living arrangements
	Age and ethnicity	Other ASN	SIMD 2012	Urban/rural classification						
Adam	21 white	-	3	6 (remote rural)	BSL	Mainstream primary → Deaf secondary → Selective school for the deaf in England (years 12-13)	School (year 13) → College (HND) → University	HND	HE student	Shared accommodation
Liam	22 white	Motor disorder	4	5 (accessible rural)	speech	Mainstream primary and secondary	School (year 5) → University → Employment	HE graduate	Employed (graduate level)	With parents
Freya	24 white	-	5	1 (large urban)	SSE	Mainstream primary → Selective school for the deaf in England (years 7 -13)	School (year 13) → University → Voluntary work → University (second degree)	HE graduate	HE student (second degree)	Shared accommodation

**Table 2.2: Number of participants by current employment status and key socio-demographic characteristics**

Employment status	Gender		Ethnicity		Communication		Other ASN	SIMD <sup>10</sup>					Urban/rural <sup>11</sup>						TOTAL
	male	female	white	non-white	Oral	BSL/SSE		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	
HE students	5	4	9	-	7	2	-	-	-	1	1	6	4	3	-	-	-	2	9
FE students	2	1	3	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
Training	2	1	3	-	3	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
Graduate employment	1	1	2	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Non-graduate employment	1	6	5	2	7	-	3	-	-	2	1	4	2	4	-	-	-	1	7
Jobseekers	1	3	4	-	4	-	2	-	-	2	-	2	3	-	-	-	1	-	4
NEET	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Not available for employment <sup>12</sup>	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	

<sup>10</sup> The most deprived areas are in quintile 1, and the least deprived in quintile 5.

<sup>11</sup> Six-fold classification, in which Group 1 denotes large urban areas and Group 6 remote rural areas.

<sup>12</sup> Full-time carer.

## Section 3 Young people's school experiences

### Introduction

This is the first of several sections presenting the findings from the in-depth interviews with thirty DHH young people. These sections roughly match the headings of the interview schedule, namely school background, post-school transition planning, post-school destinations, identity and social networks. This first section offers an overview of the participants' school experiences, and it focuses on four main aspects: the types of schools they attended, the support they received in school, the barriers they encountered and their relationships with their peers. The case studies in each section are used to illustrate particular aspects of young people's experiences, which may be either typical or atypical.

#### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- The only publicly-available official statistics about children who are DHH in Scottish schools are statistics about pupils in publicly-funded Scottish schools who receive support for learning due to a hearing impairment. As these do not include the DHH pupils in publicly-funded schools who do not receive support for learning and the DHH pupils in independent schools, actual figures are likely to be higher.
- In 2012 pupils who received support for learning due to a hearing impairment represented 0.34% of all pupils in publicly-funded Scottish schools.
- The most common type of support plan for hearing-impaired pupils in publicly-funded schools was the Individualised Educational Programme (33%).
- Less than 15% of pupils who are DHH are educated in special schools.
- There doesn't seem to be a strong relationship between hearing impairment and level of deprivation among pupils who are DHH in publicly-funded schools.
- In 2011/12, compared with school leavers with no additional support needs, DHH school leavers who received support for learning: (i) left school with no qualifications in far greater proportion (8.9% vs. 1%); (ii) were almost twice as likely to leave school with Standard Grades at 3-4 (14.4% vs. 7.5%); (iii) were almost half as likely to qualify for entry into higher education (36.4% had Highers and Advanced Highers, as opposed to 60.2% of school leavers with no additional support needs).

### Mainstream and special school attendance

Most participants (25 out of 30) went to mainstream schools: 19 went to local mainstream schools; one went to a private school; and four went to mainstream schools which had resource bases (or units) for deaf pupils and attended both mainstream classes and classes especially designed for deaf pupils. One young man who had Down's syndrome was mostly in special schools.

There were five BSL users in this study, and they all changed school for academic and support reasons. Some switched from schools for the deaf to mainstream schools with resource bases, while others switched from local mainstream primary schools to secondary schools for the deaf. It is worth



pointing out that none of the young people in this study spent their senior years in secondary schools for the deaf in Scotland. They either moved to mainstream schools or to a selective school for the deaf in England. Table 3.1 below shows the last type of school attended by the participants in this study.

**Table 3.1 Type of secondary schools attended by participants in their senior years**

Type of school	No of participants
Mainstream local schools	19
Private school	1
Mainstream school with resource base	6 (2 BSL users)
Selective school for the deaf in England	3 (all BSL users)
Special school for the deaf in Scotland	0
Special school for pupils with learning difficulties	1

The most commonly cited reasons for choosing a mainstream school were proximity to home and the young people or their parents' wish to be at the same school as older siblings, relatives or friends. There are suggestions that some parents hoped that older siblings or relatives would be able to look after them:

*My big sister was there already so they knew that I would have someone in case anything happened.*

(Ava, HE student)

In some cases parents chose the school because of its reputation for high academic standards. Some young people recounted that their parents had declined placement offers at schools for the deaf, because they believed that their children would get adequate support in mainstream schools or because they did not want their children to be 'different':

*Mum and Dad just decided me to go to school and also they did thought about going to [name of school for the deaf], but they thought mainstream school seemed a bit better option for them because it had teacher of the deaf for me, almost the whole of my life actually so since nursery.*

(Tyler, apprentice)

*[Mum] said that she didn't want me to be any different. She wanted me to be able to speak.*

(Isla, purchasing assistant and part-time HE student)

Most of the young people who attended mainstream schools were educated orally. Most of those who communicated mainly in BSL or preferred to use BSL were educated in special schools for the deaf or in mainstream schools with resource bases for deaf pupils. It is important to note here that four out of the five BSL users who took part in this study changed schools because they and their families were not satisfied with the quality of support in mainstream schools or with the academic standards of the school for the deaf (see Case Studies 1 and 2). Difficulty in establishing friendships and 'frustration' were other reasons why they decided to change schools.

**Case Study 1: Adam<sup>13</sup>*****Moving from mainstream to a school for the deaf, and then on to a selective school for the deaf in England for academic reasons***

Adam is a first year university student. He comes from a remote rural area. He received a cochlear implant at the age of six. His parents are hearing and he has a sibling who is deaf. He describes himself as bilingual, but is most comfortable using BSL. He mostly communicates with hearing people in writing.

He first went to the local primary school, where he had a full-time Communication Support Worker who acted as an interpreter and scribe. Because he had difficulties acquiring literacy skills and making friends among his hearing classmates, his parents decided to move him to a school for the deaf:

*I wasn't able to communicate with other hearing children when I was young. I use sign language so my parents thought [name of deaf school] would be better for me.*

At the school for the deaf he was taught by qualified teachers of the deaf and his literacy skills quickly improved. He was at the school for the deaf for six years, but there too were problems. He was unhappy with the low educational standards of the school. He also mentioned feeling frustrated with the fact that he was one of the few pupils at the school who did not have complex support needs:

*Mmm, but the quality of education was not good for me. [...] I was happy at [name of school] but in the last few years, I became frustrated. There were few deaf people like me. Other deaf students had additional disability but it is not their fault.*

His educational psychologist advised him to move to a residential school for the deaf in England, which was known for its higher educational standards. Adam moved there when he was 17:

*I went to [name of school for the deaf] to achieve higher qualifications. They gave us lots of challenging work which was good.*

Adam left the school two years later, with three A levels. He spent one year in college to build up his art portfolio, then started an art degree at a pre-1992 university.

Three out of the five BSL users who took part in the study spent all or part of their secondary education years at a selective school for deaf pupils in England. Their parents chose the school because of its reputation for high academic standards. The reasons are summarised by Freya, a first year higher education student:

*I went to [name of school] because we felt that I will be able to achieve my full potential and deaf awareness was there. Access was there.*

(Freya, HE student)

They were all satisfied with their experience of studying at the school. They praised the academic environment, as well as the sense of community:

*We sat in a horse-shoe shape so we were able to see the teacher and each other. One person spoke at a time. A maximum of 12 children per class. Classes were smaller when we did A*

<sup>13</sup> The names used in the case studies and after quotes are not the participants' real names.

levels. [...] The school was very good in encouraging us to go out of the school – we had sports competitions with other schools.

(Freya, HE student)

I was much happier at [name of school] because there were lots of friends who are like me.

(Adam, HE student)

However, it is important to note here that there seems to be a clear difference in socio-economic status between the parents of the BSL users who went to the selective school for the deaf in England and the parents of those who did not. The three young people who went to the school in England came from advantaged areas (5<sup>th</sup> quintile of SIMD), while the two young people who stayed in local schools came from areas at the opposite end of the spectrum (1<sup>st</sup> quintile, the most deprived areas).

### **Case Study 2: Leah (also see Case Studies 6 and 21)**

#### ***Moving from a special to a mainstream setting in search of a more stimulating environment***

Leah is full-time mum and a BSL user. She was diagnosed with hearing loss when she was a toddler. She lives in an urban area of high social deprivation (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> quintile) with her partner and baby daughter, who are also deaf. Her parents and siblings are hearing and she communicates with them orally, although she is most comfortable using BSL. She does not use hearing aids.

Leah spent most of her school career in schools for the deaf. Her mum believed that a mainstream school would not be suitable for her. However, Leah did not thrive at her secondary school for the deaf. She was unhappy with her teachers' low expectations:

*I hated it there! [...] They gave us work that was too easy for us. I would finish my work early and asked for more work. They kept saying that they couldn't give me more challenging work because they had to give us work that is appropriate for our ages.[...] They thought that we were stupid so they gave us easy work like Access 3, even Access 1 and 2. [...] If I remained at [name of school] I would be doing Access 3. Why?!*

The lack of stimulation at school brought on behavioural problems. Leah talked of intense feelings of frustration and anger, which affected her behaviour at home and her general well-being:

*It was very boring at [name of school]. I usually spent time looking around with nothing to do. [...] I was not happy there. I had behaviour problems because I wasn't challenged enough. I was frustrated and would lose my temper frequently. I became less motivated to do the work because it was too easy. I was angry a lot. [...] My behaviour at home was also affected. [...] During the day I would be angry and come home still angry because the teachers thought I was 'thick'. [...] If I stayed at [name of school] I would not be here today. No, I wouldn't be here at all.*

She believed that other pupils were also affected by the general low academic standards:

*Teachers at [name of school] thought we had behaviour and learning problems. I believe it was because we were angry because they were not challenging us enough.*

After two years at the secondary school for the deaf, Leah moved to a mainstream high school with a resource base. There she had full-time support from teachers of the deaf who also acted as interpreters. She was happy to be given more challenging work:

*[Mainstream teachers] were very good and gave me more challenging work and I progressed very*

*quickly. I felt much better and enjoyed the challenging work. It was good to get my brain working properly!*

She was satisfied with the progress she made during her two years in the mainstream high school, although her experience was blighted by the hearing pupils' 'shocking' attitude towards her and other DHH pupils.

She left after her 4<sup>th</sup> year with one qualification at Intermediate 2 and several at Intermediate 1 and went into further education, where she completed SCQF Level 3 in Beauty Therapy. She worked for six months in the public sector before she became a mother. Further details are given in Case Study 3.

About five young people who were educated orally also changed schools, but their reasons were different. They did so not because they were unhappy with the quality of support (and evidence suggests that it varied a lot, depending on the school), but because they were bullied or felt socially isolated. They believed that they would be able to make friends at schools which had Hearing Impairment Departments and therefore higher proportions of pupils who were deaf or hard of hearing.

*I felt I wasn't happy towards the end of fourth year and fifth year. I just didn't feel like I fitted in and I just felt quite excluded. I didn't really feel I had a base of friends cause my two friends had gone on to do different subjects from me. [...] I moved over for the one year. And I think it was worth it cause I worked hard and I have some friends there already who I knew from the deaf club. So I was okay.*

(Ava, HE student)

Some of the young people who went to mainstream schools talked about the benefit of growing up in a mainstream setting when there is adequate support. Lucy, a support worker with profound hearing loss, was happy with her parents' choice of school:

*I think a lot a' people from the deaf community thought that going to a mainstream school was a terrible, terrible decision. I couldn't possibly do this and I wouldn't get the qualifications. But actually I did really well in school.*

Others talked about the advantage of being able to function in the hearing world:

*I mean I know that certainly being able to speak like this has got me far.*

(Emily, jobseeker)

*Better you go normal school so you can see world, you can learn new things, everything.*

(Madhat, beautician)

However, mainstream schools were not always considered to be a perfect environment for DHH children and young people. The most commonly cited complaints about mainstream schools were bullying and teachers' lack of deaf awareness. These issues are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

## Support in school

Most of those who were educated in mainstream schools had learning support from teachers of the deaf (hereafter ToDs). Smaller proportions received support from educational audiologists, learning support departments within schools and communication support workers.

The frequency of support varied. Generally speaking, the young people in this study received more support in primary school and the first few years of secondary school, and less in their senior years. Some pupils had full-time support from a ToD or a communication support worker throughout primary and secondary school; these were either BSL users or young people who had difficulties acquiring literacy skills. Most of them worked with the same ToD or communication support worker for several years. One such example is Madhat, who had the same ToD throughout high school. Her teacher provided her with academic and pastoral support (see Case Study 3). Other young people received support only for the particular subjects they struggled with. In most cases these were English (reading and/or writing) and Maths, and less frequently foreign languages and science. They would either have a ToD supporting them in mainstream class and occasional one-to-one sessions, or the ToD would come in once or twice a week for one-to-one tutorials.

*I got taken out of home economics to speak with [the ToD]... Talked...we did some work. When I was struggling.*

(Liam, IT support specialist)

Those who went to secondary schools with Hearing Impairment Departments had access to specialised teachers of the deaf for each or most of the subjects they chose to sit in exams:

*I remember in fifth year when I was finding higher maths really difficult they set up one, we had one class a week on a Thursday with a different teacher. And...like I would, instead of going to that teacher's class I would just go to [ToD's name]. And she would help me with what I was finding difficult which was good.*

(Chloe, HE student)

### **Case Study 3: Madhat (also see Case Study 10 in Section 6)**

#### ***Ongoing pastoral and academic support from the teacher of the deaf throughout high school***

Madhat is a beautician. She was born with severe to profound hearing loss. She lives with her family in a very affluent urban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). Her family are hearing. Although her family belong to an ethnic minority and her mother reportedly struggles with English, Madhat speaks only English at home. She does not use sign language.

She was educated orally in mainstream schools. Because she had difficulties acquiring literacy skills, she received full-time support from primary school up to her 4<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school. The ToD took notes for her in mainstream classes, and sometimes took her out of class for short catch-up sessions:

*I went to [name of high school] and I got my deaf teacher, she's amazing, truly amazing.[...] Every class they're with me when the lecture comes, to write for me what teacher say because when the lecturer talk, sometime I don't understand.[...] We go to another room, so that she explain everything so that I can write everything and before finishing I go back to the classroom and then give it to the teacher and sit down [...]. So first year, second year, third year, third year, fourth year again at prelim exams.*

In S4 and S5 Madhat was usually on her own, but she could ask the ToD to come in when she thought she needed help.

*All the time up to 5<sup>th</sup> year, so like some subjects if I need her I tell her, 'oh we have a lecture I need you to come'.[...] And she got my number, I text her, she text me, but she always with me, until when I was in 6<sup>th</sup> year.*

Over the years, Madhat developed a close relationship with her ToD. The teacher gave her advice about making friends in high school, as a way of improving her communication skills:

*But my deaf teacher says, 'it's better for you to make new friends, to go to committees and learn how they talk'.*

She helped Madhat find a work experience placement and was actively involved in her post-school transition planning. She took her to visit to local colleges when Madhat was deciding on a future career and a suitable college:

*My deaf teacher always took me everywhere, to [names of colleges], she take me everywhere in her car. She drive me she take me, we look around, she saying, 'what do you think', 'what do you like'. So that she give me plenty of time before that I can make up my mind. So she's a great help.*

BSL users in mainstream schools had full-time communication support workers or ToDs who acted as interpreters:

*There were six or seven teachers for the deaf who offered support to each deaf pupil within a mainstream class. They behaved like interpreters - translating what the mainstream teacher was saying. But we were able to ask them for help if we didn't understand what the mainstream teacher was explaining. They have a dual role - interpreter and teacher.*

(Leah, full-time mum)

A small proportion of the young people in this study (8 out of 30) received non-teaching support, which consisted of visits from educational audiologists, who checked their hearing aids and other equipment and assessed their hearing. The reported frequency of these visits varied from once a month to once a year.

*There was a guy who would come round every now and again to like make sure I was getting on okay in school and like to make, check up with the equipment and everything. [...] But like for one, one example, one time they, we spent about an hour testing how well I could hear normally. And then they would, they did it with a paper in front of their mouth to see how much like lipreading was taken into...taken into account. [...] It would be once every six months maybe.*

(Max, HE student)

About half of all participants had speech therapy in primary school, some for one or two years, some throughout their primary school years. Amongst the participants in this study, only those who had support needs other than hearing loss (such as dyslexia and social-emotional and behavioural difficulties) reported being in regular contact with the Learning Support Departments in their schools.

The DHH young people also benefited from a series of adjustments, such as being allowed to opt out of foreign language classes, longer time in exams, exams in a separate room, and in some cases, readers in exams. Just over one third mentioned being given longer time in exams. Some were given longer time in all exams, and some only in exams where they were required to listen to recordings, which they could stop and replay as necessary. Those who could not hear recordings had readers, who read out a script. Readers were generally provided only for foreign language exams, but pupils with literacy difficulties had readers in all exams.

The majority of those who were educated orally reported using radio-aids (18 out of 26). However, only a small proportion continued to use radio-aids beyond primary school (5 out of 18). The

majority stopped for various reasons. The main difficulty seemed to lie with the fact that DHH pupils had to give the microphone to the teacher at the beginning at each class. Some forgot, some found it 'annoying', while others refused to do it because they did not want to attract attention to themselves:

*I had six different teachers in a day in six different places and it's not very conducive to the life of being a teenager [laughs], really, going about having to remember at the start and beginning of every lesson.*

(Emily, jobseeker)

*Cause I just felt I already stand out enough as it is without having to walk to the front a' the class and hand something over.*

(Lucy, support worker)

At the beginning of each year ToDs informed mainstream teachers of the DHH pupils' support needs and provided them with deaf awareness training. If a DHH pupil did not have a ToD or an educational audiologist, the Learning Support Department took on the role of informing the teachers. The general consensus among the young people was that there was a lot of variation in the mainstream teachers' degree of deaf awareness and the consistency with which they modified their behaviour to suit the needs of DHH pupils.

*I think they were all told that I needed extra support but some of them were definitely better than others at acknowledging this and checking that everything was okay with me.*

(Lily, jobseeker)

Mainstream teachers' flexibility and willingness to offer additional help and explanations were qualities which were highly valued by the DHH pupils. One young woman described how she preferred to be offered help in a discreet manner, which would not make her stand out. Another young person appreciated being treated the same as everyone:

*They never treated me any different. You know, like 'oh she's deaf, cheers!' It was never like that. I was just another kid.*

(Sophie, documentation coordinator)

On the other hand, the most common complaints were about mainstream teachers' lack of deaf awareness: teachers who did not speak clearly, who wore noisy necklaces when they had the microphone hanging around their neck, or made it difficult for DHH pupils to lipread because they moved around, faced away from the class, stood in front of windows or turned the lights down. These were usually new teachers or supply teachers, who had no experience of teaching DHH pupils. There were few such complaints about regular class teachers.

*In general a good teacher to everybody was generally a good teacher to me, you know. I mean we had a few, I had a few who were, could've done with a bit more deaf awareness training.*

(Emily, jobseeker)

However, one young person suggested that some teachers may have been reluctant to modify their behaviour or make adjustments:

*And I think [the ToD] had a harder time at [name of high school] trying to...get the teachers to understand the type of support I needed.*

(Lily, jobseeker)

Some local authorities organised peer groups for all the DHH pupils in the authority. This was an opportunity for deaf pupils to meet on a regular basis and engage in various activities, in line with the recommendations of *Count Us In: Achieving Success for Deaf Pupils*, a report on the education of deaf pupils in Scotland (HMIE and NDCS, 2007). One participant who had no other DHH peers at her school described these weekly sessions as a 'support mechanism':

*We'd just do activities together and stuff like that. Basically just a day off school [laughs]. You know, but I think it was more like a support mechanism. So like we had all these different people. We interacted wi' other deaf people. We got the help that we needed and the support that we needed. I think...it was just to see how, take away the pressure of being at school a wee bit, I think.*

(Sophie, documentation coordinator)

There were only few complaints about the quality of support. Another young man complained that the support workers who replaced his ToD when she was on sick leave were not as helpful. One young man who had Down's syndrome was not given a radio-aid to use in class, and his mum believed that he may have missed out because of this.

However, there seemed to be some variation between local authorities in how they supported DHH pupils. Three young people in mainstream schools, two in rural areas and one in a socially deprived urban area, reported that they received no specialist support at certain stages of their school career. One young man mentioned that he was visited by an educational audiologist only in his senior years, and that he had no support prior to that. Karen, an FE student living in a disadvantaged area reported that she had no support in primary school apart from a speech therapist:

*For like primary one to primary two I think it was, I had [a speech therapist]. And then I stopped, well it got stopped. And then I just tried my best.*

(Karen, FE student)

Mia, an apprentice from a remote small town reported that she received no support in high school:

*No support whatsoever in high school, in fact none of the teachers were even told I was deaf!*

(Mia, apprentice)

Apart from these few reports of lack of support, the interviews revealed that on the whole the DHH young people were satisfied with the quality of support they had received in school, and believed that it had played an essential part in helping them achieve their end-of-school qualifications:

*If I didn't do the face to face tutorial I wouldn't have passed my exams.*

(Isla, purchasing assistant and part-time HE student)

*But teachers of the deaf they've been really great service. Without them I would never have got to the stage where I'm at now, a job, a qualification. So without teacher of the deaf my life would just have been more downhill than uphill.*

(Tyler, apprentice)

However, in spite of the academic and pastoral support they were given, many young people reported that they still encountered difficulties in school because of their deafness. The next section highlights DHH pupils' barriers to participation in school.



## Barriers in school

When asked about the difficulties that they encountered in school, some young people (six out of 30) believed that they encountered no difficulties which arose as a direct consequence of their hearing loss. However, a larger proportion (10 out of 30) spoke of barriers to participation, both in class and while engaging in extracurricular activities. Some complained about having difficulties listening to audiotapes in French or music classes:

*I did standard grade French and it was, it was really difficult for me to listen cause the tape player is never always that clear anyway. But it would be really difficult, I'd always like not get the best grades in the listening part.*

(Ethan, HE student)

While some students chose to opt out of French lessons, one young man who is a BSL user expressed disappointment at not being allowed to sit the French exam on grounds that he could not do the listening and speaking parts:

*I was not allowed to just sit two sections of the exam. That was why I had to drop French and I was very disappointed.*

(James, FE student)

Others complained of not being able to hear much of what was said in class and of being affected by background noise, particularly in settings with poor acoustics such as open plan schools or buildings with glass roofs. Jack, a 24-year old jobseeker with profound hearing loss, did not use a radio-aid in high school and reported being able to understand very little in class:

*A couple of times my teacher was shocked when he actually asked how much I actually understood and I said you know 'at best maybe 15% and then it's mostly "the", "a" words like that'.*

(Jack, jobseeker)

Several complained about not being able to hear in assemblies, during swimming lessons or when playing outdoor sports or simply missing out on announcements made outside lesson time.

*Assemblies and talks in the school hall, I didn't know what was going on or what was being said and I would spend two hours bored out of my mind. I didn't like interactive sessions where everyone had to sit in a large circle and say things, I never knew what was said and when it came to my turn, if what I said had already been said.*

(Erin, sales assistant)

*Sometimes I'd miss news, like I'd miss hearing about a group that was starting up and by the time I'd gone along it was full or whatever.*

(Jack, jobseeker)

Another common complaint was the lack of subtitles on videos shown in class (eight out of 30). In some cases there were measures in place to help them compensate for the lack of subtitles: a couple of people mentioned having a notetaker when videos were shown (although one person suggested that this did not fully compensate for not having subtitles, and that it was 'complicated'); one young man watched the videos again during his one-to-one sessions with his ToD, who made sure that he fully understood the content. However, the majority did not have any support:

*I just kind of gave up when it came to videos.*

(Emily, jobseeker)

Many young people spoke of the inadvertent attention they drew on themselves because of the support they received or the equipment they used. Some thought they stood out because there were no other deaf children in their year or in the entire school. One young person believed that having a ToD sitting next to him in every class contributed to his social isolation in high school. Another one resented having to sit at the front of the class, because 'all the cool kids sat at the back'.

As mentioned before, several young people stopped using their radio-aids because they had to go to teachers at the beginning of each class to hand out the microphone. Others were reluctant to ask for help or explanations even when they knew they had missed out on information. They blamed this on their lack of confidence:

*I didn't ask for much, I should have asked for more, but didn't have the confidence to.*

(Mia, apprentice)

*My own lack of confidence to say stuff myself would have made a big difference. Cause I think it would have made life much easier for the support person who came in if I was more willing to work with her and explain exactly what I needed. [...] So...for me when I was a teenager I was a bit insecure about asking for what I needed.*

(Lily, jobseeker)

Two people turned down any learning support because they did not want to be singled out:

*They'll sit with you in class and maybe try to explain things to you if you didn't quite understand it [...] that's marking you out a bit in the class. [...] On one hand I didn't feel I particularly needed it and the other hand I wasn't too sure what support I could be gleaming from that [...] So I kind of brushed that off a bit.*

(Logan, HE student)

*I liked one-to-one tuition so I could go over things and discuss [...] I just wanted to be like the other hearing pupils and eventually, around the second year, I said no to any additional help in school and didn't have any for the rest of my school years [...] So I probably made things a lot harder for myself.*

(Erin, sales assistant)

Others mentioned that they felt the need to explain to their peers that they were not getting 'special treatment':

*But I understand why my classmates were a bit upset with me because I always away from class and they went, 'oh, where's she going', but I have to explain to them that I don't understand reading writing, and they understand, but they now understand but before they were like, 'hmm', they're going, 'oh, why does she have to leave, is she doing something or something'.*

(Madhat, beautician)

*I didn't want them thinking I was gonnae get any special treatment. That I was really only gonna be treated the way I was because I was deaf.*

(Ava, HE student)

Some of the participants in this study believed that they had to work harder in school than other pupils, in order to compensate for what they had missed in class. Some did more independent work in class; others went over the same material again in the one-to-one tutorials with the ToD or on their own, in the library. Sophie, a documentation coordinator, expressed her belief that doing well in school depended not only on the quality of support, but also on her own coping mechanisms:

*I mean school was hard for everybody but I think cause I've been deaf it's always made it harder. Again it depends, like what sort of support you have in place. And how, how you cope with like the demands. Like I know I had to concentrate and work harder. I had to work a lot harder. So instead a' maybe doing a couple of hours homework a night, I would always do double to try and catch up. [...] There was always support in place for me. So I never really struggled too much. And I think also I never let myself struggle.*

(Sophie, documentation coordinator)

### BSL users' experiences

Three BSL users who went to a school for the deaf (three of the five BSL users in this study) encountered a different kind of barrier. They complained of low academic standards in the school and the lack of an academic peer group since a high proportion of pupils had additional support needs besides hearing loss (see Case Studies 1 and 2). They spoke of feeling frustrated and even angry. All three transferred to other secondary schools during their senior years in order to achieve higher qualifications. One young woman went to a mainstream high school which had a Hearing Impairment Department, and the other two went to a selective school for the deaf in England. This is an academically selective residential school for the deaf located in England, where the communication policy in class is oral, although sign language may be used outside the classroom. The three pupils who transferred to this school, all from socially advantaged backgrounds, all commented positively on its supportive social and academic environment. The other two BSL pupils who attended a mainstream school with a Hearing Impairment Department were less positive about the academic and social environment, experiencing isolation from their local community.

DHH pupils' ability to establish social networks also played an important part in how well they did in school and how prepared they were to start their post-school journeys. This is the focus of the following section.

### Relationships with peers

Most of the young people in this study went to local mainstream schools, and some reported being the only deaf pupil in their year or in the entire school. Their peers may not have had any previous experience of deafness. When asked about their relationships with other pupils, twelve young people said that they had always had good relationships with their peers and had never been bullied. An equal number mentioned being bullied at least at some stage of their school career and seven people did not mention being bullied, but spoke of feeling socially isolated.

Lucy, a support worker with profound hearing loss, was amongst those who reportedly had good relationships with peers throughout school. She believed that being open about her deafness made it easier for her peers to accept her for who she was:

*I mean I've never been bullied or anything which I think a lot of people were quite surprised about. [...] But I'm like, 'I'm not bothered about it so why would you be'. That kind of attitude. And like kids are more accepting that way.*

(Lucy, disability support worker)

Twelve people mentioned being bullied at least at some stage of their school career. While two of them were certain that the bullying was not related to their hearing loss, the rest believed that their disability was the reason why they were targeted:

*I was picked on a lot probably 'cause they thought being deaf I was weaker.*

(Liam, IT support specialist)

Leah, the BSL user who moved from the school for the deaf to a mainstream high school (Case Study 2), expressed shock at the hearing pupils' attitude towards her and other DHH pupils:

*Their attitude was awful. They were bullying us. They called me a 'Mongol'. It was because they didn't understand what being deaf is like. They thought it was funny. [...] I was shocked and realised that the hearing people don't understand us. [...] They thought we were deaf and dumb. I had to tell them that I am not dumb, just deaf.*

(Leah, full-time mum)

Few people reported being bullied in primary school. Most bullying incidents seemed to have taken place in high school, and they were more likely to occur during their first years of high school. Some reported isolated events; others reported being bullied throughout high school:

*Pretty much my whole high school time was stuff like that.*

(Ruby, nursery nurse)

There were also different degrees of bullying, ranging from banter ('*sometimes the rest of the school would laugh a bit, maybe bully me a wee bit for my deafness*') to verbal bullying, and in a few cases physical bullying resulting in bodily harm ('*I was burnt at high school as well. [...] Burnt, with a chain.*'). The young people also varied in the way they reacted to bullying. Some kept it to themselves and never let teachers or parents know about it, as doing so would have been 'a major embarrassment'. Others asked teachers for help, although their intervention did not always seem to have an effect:

*I tell [the teachers], I go, 'why, why are they bullying me, what have I done, I've done nothing'. And they went, 'okay', and they get into trouble straightaway [...] But they still kept on bullying.*

(Madhat, beautician)

Some teachers refused to get involved:

*Some teachers did really really help. But other teachers just didn't basically want to know. [...] they dinnae really understand how it was tae be bullied.*

(Ruby, nursery nurse)

The effect of bullying on the victims varied, as well. Some reported feeling unhappy and less confident in social situations:

*But when I got bullied I got scared, what if I say something and they start laughing, what if I do something they start laughing, you know, they are just joking me around all the time.*

(Madhat, beautician)

Others became increasingly isolated socially, either because they purposely avoided others' company or because their friends began to avoid them for fear that they may be bullied as well:

*So I've been very lonely, lonely at school pretty much.*

(Tyler, apprentice)

Two of the people we interviewed alluded to feeling depressed and engaging in self-harming behaviour. One young woman reported that she walked out of class every time she got bullied. And although she belonged to a support group for pupils at risk of disengagement, she was eventually

excluded from school for truancy (see Case Study 4). Others suggested that tense relationships with their peers played a role in their decision to leave school before the 6<sup>th</sup> year.

#### **Case Study 4: Ruby**

##### ***A target of bullying who was excluded from high school, but had a successful post-school career as a nursery nurse***

Ruby is a nursery nurse. She has been using hearing aids since childhood but she did not know the level of her hearing loss. She has partial sight loss in one eye. She lives with her parents in a relatively disadvantaged suburban area (SIMD 3<sup>rd</sup> quintile). She communicates orally. She went to local mainstream schools and reported being bullied and feeling socially isolated throughout secondary school:

*I didn't have much friends at high school. [...] I got bullied a lot so I kinda like kept myself out really.*

She believed she was bullied because of her disabilities. She was a target of both physical and verbal bullying:

*I was burnt at high school as well. And the boy that did it only got kicked out a' school for one day for it. [...] Burnt, with a chain [laughs]. [...] That was pretty much my whole high school time was stuff like that so...*

Ruby and her family made a formal complaint to the head teacher, and the boy was excluded from school for one day. However, soon after Ruby's family contacted the local MP, the boy was excluded permanently. Ruby continued to be bullied after this incident. She asked for help from her teachers. Some were more helpful than others:

*Some teachers did really, really help. Like but other teachers just didn't basically want to know. [...] they dinnae really understand how it was tae be bullied.*

Ruby often walked out of class to avoid being bullied, and this got her in trouble with her teachers.

*Every time that somebody says something to me, my like way of dealing with it was just walking away from it, like walking out of the room from it. So then that has put me in the wrong cause my mum and dad were getting called up tae the school [...] about my behaviour really.*

She was deeply affected by the bullying and started to engage in self-harming behaviour.

*Because I was getting bullied I did start self-harming.*

She received support for her behavioural issues. She belonged to a group for pupils at risk of disengagement, which was run by the Learning Support Department and met once or twice a week. However, her parents were often called to school and she was warned on several occasions that she could be excluded from school for truancy. She was eventually excluded just before her fifth year exams.

*I practically got told that I wasn't allowed tae stay on at school because a' my behaviour. [...] They basically just said that I wasn't getting kept on and that that was my last day there and then. And that...wished me luck basically.*

Ruby had low qualifications when she was excluded from school. But as she had already been in touch with a Career's Advisor, she soon contacted a local training provider and enrolled on a training programme in childcare. She completed a Modern Apprenticeship programme and at the time of the

interview was in full-time employment. Her experiences of training and employment had been largely positive. She described how she gradually became more confident and positive about the future. She was planning to return to college and qualify as a youth worker.

A smaller number of people (six out of 30) reported that they felt isolated because they had trouble making friends, although they did not mention being bullied:

*It's just that for at least the first four years I was always very quiet, very shy. I spent a fair amount of time just like reading in the library rather than going out and talking to people. [...] I was just very shy and very, very withdrawn. Never really tried, I suppose.*

(Max, HE student)

Freya, who used BSL at home with her deaf family and speech at her mainstream primary school, described how her relationship with hearing peers at school changed as she grew older. It became harder for her to join in and she felt increasingly isolated:

*When I was at primary school, P1 to P3, I was confident and the most popular girl in class. I had a group of friends but as we got older, they started to form groups with other friends. I would try to join in and play with them but I only had one proper friend. [...] It became harder to join in, as I got older. I think that this was the main reason for going to [name of school for the deaf in England]. I was back to my normal self at [name of school]. I had lots of friends and people always wanted to talk to me. It was great and I was in my comfort zone.*

(Freya, HE student)

Some of those who went to schools outside their catchment areas talked of difficulties of living away from their school and friends, or living away from their family if they boarded at the school:

*It's difficult living far away from the school [...] because, I don't know, it's just not the same because at home it's like...I didn't know that many people.*

(Chloe, HE student)

It is interesting to note here that the majority of those who said they were never bullied or felt isolated in school were in regular contact with other DHH people: some were in schools with a high proportion of DHH pupils; some belonged to deaf peer groups organised by ToDs, where they spent time with other DHH pupils from other schools in their local authority; and some had deaf family members. On the other hand, most of those who were bullied did not seem to have other DHH peers, friends or relatives. We could speculate that the first group of young people had good coping strategies, in that they were more accepting and open about their own deafness. This, in turn, may have made it easier for their peers to accept them.

It is also worth mentioning that the majority of those who said they were not bullied left school with Highers and went to university (eight out of 12), while most of those who reported being bullied left school with Standard Grades (seven out of 12). This suggests that pupils who did not have other DHH peers and did not do well academically were more likely to be the target of bullying. This relationship between hearing loss, academic achievement and bullying could be explored in further research.

## School experiences: summary

This section provided an overview of the school experiences of the thirty young people who took part in this study. Here are the main findings regarding DHH young people's school experience:

- Most participants went to mainstream schools and were educated orally (25 out of 30). Some went to mainstream schools with resource bases for the deaf. A minority went to special schools for the deaf.
- Those who went to schools for the deaf were BSL users. Unlike the rest of the DHH participants in this study, they seemed to have difficulties finding schools which fitted their needs and expectations, so they changed schools more frequently. Three BSL users from socially advantaged backgrounds transferred to a selective school for the deaf in England for their senior years. The other two BSL users in this study transferred to mainstream schools.
- Most of those educated in mainstream schools received academic support from teachers of the deaf. Others were supported by educational audiologists, Learning Support Departments or communication support workers. There was wide variation in the frequency of support, from full-time teaching support to brief one-to-one sessions a few times a year. Generally speaking, support was more concentrated in primary years and the first four years of secondary school.
- DHH pupils benefited from a series of adjustments, such as longer time in exams.
- There seemed to be some variation in the consistency and quality of support offered by different schools/authorities. Apart from providing academic support, some local authorities organised deaf peer groups, which gave pupils the opportunity to interact with other DHH pupils. On the other hand, a few young people reported that they had no support at various stages of their school career.
- DHH pupils valued mainstream teachers who were aware of their communication needs and adjusted their behaviour accordingly.
- One third of participants encountered barriers to participation in class and when they engaged in extra-curricular activities. Many young people believed that the barriers they encountered in school were a direct consequence of their hearing loss (e.g., not being able to hear teachers in class or to listen to audio materials). Some also mentioned teachers' lack of deaf awareness. There were frequent mentions of the lack of subtitles on videos shown in class. However, the most frequently cited difficulties in school were not academic, but related to the issue of social inclusion.
- Two thirds of participants mentioned that they had been bullied or felt socially isolated in school because they were deaf or hard of hearing. In some cases the bullying had profound negative effects on their academic performance and general well-being. Findings suggest that those who had DHH friends or family and performed well academically were less likely to be bullied or feel isolated.
- Many young people believed that the learning support they received and the equipment they used made them 'stand out' amongst their peers. This was the reason why some of them stopped using radio-aids or turned down academic support in secondary school.

The interviews revealed that most participants were satisfied with the quality of support they had received in school and believed that it had enabled them to achieve their end-of-school qualifications. However, we must keep in mind the fact that a large proportion of the participants were young people from socially advantaged backgrounds (more than half came from areas in the 5<sup>th</sup> quintile of the SIMD), and that many of them entered higher education (15 out of 30). On the whole, DHH pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to report receiving adequate support in school. The influence of parental socio-economic status is also evident in the case of BSL users. As a group, BSL users were much more likely to change schools for academic reasons than

their orally-educated peers. Those who successfully transferred to the selective school for the deaf in England were from socially advantaged backgrounds. Those who stayed in local schools were from more deprived areas.

#### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- What is the total number of pupils with hearing impairment in Scottish schools, and what proportion receive support for learning? The information published by the Scottish Government does not include pupils in independent schools and pupils in publicly-funded schools who do not receive support for learning.
- How does the socio-economic background of pupils who are DHH impact on their educational attainment? Previous research (Hills et al., 2010) has shown that pupils from poorer areas tend to have lower educational outcomes than pupils from less deprived areas. There is a need to investigate the nature of this relationship for pupils who are DHH.
- How do the type of school attended and degree of social inclusion influence the educational attainment of pupils who are DHH? Findings from the case studies suggest that some pupils had difficulties finding schools which fitted their academic and social needs, and that pupils who were bullied left school with lower qualifications. There is a need for further research to explore these relationships.



## Section 4 Young people's experiences of post-school transition planning

### Introduction

In this section we present the DHH young people's experiences of transition from school to their immediate post-school destinations (post-16 education, training or employment). We focused on the role played by schools, professionals and parents in the planning of post-school transitions. In order to build a more complete picture of their transition experiences, we also describe hearing-aid users' experiences of transition from paediatric to adult audiology.

### Support in post-school transitions

As discussed in Section 1, the **Code of Practice** (Scottish Government, 2009b and 2010f) accompanying the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 stipulates that education authorities have a duty to organize post-school transition planning for all young people who meet the following criteria:

- *have a co-ordinated support plan*
- *are in a specialist placement such as a specialist unit or a day or residential special school*
- *have additional support needs arising from a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995<sup>14</sup>*
- *are otherwise at risk of not making a successful transition* (Scottish Government, 2010f, p. 108).

In accordance with Code of Practice guidelines for post-school transition planning, we considered that participants in this study had transition plans if there was evidence that they had a multi-agency transition team which met regularly to discuss the young person's post-school career options, took into account the young person's and parents' wishes and communicated with the institution the young person hoped to join upon leaving school.

Despite this guidance, very few young people (four out of 30) seem to have benefited from post-school transition planning. Leaving aside the BSL users who went to secondary schools in England, many of those who went to school in Scotland (14 out of 26) believed that they received only generic transition advice from guidance teachers and careers' advisors. By generic advice we mean the advice offered to all school leavers, irrespective of whether they had additional support needs or not. Slightly fewer participants (eight out of 26) reported that they discussed post-school support options with their ToDs or educational audiologists.

Most of the young people who had post-school transition plans had complex support needs. They had learning difficulties; one was in a special school and the other two were in mainstream schools with Hearing Impairment Departments. However, not all young people who had complex support needs and/or went to schools with Hearing Impairment Departments benefited from post-school transition planning. Young people with social-emotional and behavioral difficulties and dyslexia did not have post-school transition plans, although some of them required significant learning support in school.

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<sup>14</sup> Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has since been replaced by the Equality Act 2010.

On the whole, the transition plans seemed to follow the guidelines in the Code of Practice (Scottish Government, 2009b and 2010f). The planning started when they were in their fourth year and involved several professionals depending on the young person's needs. For instance, the transition team of a young man with Down's syndrome consisted of a class teacher, the head teacher, a social worker, college staff, a speech therapist and school doctor, as well as the young man himself and his parent. Transition teams held regular meetings. At the meetings the young person's views were taken into account:

*It was like, 'what can we do for you'. And that, I thought, was a good way of doing it rather than trying to make some practice fit me rather than me fit the practice sort of thing.*

(Lucy, support worker)

As part of the transition process, some young people started taster courses at college or went on work experience placements for one day a week. They and their families were informed of support options available at their chosen post-school destinations:

*What was good was that I was really well informed about what would happen and how it would work. You know, the school were supportive right up until the end.*

(Lucy, support worker)

However, having a transition plan did not seem to guarantee that a young person with ASN would receive adequate support after school. Juzar, who had a post-school transition plan, reported a complete lack of communication support when he started college. As a consequence he dropped out of college a few months into the course (see Case Study 11 in Section 6).

Most of the young people we interviewed did not have transition plans. They fall into two categories: (1) those who received generic transition advice and were not given any information about support options after school and (2) those who discussed with their ToDs or educational audiologists issues related to support in college, at university or at the workplace.

The young people who discussed support options with their support staff were advised to declare their disability in their application forms, to approach Disability Offices or Student Support Centers on Open Days and enquire about support, and to request notetakers with specialist knowledge.

*They gave me advice on, and certainly a big packet of stuff, on various sort of options and rights and things, and disabled student stuff. So I knew I had, I knew when it came to applying like on my UCAS form that I needed to put that I was disabled and because, because I did that, that sort of triggered in the application process for a lot of universities, it triggered them writing to me.*

(Emily, jobseeker)

*But they were like, they were telling us what to ask for, like note takers and how many words a minute like they can type and things. And like if you wanted a support, a support notetaker there to like type, type up notes on the laptop when people are speaking and things like that.*

(Chloe, HE student)

Those who did not benefit from specialist transition advice found out about support options from their parents or in a few cases from the NDCS, the Disability Office at university or a Disability Employment Advisor. It is worth pointing out that one third of the young people who were given no information about support went straight into employment or training. At the time of the interview none of them had support at their workplace. Some did not know what support options were available or how to access support.

Apart from schools, parents played an important part in planning young people's transition from school to their next destinations. As mentioned above, some parents looked into support options or prompted their children to do so. Parents may also have influenced their choice of career or institution. It is important to note that young people from socially-advantaged backgrounds were more likely to report that their parents were actively involved in their transition planning. Sophie is one of the young people from a socially-advantaged background who benefited from family support in her transition from school to university (see Case Study 5).

### **Case Study 5: Sophie (also see Case Study 18 in Section 8)**

#### ***Transition support from family and wider social network***

Sophie was born with severe sensorineural hearing loss and uses hearing aids. She lives with her family in a relatively affluent rural area (SIMD 4<sup>th</sup> quintile). She is also in close contact with members of her extended family, who live nearby. She went to the local mainstream school. A teacher of the deaf visited her once a week. She attended a deaf peer group organised by the teachers of the deaf in her local authority.

In her fourth year of secondary school, Sophie thought she would like to be a PE teacher. Her school organised a work placement with a deaf PE teacher from a neighbouring school:

*And we thought it would be quite well, you know, with her being deaf and me wanting to be a PE teacher and stuff. So I got to work with her for a few weeks, just to see how she copes with it, how she coped with Uni, being deaf at Uni and stuff like this.*

Sophie received generic transition support from school, but the deaf PE teacher as well as her ToDs at her deaf peer group advised her to get in touch with the Disability Office at university as soon as possible. Her parents and extended family were very involved with her transition planning:

*I have to say, my parents probably helped more than the school did. [...] They were always quite heavily involved in my education in terms of making sure that support was there. Yeah they were, they were always supportive. You know, whatever route I was gonnae take. [...] And it wasn't just my parents. Like my whole family and wider family, they were always involved.*

They looked into support at university and advised her on her choice of university:

*My parents weren't too keen on was a city university where different buildings all over the place. [...] So one day you'd have to get the bus away out. And then a bus away tae the other side.*

When she chose the university, Sophie actively sought information about it from various acquaintances:

*One a' the people that I knew. He was actually my brother's friend. His older sister, she went to [name of university]. She said, she was just like, texted, like 'join as many sport societies that you can cause it gets you like knowing people really quickly. Just taking part as much as you can'. [...] And there were people, you know, who'd been to Uni before. It was like just get involved as much as you can. Just little bits and pieces like that.*

Sophie also benefited from family support after she entered university. She mentioned that her aunt proofread her essays, and that one of her brother's friends recommended that she apply for a work placement at the international company he worked for. At the time of the interview, Sophie had graduated from university and was working full-time for the same company.

## Barriers in post-school transitions

Only one third of participants believed that they had no difficulties in their transition from school to post-16 education, training or employment. The rest quoted barriers such as their own inability to make informed choices, lack of self-advocacy and independence skills and lack of qualifications and work experience. Some people felt that they had limited career choices because of their hearing loss. Others perceived potential employers' lack of deaf awareness as a barrier to making successful transitions.

Those who believed that they could not make informed decisions about their future would have liked to know more about which careers were suitable for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and which institutions provided adequate education and support. James, a BSL user, spoke of difficulties and uncertainty when preparing to leave school:

*It was really difficult because there was not much information available for deaf people. [...] It was difficult facing the next step because I didn't know what to expect.*

(James, FE student)

Leah, who is also a BSL user, left school in her fourth year and had no guidance (see Case Study 6).

### Case Study 6: Leah (see also Case Study 2)

#### **Leaving school with no career guidance**

Leah's school experience is described in Case Study 2. She is a BSL user who spent two years at a mainstream school with a Hearing Impairment Department. In her 4<sup>th</sup> year she made a sudden decision to leave school. She did not inform the school of her intention to leave. She did not have a transition plan and knew little about options available after school. Her highest qualification was at Intermediate 2. She first looked into going to university, and realised she didn't have the necessary qualifications. Then she did some research in order to find a college suitable for BSL users and chose a course:

*I chose the course at random and thought that I may like it. I did enjoy the course very much after all.*

She only found out about communication support when she went for an interview:

*I found out when I went for the interview at Motherwell College. They explained about communication support and allowance.*

She was offered a place and later completed Levels 2 and 3 in Beauty Therapy. She worked for six months before she became a mother. At the time of the interview she was not looking for work, but planning to do so in the near future. With hindsight, she thinks she would have benefited from more career guidance when she left school:

*[I would have liked] more career information at school – a room with information – it would have given me more choices for my future.*

Other young people felt they had limited career options because they had low qualifications or lacked work experience. An added complication was the fact that they had to explain their needs to people who knew little about deafness. Many young people seemed to have left school with poor self-advocacy skills.

*I spent the first four months after I left school, unemployed and no-one seemed willing to hire a 17 year old whose only experience was school.[...] It was very hard leaving school and entering the working world, I was quite naïve and I was amazed at how little people understood about deafness so I found my first few months hard.*

(Erin, sales assistant)

Several young people commented on the drastic change from the supportive school environment to university, college or working life, where they were expected to be independent, establish new friendships and manage their own time.

*It was quite hard going from such a supportive environment and then going to Uni where they sort of expect you to be more independent as well. And then just sort of throwing you in at the deep end, so to speak.*

(Lucy, support worker)

*The school tried to prepare us for leaving school to go to the 'hearing world' but it was still a shock for us! Nothing can prepare you for life at university. Nothing! It was terrible!*

(Freya, HE student and BSL user)

*I was a bit out of my depth in College, not in terms of the work, the academic, that was very easy, but just the new people this new world around me, I didn't do very well.*

(Logan, HE student)

There were few direct complaints about the lack of transition support from schools/education authorities. However, several participants reported difficulties in their transition from paediatric to adult audiology services. Their experiences are summarised in the following section.

### Transition from paediatric to adult audiology

Originally this study was not intended to explore issues related to transitions from paediatric to adult audiology. However, some young people who were interviewed at the early stages of the project believed that a full picture of their experiences of transition would be incomplete without reference to their transitions from paediatric to adult audiology services. We welcomed their suggestion and followed up with questions in all subsequent interviews.

We found a consensus among hearing aid users on the high level of care they received while they belonged to paediatric audiology. Between 16 and 19 years of age many of them changed services. While some declared themselves satisfied with the quality of care of adult services, a significant proportion had a long list of complaints. Many commented on the very different standards of care of paediatric and adult audiology. Adult audiology had less frequent check-ups. Paediatric audiology staff carried out careful checks, while adult services were believed to be rather hasty. Some people complained of being told that they could not have hearing tests on request.

*You go from all that support and the visits and all the rest of it. And you keep checking and everything. And then suddenly when you turn nineteen you don't need it any more. And I don't think, I don't think that's right. [...] That's something that I think should be looked at, that, really. It's not good. And you're really left in limbo.*

(Oliver's mother, FE student, personal development course)

There was even stronger criticism about waiting times. Several people complained about having to wait three weeks for an appointment, or six to eight weeks for a hearing aid replacement. This had an adverse impact on their ability to carry out everyday tasks, as many were 'utterly reliant' on their hearing aids. Some criticised the fact that they were given hearing aids which were less

technologically advanced than the hearing aids they had from paediatric services. Others complained that they were given unsuitable hearing aids and believed that staff made rushed decisions or failed to take into account their clients' views:

*I think adult audiology perhaps just needs...everyone to have a bit more time [laughs] similar to in child audiology where they really took the time to make sure everything was okay and you're...but yes I always feel like everyone's in a bit of a rush in adult audiology.*

(Lily, jobseeker)

*I would tell them to give me the same hearing aids, but they never listen.*

(Madhat, beautician)

There were numerous complaints about the level of deaf awareness of staff. One person believed it was 'ridiculous' that appointments had to be made by phone and that receptionists called out patients' names. They found it hard to lipread because of large pillars in the waiting rooms or because the receptionist would be chewing gum. One young woman described how the receptionists suggested that she leave her hearing aids overnight for repairs, seemingly unaware that she relied on her hearing aids all the time and found the journey back home without hearing aids 'scary'. Other complaints concerned the fact that there was no 'named person', unlike at paediatric audiology. Some people felt that there was a sense of discontinuity because they had to 'tell their story' to different audiologists every time they went for a check. This seemed to be particularly detrimental to those who had difficulties expressing their needs, such as people with learning difficulties.

It is impossible to predict, based on our sample, how widespread such complaints are. In the context of our study they were voiced by almost half of all hearing aid users. It became evident that there was a high level of discontent amongst those who had difficulties in their transition to adult services. One young man stated that he was so dissatisfied with adult audiology that he decided to use private services instead (see Case Study 7):

*If I was working or anything, or in education I couldn't use NHS or Audiology, it's just not fit for purpose and I think that's been the biggest issue of the transition for me.*

(Jack, jobseeker)

### **Case Study 7: Jack (see also Case Study 14 in Section 7)**

#### ***Negative experiences at adult audiology***

Jack had meningitis when he was two years old. He started using hearing aids when he was three. He has profound hearing loss in one ear, and severe in the other. He lives with his family in a very affluent urban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). He does not use sign language. He went to a private school, which he left in his sixth year with Advanced Highers. He graduated with a degree in Business from an ancient university. At the time of the interview he was looking for work in the financial sector.

He was satisfied with the care he received when he belonged to paediatric services. He mentioned that his paediatric audiologists were the only professionals who gave him advice about support at university. They facilitated a meeting between DHH pupils in their senior years and DHH young people who had already left school, at which they could discuss post-school experiences.

When Jack transferred to Adult Audiology, he was asked to go for a hearing test. He noticed that the audiologist was not familiar with his hearing aid model:

*At the end of it she hands back my hearing aid, and said, 'please come back in two weeks' time for*

*your digital hearing aid fitting'. And I asked, 'what digital hearing aid, I've already got one you've been holding it. Why do I need a new one?' And she said, 'Oh!' And you know it was in my notes and you're actually holding the hearing, you've held the hearing aid and you haven't noticed it's digital. [...] And it was pretty much all downhill from there.*

A couple of years later he phoned the department because he needed a spare part for his hearing aid, but he could not get an appointment sooner than two weeks. Jack expressed his disbelief at the long waiting time:

*As far as they were concerned I was going to be deaf for that two-week period.*

When he went for his appointment, the technician could not repair his hearing aid:

*The appointment came along and it turned out that this, the chap at the clinic didn't actually repair hearing aids, he only did batteries, the moulds and tuning and while I had my hearing aid out and therefore deaf to all intents and purpose, the guy running it was quite rude. He claimed that I'd missed various appointments, which I'd never heard of.*

He had to make another appointment to see an audiologist, which was in another two weeks. When he went for the appointment, the computer system was down, so he was asked to reschedule. This brought the total waiting time to six weeks. The hearing aid that Jack got after the six week-wait was not suitable, so he made an appointment with a private service instead. There his hearing aid was fixed very quickly:

*And it was £120 and you know that's fine, I mean to me that was worth ten times that.*

Jack commented on the lack of deaf awareness at NHS adult audiology:

*It's one of the least deaf aware places I've ever been. 'Cause the Paediatric Department they understand how important the hearing aid is to your development and you need to get it fixed straight away. Whereas with the adult department they'll just leave you for weeks and they don't seem geared up to understand that I might have a job or might even be at University or that I might be utterly reliant on my hearing aid.*

He also commented on the fact that the set-up of the room prevented him for lipreading the staff and that he was expected to come accompanied by a carer. Jack is now using the private provider and has no intention of going back to NHS adult audiology.

This demonstrates that DHH people's experiences of transition are complex and not limited to their changeover from school to post-16 education, training or employment. Their transitions from child to adult services in audiology, health or social work are also inherent to achieving positive outcomes, and efforts should be made to maintain high standards of care throughout. The mother of a young man with complex needs described his experience of transition across several services at the same time as 'ending up in a black hole':

*I think it's quite hard because everything stops before they're nineteen. You know, so their respite changed, their school changed, their audiologist changed, their hospitals changed. You know, everything changes at the one time. And then so you kind of lose all your support all at the one time and then kind of end up in a black hole because when they get into adult services you have to go and look for it just about, you know. It's just...the same support isn't there. So that's, that's the difficult thing.*

(Oliver's mother, FE student, personal development course)



## Post-school transition planning: summary

This section provided an overview of the respondents' transition experiences from school to post-school education, training and employment, as well as from paediatric to adult audiology services. Here are the key findings:

- Most participants did not have post-school transition plans. There was evidence that transition planning took place for only four participants. Three of them had learning difficulties and were in specialist provision (special schools or mainstream schools with specialist units).
- Not all those who had complex needs benefited from transition planning. Participants with conditions such as social-emotional and behavioural difficulties or dyslexia did not have transition plans. Neither did all those who were at mainstream schools with resource bases.
- Some of the young people who did not have transition plans found out about support at their post-school destinations from their support workers or their parents.
- Young people who aimed to go to university were well informed about support options offered by universities. Many of these young people reported that their parents were actively involved in planning their transitions.
- Young people who went into further education, training or employment seemed to be less knowledgeable about support options. Many of the young people in this category were still unaware of support options (such as Access to Work) at the time of the interview.
- Almost half of the hearing aid users in the study were dissatisfied with the standards of care after they transferred to adult services. They mentioned long waiting times, less frequent and less thorough check-ups, the lack of a 'named person' and the quality of the hearing aids.
- Difficulties were also reported in making the transition to adult social work and health services. The mother of one young man with complex needs reported that child services were suddenly withdrawn when her son reached school leaving age, with no adult services in place.

The following sections describe DHH young people's experiences in post-school education, training and employment.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- What are the criteria by which education authorities/schools decide which young people require post-school transition plans? The findings from the case studies suggest that DHH pupils who had learning difficulties and were in special schools or mainstream schools with resource bases were more likely to have post-school transition plans. There is a need for large-scale research to explore transitional practices in Scottish secondary schools.
- What difficulties do education authorities/schools encounter in delivering post-school transition planning for school leavers who are DHH? The 2012 report on the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (As Amended) (Scottish Government, 2012) found variation in the effectiveness of partnership work across local authorities. There is a need for further research into the factors which facilitate or hinder collaboration between the agencies involved in supporting young people who are DHH in their post-school transitions.
- How does the lack of formal transition planning impact on the post-school outcomes of school leavers, particularly those from poorer backgrounds? Findings from the case studies suggest that school leavers from socially-advantaged backgrounds manage their post-school



transitions with the help of their parents and wider social networks. There is a need for more research into the transition experiences of DHH school leavers from poorer backgrounds, as they are more likely to experience difficulties.

## Section 5 Young people's experiences in higher education

### Introduction

As discussed in Section 2, sixteen of the thirty participants in this study were in higher education at the time of the interview or had already graduated. Data on school leavers from publicly funded schools in Scotland show that around 25% of all DHH school leavers entered higher education, whereas they represented 50% of our sample. The higher education students and graduates were also a socially advantaged group: more than two thirds came from the most affluent areas (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile), and none of them came from deprived areas (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles).

This provided us with a lot of information about the support and experiences of DHH young people in higher education. We interviewed people from nine different universities and colleges. Some young people studied at more than one university or college: some completed a higher education course in college before they entered university; some went on post-graduate courses or second degrees at a different university; and some dropped out from one HE institution and went back to study at a different institution. This allowed us to make comparisons between services at different institutions. We found that the general standard of support was high, although there was some variation in how institutions supported DHH students. In some cases, we interviewed several students from the same institution, and we could look for similarities and differences between their experiences. This allowed us to identify other possible factors which contributed to them having a positive or negative experience at university.

The participants had attended nine universities in the following groups:

- Scottish ancient universities – seven young people
- Scottish pre-1992 universities – six young people
- Scottish post-1992 university – four young people
- English post-1992 university – one young person
- The Open University – one young person.

Three participants attended higher education courses in college before they applied for a place at university. For instance, Adam, a Contemporary Art student, undertook a one year foundation course in a college to build his portfolio before applying for an art degree at a pre-1992 university.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- School leavers who are DHH are less likely to enter higher education compared with their non-disabled peers. In 2011/12, 26% of DHH leavers from Scottish schools entered higher education, as compared to 39% of school leavers with no additional support needs. Fewer school leavers who are DHH entered higher education between 2007/8 and 2010/11. The participation rate was as low as 7% in 2008/9.
- In 2009/10, 0.33% of all UK-domiciled undergraduates and 0.37% of all postgraduates declared that they are DHH. The proportion of UK-domiciled higher education students who declare a hearing impairment has stayed relatively stable in the past 10 years.
- Disabled students who do not have the Disabled Students' Allowance have higher non-continuation rates than disabled students in receipt of DSA and their non-disabled peers.

## Support and barriers in higher education

Students in higher education are entitled to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), a non-means tested allowance which can be used to meet extra costs arising from a disability. The DSA can be used to pay for specialist equipment and support workers (such as interpreters, notetakers and readers and proofreaders). The grant depends on the assessed needs of each individual student and is paid directly to students by the Scottish Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS). Full-time undergraduate students can receive a maximum of £20,520 per year to cover the costs of support workers. This amount may not cover all the needs of students with high support costs (i.e., students who require BSL interpreters as well as notetakers). In this case, the higher education institutions have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to support these students. Higher education institutions also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments, such as to give disabled students longer time in exams<sup>15</sup>.

When an institution receives an application from a potential student who declared a disability, the information is passed on to the Disability Office. The Disability Office makes contact with applicants when they are accepted on a course, or, in some cases, as soon as an offer is made. They arrange a meeting at which they assess the applicants' needs and fill in an application form which is sent to the Scottish Awards Agency for Scotland. Disability Officers also inform departments of the specific needs of disabled students and the duty to make reasonable adjustments. They manage support staff<sup>16</sup>, such as notetakers and interpreters. If necessary, they act as advocates for the students. It became apparent from the interviews that the quality of support offered by Disability Offices was as important as receiving the DSA.

Most participants were or had been in receipt of DSA. Only three out of the sixteen did not receive DSA, either because they had mild levels of hearing loss and did not require communication support or equipment, or because they chose not to apply for DSA. There was also one person who did not receive DSA because of an apparent breakdown in the application process, for which she blamed her university's Disability Office. Max, a student at an ancient university who had moderate to severe hearing loss, did not apply for DSA because he 'did not want the special treatment':

*I didn't apply for it. I can't really remember why. I think it was because I felt, I thought I wouldn't need it. Again I didn't apply for it this year either, yeah. [...] It was more like...I just wanted, I didn't really want the special treatment, I guess. I can't really explain.*

(Max, pre-1992 university)

Lucy who had profound hearing loss and studied at a pre-1992 university also turned down support at first. After encountering difficulties with one of her tutors, she asked the Disability Office for help and applied for DSA.

*When I started I didn't want to be different. So I said I didn't want anything to do with them. [...] And they said, 'oh that's fine'. But they did say to my mum afterwards we would always step in if somebody needs help. They don't say, 'you didn't ask for it so we're not giving you it'.*

(Lucy, pre-1992 university)

There was variation in the way Disability Offices at different institutions supported DHH students. Some students were contacted by Disability Advisors as soon as they were made an offer. Others had their first meetings just before lectures started:

<sup>15</sup> For a comprehensive guide to reasonable adjustments in higher education, see *Managing Reasonable Adjustments in Higher Education* (Equality Challenge Unit, 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Support staff may be employed by the university or by private agencies.

*So we made an appointment for me to go in. It was either just before Freshers week or in Freshers week or just after Freshers week. Sometime just before the teaching, which is really too late to make adjustments.*

(Lily, pre-1992 university)

Students from some universities were given communication support and equipment before they received the DSA, while others had to wait for the DSA funding to come in before they could have notetakers or laptops.

*The first year I didn't have my notetaker for like the first...two months. [...] It's still a fair amount of time. [...] And I was waiting on the laptop as well from the Uni. And I didn't get that until two months after I'd moved away. So I had to keep using the computers in the library. It was really annoying [both laugh]! But...yeah so there was a bit of a delay for sure.*

(Chloe, pre-1992 university)

There was also variation in the continuity of support. Some participants reported that they had catch-up meetings with the Disability Office every year. Others were expected to take responsibility for organising their support after the first year. It is interesting to note here that students in the second category stopped seeking note-taking support after their first year:

*It was quite hard to get the support. And it required extra effort which I didn't really put in... but I didn't feel I should have to.*

(Lily, pre-1992 university)

There were few complaints about the assessment process. Some participants mentioned that they would have liked to be given more information about various support options in order to be able to make informed decisions. For instance, Sophie, who graduated from a pre-1992 university, would have liked to have a proofreader, but did not know whether the Disability Office offered proofreaders.

Disability Offices informed teaching staff of the needs of the DHH students (for example, some tutors were advised to use a microphone, or wear the microphone component of a radio-aid). They also informed the Student Accommodation Services if DHH students were to live in university halls. Most students were given longer time in exams and were allowed to take their exams in a separate room. Students at one pre-1992 university were given extra time but had to take their exams in the same room as everyone else. They described this as 'disruptive':

*I would have preferred to be in room with people who were having extra time. [...] People would come in and start talking to you when you were doing your exam or when everyone finishes and they go outside to celebrate. You're still writing your exam.*

(Lily, pre-1992 university)

Evidence suggests that Disability Offices asked course organisers to provide DHH students with print-outs before lectures or tutorials. However, only one person reported being given print-outs at the beginning of the year and a few reported that course materials were available online.

Many participants were given laptops and specialist software. Many were also given printers and consumables or extra printing allowance. Similar to secondary school, radio-aids continued to be a rather unpopular option: only four of the sixteen HE students reported being given radio-aids, and some never used them. Audio induction loop systems were even less popular: only two people reported trying to use them and finding that they did not work in most lecture halls. Two people were given Dictaphones, but did not need to use them. A couple of people reported being given

adapted fire alarms by the Student Accommodation Services. One person with limited mobility was able to use the DSA to pay for part of her internet connection.

The vast majority of those in receipt of DSA had notetakers. Only one person reported turning down the option of having a notetaker. Liam, a pre-1992 university graduate, reported that his notetaker also acted as a reader in exams and as a proofreader for his written assignments. Adam, a BSL user who studied at a pre-1992 university, had a notetaker as well as an interpreter. Because he believed that his English skills prevented him from achieving higher grades in his written assignments, he asked for permission to sign his essays to an interpreter:

*I have a notetaker and interpreter. I need a notetaker for my lectures because I can't watch the interpreter and write notes at the same time. [...] I have asked to see if I can sign my essays to an interpreter. Of course, I have to do research before answering the essay question. The university is happy with this.*

(Adam, pre-1992 university)

In general note-taking, either manual, electronic or live remote captioning was considered a valuable form of support and many participants reported using it for the entire length of their studies. However, there were several issues which impeded on the efficiency of note-taking support:

- Subject knowledge. Having notetakers with no subject knowledge seemed to pose difficulties for those who studied subjects which required knowledge of specialist terms, such as programming languages in IT or medicine.
- Continuity. There seemed to be a general preference for having the same notetaker for all lectures and for longer periods of time. Liam, a pre-1992 university graduate, had the same notetaker for four years, and he talked of building a good relationship with him over time. On the other hand, Jack, an ancient university graduate, reported that he had several different notetakers, and that they varied in how well they took notes.
- Availability. There were numerous comments about the shortage of notetakers. Several students found that notetakers were not available at short notice. Some had notetakers only for lectures and not for tutorials, although they would have liked to have support in tutorials, too. Lily, an ancient university graduate, reported that she had notetakers for only two out of three lectures.
- Practicalities. Some people complained about having to sit away from their friends, either because their notetakers sat next to them or because they had to sit close to a plug point (if they used live remote captioning or read notes directly for the notetaker's laptop screen). The alternative to plugging in their laptops during lectures was to go to the library during breaks to charge laptop batteries. Someone who studied at an ancient university noted that in some lecture halls there was no space to place a laptop. Several young people commented on the fact that they had to arrive early to meet their notetakers and leave late because they had to pack up equipment.

Adam, the BSL user quoted above, had similar complaints about the availability of BSL interpreters, particularly at short notice. He stated that he found it difficult to get communication support for tutorials and practical sessions. Apart from availability, he also talked of miscommunication between himself, the Disability Office and the interpreting agency about the time and place of lectures:

*I have had some problems in communicating with the university and interpreters to find the right times for them to come to my lectures. The interpreters have received wrong information and arrived at the wrong time twice. I had to sit through the lectures with no communication support.*

(Adam, pre-1992 university)

Teaching or clinical practice placements, marks for participation and group work were other aspects of university study which were considered challenging. Four participants brought up the issue of communication difficulties during teaching or clinical practice placements which involved using the phone or working directly with clients or pupils, but only one mentioned being offered communication support by the Disability Office. Freya, a medical student, reported that the university helped her find a practice where she would have few difficulties lipreading the staff:

*Every two weeks we go to a GP surgery to shadow the GPs and I have asked to be put in a surgery where I can lipread people with no strong accents. I find it very difficult to lipread people from other countries and the university was very helpful in finding a suitable practice for me to visit.*

(Freya, pre-1992 university)

Chloe, a fourth year student at an ancient university, brought up the issue of marks for participation in class, which she found 'unfair' because it put her at a disadvantage:

*This year especially, everything's, there's so much of your marks on participation. And obviously that's really difficult. [...] I always try to make sure to speak a lot but I mean if you don't hear what this person's saying and then that goes to the conversation by that person or that person, it's like [...] it's nearly impossible actually to contribute sometimes.*

(Chloe, pre-1992 university)

Several people mentioned having difficulties with group work, which is commonly used in tutorials. Ethan, a first year student at a pre-1992 university, described group discussions as 'off-putting', and talked about how he had to position himself so he could hear the others, or alternatively ask his group to move to a different room.

*It can be quite hard [...] cause I'm only hearing on my left hand side. Anyone in a big room talking, like lots of people talking, someone on my right hand side, I might not be able to hear them as well. So I'd have to either like sit with my group on my left hand side so I can just get involved and hear them. Or...just...finding a quiet room for my, my own group to sit in or something like that.*

(Ethan, pre-1992 university)

Freya, a BSL user who graduated from one university and was doing a second degree at the time of the interview, described how she deliberately chose a course which required less problem-based learning and more traditional lectures, as she expected to have difficulties with group work:

*I had to look for a suitable course that doesn't involve a lot of discussions with other students – PBL (problem-based learning) – I was scared of participating in them!*

(Freya, pre-1992 university)

Similarly, Jack, who graduated from an ancient university, explained that when he had group projects, he either took on more work than his peers or did the presentation in exchange for not answering subsequent questions. These kinds of strategies seemed to work well for those on smaller courses, where peers were more likely to be aware of the DHH students' needs. However, those on larger courses often found themselves forced to explain to new course mates their need for adjustments in order to take part in group work:

*Sometimes it's, it's a bit of a hassle cause you're always meeting new, different people all the time for your tutorials and your lectures. And it's just like you have to tell people all the time. So...it's a bit...it's a bit repetitive, yeah.*

(Chloe, pre-1992 university)

In spite of this, evidence suggests that most higher education students who are DHH had good self-advocacy skills. There were numerous examples of DHH students informing their tutors or peers of their needs for adjustments, or requesting support tailored to their particular needs (e.g., notetakers with subject knowledge or equipment which was more suitable for particular learning environments). Some found it easy to ask for adjustments; for others, these were skills they had to learn:

*It made me grow up a lot because I was never really having to ask for anything done. It was always done for me. So having to ask for that did make me grow up and it did sort of make me go, 'I can't do this anymore'.*

(Lucy, pre-1992 university)

Similarly, Ava, a third year university student, was at first very shy and reluctant to disclose her deafness to people she came in contact with. She explained how learning to inform others of her needs was an empowering, 'eye-opening' experience:

*I told them what I needed, like how I needed help in how to communicate. I told the class as well, just repeat what you say and use hand signals etc etc. That was a lot more eye opening as well. Cause my peers and my tutors were a lot more friendly and approachable.*

(Ava, post-1992 university)

However, evidence suggests that good self-advocacy skills were not the only factor which contributed to securing adequate support. In some cases, the advocate role of the Disability Advisors played an essential role in ensuring that adequate adjustments were made. Direct parental involvement in negotiating support was also an effective strategy. This became apparent by comparing the experiences of students who went to the same university but had very different outcomes (i.e., some were very satisfied with the quality of support and others dropped out because of insufficient support).

An analysis of student data carried out by the Higher Education Funding Council for England showed that non-continuation rates of students who are not in receipt of DSA are higher than those of DSA recipients (see Table 1.4 of this report). These findings are mirrored in the present study. Three young people reported that they had dropped out of university. Two of them were not in receipt of DSA and one did not have communication support.

- Lucy, who was studying at a pre-1992 university, chose not to apply for DSA. Lucy dropped out because of difficulties with one of her tutors, who was 'deliberately obstructive' and refused to make adjustments. Her experiences described in Case Study 8.
- Isla, who studied at a post-1992 university, reported that she had applied for DSA, but the funding did not come through. She dropped out because she did not have any communication support and her tutors and Director of Studies repeatedly failed to make adjustments for her (see Case Study 9).
- Ava, who studied at a pre-1992 university, was in receipt of DSA and had a notetaker. However, she turned down communication support for her teaching placement. Ava was finding her course stressful and dropped out because her university teaching placement supervisor seemed unsupportive and disrespectful of her deafness.

It is interesting that all three young women blamed unhelpful teaching staff rather than the lack of communication support or equipment. There was a sense that they expected academic staff to be understanding and make reasonable adjustments for them and felt let down by the lack of support. It is unclear whether staff were aware of their duty to make reasonable adjustments, had had any

deaf awareness training, or had been informed of the students' needs by the Disability Office. As mentioned before, Disability Officers have the duty to inform academic staff of DHH students' needs, and can also act as advocates. This becomes evident in Case Study 8, where the Disability Office played a key role in persuading Lucy to return to university.

#### **Case Study 8: Lucy**

***A student on a language course, Lucy dropped out because she had been refused reasonable adjustments, but was later reinstated with the help of the Disability Office***

Lucy was diagnosed with profound hearing loss when she was four years old. Her mother is also deaf and they both use speech. She lives with her parents in an advantaged suburban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). She went to local mainstream schools.

She left school with Advanced Highers and went on to study at a pre-1992 university. She did not apply for DSA because she 'did not want to be different'. However, she expected lecturers to make adjustments for her, as she was studying a foreign language and needed subtitles and a reader for listening tasks. The programme director refused to find a reader and to provide subtitled videos on grounds of lack of resources. She gave Lucy additional assignments in lieu of not taking listening exams. Because she was given a lot of extra work and unrealistically tight deadlines, Lucy appealed to the Disability Office for help. She did not tell her parents at first about her difficulties with the tutor:

*I just needed somebody to stop it happening rather than just going in sort of all guns blazing which my mum would have done.*

A disability advisor contacted the programme director. In an e-mail to Lucy he described her as 'deliberately obstructive'. Lucy felt overwhelmed with stress and did not return to university after the Christmas break.

*It kept going on and on and on. And eventually I'd stopped eating by this point, I was so stressed out. [...] I was so upset all the time. I stopped going to University. I was trying so hard to keep up that I neglected the rest of my subjects. And I said to my mum, 'I can't do this anymore', so I left.*

Lucy started looking for work. Three months later she and her mum were called into a meeting by the disability advisor. The Vice-Dean of the school was in the meeting. He invited her to start a similar course the following year and promised to refund fees for the current year. At the time of the interview Lucy had graduated from her course and worked full-time for a charity which provides support for children and adults with disabilities.

It is not clear from Lucy's story what role her mum played in negotiating her return to university, although there were suggestions that she had been in contact with the Disability Office. However, other people's stories showed that Disability Offices may not always be good advocates. Isla (Case Study 9) blamed the Disability Office for the fact that she did not receive the DSA and did not have any reasonable adjustments.

#### **Case Study 9: Isla**

***A student at a post'92 university who dropped out because of lack of support from the Disability Office and academic staff***

Isla was diagnosed with profound hearing loss when she was 2 years old. She lives in a relatively



disadvantaged area (SIMD 3<sup>rd</sup> quintile) with her family, who are hearing. She does not use sign language.

She left school with Highers and went on to study at a post-1992 university. She was well-informed about support options when she left school. Her support worker gave her a list of questions to ask on Open Days about support at university. She contacted the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) in her sixth year, when she got her conditional offer. She had her needs assessed and filled in her DSA application form.

In summer, as soon as she was accepted, she had a meeting with a disability advisor. Then in October she contacted the Disability Office once more to ask about support. She was told that the paperwork was being processed. During the following three months Isla had no communication support and no adjustments were made for her. She arrived early for lectures and asked tutors to wear the loop system microphone, but found that microphones rarely worked or tutors forgot to use them. In a laboratory session she asked to be allowed to sit at the front so she lipread, but the tutor was not supportive:

*She said to me, 'well you just have to sit through it for this tutorial, this lab, but for the next time I'll have you down the front'. Next time I went in, still hadn't changed it. I was raging. I was like really angry.*

As time went by, Isla realised that she was missing out most of the content of her course. Unlike Lucy, in Case Study 8, she did not ask for help from the Disability Office. She dropped out at Christmas, just before she was due to hand in her first assignments.

*We had a couple of big papers coming up. I had started them. I had no idea where I was going with it. I e-mailed my tutor and said, 'look I'm not coming back. I can't, I can't hear anybody so I can't. He said, 'I'm sorry to hear that'. That was it! I think I cried for days.*

After she dropped out of university her dad wrote a letter to the Disability Office listing their complaints. The Disability Office responded in writing:

*We got two letters back. One telling my dad that they need written consent for him to contact the University on behalf of me, although I had signed the bottom of the letter along with my dad! I think that constitutes written consent. The other one I got back was an eight page letter simplifying all the points that I had pointed out to them as to what they had done wrong, accusing me of being a liar! Saying that I had never been up to speak to them.*

There was no other contact between Isla or her parents and the university. Isla registered with the JobCentre and looked for work for nine months. At the time of the interview she held a full-time, permanent position as a purchasing assistant with a construction company, and had started a part-time university degree.

It is important to note here that two other participants in this study, Liam, and Ava, went to the same post-1992 university as Isla, and were satisfied with the quality of support. Liam, an IT support specialist, was particularly happy with the support:

*Everybody at Uni was really good. [...] The support was brilliant.*

(Liam, post-1992 university)

He had a notetaker with subject knowledge who also acted as a reader in exams and as a proofreader, and who was with him for the entire length of his studies. He had regular meetings

with his Disability Advisor. It is worth pointing out that both Liam and Ava reported that their mothers were actively involved in negotiating support with the university. They were present at the initial meetings with Disability Advisors, and made sure that departments were made aware of their children's needs. On the other hand, Isla did not mention any direct contact between her family and the Disability Office or department apart from the complaint letter her father sent out after she dropped out. This may suggest that direct parental involvement could be an even more effective strategy in securing appropriate support.

In spite of these three stories of drop-out, the vast majority of young people who took part in the study were very satisfied with the levels of support. Many described the support they received in superlative terms, such as 'idyllic' (Sophie, documentation coordinator) and 'fantastic' (Lucy, disability support worker). Others pointed out the existence of irremovable barriers to achieving support:

*At times the support was not quite enough but other times the support was simply too much. [...] I'm not sure the help can be achieved, if you see what I mean. [...] I'm not really sure how you could change it without changing how I interact with most people anyway and I'm not sure I want to do that.*

(Jack, pre-1992 university)

### Experiences of higher education: summary

The fact that more than half of all participants were higher education students and graduates enabled us to collect a wealth of information on the effectiveness of the DSA and disability support offices in universities.

- The general level of support in higher education was good, although there was some variation between institutions (e.g., some institutions provided disabled students with communication support and equipment before funding came through, while others did not).
- Most participants received Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and benefited from reasonable adjustments.
- The DSA was used to pay for communication support and equipment (e.g., laptops and printers). Most DSA recipients had notetakers, while some also had BSL interpreters, readers, scribes and proofreaders.
- Note-taking was considered a valuable form of support, although some respondents acknowledged that it had limitations (there were complaints about notetakers' availability, especially at short notice, about high turn-over rates, and, in some cases, about notetakers' lack of subject knowledge).
- Although they received communication support, many higher education students encountered communication barriers, particularly when they had to take part in group work or go on clinical or teaching placements.
- There was also evidence to suggest that applying for DSA was not guaranteed to ensure appropriate support. Findings suggest that good self-advocacy skills, pastoral support from Disability Advisors, as well as direct parental involvement in negotiating support also played essential roles.
- Middle class parents typically intervened when difficulties arose, in one case making direct contact with the disability office in order to facilitate re-admission.
- There was less direct intervention by parents from less socially advantaged areas.

In the following subsections we describe the experiences of support and perceived barriers to participation of young people who went into further education, training and employment.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- What are the socio-demographic characteristics of higher education students who are DHH? Previous research indicated that disabled young people in higher education (Riddell et al., 2005) reflect the relative social advantage of the majority of higher education students, in particular those in pre-1992 universities, where 80% have parents in professional and managerial occupations. There is need to investigate whether higher education students who are DHH also represent a socially advantaged group. This would provide an indication of the factors which contribute to their success.
- What are the non-continuation rates of students who are DHH? What factors lead to drop-out? Findings from the case studies suggest that some higher education students who are DHH may encounter communication difficulties during their studies, which may lead to drop-out. An analysis of HESA data would shed light on the non-continuation patterns of higher education students who are DHH.

## Section 6 Young people's experiences of further education and training

### Introduction

Nine young people who took part in the study had started or completed courses in nine Scottish colleges. They were enrolled on a variety of vocational courses (such as Beauty Therapy, Car Mechanics and Childcare), but also on programmes specifically designed for people with additional support needs, such as personal development courses. Not all those who started further education courses completed them. Three people had dropped out of college, and only one returned to study at a different college. Compared to higher education students and graduates, those in further education were a less socially advantaged group (half came from areas in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SIMD quintiles). They also had a higher incidence of complex support needs.

Six participants reported that they had been or were on training courses such as Get Ready for Work or Modern Apprenticeships. Most of them came from less advantaged areas (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quintiles). Three young people had other support needs besides hearing loss, such as social-emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and dyslexia. It is important to point out that there were no BSL users in this group.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- Further education is the most common post-school destination of school leavers who are DHH. In 2011/12, 39% of school leavers who are DHH entered further education, as opposed to 23% of school leavers with no additional support needs. During the previous five years the participation rate was even higher (as high as 57% in 2009/10).
- In 2010/11, 0.55% of all further education students reported that they were DHH.
- A very small percentage of school leavers enrolled on training programmes in 2011/12 (1.5%, slightly lower than school leavers with no additional support needs, at 3%).
- Skills Development Scotland does not collect data on participation rates of young people who are DHH on national training programmes.

### Support and barriers in further education

Disabled students on further education courses are not entitled to the DSA. Students on programmes specifically designed for students with additional support needs, students on mainstream courses who receive Extended Learning Support and students with additional support needs who do not fall into the two previous categories may be offered an Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance (ASNLA). ASNLA is a non-means tested grant to cover for extra study or travel costs arising from their disability. The allowance comes out of the annual bursary allocation of each college from the Scottish Funding Council, and these funds are used at the discretion of the college. The costs for needs assessments are covered by college core funds (Scottish Funding Council, 2012).

Colleges vary greatly in their ASNLA spent. An analysis carried out by the Scottish Funding Council revealed that in 2010/11 some colleges did not claim any ASNLA, while a small number of colleges

claimed more than 60% of the entire ASNLA spent in Scotland (Scott and Tye, 2012). This could be an indication that some colleges provide higher levels of support and therefore attract a large numbers of students with ASN. Similar to higher education students, disabled students in further education benefit from adjustments such as longer time in exams.

The discrepancy in the quality support offered by different colleges was evident from the in-depth interviews with young people who studied on further education courses. Not all participants had communication support. Karen, who had profound hearing loss, did not have a notetaker. Tutors e-mailed her course materials in advance, and she relied on peers' help when she thought she missed out in class:

*Well they send me stuff by email and stuff. And then if they do like PowerPoint and stuff they get handouts anyway so then I just read them over and stuff.*

(Karen, FE student)

Other participants mentioned that they had notetakers only for some courses:

*They try to find me some teacher, depends on they're available and time, depends. Like they have to check my timetable, see, 'Oh I can't help you this time, this time, but I can help you later on'.*

(Madhat, beautician)

On the other hand, there was also evidence of good levels of support. Two participants who had literacy difficulties received one-to-one tuition from learning support staff on a regular basis and had readers in exams. Juzar, who had profound hearing loss, had one-to-one homework help at lunch time every day. He was satisfied with the support, but he did point out that when his support worker was off sick, there was no one to replace her. However, he had previously enrolled at a different college, where he had no communication or learning support (see Case Study 11).

BSL users in this study were satisfied with the support they had, but they admitted that they had applied to colleges which had a reputation for providing high levels of support to deaf students. They had notetakers as well as interpreters.

Unlike higher education, there was almost no mention of equipment or extra printing allowance. Another difference between further and higher education students was that further education students tended to rely more on the help they received from peers:

*If I don't understand I just like ask my friends and stuff they're like, 'I'll tell you'. I'm like 'okay' [both laugh]. [...]The good stuff about being in college is like people don't like put you down for being different. And like everybody wants to be your friend. So then you meet more friends.*

(Karen, FE student)

*I had some help from friends so I was fine. [...] I mean they were really good with me. Like cause I was the only deaf girl in class. So like if I struggle, they sometimes say, 'do you want help?' And it's like, 'yes please'. And they're just really good with me.*

(Gillian, cleaner)

There were many positive comments about teaching staff in further education. Madhat, who had reading and writing difficulties, described how tutors made sure she sat at the front of the class, gave her additional help and even wrote notes down for her when she did not have a notetaker. Her college experiences are described in Case Study 10.

**Case Study 10: Madhat (also see Case Study 3 in Section 3)****Formal and informal support in college**

Madhat was born with severe to profound hearing loss and has communication and literacy difficulties. She comes from an Asian family and lives with her family in a very affluent urban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). She was educated orally in mainstream schools. She had full-time support from a ToD until her fourth year. She was very satisfied with the support she had in school. When she went to college, she had notetakers, but not for all her classes:

*They try to find me some teacher, some teacher depends they available and time depends. Like they have to check my timetable, see what, 'oh I can't help you this time, this time, but I can help you later on'.*

She also had a reader in exams. However, when her support worker was off sick, there was no one to replace her, so she had to rely on support from her lecturers and peers:

*But sometimes the helper might off-sick that help me, 'I went okay, that's no problem', so I told my lecture, teacher, she went, 'okay', she helped me, everything, she explain me. [...] My classroom helped me, everything when my helper not here, they helped me, they got a book, I had to copy what they write, copy, I go, 'what does that mean', she explain.*

Madhat also benefited from reasonable adjustments. She mentioned being given an oral examination after she repeatedly failed the written exams:

*I fail both times. [...] I pay another £45 [...] but my lecturer, she's with me, she say, 'tell me answer, tell me', I think, think [...]. She give me the mark, 'you passed this'.*

At the time of the interview, Madhat had finished her course and was working full-time as a beautician.

BSL users were more likely to comment on lecturers' lack of deaf awareness. James, who was doing a second course in further education, mentioned that lecturers did not know how to interact with him at first, so he took the initiative to approach them and explain his communication needs:

*All the staff at college should have Deaf awareness. Usually in the first two weeks of a new course, the lecturers are awkward and don't know how to deal with me. I have to approach the lecturers and explain via an interpreter how to deal with deaf people. Once they know how to deal with me, they usually change their attitude towards me and become more friendly and approachable!*

(James, FE student)

James learned that being assertive helped him establish good working relationships with teaching staff:

*I had to be assertive and approach new lecturers and let them know. I had to explain to them. I am concerned about deaf people who are not so assertive. It will be difficult for them. They need to be encouraged to ask for help. My lecturers are very good and they like to make sure that I am following the course.*

(James, FE student)

James's experience is similar to Ava's, the university student who found that her peers seemed more friendly and approachable after she explained to them how to communicate with her effectively. On the other hand, Harry, a BSL user, dropped out of his film-making course because the audio-video

content of the course was not accessible to him. With hindsight, he thought he should have been more assertive and spoken to his lecturers about his frustrations and communication problems.

Unlike higher education students, none of the young people in further education described their support in superlative terms. On the whole, there seemed to be more instances of inadequate support or complete lack of support in further education. Two young people reportedly dropped out of college because they had not support. Juzar, a cochlear implant user with significant communication difficulties, received no support from his further education institution. His college experience is described in Case Study 11.

### **Case Study 11: Juzar**

#### ***A young man with communication difficulties who had very different experiences of support at different colleges***

Juzar was born with profound hearing loss. He lives with his family in a very affluent urban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). His family are hearing and he does not use sign language. He belongs to an ethnic minority, but speaks only English, although his siblings are bilingual. He used hearing aids between the ages of two and five. When he was five years old he received a cochlear implant. His speech is clear, but he has difficulties understanding questions and expressing ideas.

He went to mainstream schools with deaf resource bases. He had full-time communication support when he was in mainstream classes, as well as one-to-one tutorials three times a week. He was one of the few young people in the study who had a post-school transition plan. With the help of his transition team, he decided to go on to college to study Digital Media and Computing.

Before the start of courses, he went to the Student Support Centre of the college to enquire about support, but 'nobody came'. He tried to use his radio-aid, but found that he still could not understand the tutors:

*Don't understand questions. And also I don't understand what they say, talking. They just speak too fast. Not seem helpful. I'm not happy.*

He asked his tutors for help.

*They shouted at me. Don't know why.*

His father phoned the Student Support Centre, but Juzar still did not receive communication support. Six months into the course, he stopped going to college, as he believed he would fail the tests he was supposed to sit at the end of the month. He started to work as a cook in his uncle's restaurant, and a few months later enrolled on an evening course in Catering and Hospitality at a different college. This time he was happy with the support:

*It was much, much better.*

He had manual notetakers, as well as daily one-to-one tuition from a learning support worker (although he did point out that learning support was not always available). Although some of his lecturers 'spoke too fast', they were generally helpful, as well as 'nice, careful and bright'.

Juzar completed the course and started another one at the same college. At the time of the interview he went to college one day a week and worked six days a week as a cook. In spite of this, he worried about his future:

*I don't know what to do in the future job.*

He did not think he would be able to move out of his parents' home in the next five years.

We do not know the reasons behind the failure of Juzar's first college to provide communication support. As Juzar was one of the few participants in this study who had a transition plan, his experience suggests that post-school transition planning is not a guarantee that young people with ASN are supported appropriately at their post-school destinations. Young people with learning and communication difficulties, such as Juzar, seemed to be particularly vulnerable to breakdowns in support.

Generally speaking there were fewer instances of successful self-advocacy amongst further education students compared to the higher education group. This may be a consequence of the fact that many of the further education students in this study had learning and communication difficulties. There were also fewer instances of parental involvement in negotiating support. This may be a consequence of the fact that a higher proportion of young people in this group came from less advantaged areas: half of the further education students in this study lived in the most deprived areas (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles of the SIMD), while amongst higher education students there were no people from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quintiles.

The interview with the mother of a young man with Down's syndrome, who had significant learning and communication difficulties, highlighted the particular issues facing students on personal development courses. She pointed out that going to college had been a very beneficial experience for her son, as it had helped improve his speech and boost his confidence:

*It's helped his speech. I mean it is better than it used to be. I think it helped and it helped his confidence being with, you know, the staff and moving about the bits of the college. [...] They used the same dining room as everybody else. And sometimes some of the other students, mainstream students, would come in to help out with different things, you know. So yes it's definitely, definitely helped his confidence I think.*

(Oliver's mother, FE student, personal development course)

However, cuts in funding meant that her son had gradually fewer days in college and a less varied curriculum:

*We're just going year by year now because when he left school he had a four day place for two years. [...] And then he had a three day place for a year. But this year they were only offered two half days. Cutbacks. [...] They used to get gym and, you know, PE and they'd have staff come in. But they're not getting funding for that now. [...] But at the end of the day, that's all the college can offer. So you have to accept that or, you know, not.*

(Oliver's mother, FE student, personal development course)

Findings suggest there was a lot of variation in the quality of support offered by different colleges. Moreover, compared to higher education students, the experiences support of young people in further education were less positive. This may be a direct consequence of the different levels of funding for higher and further education, but also of the different socio-demographic profiles of young people in further and higher education.



## Support and barriers on training programmes

The six participants who went on training courses did so straight after leaving school: two went on Get Ready for Work programmes and later progressed to Modern Apprenticeships; two went straight on Modern Apprenticeships; one completed Skillseekers<sup>17</sup> and other training courses offered by the third sector; and one young woman went to college after completing Get Ready for Work. They undertook training in Childcare, Decorating and Painting, Business Administration and Joinery. At the time of the interview, one young woman had completed her Modern Apprenticeship and was in full-time employment, one was looking for work and the rest were still in training.

None of the young people in this group received communication support. No one had adapted equipment, apart from the young man who trained with the local council. He reported that he was given an amplified phone. It is interesting to note that two people believed that they didn't need communication support, although it became apparent from the interviews that they regularly encountered difficulties when interacting with others at work, taking courses or using the phone. Alex, who was undertaking training in business administration, believed that he did not need communication support:

*There is no communication support as it is not needed.*

(Alex, Modern Apprenticeship)

At the same time, there were indications that he expected very little in terms of support. He seemed to believe that people repeating what they had said amounted to 'lots of support':

*I get lots of support. If I did not hear someone they would repeat it again.*

(Alex, Modern Apprenticeship)

Similarly, Mia, who was training to be a nursery nurse, reported having difficulties due to her hearing loss. In spite of this, she believed that she did not need communication support. Her experiences are described in Case Study 12.

### Case Study 12: Mia

#### **Limited support in school and lack of support in training**

Mia thinks she was born deaf, and she doesn't know the degree of her hearing loss. She was diagnosed when she was four years old, and has been using hearing aids since. She lives with her mother and boyfriend in a disadvantaged rural area (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> quintile). She went to mainstream primary and secondary schools. She was visited by a teacher of the deaf in primary school, but had no support in secondary school.

*When I was in primary one, I had someone who worked with deaf children come along and visit me often to see how I was getting along, but the visits got less frequent as I got older and I didn't see her for a couple of years at a time. [...] No support whatsoever in high school, in fact none of the teachers were even told I was deaf!*

Apart from this, Mia also lacked the confidence to let others know of her communication needs:

*I quite often couldn't hear the teachers in class. I would end up getting in trouble as I didn't have the confidence to tell the teachers I was deaf.*

At the end of her third year, she moved to another rural area to live with her relatives, because she was bullied at her former school. She went to the local mainstream high school for one year before

<sup>17</sup> A training programme which has been phased out and replaced by Level 2 of Modern Apprenticeships

she left school. When she left she had two Standard Grades as her highest qualifications. After school she did a course in hairdressing, but did not pursue a career in hairdressing. She went to college to do a further education course in Childcare, but dropped out half way through and started looking for work. She joined a youth job club run by a local charity. Through the club she got on a Get Ready for Work training programme and worked for five months in childcare. Later she progressed to a Modern Apprenticeship. At the time of the interview she was working towards Level 3 in Childcare.

Mia described her communication difficulties in her apprenticeship:

*I sometimes find it difficult hearing children and their parents. I really struggle with answering the phone as can't hear very well over it. I get a lot of support from the staff at [name of playgroup], they notice when I am struggling with my hearing and help me. [...] I am sometimes asked to watch videos, but they don't have any subtitles.*

However, she did not ask for communication support:

*I haven't asked them for any support as don't feel I need any at the moment.*

However, at the same time she complained about people's lack of awareness of her communication difficulties:

*I think sometimes people think because I don't sign, sometimes doesn't seem as though I am deaf, they think I don't need help. The truth is I struggle each day, I have no confidence because of my hearing and hearing aids.*

Although Mia was very happy with the fact that she had the opportunity to undertake training (*I think it is brilliant*), she worried about her prospects of finding a job at the end of her apprenticeship:

*[The playgroup] would be able to keep me on permanent, if everything wasn't so expensive. [...] In our small town, there's never many jobs going.*

She hoped that in five years' time she would have her own house and would start a family.

Both Alex and Mia, who were from less socially advantaged neighbourhoods, believed that they had not received adequate support in secondary school. They were less informed about support options, and this may be the reason why they believed that they did not need communication support.

On the other hand, Tyler, who had adequate support in school, repeatedly expressed his dismay at the total lack of support on his training programme. His experience is described in Case Study 13.

### **Case Study 13: Tyler**

#### ***Lack of communication support in college and lack of deaf awareness on the construction site***

Tyler was born with profound hearing loss. He received a cochlear implant before his third birthday. He lives with his family in an affluent suburban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). His family are hearing. He used sign language at home until he was eight, then he started to communicate mainly orally. He now uses speech at home and at work, and BSL with his deaf friends. He went to local mainstream schools, where he had full-time support from Teachers of the Deaf. In his fifth year he left school to start a Modern Apprenticeship programme in joinery. He disclosed his deafness in the application form and also brought it up in the interview:

*I talked to my company that I was profoundly deaf and they asked me, 'will you be all right'. And I said, 'yes, I could be fine though, I'll try it see how it goes'.*

His programme consisted of a combination of work on construction sites and college courses. Tyler found that had difficulties learning new technical terms and remembering instructions:

*In the workshop before starting the new product we're doing, they talk through about it, and I can't hear a thing what's going on, just I can't hear a word 'cause then it's so noisy in the workshop and be easier if I got a notetaker. [...] When it comes to like, spelling or hearing new words for the first time, [...] I still don't pick up the new words.*

He was even asked to write after dictation in tests:

*When it comes to doing the tests, they say write down what they're saying and I was like, 'great I can't even do it, 'cause I've not, I usually have a teacher of the deaf do it for me', but they still don't understand why I don't do it, I don't know why, probably never, this could be their first time having a deaf student in their lecture class.*

Tyler contacted the Learning Support Centre of the college to ask for communication support. Although he had his needs assessed, he did not receive any support.

*I decided I'd go and see the Support Centre in the College. I asked and I went through the stages, talked about what support I need, but they've done nothing from that point, they just let it pass away.*

He also encountered difficulties on construction sites. He had difficult relationships with his co-workers, who often reacted aggressively when he misunderstood instructions:

*Sometimes they are not speaking properly, or else I can't hear very well and I've not got used to their voice. [...] It's a big challenge to try and hear because sometimes they shout and I can't hear and I end up picking the wrong tool and give it to them and they got really annoyed, aggressive, 'cause they're not, we don't really give me respect for that.*

Tyler started avoiding his co-workers and working mostly on his own. He believed that his relationship with them impacted negatively on his learning:

*They're terrible teacher, trying to teach me to be a joiner, so they're not really good for me. [...] Apprenticeship's meant to be all about learning, learning, so how can I learn if I'm on my own, you have to work with other joiners.*

When asked to comment on his experience since leaving school, Tyler said:

*It's a lot to take in for a new challenge just straight leaving school like, just like that in fifth year. So it's a bit difficult, really.*

Other young people also mentioned encountering difficulties because of the lack of communication support and equipment. However, unlike Tyler, many reported that their co-workers were mostly supportive and willing to help out if necessary.

*Everybody was so...like, like respectful of it. Like they knew to face me when they were talking to me and stuff like that. Some a' the staff were saying like they were sick a' repeating themselves and stuff like that. But apart fae that, that was, so it was quite good [laughs]. [...] Even the parents, if I couldn't hear them I would tell them that I'm hearing impaired. And...they were fine with that as well. None a' them had a problem with that.*

(Ruby, Modern Apprenticeship)

Several young people commented on the benefits of training programmes like Get Ready for Work and Modern Apprenticeships. One young woman mentioned that she enjoyed the work and liked getting paid for it. Others believed that they had become more confident and assertive since they started training. And finally, one young woman commented on the fact that undertaking training had increased her prospects of finding employment:

*I did the Get Ready for Work scheme in 2011. I think it is brilliant, I think people on benefits should be made to do this sort of thing! If I hadn't gone on the Get Ready for Work scheme I wouldn't be where I am today.*

(Mia, Modern Apprenticeship)

However, there were also mentions of barriers in accessing training. Amelia, who lived in a rural area, complained that she was not eligible for training courses in the neighbouring local authority, although it would be a much shorter commute from her home:

*It'd be like two hours there and two hours back if I went tae a training course there [laughs]. So I don't think I'd be going there.*

(Amelia, Skillseekers)

The common theme of young people's training experiences was the lack of support. As most of the young people in this group received little support in secondary school, they seemed to be unaware of support options. Some even believed that they did not require support, although they reportedly encountered difficulties because of their hearing loss.

## Experiences of further education and training: summary

### Further education:

- Most further education students had some communication support from notetakers. Some also had BSL interpreters and readers. Some further education students also received one-to-one tuition from learning support workers.
- There was very little mention of specialist equipment, such as FM systems.
- There seemed to be wide variation among colleges in terms of support standards: some colleges seemed to offer appropriate levels of support, while others offered no support at all. There was also less consistency of support.
- Many students reported that communication support workers were in short supply and were often unavailable.
- Further education students were less appreciative of the disability support services offered by colleges, and more positive about the informal support offered by their peers and teaching staff.
- There were also fewer instances of successful self-advocacy and direct parental involvement in negotiating support. This may be a direct consequence of the fact that further education students formed a less socially-advantaged group, with a higher incidence of learning and communication difficulties.

### Training:

- Young people on training programmes did not benefit from communication support.
- There were no BSL users among those on training programmes. This may be a direct consequence of the lack of communication support offered to young people in training.
- Most young people on training programmes seemed to be less knowledgeable about support options.

- Some young people believed that they did not require support, although they reportedly encountered various communication difficulties during their training. This may be a direct consequence of the fact that these young people received little support in school. One young person who had adequate support in school expressed concerns that the lack of communication support and deaf awareness on his apprenticeship programme had a negative impact on his learning.
- There was consensus amongst those on Modern Apprenticeships that the training had increased their employability and helped them become more confident and assertive.
- The personal development course attended by a young man with Down's syndrome was time limited and did not have a clear progression route.

#### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- How does the model of funding for students with additional support needs in further education impact on the quality of support offered by colleges? Findings from the case studies suggest that there is a marked difference between the quality of support offered by higher education institutions and further education colleges. Is this difference in support a direct consequence of the difference in funding mechanisms for students with additional support needs in higher and further education?
- What are the reasons behind the low claims for the Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance of some colleges? An analysis carried out by the Scottish Funding Council (Scott and Tye, 2012) revealed that 2010/11 some colleges did not claim any ASNLA, while a small number of colleges claimed more than 60% of the entire ASNLA spent in Scotland. There is a need to investigate the reasons behind this variation in ASNLA spent between colleges.
- What are the non-continuation rates of students who are DHH in further education and what factors contribute to drop-out? Findings from case studies suggest that some further education students who are DHH drop out of college, mainly due to a lack of communication support.
- What proportion of higher education students who are DHH study on higher education courses in colleges? Scottish Government data on school leavers' destinations and the data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency which are included in this report do not distinguish between DHH students studying towards a first degree and other undergraduates.
- What is the participation rate of young people who are DHH on National Training Programmes, including Modern Apprenticeships? Findings from the case studies suggest that training programmes increased the employability of DHH young people who left school with lower qualifications. However, Skills Development Scotland does not collect data on the number of young people on national training programmes who are DHH.
- What barriers do young people who are DHH encounter in accessing and completing training programmes? Findings from the case studies suggest that many young people on training programmes do not have communication support. Some may also encounter discriminatory attitudes. There is a need for further research into the training experiences of young people who are DHH.

## Section 7 Young people's experiences in the labour market

### Introduction

Although many young people in the sample (12 out of 30) were still in full time education, the majority had some experience of the labour market. Of those who had left full-time education, there were marked differences between the experiences of higher education graduates and those with vocational qualifications. In this section we discuss these two groups separately, focusing on issues related to looking for work, support and barriers in employment and relationships with colleagues.

#### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- In 2011/12 leavers from Scottish publicly-funded schools who are DHH were less likely to be employed than their peers with no additional support needs (15% vs. 25%). They were more likely to be unemployed and not seeking employment or training (5% vs. 2%).
- In 2012 the estimated employment rate of working-age people in Great Britain who have 'difficulties in hearing' was much lower than that of non-disabled people (48% vs. 78%).
- In 2009/10, the employment rates of higher education graduates who are DHH six months after completion were similar to those of their non-disabled peers (around 68%).
- In 2009/10, graduates who are DHH were better represented in graduate-level occupations than their non-disabled peers. 67% of graduates who are DHH were in managerial and administrative occupations, professional, associate professional and technical occupations, compared with 63% of the non-disabled graduates.
- There is no publicly-available data on the employment outcomes of people who are DHH with further education and training qualifications.

### Graduates' experiences of finding a job

At the time of the interview, three participants were in full-time graduate employment (Sophie, Lucy and Liam), while three graduates were looking for work (Jack, Emily and Lily). Sophie was a documentation coordinator, and her job was mainly desk-based. Lucy worked in the third sector, as a support worker for people with disabilities. Liam worked as an IT support specialist for a company. Emily, who at the time of the interview was looking for work, had worked as an administrator in social services.

Higher education graduates mostly looked for work online. Emily was the only graduate who used the **JobCentre** and applied for Jobseekers' Allowance. She was referred to a disability employment advisor (DEA) after her first review, which took place three months after she started receiving the allowance. The DEA told her about Access to Work and advised her to contact Remploy<sup>18</sup>. The rest of the graduates did not use the JobCentre. Jack did not feel that the JobCentre would be useful:

*I've stayed away from Job Centres and things like that because I'm just applying to Graduate Schemes.*

(Jack, 24, HE graduate, looking for work)

<sup>18</sup> Remploy is an organisation owned by the Department for Work and Pensions which provides employment and employment placement services for disabled people.

It is interesting to note that very few graduates reported seeking help from **careers advisors** in universities and colleges. Lily, who had been looking for a permanent position since she graduated from university, pointed out that her careers advisor could not offer any advice about finding employment as a disabled person:

*I had a couple of appointments with them. And I did actually ask them about looking for employment with a disability. And they did not have any information on it. They were...very helpful in everything else but not helpful in this one part which was quite disappointing.*

(Lily, 23, HE graduate, looking for work)

Jack sought similar advice at university, and was disappointed that the Disability Advisor could not give him much information about support in employment:

*I've heard of [Access to Work] and I had asked the Disability Office if they knew much about that but they didn't really.*

(Jack, 24, jobseeker, HE graduate)

Apart from online searches, another common job searching strategy amongst graduates was to seek help from **family, friends and wider social networks**. Evidence suggests that this was probably one of the most effective job seeking strategies. Lucy, Liam and Emily reported that they found their current jobs or previous jobs through parents, other relatives or friends. It is interesting to note that they all started working part-time for their current employers prior to graduating. Lucy was encouraged by her mum to send a speculative application to her current employer whilst still at university:

*So my mum said, 'why don't you hand in a speculative application'. As it turned out, I had done at the right time because they were actually looking for relief workers. [...] And she would often say 'why don't you try this'. She obviously knows other organisations that maybe other people wouldn't be aware of.*

(Lucy, 23, support worker, HE graduate)

After graduation Lucy was offered a full-time position within the organization. Similarly, Liam (Case Study 20) described how he found work at the company where his mother worked. He also mentioned that he had previously worked for the company, when he was still at university:

*[Mum] asked me if I wanted that job. And I took a day or two to think about it. It was like, 'yeah it's probably a better, it's a better career than work in a shop'. [...] I'd done a bit of work for them like freelance. When I was at Uni.*

(Liam, 22, IT support specialist, HE graduate)

Emily found her first job with her mother's help. It was a summer job in the public sector, in her mother's former office:

*My mum [...] had heard that in her old office which she still keeps in touch with they were looking for somebody to cover basically and do some work and I was available that summer, this was just, I'd just finished my first year at Uni, and so she said to them, 'Oh Kate's available', and so basically I had, I was technically employed through an agency, they got me to sign up with an agency and basically said, 'we want her', and that's how I ended up in that office.*

(Emily, jobseeker, HE graduate)

Since then she worked in the public sector during summers and after she graduated from university. Emily's experiences of employment are presented in Case Study 15.



Most graduates said that they **disclosed their disability** in job applications. Some did so because they wanted to take advantage of guaranteed interview schemes<sup>19</sup>. Others wanted to ask for adjustments, such as face-to-face interviews or to be contacted by e-mail or text message rather than by phone. Jack believed that disclosing their disability may be helpful in the initial stages of the selection process, but he was doubtful that it increased their chances of being offered a job:

*So in the actual applications it has been helpful, but when you get to the interview sometimes you can never quite tell, you know, are they thinking about the deafness or not? And, cause to be perfectly honest if I was on the other side of the table that's what I would be thinking.*

(Jack, 24, jobseeker, HE graduate)

However, there were also people who chose not to disclose their disability at all or at least not until the interview.

*But I wouldn't necessarily tell somebody when I first started I don't hear. Because I've actually lost a job because I couldn't hear.*

(Lucy, 23, support worker, HE graduate)

**Fear of discrimination** seemed a common issue among DHH jobseekers. Lily, who has moderately-severe hearing loss, spoke of a conflict between her fear of discrimination and the need for adjustments:

*I think for me...the hardest thing is knowing at what point to disclose a disability. Because you don't want to put them off before they've met you. But at the same time you need them to make provisions sometimes and to understand in the interview you still need time to get used to their voice and so on yeah.[...] But usually I try to play it down. And then hopefully ask for their support later [both laugh].*

(Lily, 23, jobseeker, HE graduate)

At the same time she acknowledged that fact that trying to hide her hearing loss made her feel tense and less confident in interviews:

*Maybe I said something, like didn't quite answer the right question or didn't seem quite so confident because I wasn't sure what I was hearing.*

(Lily, 23, jobseeker, HE graduate)

She believed people who are deaf or hard of hearing are discouraged from disclosing their disability by potential employers' lack of understanding and **negative views of deafness**:

*I think it would be more helpful if in general there was a greater understanding of deafness so that when you mention, 'Oh I'm deaf', people understand what this means. And they know that it's not necessarily going to influence how well you can do your job. [...] And with that kind of increased knowledge a more...positive outlook about disability that would make it easier for people to be more assertive, I think. [...] To try and improve people's awareness and understanding of deafness and other disabilities is really the thing that I think would make a big difference, hand in hand with equality legislation.*

(Lily, 23, jobseeker, HE graduate)

Others were less hopeful about what the new **equality legislation** could achieve, but were aware that they could use it as a 'battering ram' if they had to. Some did not think that the legislation

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<sup>19</sup> Some organizations, such as the civil service, have guaranteed interview schemes. This means that applicants with a disability need only meet the minimum qualifying criteria for their chosen scheme(s) and may choose not to be assessed for the first stage of the assessment process.



would prove in any way useful, as 'excuses can always be made' and policy makers lacked understanding of deafness.

*Politics never provide everything. Many hearing people will never be aware of our needs.*

(Adam, 21, HE student, HND)

*I don't want to go into business or, I couldn't cope in business [...] That, that relies so much on... group work and...it's not me.*

(Chloe, 21, HE student, Advanced Higher)

However, other participants in the study were successful in pursuing careers in business or childcare, although they encountered various challenges on the way. Jack, who had severe to profound hearing loss, gave a detailed account of his experiences of looking for work in the financial sector (see Case Study 14).

#### **Case Study 14: Jack (also see Case Study 7 in Section 4)**

##### ***Barriers to finding employment***

Jack had meningitis when he was two years old. He started using hearing aids when he was three. He has profound hearing loss in one ear, and severe in the other. He lives with his family in a very affluent urban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). He does not use sign language. He went to a private school, which he left in his sixth year with Advanced Highers. He graduated with a degree in Business from an ancient university. At the time of the interview he was looking for work in the financial sector.

He first described how, unlike his peers, he could not take advantage of university careers fairs because he could not hear in noisy environments:

*I went along to the careers fairs the university arranged and they were a bit of a disaster because the rooms were so packed and it was so noisy you couldn't speak, you couldn't network so you were just reduced to picking up the literature they had on the tables and trying to avoid speaking to people and looking like an idiot because you can't understand a word that they're saying. So that was a hindrance, especially when everyone says networking is so important and all that sort of thing.*

Jack always disclosed his disability in job applications and asked for face-to-face interviews. Companies were always eager to oblige. In spite of this, he still encountered communication difficulties. He recounted how in his first interview he failed to show enthusiasm because he struggled to understand the interviewers:

*Sometimes I have to focus so much on listening that I don't really have the spare brain power to appear enthusiastic 'cause I'm focussing so much on what you're saying.*

He also reported that he could not take full advantage of networking lunches and that he had difficulties in group exercises, which were part of the selection procedure:

*Sometimes they'll arrange for you to have lunch with an employee to find out more about the job and if it's just two of us I can hold a conversation. If it's three people I tend to fall out of the conversation. [...] Assessment Centres often require a group exercise and they're looking for people who can work in teams or lead a team or whatever and that's quite difficult for me but it's such a crucial part of the job, if you can't do this how are you going to do the job.*

In spite of these difficulties, soon after the interview Jack was successful in obtaining a place on a graduate employment scheme.

## Graduates' experiences of employment

Most DHH young people spoke of encountering **communication barriers** at work: some were relatively minor (such as having trouble understanding or lipreading people with heavy accents), while some significantly impacted on their work (such as developing a telephone phobia).

Some graduates knew about **Access to Work**, but only one had used it<sup>20</sup> (see Case Study 15, Emily). She was told about Access to Work by her Disability Employment Advisor. In order to cope with the demands of their jobs, those who did not know about Access to Work avoided certain tasks (such as taking telephone calls or taking minutes in meetings) or relied on their **co-workers' help**. Most graduates believed that their co-workers and managers were understanding and supportive of their deafness.

However, Emily, who is hard-of-hearing, recounted how she had to give up her job because she encountered communication barriers on a daily basis (see Case Study 15). Although she used Access to Work and her managers were trying to help out, she was an example of the general lack of awareness about the communication barriers encountered at work by people who are hard of hearing.

### Case Study 15: Emily

#### **Communication barriers encountered by an employee who is hard of hearing**

Emily was diagnosed with severe hearing loss when she was two years old. Her parents are hearing. She lives with her father in a relatively disadvantaged urban area (SIMD 3<sup>rd</sup> quintile). She went to local mainstream schools. In spite of the fact that her secondary school had very low rates of progression to higher education, she achieved one Advanced Higher. She went straight to a pre-1992 university. While she was a student she had several part-time and summer jobs. After graduation she was unemployed for a while. Then she was offered a full-time permanent position in the public sector. She worked in a very busy open plan office:

*The telephones rang a lot and I was expected to answer them. I was expected to take people at reception as well, speak to people at reception as well as all these other sort of admin duties you know, typing things up in the system and stuff.*

Although she knew about Access to Work, she did not apply before she started the job, as she did not know what kind of support she would require:

*It quickly became apparent though that the telephone was a big part of the job and so something was going to have to be done about that.*

She applied for Access to Work and was given equipment. She only used the amplified telephone, because the rest of the equipment arrived later and she did not know how to use it. Having the amplified telephone was helpful, but she still had difficulties using it because of the background noise in her office. Things were much better when she was moved to a smaller office:

*My line-manager was very understanding in that I got sent to work in a hostel which had a very small team and was a lot smaller and a lot quieter.*

<sup>20</sup> Only three of the 22 young people in this study who had an employment history had used Access to Work. Emily used it to buy an adapted telephone; Jessica used it for the same purpose when she worked in her gap year; and finally, Leah, a BSL user, used the award to pay for an interpreter for her first three days at work.

But because her department was restructured, she soon had to return to her previous office. In time she developed what she described as a phone phobia:

*The ring of the telephone ... I almost became phobic in a way. I just didn't want to pick it up, didn't want to because if I picked that telephone up something bad was going to happen.*

Her fear of making mistakes over the phone was augmented by the unsupportive attitude of one of her co-workers:

*It turned out that it was a colleague, one particular colleague who was actually causing most of my stress because she would pick up on anything that went wrong in a bad way.*

After five months in the job Emily decided that she couldn't cope with the stress and gave up her job. She was later diagnosed with anxiety and depression. After giving up her job, Emily undertook further post-graduate training in IT. At the time of the interview she was looking for work. Commenting on her employment experience, she explained how she found it difficult to make others aware of her communication needs:

*It's difficult for me because my communication issues don't fit in a neat box. I get by in my everyday life pretty normally really and [...] I don't do BSL every day at home so it's not like I turn up and go, 'Oh, I'm really deaf'.*

She believed that she would have a successful career if employers were more aware of the communication needs of people who are hard of hearing:

*My ideal job would maybe involve being in an office where I do those things I'm good at and I don't have to do those things I'm not so good at.*

Apart from Emily, graduates were mostly happy with their working environments. Many considered their current positions temporary and were planning to go back to university for postgraduate degrees or were looking for more secure jobs. In Section 8 we discuss how those who were in graduate-level employment were likely to achieve financial independence from their parents sooner than young people in non-graduate jobs.

### **Job seeking experiences of young people with further education and training qualifications**

Due to the large proportion of young people in the study who have looked for work and/or have been in some form of employment (full-time, part-time or seasonal), we were able to collect a lot of information about the support received and barriers encountered by young people with vocational qualifications. This section focuses on the job seeking experiences of young people who completed further education and training qualifications, but also refers to the experiences of those who were still in education or training. At the time of the interview six people were in non-graduate employment (i.e., in occupations which do not require a higher education degree), and they worked as beauticians, cooks, sales and purchasing assistants, cleaners and nursery workers.

Relatively few young people in this study started looking for work straight after school (five out of 30). They were mostly young people who had taken a gap year before going to university or had dropped out of university. Only one person deliberately chose not to engage in post-16 education or training, and looked for permanent full-time employment. However, she soon found out that it was not easy to find employment straight after leaving school:

*I spent the first four months after I left school unemployed and no-one seemed willing to hire a 17 year old whose only experience was school.*

(Erin, 22, part-time sales assistant, Intermediate 2)

Many young people looked for jobs online. All those who were looking for full-time employment used the **JobCentre** and applied for Jobseekers' Allowance. The interviews revealed that relatively few of those who registered with the JobCentre were referred to **Disability Employment Advisors (DEA)**. Many were reportedly unaware that the JobCentre offered specialist support for disabled jobseekers. Amelia, who had dyslexia as well as hearing loss, stated that her DEA helped her fill in application forms and made phone calls on her behalf. However, some expressed doubts over the usefulness of having a DEA:

*The DEA is not supportive at all. She just writes reports.*

(Leah, 23, full-time mum, SVQ 3)

It is interesting to note that very few young people reported seeking help from **career advisors** in colleges. However, all the young people who entered training programmes straight after leaving school did so at the advice of their careers advisors in schools. A few sought support from **third sector** organisations. One person with learning difficulties used the **supported employment services** offered by her local council. Those who were on apprenticeship programmes hoped to be offered full-time employment by the company/organisation which trained them. Unlike graduates, only one young man with non-graduate qualifications reported finding work through **parents or friends**. This may be a reflection of the fact that most young people with non-graduate qualifications were from more disadvantaged backgrounds and therefore did not benefit as much from their parents' social capital. Juzar, who worked as a cook in his uncle's restaurant, is an exception, because he lived in an affluent area.

Most of the young people we interviewed said that they **disclosed their disability** in job applications, mainly because they wanted to ask for adjustments, such as face-to-face interviews, or to be contacted by e-mail or text message rather than by phone. However, unlike graduate jobseekers, who were eager to take advantage of guaranteed interview schemes, some non-graduates refrained from disclosing their disability because they did not agree with the idea of 'positive discrimination':

*I didn't want to be guaranteed an interview. I wanted them to see my qualifications and say, 'she's a potential candidate'. I didn't want to be discriminated against that way.*

(Isla, 20, purchasing assistant and part-time HE student, Highers)

Several people firmly believed that they were victims of **discrimination** in the selection process. Leah, a BSL user, recalled how some interviews got cancelled after she told the company that she was deaf and needed an interpreter:

*It was interesting because I noticed that when I sent my CV to the employers with a statement about me being deaf, I never got a reply. I tried again with no mention about my deafness on my CV and I received replies! I have been invited to interviews but I had to let them know that I need an interpreter for the interview. The interviews were then cancelled. This is discrimination! [...] I don't understand why the employers get put off when they see the word 'deaf' on my CV. They should wait until they meet the deaf person at the interview before making a decision. It is not acceptable to be denied an opportunity because I am deaf.*

(Leah, 23, full-time mum, SVQ 3)

Similarly, Amelia, who had dyslexia as well as hearing loss, remembered how she repeatedly applied for jobs with the same company and got invited for an interview only when she chose not to disclose her disabilities:

*But I applied for [name of company] like way back when I first left school. And...I put on that I was dyslexic and didn't hear anything back. And then the next time I didn't put it on and heard. Like got an interview. So I was like that, 'how's that'. And then I applied for them again a couple a' months ago and said I had a hearing loss and didn't hear anything back. So...they must no want folk wi' anything like that.*

(Amelia, 19, jobseeker, Intermediate 1)

Non-graduate jobseekers were also more likely to encounter potential employers who held openly **negative views of deafness**. Madhat, a beautician, explained how she was interviewed by people who seemed to have little knowledge about people with hearing loss and questioned her ability to work with the public:

*Every time when I go interviews, they were asking me, 'how do you manage, with your hearing aids', 'how do you, how do you do speaking to a customer', but I understand they never see people like me before but I have been well-experienced, you know. [...] I tell them, 'honestly, I'm deaf but it doesn't mean that I can't hear or anything, but I can hear, I can see everything'.*

(Madhat, 24, beautician, SQV Level 3)

When asked whether they considered that the **equality legislation** could increase their chances of finding employment, some young people expressed the hope that anti-discrimination laws would indeed provide 'a level playing field', by offering equal access to education and employment:

*I was thinking the law should help any deaf people that want to work, give them more experience, never let them down you know. The second thing, the government should be helping deaf people go out, learn English, be more independent, you know. Push them, provide more helpers.*

(Madhat, 24, beautician, SQV Level 3)

James, a BSL user, hoped that the BSL bill would improve his chances of finding employment (see Case Study 16).

### **Case Study 16: James**

#### ***A BSL user's barriers to finding employment: lack of support and work experience***

James had meningitis when he was 18 months old. His family are hearing. They started learning BSL when James was two years old, and have communicated with him in BSL since. James mainly uses BSL. He communicates with hearing people in writing or through interpreters. At the time of the interview he lived with his partner in a disadvantaged area (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> quintile).

He went to a primary school for deaf pupils and to mainstream high schools which had deaf units. His last high school was in England, where his parents moved. James liked his primary school, because everyone communicated in sign. He was not happy with his high school experience, although he acknowledged the support of his ToD. He left school at 16 with five GCSEs at B. He was not sure what he wanted to do next and he felt that he could not make informed choices:

*It was really difficult because there was not much information available for deaf people. [...] When you are 16 years old, you should be given a chance to try out different work experiences [...] This will help you to choose what you want to do in the future. [...] I missed out my chance of having work experience when I was at school. I can't really remember exactly why. I think it was because of my deafness.*

He relied on advice from friends in the Deaf community and his parents. He first went to college to

study Law, but he realised he did not want to become a lawyer, so he dropped out. He moved back to Scotland to live on his own. He started a college course in car mechanics. He was satisfied with the support he had in college, but he felt the college did not really prepare him for employment:

*At my recent work experience, I realised that there is a big difference between the real world and college. At college, I would start at 10am and finish at 4pm with an hour for lunch break. There are plenty of breaks at college but at work, I had to start at 8am and finish at 5pm with a very short lunch break. It was a shock for me!*

James finished the course and started looking for work. At the time of the interview he had been looking for work for six months:

*I have made over 200 job applications. Nothing at all. [...] I have to go to the job centre, check the internet and newspapers for any jobs. I have been applying for lots of jobs. I have applied for two apprenticeships. I am hoping to hear from them soon.*

He was never called for an interview. He blamed his lack of work experience for his difficulties in finding work. It is interesting to note that he had never used the career guidance service at college:

*I have never heard of one at the college. [...] The college is not helping me to find a job.*

He had a Disability Employment Advisor at the Jobcentre, but he did not feel it was helpful:

*I felt I didn't receive useful information from them.*

James started a second course at college while he was looking for work. An active member of the Deaf community, he was involved in fundraising campaigns. He was also involved in the consultation process for the BSL Bill, which he believes would increase his chances of finding employment:

*Hopefully this Bill will go through. I believe it will help to improve things for deaf people. It will help my chances of finding a job. The future deaf generation will have a better life with more equality.*

However, discrimination was not considered to be the only barrier to finding employment. The recession was actually the most commonly cited reason for the lack of employment opportunities. Some young people also quoted **limited work experience** and **lack of qualifications**. Others complained about the **lack of accessibility of the application process**. They reported that they sometimes had to request job details by phone, or were asked to have telephone interviews.

*You have to phone them up and then like you can't really hear them on the phone and you have to ask them to repeat themselves and then they get fed up from like repeating themselves.*

(Karen, 18, FE student, Intermediate 2)

Several people believed that there was only a rather **limited range of jobs** they could do or felt confident doing because of their hearing loss. Among the kind of jobs some tended to avoid were jobs in call centres or jobs which required intensive use of the phone, but also jobs which involved team work or working with children and the public:

*I've tried to get an office job in the hopes of moving up the ladder, but I cannot do office work because I have trouble with the phone, and even though I am good with computers, it is an important requirement.*

(Erin, 22, part-time sales assistant, Intermediate 2)

Several of the young people we interviewed had been looking for work for many months or even longer than one year. They described how looking for work was an emotionally taxing experience:

*So it's very hard to find a job, but I will keep my hope up, try and keep it, but sometimes I feel my hope going down [...]. I feel like so rubbish, you know, but that's the bad thing. Looking for job is very hard.*

(Madhat, 24, beautician, SQV Level 3)

*I have been looking for work since June – 6 months. I have made over 200 job applications. Nothing at all.*

(James, 23, FE student, NVQ Level 3)

Amelia (Case Study 17) is a young woman with complex needs and **low qualifications** who had been on several training programmes and work placements in the three years since she left school, but had never held a permanent position.

### Case Study 17: Amelia

#### **Barriers to finding employment encountered by a young woman with complex support needs and low qualifications**

Amelia is 19 years old. She has hearing loss in both ears but is not sure how severe it is or when it occurred. She lives with her mother, her sister and her sister's child in relatively deprived rural area (SIMD 3<sup>rd</sup> quintile). She only went for a hearing check recently, when her family started to notice that she had hearing difficulties:

*The only reason I went for a hearing test is because me and ma mum were falling out cause I had the telly up too loud and I was shouting.*

There were suggestions that she might have had hearing loss for a while, but it had passed unnoticed:

*So but they dunno how long I've had it. [...] They said I've noticed it more because growing up I must a' just, like it's all I've ever known so I've just got on wi' it.*

She also found out that her hearing loss may be genetic:

*And I found out ma dad's deaf and ma gran's deaf. So it's in the family. I never knew they were deaf [laughs].*

Amelia went to local mainstream schools. She was diagnosed with dyslexia when she was in P3, and she had behaviour difficulties in secondary school. She had readers and scribes in exams and significant learning support in class.

*I hated school [...] a' the teachers hated me. [...] I was bored a' it cause I didn't know what I was doing. So I was bored and decided everybody else was bored. So I spoke tae them [laughs].*

She left school in her fourth year, with Intermediate 1. She thought she would have been excluded if she stayed on. The careers advisor arranged for her to start a course in tile training straight after she left school. For Amelia, this was the beginning of a long series of work placements and training programmes (*I've been on hundreds of them*). She was on Skillseekers for one year, learning how to



paint and decorate. Later she went on a course which taught her basic literacy skills and jobseeking strategies. Then she enrolled on a Youthbuild<sup>21</sup> programme to work on bridges and railways for a few months, but got paid off for health and safety reasons. Her last job was a Sales Assistant position over Christmas. She found it very stressful because of her dyslexia. At the time of the interview she had been unemployed for one year. She was actively looking for work.

*I've applied for hundreds a' jobs.*

She had a Disability Employment Advisor at the JobCentre. She also received help from an employment advisor at a third sector organisation, who helped her fill in job applications and made phone calls on her behalf. She thought she had difficulties finding work because of her low qualifications:

*There's hundreds a' folk going for like one job. And they probably get better grades and a' that than me.*

Another reason was discrimination. She noticed she was more likely to be called for interviews if she didn't disclose her disabilities in the application form:

*They must no want folk wi' anything like that.*

At the same time as looking for work, Amelia applied for a gamekeeping course at college because she liked working outdoors and the course did not require high qualifications. In the eventuality that she did not get accepted on the gamekeeping course, she was planning to go back to college to improve her English, which would allow her to start college courses in joinery or childcare. Amelia was hoping that in five years she would have a stable job and a place of her own.

## Employment experiences of young people with further education and training qualifications

Similar to graduates, the most common difficulties encountered by young people in non-graduate occupations were **communication difficulties**. Many reported that they could not use the phone at all or did so with difficulty. Several complained about background noise at their workplace, particularly those who worked with the public or in open plan offices. A few people reported that they found it hard to understand people with heavy accents.

Most young people in non-graduate employment did not know about **Access to Work**. Similar to graduates, they avoided certain tasks (such as taking telephone calls) or relied on their co-workers' help. Madhat explained how her co-workers helped her take appointments over the phone:

*When the phone call come, they answer the phone, they say 'look at diary, make appointment', they went 'okay' they book it for me. [...] Yes, they help me, always.*

(Madhat, 24, beautician, SQV Level 3)

<sup>21</sup> YouthBuild UK is an organisation which promotes engagement with young people to combat social exclusion, through the development of construction based support services. It offers work placements in the construction industry to unemployed 16-24 year olds who belong to the following categories: Care Leaver; Ex-Offender; Literacy/Numeracy; Lack of Qualifications; Social Work Involvement; Long-term unemployed (6 months); Health or Medical Problems; Chaotic Family Background/Lack of Support.



On the other hand, BSL users know about Access to Work. Leah, a BSL user who worked for the NHS on a temporary contract, had an interpreter for the first three days at her new job:

*I asked the Job Centre about using an interpreter at work. [...] For three days, the interpreter was with me for the induction and meeting patients and other employees. I wasn't sure how confident I would be with the patient so the interpreter came.*

(Leah, 23, full-time mum, SVQ 3)

Ruby, a nursery nurse, was one of the many young people who did not know about Access to Work. She described how she contacted her audiologist to ask for information about adapted equipment:

*Because I can't hear the door or anything, I went to the audiologist and I did say to them that like I didn't know much about being deaf and stuff like that. I asked them like...like what I can do, what they can do at the nursery that would help me as well. That my manager wanted to know like what they could do to help me. The audiologist gave me a number for a lady to come in to watch me around the nursery to see what I'm able to do and what I'm not able to do. And then they could fit in stuff like a new buzzer system and stuff like that. So then it should help.*

(Ruby, 20, nursery nurse, Modern Apprenticeship Level 3)

Others expected employers to make **adjustments** for them. Erin worked part-time in a shoe shop and found that her managers had little understanding of deafness:

*The assistant manager always gives me the radio mike (we use the mikes to communicate what shoes we need to be sent down to the shop floor from the stockroom upstairs) even though I have told her countless of times that I find it very hard as I mainly lipread. Her solution? To turn up the crackly volume. It doesn't make a difference. I still can't hear. [...] The management are unwilling or just plain lazy to make reasonable adjustments to help me do my job fully.*

(Erin, 22, part-time sales assistant, Intermediate 2)

Ruby mentioned that she briefly had an unhelpful manager, who seemed to believe that Ruby could not be trusted to do her job:

*She was really picky towards me. Like she was saying, 'if I put my fingers in my ears, is this how you can hear?' Stuff like that she would say. [...] I wasn't allowed to turn my back to the kids just in case something happened to them and...so she made it quite difficult but then she was only there for like a few months.*

(Ruby, 20, nursery assistant, Modern Apprenticeship Level 3)

But apart from occasional 'rude' comments, there were relatively few complaints about **co-workers and managers**. Many young people in non-graduate employment reported having supportive co-workers:

*What's good about my job is that everybody's aware of my hearing loss. They understand that I have difficulty on the phone. The receptionist knows not to put anyone with a heavy accent on the phone to me. [...] The mechanics moved their phone into...to put it better-ly, a supply closet [interviewer laughs] so that it cuts out background noise so that I can hear them which is quite good of them. They didn't have to do that.*

(Isla, 20, purchasing assistant and part-time HE student, Highers)

To summarise, there were similarities between the job seeking and employment experiences of higher education graduates and those in non-graduate occupations. However, we have seen the graduates were more likely to make informed decisions and had better employment prospects. The

differences between graduates and non-graduates are further explored in the following section, which analyses their attainment of independence and other markers of adulthood.

### Employment experiences: summary

- Young people with higher education qualifications were more likely to find employment with the help of their parents or wider social networks than young people with non-graduate qualifications.
- Most of the graduates who were in employment had worked for their current employers when they were students.
- Graduates were more aware that they could use the equality legislation as a ‘battering ram’, but at the same time they believed that they could be victims of discrimination.
- Graduates were less likely to register with the JobCentre and receive Jobseeker’s Allowance than young people with vocational and training qualifications.
- Graduates were less likely to seek advice from Careers Advisors at college or university. Most young people who went into training straight after leaving school reported seeking help from Careers Advisors in schools.
- Jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications were more likely to encounter potential employers with openly negative views of deafness.
- Several jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications believed that disclosing their deafness in job applications would lower their chances of being offered interviews.
- Jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications were more likely to have limited work experience.
- Many jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications seemed to believe that their hearing loss limited the range of jobs that they could do.
- Many young people who are DHH reported that they encountered communication difficulties at work, such as difficulties using the phone or general communication difficulties due to noisy working environments.
- There seemed to be little awareness of the communication needs of people who were hard of hearing.
- Very few young people used Access to Work. Graduates and BSL users were more likely to know about Access to Work, although relatively few used it.
- Those who did not have Access to Work avoided certain tasks or relied on informal support from co-workers and employers.
- The majority of those in employment were happy in their jobs and pleased to be in work.

#### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- How do educational and training qualifications translate into employment outcomes for people who are DHH? There is a need for further comparisons between the employment outcomes of DHH people and non-disabled people with similar qualifications, in order to account for barriers to accessing employment, such as discrimination and lack of support.
- What are the employment outcomes of DHH young people who completed further education and vocational training courses? As the employment rates of DHH young people with higher education degrees are similar to those of non-disabled graduates, while the employment rates of all working-age people who are DHH are much lower than those of the non-disabled population, we can infer that the DHH people with training and further education qualifications are more likely to encounter difficulties in finding work.

- What types of support are required by Access to Work clients who are DHH? There is no publicly-available data on the types of support required by Access to Work clients who are DHH (e.g., support workers or specialist equipment).
- What barriers are encountered by people who are DHH in recruitment and employment? Findings from the case studies suggest that jobseekers who are DHH encounter a series of barriers in accessing employment, including discrimination and lack of communication support. There is a need for further research into the jobseeking and employment experiences of young people who are DHH.

## Section 8 Attainment of independence and other markers of adulthood

### Introduction

This section presents data on the attainment of other markers of adulthood such as independent living and social relationships and the way in which these are affected by different post-school destinations. In addition to current outcomes, it also draws on interview data relating to future plans. Issues related to adult identity and perception of deafness are also included in this section.

### Independent living arrangements

Leaving home has traditionally been an important marker of adulthood, although many young people have to live at home due to the high cost of buying or renting a house. Most university students had **independent living arrangements** during their studies. Some lived in student accommodation; others lived in shared accommodation with other young people or partners. Chloe, who studied at a pre-1992 university, worked part-time in retail so she could pay for her own accommodation, although her family lived within travel distance from the university. Some young people lived and studied abroad for short periods of time. Lily, who graduated from a pre-1992 university, went abroad on a one-year exchange programme in her third year, and after graduation worked abroad for another few months.

After finishing university, many graduates moved back with their parents on a temporary basis while they looked for work. Some found it difficult to live with their parents again:

*That was challenging 'cause you're sort of getting used to doing your own thing and cooking your dinner and like, you know, just going to bed whenever you want.*

(Lucy, 23, support worker, HE graduate)

These experiences were also reflected in their plans for the future. Many university students and graduates expressed hopes to live and work abroad. Sophie is one such example (Case Study 18).

#### **Case Study 18: Sophie (see also Case Study 5 in Section 4)**

##### ***Employment as a route to achieving independence***

Sophie is 21 years old. She was born with severe sensorineural hearing loss and uses hearing aids. She lives with her family in a relatively affluent rural area (SIMD 4<sup>th</sup> quintile). The support she received from her family when she was in school and during her transition from school to university is described in Case Study 5.

When she was in her first year at university, one of her brother's friends recommended that she apply for a work placement with the international company he worked for. Sophie applied, was successful and worked with the company every summer until she graduated. She was initially planning to do a Master's course, but she postponed it when one of her friends from work told her about positions opening up in the department where she worked during the summer. She chose to apply for a temporary position and was successful:

*I didn't want to be tied down tae a permanent job.*

At the time of the interview she was planning to start her Master's course at an English university at the end of her contract, but at the same time she wanted to keep in touch with the company, with the view that she would later return to work for them:

*And I wouldn't mind working for the company in the future. My boss recommends that I do my Master's part time and continue working for them. Or getting some sort of arrangement set up with them. [...] I would want to progress more into what I was doing. Progress up the ladder sorta thing.*

Sophie would like to continue working for the international company because she would have the opportunity to live abroad:

*I do know that it's a global company so they've got bases all over. I'd love to go and work in America or Europe for a while. It's something that I would kinda want to have as an option, you know.*

Sophie hoped that in five years' time she would be working abroad:

*If it's with the company that I'm with right now, that'd be a bonus. But if it's not, I'm not too bothered. But I do know I'm hoping not to be in the UK in five years' time [laughs]. [...] I do know there's a lot more out there. I just wanna kinda experience it.*

She was hoping she would be in a stable relationship but was not planning to start a family before she turned thirty.

On the other hand, most young people who went into further education or training had never lived independently. Even after finding employment, they found the costs of independent living prohibitive. When asked about their plans for the future, most of them expressed their wish to move out of their family home. However, unlike university students and graduates, they were less likely to want to leave their hometowns. None of them expressed the wish to move abroad.

*No, I don't like going on planes [laughs] so I'll just stay where I am. [...] Somewhere near ma gran and ma mum. And ma sister hopefully.*

(Amelia, 19, jobseeker, Intermediate 1)

Another difference between university students and the young people who went to college or into training was the level of clarity of their **future career plans**. While university students and graduates in particular had very clear plans about the kind of jobs they wanted to have in the future, many of those with lower qualifications said that they wanted to work, irrespective of what the job was:

*I don't know, working somewhere. Doing something hopefully. I really want tae like do ma gamekeeping and that. So, or joinery or anything at all. Cleaning or something.*

(Amelia, 19, jobseeker, Intermediate 1)

*I hope to be working by then. Any job. I want to be able to earn my own wages and I don't want to rely on the state. I want my own money.*

(Leah, 23, full-time mum, SVQ 3)

Some young people were aware of the fact that finding employment was a route to achieving independence:

*I hope to like have a job and have my own house and be able to like support myself. And like be like an adult member of society. Not like...not like...go to like my mum and ask my mum for everything. Cause like I want to like fend for myself.*

(Karen, 18, FE student, Intermediate 2)

The issue of financial independence is discussed in the following sub-section. But before we move on, we briefly illustrate the challenges encountered by carers of young people who cannot live independently. Oliver (Case Study 19) had learning difficulties and required constant care.

### **Case Study 19: Oliver**

#### ***A young man with complex needs who cannot work and live independently***

Oliver is 23 years old. He has Down's syndrome, moderately-severe hearing loss and other health problems. Because his communication skills were limited, his mother was interviewed alongside him. Oliver and his mother live in an affluent area in a small town (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). Oliver was in a mainstream primary school for only one year, and the rest of his school career he was in special schools. He started using hearing aids in primary school:

*Well we thought...from earlier on that his hearing wasn't good. And he probably should have had them when he was at nursery. But he didn't have. And it wasn't till really he was going to school that [...] they realised it was his hearing and not just his learning difficulty.*

In school he was not given radio aids, and his mother thinks he might have missed out because of this.

*They wouldn't give them to him in case something happened to them, you know. In case he would throw them or something, would do something. But, you know, [...] he should have had them the same as other children.*

Oliver left school at 19 and went on a personal development course in college for two years. His travel costs were covered by the local authority. Oliver's mother believed that Oliver had benefited from the college experience. However, the following three years his placements were gradually reduced, and at the time of the interview he only had two half days at college.

*We're just going year by year now because [...] this year they were only offered two half days, cutbacks. So we just go year by year to see what they're going to offer.*

Cutbacks also affected charities, which meant that Oliver had fewer opportunities to do voluntary work.

*And he had a wee voluntary job down at [name of café]. [...] They taught them all the skills of either in the kitchen or in the, you know, doing the tables and all that kinda thing. But then they lost their funding.*

At the time of the interview Oliver went to a day centre two days a week, and spent Mondays at home with his mother. He had a very busy social life in the evenings and on weekends. Because Oliver is not able to live independently, his mother took him to all his clubs and activities. And in the context of cutbacks in funding she worried about his future:

*I don't really want him in the day centre kind of five days a week. You know, I don't think that's right for him. [...] But yes five years' time if they had their way he would probably be in the day centre four days a week. And he's not, I don't think, moving out any time soon.*

She was hoping that the launch of direct payments would allow him a greater degree of

independence:

*We'd been waiting for direct payments to get a one to one for somebody to take him out for about three years. [...] I think I would probably choose for someone to take him out to do what he wants to do. To do the things that he likes to do. You know, tae, I mean he likes going tae the gym and stuff but he doesn't want to go with his mum. You know, he's twenty three.*

### Attaining financial independence

As the participants in this study were 24 years old or younger, their transition process was not completed. However, we could see significant differences between the experiences and expectations of young people who went to university and those who went into further education and training. These differences may not only reflect the different qualifications and employment prospects of graduates and non-graduates, but also the differences in socio-economic status between the two groups. As mentioned above, university students and graduates were more likely to come from socially advantaged backgrounds and benefit from their parents' financial and social capital.

Given the relatively young age of the participants, there were few university graduates amongst them. However, there were indications that university graduates were likely to become financially independent from their parents sooner than other young people. Liam is such an example (see Case Study 20). At the age of 22, he was in full-time permanent employment and together with his partner was looking for a place to live which was closer to work. Liam is also one of the people in this study who mostly benefited from parental support when he was at school and university.

#### Case Study 20: Liam

##### **Parental support at school, university and in finding employment**

Liam is 22 years old. He was born with severe hearing loss and was diagnosed when he was three years old. He also has dyspraxia. His parents are hearing, and he has a deaf sibling. He lives with his parents in a socially-advantaged rural area (SIMD 4<sup>th</sup> quintile). He went to local mainstream schools. In secondary school he had one-to-one sessions with a teacher for the deaf once every two weeks. He also had tuition outside school:

*I also had lots of extra tutors outside of school. So I always had a maths tutor and an English tutor. [...] I also had a physics one as well.*

In his fifth year Liam suddenly decided to leave school and apply for university:

*I got my fifth year grades back in. I thought 'Oh I did pretty well here. I'll just go in, apply online for all these, like the closing of the courses'. You know the last spaces. So I applied for [name of university]. And I got a phone call saying, 'We'd love to have you'. So I went down to have a look at the place. And then decided to go. So it wasn't exactly planned. It was, just happened.*

His mother found out about support at the university and contacted the Disability Office:

*See mum would think about that. I wouldn't think about that but my mum would. [...] So she was on line with them. So we, me and my mum, drove down to see the Uni. And we also met up with the support guy.*

Liam's mother and young brother moved to be with him, leaving his father behind.

*And mum was really supportive, she moved down with me as well. Cause, well seventeen, I wasn't exactly capable of living on my own at that time. [...] Just cause we moved my little brother down as well. 'Cause he got into a school there and he got all his friends. So it was unfair to move him just for that one year so we stayed for the four years.*

Liam was very happy with the support he had at university. He had a notetaker, who also acted as a reader and proofreader. At the same time, while he was at university he worked as a freelancer for the company his mother worked for. When he finished university, he found a job through a friend:

*I just, I got offered the job through people that I know. [...] One of my mates worked for [name of company]. And he put in my CV to [name of company].*

A few months later his mother told him about a position opening at the company she worked for:

*She asked me if I wanted that job. And I took a day or two to think about it. It was like, 'Yeah it's probably a better, it's a better career'.*

He applied for the position and was successful. Liam was one of the few young people in this study who had become financially independent and was in a stable relationship. At the time of the interview he was temporarily living with his parents, but looking for a place to live closer to work:

*I'm looking at a place wi' my girlfriend at the moment.*

Although he was in a permanent position, he kept looking for a better job. Liam had a busy social life. He kept in touch with his deaf friends from the local Deaf Children's Society. But most of his friends are hearing friends from school and university. His girlfriend is also hearing.

Young people in non-graduate jobs were less likely to be financially independent from their parents. Although many of them expressed their wish to move out of their family homes, they found the costs prohibitive. Erin, who went straight into employment after she left school, expressed concern about her prospects of living independently of her parents:

*I am lucky in the sense that I still live at home because even with both wages combined from both my jobs, I still make less than a grand a month. Way less than a grand a month. I cannot afford to move out of the family home... and I don't know when I will be able to.*

(Erin, 23, sales assistant, Intermediate 2)

Ruby, who had completed a Modern Apprenticeship and at the time of the interview had been in full-time employment for approximately one year, wanted to move out but realised that it was much cheaper to stay in her family home:

*I was looking for a house... but I only pay £60 a month so I thought about it, and then I was like, 'no [laughs] no the now'.*

(Ruby, 20, nursery nurse, Modern Apprenticeship Level 3)

However, one group of young people who stood out were the BSL users. They all began to live independently of their parents at a relatively young age. James (Case Study 16 in Section 7) moved away from his parents soon after he left school:

*I learnt how to be independent when I was 17 years old. I learnt how to run my home and pay the bills.*

(James, 23, FE student, SVQ Level 2)



He lived in a flat which belonged to his mother and paid rent for five years. At the time of the interview he had recently moved in with his partner. However, given the fact that he was not yet in paid employment, he and his partner lived in a poor neighbourhood (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> quintile). Leah, who is also a BSL user, was the only participant in this study who had started a family (see Case Study 21). She lived with her baby and partner, who was also deaf and a BSL user, in a poor neighbourhood (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> quintile). Leah and her partner struggled to find work. She had only worked for six months before she had her baby, and her partner had very little work experience and had been unemployed for three years. Although they were independent from their parents, they were dependent on the welfare system. Unlike young people like Liam, Leah's parents were not involved in her education (see Case Study 6, about Leah's post-school transition experiences).

### **Case Study 21: Leah (also see Case Studies 2 and 6)**

#### ***Barriers to finding employment encountered by a young deaf family from a disadvantaged background***

Leah is 23 years old. Her school and transition experiences were described in Case Studies 2 and 6. She is a BSL user who first went to a special school for the deaf and then moved to a mainstream school with a Hearing Impairment Department. She left school in her fourth year with Intermediate 2, and went to college to study Beauty Therapy. She left college with SQV Level 3. She looked for work for one year. She believed that she had difficulties finding work because she was deaf:

*I received lots of rejections because I am deaf, have no telephone skills and no communication skills with the public.*

She also believed that she was a victim of discrimination:

*I don't understand why the employers get put off when they see the word 'deaf' on my CV. They should wait until they meet the deaf person at the interview before making a decision. It is not acceptable to be denied an opportunity because I am deaf.*

She was offered a six-month contract with the NHS. Towards the end of her contract she became pregnant. At the time of the interview Leah lived with her 17-month old baby and partner, who are both deaf, in a disadvantaged area (SIMD 1<sup>st</sup> quintile):

*I live in a three-floored house with my partner and daughter and two cats!*

Leah was once more looking for work:

*I was hoping to return to NHS but the job position was filled. I tried to apply for other jobs but with no success. I have experience working with people in NHS but do not have any other experience like working in a shop – like River Island over there. I would like a job near home but it was very difficult finding a job.*

Her partner was also looking for work:

*My partner has been looking for three years and he never had a proper job. He did have weekend jobs before but never had a steady job. It is so hard. He is very deaf and only uses BSL. He can't communicate with hearing people so it is difficult for him to find a job.*

Leah's mother was trying to help him find work. She joined him whenever he went to meet his Disability Employment Advisor:

*My Mum knows that he is fed up at home with no job and it is not good for our relationship because we are together all the time.*

Leah and her husband also considered the idea of setting up a business, but gave up because of the costs involved:

*We tried to set up a business two years ago but we realised it would cost us a lot of money. We wanted to set up a Recovery service for cars broken down on the roads. We had to save up a lot of money for a van but we realised that we had to pay for hidden costs like tax too. We agreed that it wasn't a good idea.*

At the time of the interview, Leah's partner was hoping to be accepted on a training programme. Leah was hoping that in five years' time she and her partner would be financially independent:

*I hope to be working by then. Any job. I want to be able to earn my own wages and I don't want to rely on the state. I want my own money.*

Leah and her partner did not have a wide social network, and spent most of their time with Leah's parents and siblings, who lived nearby. They occasionally socialise with other deaf people, but don't consider themselves to be part of the Deaf community.

### Formation of independent relationships

Other differences between university students and graduates and young people who were in further education or training were their levels of **social engagement** outside formal education or work and their ability to form independent relationships. University students were much more likely to belong to clubs and organisations and to do voluntary work:

*I'm part of the Ultimate Frisbee team. I've been away to tournaments, I've been away to here, here there and everywhere really with them. Parties, everything, it's been really good. I'm part of...the...university's volunteer group which is...we go round schools and tell them, basically those that are going to University, get them ready for university to tell them the dos and don'ts.*

(Ethan, 18, HE student, Advanced Highers)

At the same time, many university students spoke of having partners, and some, particularly young women, were in long-term relationships:

*My boyfriend and I have been together five years. [...] I moved in wi' my boyfriend, I lived with him for three years.*

(Lucy, 23, support worker, HE graduate)

Most college students and apprentices spent their free time in the company of friends or family. Generally speaking, their social networks were smaller, as they had fewer opportunities to meet new people:

*I spend time with my family, I love spending time with my little sister Beth, who is five, she means the world to me. I like shopping! Browsing the internet and listening to music.*

(Mia, 19, Modern Apprenticeship Level 2)

Unlike university students, they were less likely to have partners, and this was particularly evident in the case of young men:

*It'll be a challenge finding a girl.*

(Tyler, 18, apprentice, Intermediate 2)

However, young people who had lower qualifications but came from **socially-advantaged backgrounds** were more likely to achieve markers of independent adulthood with the help of their parents. Gillian, who came from a well-to-do family, had a certain degree of independence, was in a relationship and was hoping to move out of her family home in the near future (see Case Study 22).

### Case Study 22: Gillian

#### *Parental social capital as a protective factor for a young person with complex needs*

Gillian is 19 years old. She was born with learning difficulties and hearing loss. She uses a cochlear implant and a hearing aid. She lives with her parents and younger sibling in a socially-advantaged suburban area (SIMD 5<sup>th</sup> quintile). Her family are hearing. They learned how to sign when Gillian was a baby:

*I think mum and dad went to a special thing to learn how to sign before, when I was, when I was a baby.*

Gillian's mother made several attempts to obtain Disability Allowance for her before she was successful. In doing so, she enlisted help from a voluntary organisation.

Gillian went to mainstream primary and secondary schools which had deaf resource bases. During school she spent time both in mainstream classes and classes for deaf pupils. She was one of the few young people who had a transition plan. In her fourth year she started going to college one day a week, and in her fifth year she went on a work placement in a nursery. She left school after her fifth year with Standards Grades and went to college on a link course. After college Gillian started looking for work. Her mother enlisted help from the supported employment services offered by the local authority. With their help, Gillian went on several work placements in retail in order to build up her CV.

*It would be hard without any support. I don't know if I would do it myself without any support. But I'm glad I've got the job coach cause it does really help a lot.*

At the time of the interview she worked part-time as a cleaner in a sports club and continued to look for a permanent position. She drove herself to work every morning:

*I just passed my driving test about a month ago or something. So I've been driving there every morning.*

Gillian had a group of deaf friends who she met often. Her boyfriend lived in another city and she sometimes travelled to see him. Gillian was hoping that in five years' time she would be financially independent and move out of her family home:

*Hopefully get my own place with my boyfriend, I dunno, hopefully.*

### Identity and perceptions of deafness

For this group of young people, the extent to which deafness was seen as a defining part of their identity depended on the severity of their hearing loss and the age of occurrence. Those who were born with profound hearing loss or acquired profound hearing loss at a very young age were much more likely to view deafness as an essential aspect of their identity. Many preferred to use BSL and had close connections with the Deaf community.

*Being deaf is part of me. If I became hearing tomorrow, I would not feel right. I have always been deaf. This is me.*

(Leah, full-time mum)

Not all those with profound hearing loss used BSL or had deaf friends. For them, deafness was an inherent quality, but not the most significant aspect of their identity.

*I'd rather be the girl who is really funny and happens to be deaf as opposed to being that deaf girl.*

(Lucy, support worker)

On the other hand, the vast majority of those who had severe and less than severe hearing loss believed that their deafness, although not a defining feature, had influenced their personality and the way they related to others. They had been educated in mainstream schools and many had no other friends who were deaf or hard of hearing.

*I think it really makes me an individual rather than a member of a group if anything. I see it as something that differs, makes me different from my friends and family as opposed to similar to other deaf people.*

(Jack, jobseeker)

Some people believed that they belonged equally to the deaf and hearing worlds and were uncomfortable with the deaf/hearing dichotomy:

*It's ridiculous to be labelled.*

(Freya, HE student)

*You've got this wall, the 'hearies' and the 'deafies' and there's the wall of the hearing world and the deaf world and I don't like that thinking. So I'm a bit in conflict between the two. I do identify as that socially deaf person, but I don't like saying that is all of me and the rest of the world doesn't understand me because of that.*

(Logan, HE student)

One member of the Deaf Community suggested that there was a tension between being culturally Deaf and fitting into the hearing world:

*[I'm] both Deaf and deaf. Because I live with hearing people at the University. I have to be deaf to be able to fit in.*

(Adam, HE student)

The experiences of the young people in this study were mostly shaped by the type of school they attended. Parents chose schools depending on whether they wanted their children to be educated orally or to use sign language. This, in turn, had a bearing on the kind of friends the young people had and their sense of identity. Many of the young people who were educated orally in mainstream schools had hearing friends and hearing identities, while many of those who were educated in special school for the deaf and used sign language had Deaf identities<sup>22</sup> and close ties with the Deaf community.

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<sup>22</sup> There were also some young people with dual identities, who belonged to both Deaf and hearing communities. At the end of compulsory education, some young people who were educated orally started learning BSL and joined the Deaf community in search for other young people with similar experiences. At the same time, some BSL users chose to distance themselves from the community, because they considered that it was too small and divisive.

Many young people commented on the effect of deafness on their personality and behaviour. Young people who communicated orally were particularly likely to report that they felt less confident in social situations because of their hearing loss. Many worried that they would 'make complete fools' of themselves in front of others, and as a consequence were quiet and shy. Even those with relatively mild degrees of hearing loss believed that their deafness made them feel less confident overall:

*I think it's actually affected my confidence a little bit. But I didn't really acknowledge that for a long time. [...] So if I do something wrong then I'm more likely to, to think, 'Oh I probably heard their instruction wrong' rather than thinking that they told me to do the wrong thing.*

(Jessica, HE student)

One thing that all young people agreed on was that their deafness had made them more resilient:

*I think deafness makes you stronger as a person. You can take a lot more on the chin.*

(Liam, IT support specialist)

*So would it be easier if I could hear? Yes. But I don't know if I'd still be the same person if I could hear. I do think deafness has made me who I am cause I am...sort of strong.*

(Lucy, support worker)

There were also different attitudes and perceptions of deafness. Some young people did not see deafness as a disability:

*I don't see myself as disabled but I am aware that I'm deaf. But I just don't really see it. I know that sounds stupid but I think sometimes it can be a frame of mind.*

(Lucy, support worker)

Those who were members of the Deaf community or had close ties with other deaf people were particularly accepting of their own deafness. Even relatively new members of the Deaf community became very comfortable with their deafness and embraced the values and culture of the community. Tyler, who comes from a hearing family and was educated mainly orally, is such an example. He recently became an active member of the Deaf Community and expressed hopes to have a Deaf family:

*I prefer deaf girls 'cause they seem to be more easy to get on with, understand me, accept who I am. [...] I'd quite like to have a deaf son or daughter, it would be nice to have my own me. [...] And tradition carries on, 'cause I'm part of the Deaf culture so I'd like to, don't want the culture to end, want to keep it going.*

(Tyler, apprentice)

Others, on the other hand, tended to distance themselves from their deafness, and see it more as a 'medical condition' or something that 'you overcome and move on'. Some young people had very negative views about their hearing loss:

*Being deaf makes me who I am. But I am very embarrassed by it. I get very stressed out and upset! I hate being deaf and I am only partially deaf, but it is still a struggle.*

(Mia, apprentice)

Contrary to Tyler, who wanted a Deaf family, a few young women with genetic hearing loss expressed concern at the possibility of having deaf children:

*But I don't actually know if I want children cause I'm worried that because I don't hear it would pass on to them. [...] It's not something I would want for a child. But I don't know.*

(Isla, purchasing assistant and part-time HE student)

These were young people who had been educated in mainstream schools and had few or no friends who were deaf or hard of hearing. It is interesting to note here that some of the people in this second category had parents or siblings who were deaf or hard of hearing. Having a deaf parent or sibling did not seem to encourage positive perceptions of deafness.

Some of the young people who had negative views of deafness also had low expectations of what deaf people can achieve:

*I don't see much deaf people [working] in the store. I never see deaf people who become like a lawyer or something.*

(Madhat, beautician)

Similarly, some of those who did well in school expressed surprise at how successful they had been in spite of being deaf:

*I thought I was gonna find it hard cause people who are deaf, I think they find it a wee bit hard to get into uni. You need to get really good grades. And I thought I wouldn't get as good grades as I did.*

(Ava, HE student)

These negative views are not entirely substantiated by evidence. Although a small proportion of DHH school leavers had the necessary qualifications to enter higher education in the last few years, those who completed a higher education degree had good employment rates and were well represented in professional and associate professional occupations (see Figures 1.3, 1.5 and A25).

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was that deaf people's attitudes to their own deafness were a major prerequisite for success. Some were of the opinion that their own coping mechanisms were as important as the quality of support they received:

*Again it depends, like what sort of support you have in place. And how you cope with like the demands. [...] There was always support in place for me. So I never really struggled too much. And I think also I never let myself struggle.*

(Sophie, documentation coordinator)

Others saw deafness as a perpetual barrier that they needed to overcome:

*I don't let like my hearing bother me, well try and not let it bother me. Sometimes it does but... I dinnae try and let it control my life basically [laughs].*

(Ruby, nursery nurse)

Many expressed the belief that they needed to be assertive and confident in order to be successful. They considered that it was important to be open about their deafness, to actively seek support and explain their communication needs to teachers, employers or co-workers. They believed that it was their own responsibility to make the most of the support available:

*Obviously my own attitude is very important and like I think if you have a disability, including deafness, you need to be able to believe in yourself [laughs] in order to achieve what you want to achieve. And understand that it's not always going to be as easy as it might seem for other people. But that it's essentially your responsibility to create it.*

(Lily, jobseeker)

To summarise, the interviews revealed that there was a lot of variation in young people's perceptions of deafness and understandings of their identity. They seemed to depend on a variety of factors, such as the degree of hearing loss, the age when it occurred, the type of school they went to, their ties with other deaf people and the hearing status of their immediate family. This reflects the highly heterogeneous nature of the DHH population as a whole.

### Markers of adulthood: summary

- There were clear differences between young people in higher education and the young people who entered further education or training with regard to their ability to achieve independent markers of adulthood.
- University students had independent living arrangements during their studies, while most of those who were in college and training had never left their family home.
- Many university students and graduates wanted to move to different cities or abroad, while college students and apprentices rarely expressed the wish to leave their hometowns.
- University graduates became financially independent sooner than those in non-graduate occupations.
- University students were much more likely to belong to clubs and organisations and do voluntary work, while most further education college students and apprentices spent their free time with family or friends.
- As a direct consequence, university students and graduates had wider social networks, while further education college students and apprentices had fewer opportunities to meet new people.
- University students and graduates were more likely to be in stable relationships.
- University students and graduates were more likely to have clear plans about their future professional careers.
- Young people's sense of identity depended on their degree of hearing loss, the age when it occurred and their preferred mode of communication. BSL users had a clear deaf identity, while those who were educated orally and had milder hearing loss tended to have a hearing identity. Some young people had ambivalent identities.
- Many of those who had a hearing identity held negative views of deafness.
- Most young people believed that being deaf made them more resilient.
- Many acknowledged the importance of being assertive and confident in order to be successful.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- Are the school-to-work transitions of people who are DHH longer and more complex than those of young people with no disabilities? Post-school transitions have become more complex and drawn-out over time and are less likely to lead straight into employment (Riddell et al., 2001). There is a need for further research in order to establish whether young people who are DHH take longer to enter the labour market and achieve financial independence than young people with no disabilities.
- What factors support those who are most successful in the education system and the labour market? Findings from the case studies suggest that DHH young people from socially-advantaged backgrounds are more likely to leave school with higher qualifications and have good employment outcomes. What other factors contribute to their success?

## Section 9 Summary of findings and key messages

### Introduction

In this concluding section, we draw together the key findings, before exploring the central themes of the research relating to the post-school destinations of young people who are DHH, the linkages between the different markers of adult status, the barriers which impede successful transitions and the factors which facilitate the establishment of adult status and identity.

### Patterns of transition: summary

- Post-school transitions have become more complex and drawn-out over time and are less likely to lead straight into employment.
- The post-school destinations of school leavers who are DHH differ from those of young people who are not DHH.
- Young people who are DHH are more likely to take a college course on leaving school, and are less likely to move into higher education, employment or training. They are slightly more likely to be unemployed.
- Higher education graduates who are DHH are somewhat less likely to be in employment than non-disabled graduates.
- Compared with other disabled groups, they are the most successful in finding graduate level employment.
- Disabled Students Allowance, payable to the individual person, is only available to those on higher education courses.
- College students do not have a personalised learning support allowance.
- Cuts in college funding are likely to have an impact on support in college over coming years.
- People who are DHH in the working age population are more likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people.
- Compared with other disability groups, people who are DHH have relatively high employment rates and receive the largest number of Access to Work payments.

### School experiences: summary

#### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- The only publicly-available official statistics about children who are DHH in Scottish schools are statistics about pupils in publicly-funded Scottish schools who receive support for learning due to a hearing impairment. As these do not include the DHH pupils in publicly-funded schools who do not receive support for learning and the DHH pupils in independent schools, actual figures are likely to be higher.
- In 2012 pupils who received support for learning due to a hearing impairment represented 0.34% of all pupils in publicly-funded Scottish schools.
- The most common type of support plan for hearing-impaired pupils in publicly-funded schools was the Individualised Educational Programme (33%).
- Less than 15% of pupils who are DHH are educated in special schools.
- There doesn't seem to be a strong relationship between hearing impairment and level of deprivation among pupils who are DHH in publicly-funded schools.



- In 2011/12, compared with school leavers with no additional support needs, DHH school leavers who received support for learning: (i) left school with no qualifications in far greater proportion (8.9% vs. 1%); (ii) were almost twice as likely to leave school with Standard Grades at 3-4 (14.4% vs. 7.5%); (iii) were almost half as likely to qualify for entry into higher education (36.4% had Highers and Advanced Highers, as opposed to 60.2% of school leavers with no additional support needs).

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- Most participants went to mainstream schools and were educated orally (25 out of 30). Some went to mainstream schools with resource bases for the deaf. A minority went to special schools for the deaf.
- Those who went to schools for the deaf communicated in British Sign Language (BSL). Unlike the rest of the DHH participants in this study, they seemed to have difficulties finding schools which fitted their academic and social needs, so they changed schools more frequently. Three BSL users from socially advantaged backgrounds transferred to a selective private school for the deaf for their senior years. The other two BSL users in this study transferred to mainstream schools.
- Most of those educated in mainstream schools received academic support from teachers of the deaf. Others were supported by educational audiologists, Learning Support Departments or communication support workers.
- There was wide variation in the frequency of support, from full-time teaching support to brief one-to-one sessions a few times a year. Generally speaking, support was more concentrated in primary years and the first four years of secondary school.
- DHH pupils benefited from a series of adjustments, such as longer time in exams.
- There seemed to be some variation in the consistency and quality of support offered by different schools/authorities. Apart from providing academic support, some local authorities organised deaf peer groups, which gave pupils the opportunity to interact with other DHH pupils. On the other hand, a few young people reported that they had no support at various stages of their school career.
- DHH pupils valued mainstream teachers who were aware of their communication needs and adjusted their behaviour accordingly.
- One third of participants encountered barriers to participation in class and when they engaged in extra-curricular activities. Many young people believed that the barriers they encountered in school were a direct consequence of their hearing loss (e.g., not being able to hear teachers in class or to listen to audio materials). Some also mentioned teachers' lack of deaf awareness. There were frequent mentions of the lack of subtitles on videos shown in class. However, the most frequently cited difficulties in school were not academic, but related to the issue of social adjustment.
- Two thirds of young people in the case studies mentioned that they had been bullied or felt socially isolated in school because they were deaf or hard of hearing. In some cases the bullying had profound negative effects on their academic attainment and general well-being. Findings suggest that those who had DHH friends or family and performed well academically were less likely to be bullied or feel isolated.
- Many young people in the case studies believed that the learning support they received and the equipment they used made them 'stand out' amongst their peers. This was the reason why some of them stopped using radio-aids or turned down academic support in secondary school.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- What is the total number of pupils with hearing impairment in Scottish schools, and what proportion receive support for learning? The information published by the Scottish

Government does not include pupils in independent schools and pupils in publicly-funded schools who do not receive support for learning.

- How does the socio-economic background of pupils who are DHH impact on their educational attainment? Previous research (Hills et al., 2010) has shown that pupils from poorer areas tend to have lower educational outcomes than pupils from less deprived areas. There is a need to investigate the nature of this relationship for pupils who are DHH.
- How do the type of school attended and degree of social inclusion influence the educational attainment of pupils who are DHH? Findings from the case studies suggest that some pupils had difficulties finding schools which fitted their academic and social needs, and that pupils who were bullied left school with lower qualifications. There is a need for further research to explore these relationships.

## Post-school transition planning: summary

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- Most participants did not have post-school transition plans. There was evidence that transition planning took place for only four participants. Three of them had learning difficulties and were in specialist provision (special schools or mainstream schools with specialist units).
- Not all those who had complex needs benefited from transition planning. Participants with conditions such as social-emotional and behavioural difficulties or dyslexia did not have transition plans. Neither did all those who were at mainstream schools with resource bases.
- Some of the young people who did not have transition plans found out about support at their post-school destinations from their support workers or their parents.
- Young people who aimed to go to university were well informed about support options offered by universities. Many of these young people reported that their parents were actively involved in planning their transitions.
- Young people who went into further education, training or employment seemed to be less knowledgeable about support options. Many of the young people in this category were still unaware of support options (such as Access to Work) at the time of the interview.
- Almost half of the hearing aid users in the study were dissatisfied with the standards of care after they transferred to adult services. They mentioned long waiting times, less frequent and less thorough check-ups, the lack of a 'named person' and the quality of the hearing aids.
- Difficulties were also reported in making the transition to adult social work and health services. The mother of one young man with complex needs reported that child services were suddenly withdrawn when her son reached school leaving age, with no adult services in place.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- What are the criteria by which education authorities/schools decide which young people require post-school transition plans? The findings from the case studies suggest that DHH pupils who had learning difficulties and were in special schools or mainstream schools with resource bases were more likely to have post-school transition plans. There is a need for larger-scale research to explore transitional practices in Scottish secondary schools.
- What difficulties do education authorities/schools encounter in delivering post-school transition planning for school leavers who are DHH? The 2012 report on the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (As Amended) (Scottish Government, 2012) found variation in the effectiveness of partnership work across local authorities. There is a need for further research into the factors which facilitate or

hinder collaboration between the agencies involved in supporting young people who are DHH in their post-school transitions.

- How does the lack of formal transition planning impact on the post-school outcomes of school leavers, particularly those from poorer backgrounds? Findings from the case studies suggest that school leavers from socially-advantaged backgrounds manage their post-school transitions with the help of their parents and wider social networks. There is a need for more research into the transition experiences of DHH school leavers from poorer backgrounds, as they are more likely to experience difficulties.

## Experiences of higher education: summary

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- School leavers who are DHH are less likely to enter higher education compared with their non-disabled peers. In 2011/12, 26% of DHH leavers from Scottish schools entered higher education, as compared to 39% of school leavers with no additional support needs. Fewer school leavers who are DHH entered higher education between 2007/8 and 2010/11. The participation rate was as low as 7% in 2008/9.
- In 2009/10, 0.33% of all UK-domiciled undergraduates and 0.37% of all postgraduates declared that they are DHH. The proportion of UK-domiciled higher education students who declare a hearing impairment has stayed relatively stable in the past 10 years.
- Disabled students who do not have the Disabled Students' Allowance have higher non-continuation rates than disabled students in receipt of DSA and their non-disabled peers.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- The general level of support in higher education was good, although there was some variation between institutions (e.g., some institutions provided disabled students with communication support and equipment before funding came through, while others did not).
- Most participants received Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and benefited from reasonable adjustments.
- The DSA was used to pay for communication support and equipment (e.g., laptops and printers). Most DSA recipients had notetakers, while some also had BSL interpreters, readers, scribes and proofreaders.
- Note-taking was considered a valuable form of support, although some respondents acknowledged that it had limitations (there were complaints about notetakers' availability, especially at short notice, about high turn-over rates, and, in some cases, about notetakers' lack of subject knowledge).
- Although they received communication support, many higher education students encountered communication barriers, particularly when they had to take part in group work or go on clinical or teaching placements.
- There was also evidence to suggest that applying for DSA was not guaranteed to ensure appropriate support. Findings suggest that good self-advocacy skills, pastoral support from Disability Advisors, as well as direct parental involvement in negotiating support also played essential roles.
- Middle class parents typically intervened when difficulties arose, in one case making direct contact with the disability office in order to facilitate re-admission.
- There was less direct intervention by parents from less socially advantaged areas.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- What are the socio-demographic characteristics of higher education students who are DHH? Previous research indicated that disabled young people in higher education (Riddell et al.,

2005) reflect the relative social advantage of the majority of higher education students, in particular those in pre-1992 universities, where 80% have parents in professional and managerial occupations. There is need to investigate whether higher education students who are DHH also represent a socially advantaged group. This would provide an indication of the factors which contribute to their success.

- What are the non-continuation rates of students who are DHH? What factors lead to drop-out? Findings from the case studies suggest that some higher education students who are DHH may encounter communication difficulties during their studies, which may lead to drop-out. An analysis of HESA data would shed light on the non-continuation patterns of higher education students who are DHH.

## Experiences of further education and training: summary

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- Further education is the most common post-school destination of school leavers who are DHH. In 2011/12, 39% of school leavers who are DHH entered further education, as opposed to 23% of school leavers with no additional support needs. During the previous five years the participation rate was even higher (as high as 57% in 2009/10).
- In 2010/11, 0.55% of all further education students reported that they were DHH.
- A very small percentage of school leavers enrolled on training programmes in 2011/12 (1.5%, slightly lower than school leavers with no additional support needs, at 3%).
- Skills Development Scotland does not collect data on participation rates of young people who are DHH on national training programmes.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- Most further education students had some communication support from notetakers. Some also had BSL interpreters and readers. Some further education students also received one-to-one tuition from learning support workers.
- There was very little mention of specialist equipment, such as FM systems.
- There seemed to be wide variation among colleges in terms of support standards: some colleges seemed to offer appropriate levels of support, while others offered no support at all. There was also less consistency of support.
- Many students reported that communication support workers were in short supply and were often unavailable.
- Further education students were less appreciative of the disability support services offered by colleges, and more positive about the informal support offered by their peers and teaching staff.
- There were also fewer instances of successful self-advocacy and direct parental involvement in negotiating support. This may be a direct consequence of the fact that further education students formed a less socially-advantaged group, with a higher incidence of learning and communication difficulties.
- Young people on training programmes did not benefit from communication support.
- There were no BSL users among those on training programmes. This may be a direct consequence of the lack of communication support offered to young people in training.
- Most young people on training programmes seemed to be less knowledgeable about support options.
- Some young people believed that they did not require support, although they reportedly encountered various communication difficulties during their training. This may be a direct consequence of the fact that these young people received little support in school. One young person who had adequate support in school expressed concerns that the lack of

communication support and deaf awareness on his apprenticeship programme had a negative impact on his learning.

- There was consensus amongst those on Modern Apprenticeships that the training had increased their employability and helped them become more confident and assertive.
- The personal development course attended by a young man with Down's syndrome was time limited and did not have a clear progression route.

## EMERGING QUESTIONS

- How does the model of funding for students with additional support needs in further education impact on the quality of support offered by colleges? Findings from the case studies suggest that there is a marked difference between the quality of support offered by higher education institutions and further education colleges. Is this difference in support a direct consequence of the difference in funding mechanisms for students with additional support needs in higher and further education?
- What are the reasons behind the low claims for the Additional Support Needs for Learning Allowance of some colleges? An analysis carried out by the Scottish Funding Council (Scott and Tye, 2012) revealed that 2010/11 some colleges did not claim any ASNLA, while a small number of colleges claimed more than 60% of the entire ASNLA spent in Scotland. There is a need to investigate the reasons behind this variation in ASNLA spent between colleges.
- What are the non-continuation rates of students who are DHH in further education and what factors contribute to drop-out? Findings from case studies suggest that some further education students who are DHH drop out of college, mainly due to a lack of communication support.
- What proportion of higher education students who are DHH study on higher education courses in colleges? Scottish Government data on school leavers' destinations and the data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency which are included in this report do not distinguish between DHH students studying towards a first degree and other undergraduates.
- What is the participation rate of young people who are DHH on National Training Programmes, including Modern Apprenticeships? Findings from the case studies suggest that training programmes increased the employability of DHH young people who left school with lower qualifications. However, Skills Development Scotland does not collect data on the number of young people on national training programmes who are DHH.
- What barriers do young people who are DHH encounter in accessing and completing training programmes? Findings from the case studies suggest that many young people on training programmes do not have communication support. Some may also encounter discriminatory attitudes. There is a need for further research into the training experiences of young people who are DHH.

## Employment experiences: summary

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

- In 2011/12 leavers from Scottish publicly-funded schools who are DHH were less likely to be employed than their peers with no additional support needs (15% vs. 25%). They were more likely to be unemployed and not seeking employment or training (5% vs. 2%).
- In 2012 the estimated employment rate of working-age people in Great Britain who have 'difficulties in hearing' was much lower than that of non-disabled people (48% vs. 78%).
- In 2009/10, the employment rates of higher education graduates who are DHH six months after completion were similar to those of their non-disabled peers (around 68%).

- In 2009/10, graduates who are DHH were better represented in graduate-level occupations than their non-disabled peers. 67% of graduates who are DHH were in managerial and administrative occupations, professional, associate professional and technical occupations, compared with 63% of the non-disabled graduates.
- There is no publicly-available data on the employment outcomes of people who are DHH with further education and training qualifications.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- Young people with higher education qualifications were more likely to find employment with the help of their parents or wider social networks than young people with non-graduate qualifications.
- Most of the graduates who were in employment had worked for their current employers when they were students.
- Graduates were more aware that they could use the equality legislation as a 'battering ram', but at the same time they believed that they could be victims of discrimination.
- Graduates were less likely to register with the JobCentre and receive Jobseeker's Allowance than young people with vocational and training qualifications.
- Graduates were less likely to seek advice from Careers Advisors at college or university. Most young people who went into training straight after leaving school reported seeking help from Careers Advisors in schools.
- Jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications were more likely to encounter potential employers with openly negative views of deafness.
- Several jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications believed that disclosing their deafness in job applications would lower their chances of being offered interviews.
- Jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications were more likely to have limited work experience.
- Many jobseekers with non-graduate qualifications seemed to believe that their hearing loss limited the range of jobs that they could do.
- Many young people who are DHH reported that they encountered communication difficulties at work, such as difficulties using the phone or general communication difficulties due to noisy working environments.
- There seemed to be little awareness of the communication needs of people who were hard of hearing.
- Very few young people used Access to Work. Graduates and BSL users were more likely to know about Access to Work, although relatively few used it.
- Those who did not have Access to Work avoided certain tasks or relied on informal support from co-workers and employers.
- The majority of those in employment were happy in their jobs and pleased to be in work.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- How do educational and training qualifications translate into employment outcomes for people who are DHH? There is a need for further comparisons between the employment outcomes of DHH people and non-disabled people with similar qualifications, in order to account for barriers to accessing employment, such as discrimination and lack of support.
- What are the employment outcomes of DHH young people who completed further education and vocational training courses? As the employment rates of DHH young people with higher education degrees are similar to those of non-disabled graduates, while the employment rates of all working-age people who are DHH are much lower than those of the non-disabled population, we can infer that the DHH people with training and further education qualifications are more likely to encounter difficulties in finding work.



- What types of support are required by Access to Work clients who are DHH? There is no publicly-available data on the types of support required by Access to Work clients who are DHH (e.g., support workers or specialist equipment).
- What barriers are encountered by people who are DHH in recruitment and employment? Findings from the case studies suggest that jobseekers who are DHH encounter a series of barriers in accessing employment, including discrimination and lack of communication support. There is a need for further research into the jobseeking and employment experiences of young people who are DHH.

## Markers of adulthood: summary

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- There were clear differences between young people in higher education and the young people who entered further education or training with regard to their ability to achieve independent markers of adulthood.
- University students had independent living arrangements during their studies, while most of those who were in college and training had never left their family home.
- Many university students and graduates wanted to move to different cities or abroad, while college students and apprentices rarely expressed the wish to leave their hometowns.
- University graduates became financially independent sooner than those in non-graduate occupations.
- University students were much more likely to belong to clubs and organisations and do voluntary work, while most further education college students and apprentices spent their free time with family or friends.
- As a direct consequence, university students and graduates had wider social networks, while further education college students and apprentices had fewer opportunities to meet new people.
- University students and graduates were more likely to be in stable relationships.
- University students and graduates were more likely to have clear plans about their future professional careers.
- Young people's sense of identity depended on their degree of hearing loss, the age when it occurred and their preferred mode of communication. BSL users had a clear deaf identity, while those who were educated orally and had milder hearing loss tended to have a hearing identity. Some young people had ambivalent identities.
- Many of those who had a hearing identity held negative views of deafness.
- Most young people believed that being deaf made them more resilient.
- Many acknowledged the importance of being assertive and confident in order to be successful.

### EMERGING QUESTIONS

- Are the school-to-work transitions of people who are DHH longer and more complex than those of young people with no disabilities? Post-school transitions have become more complex and drawn-out over time and are less likely to lead straight into employment (Riddell et al., 2001). There is a need for further research in order to establish whether young people who are DHH take longer to enter the labour market and achieve financial independence than young people with no disabilities.
- What factors support those who are most successful in the education system and the labour market? Findings from the case studies suggest that DHH young people from socially-advantaged backgrounds are more likely to leave school with higher qualifications and have good employment outcomes. What other factors contribute to their success?

### Post-school destinations and their significance

The review of policy and statistics in Section 1 of the main report shows that, in 2011/12, 26% of young people who are DHH moved from school into higher education. This figure includes those moving into sub-degree programmes in colleges such as Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND). However, by far the largest group of DHH leavers moved into vocational or personal development courses in college. A small group of young people who are DHH were enrolled on training programmes (1.5%) and relatively small numbers of young people who are DHH were unemployed and seeking work (8.3%) or economically inactive (4.5%).

Higher education conferred considerable advantages both in terms of the nature of support available and chances of obtaining a reasonably paid and relatively secure job at the end of the course. Those undertaking further education college courses were less positive about the quality of support and subsequent employment opportunities were less well paid and more insecure. The Scottish Government is devoting a growing proportion of the total education budget to universities in order to ensure that a funding gap does not open up between institutions north and south of the border in the light of different policies on student fees. Higher education students in our sample were clearly benefiting from this investment. By way of contrast, a report by the Auditor General for Scotland, published in September 2013 (Audit Scotland, 2013), confirmed a year on year reduction in college funding, with 110,000 fewer places available in academic year 2011/12. Further education students in our sample were much more likely to encounter problems with levels of support in college, as well as difficulties finding employment on completion of their course.

Those leaving school with few or no qualifications were clearly encountering the most difficult post-school transitions, with disrupted working lives, economic insecurity and limited future prospects.

### Barriers to successful post-school transitions

The quality of young people's school experience, described in Section 3 of the main report, underlines its importance in shaping post-school experiences. Lack of appropriate communication and social support in school was undermining of confidence and led to social isolation. There appeared to be particular problems in schools in less advantaged urban areas, where many pupils were likely to have additional support needs. Difficulties in service delivery also occurred in rural areas due to a highly dispersed population.

The majority of young people were taught in mainstream schools using oral communication in the classroom, with a small number placed in mainstream school with hearing impairment departments or in a special school for the deaf. Because only a limited number of pupils were taught with BSL as the medium of instruction, it is not possible to compare the outcomes of schools with different communication policies. However, it is quite clear that many children who are DHH are able to achieve very well using oral communication. However, it was also clear that for a significant group of children problems with bullying and social isolation arose. Three case study young people moved to an academically selective special school for the deaf in England for their senior years on the grounds that the curriculum available to them in special education in Scotland was failing to develop their academic potential. All three achieved good educational qualifications and progressed into higher education.

Barriers were not only associated with restricted educational services and opportunities, but also as a result of poor services audiology services, particularly when the young person moved from



paediatric to adult audiology services. Frequent delays were reported in the provision of hearing aids by adult audiology services, necessitating, in one case, the use of a private service.

Poor post-school transition planning appeared to be a problem for young people leaving school with low educational qualifications. Young people who were DHH and lived in socially disadvantaged areas often experienced a variety of problems and sometimes made a sudden decision to leave, in one case to avoid exclusion. These young people might have benefited from much closer engagement by the school and other agencies in a transition planning process, but appeared to receive very little support. By way of contrast, young people in more socially advantaged areas with higher qualifications were relatively unscathed by the lack of transition planning. They were well supported by parents and family, but also by the support offered by the school to all young people in making university applications.

Riddell et al. (2001) noted the lack of meaningful post-school opportunities for young people with significant learning difficulties and complex needs, and this was also reflected in case study findings. The current squeeze on welfare benefits and local authority funding for social services was likely to have a negative impact on the future opportunities of a young man with Down's syndrome.

Many young people had encountered discriminatory attitudes particularly in employment recruitment, which often led to dilemmas with regard to disclosing a disability. It is evident that much work remains to be done in ensuring that employment practices reflect the spirit of anti-discrimination legislation, and that young people who are DHH are not squeezed out of the labour market at a time of rising youth unemployment.

### Support mechanisms

The availability of additional aids and services to support communication, including the provision of hearing aids and interpreters, are important facilitators of successful post-school transitions for young people who are DHH. In addition, peer group and family support are clearly also vital, and the young people in our research had very different experiences of access to social capital.

Social capital was defined by Schuller, Baron and Field (2000, p. 1) as 'broadly, social networks, the reciprocities that arise from them, and the value of these for achieving mutual goals'. As noted by Riddell, Baron and Wilson (2001, p. 144):

*Social capital is now seen as just as important as financial, physical and human capital in explaining social hierarchies, variations in individual and civic health and well-being, and, above all, differential national profitability.*

The network of social and community relations is believed to underpin individuals' ability to engage in education, training and employment, and achieve positive outcomes. The analysis of the school and post-school experiences of the DHH young people in this study suggested that the social networks and advocacy power of their parents were closely related to their socio-economic status. They played a significant role in shaping the young people's experiences of school education, as well as their post-school journeys.

This was very evident in the case of Lucy, whose mother intervened when her daughter dropped out of university and appeared to play an active role in arranging her re-admission. Liam, also from a socially disadvantaged background, felt that he had been strongly supported by his parents at school and university, and was helped into a professional job through family networks. Sophie was

supported by her parents and also by her extended family, such as her aunt who proofread her essays.

The sociologist Robert Putnam (2000) drew a distinction between bonding and bridging social capital. The metaphor of social glue is used to describe bonding social capital, which may be important in ensuring community cohesion but may also be problematic in terms of fixing people in particular social locations. Tyler, training as a joiner on a construction site, and Ruby, working as a nursery nurse, may have benefited from strong community links, but were unlikely to leave their home communities. Young people from more socially advantaged backgrounds were much more likely to benefit from bridging social capital, enabling them to move into new social arena. Even at school level, the three young people who moved to the academically selective school in England were supported by determined parents, who were able to negotiate effectively with the local authority to secure the necessary resources.

### Intersecting factors in adult status and identity

Establishing an autonomous adult identity is clearly intrinsic to the process of post-school transition. Young people in the study varied in relation to the extent to which they regarded deafness as intrinsic to their sense of self. All of the young people in our case studies acknowledged that being deaf or hard of hearing affected their lives at a very deep level, but many were upbeat and positive about their lives. All had to make very great efforts to communicate with others in a hearing world. Some adopted a strategy of playing down their hearing impairment, socialising with hearing young people and trying to minimise difference.

Overlaying deaf identity were other social characteristics related, for example, to social class, gender and ethnicity. Young people from more socially advantaged backgrounds appeared to be more self-confident and aware of their rights to non-discriminatory treatment. Positive reinforcement came from achieving highly at school, effective support at university and the expectation of well-paid employment. Young people from less socially advantaged backgrounds generally achieved fewer educational qualifications, struggled to find appropriate college courses and subsequently employment which would pay a living wage.

In their accounts of current living arrangements and hopes for the future, the young people highlighted the associations between obtaining a reasonably paid job, moving out of the parental home and establishing an independent base. Liam, for example, was establishing himself in well-paid work in IT and was in the process of moving into his own home with his partner. For young people like Erin, working as a part-time sales assistant and earning around £200 a week, moving out of the family home was a distant prospect. Independent living was also likely to be a challenge for Oliver, who would need intensive support to live apart from his mother.

Many of the young people in the study were at a relatively early stage in the transition process and were focussed on establishing a career. Moving away from parental support prematurely was also problematic, as illustrated by Leah, who was living with her baby and partner in an area of social deprivation. The struggle to find work and look after the baby in a difficult environment was, according to Leah, placing a strain on their relationship. Stronger family and community networks would, at this point, have ameliorated some of the pressures and tensions in their lives.

## Implications for policy and practice

### IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- There is a need for greater consistency in the quality of support offered by different schools in both mainstream and special sectors.
- Pupils who are DHH in mainstream schools should benefit from better academic and social support.
- In some special schools for the deaf, there is a need for more academic stimulation and emphasis on academic achievement.
- For pupils with no disabilities there is a strong association between attainment and socio-economic status. Pupils who are DHH from socially disadvantaged backgrounds may also need much stronger support in school and at home to ensure that they fulfil their academic potential.
- Post-school transition planning is exceedingly patchy. This is a particular problem for pupils from poorer backgrounds, whose parents may not have the cultural, social and economic resources to support their children. Better transition planning for DHH young people with lower qualifications and from less socially-advantaged backgrounds is therefore a priority.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Adult audiology services are seen as providing less individualised support compared with children's services. Adult audiology services need to develop and improve how they support young adults transitioning from children's services.
- Across all agencies, the transition from child to adult services should be much smoother. In particular, the lack of provision for young people who have additional support needs should be addressed and improved support put in place for this group.
- Cuts in social services and benefits payments are affecting those at the social margins. It is important to ensure that young people who are DHH are given every assistance to attain markers of adult status such as independent housing.
- Social services need to ensure that childcare, parenting advice and return to work support is available for young women who become parents at an early age.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES

- Although universities generally provide good support for students who are DHH, certain groups experience problems. Young people who are BSL users may experience communication difficulties, whilst those with mental health difficulties are particularly vulnerable. Students from less socially advantaged backgrounds are more likely to drop out than those from more advantaged backgrounds. Additional support therefore needs to be targeted on these groups.
- Disabled students advisers and academic staff need to be more proactive in recognising difficulties at an early stage to prevent student drop-out.
- There is a need for more consistency in the quality of support offered by different higher education institutions.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLEGES AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Support in colleges tends to be patchy and under-resourced. The Scottish Government needs to ensure that colleges are able to offer the same quality of support as that which is

available in universities. This is particularly important at a time when college funding is being reduced.

- Students on personal development courses often find that there is a lack of progression. Colleges need to provide a greater range of lifelong learning opportunities to people who are deaf and have additional support needs.
- Communication support for young people on training programmes is particularly poor and needs further investment.
- There is a need to educate co-workers to ensure that trainees who are DHH do not encounter discriminatory attitudes.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND THOSE PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- There is evidence of disability discrimination particularly in the recruitment process. It is important that employers' duties to combat discrimination and promote equality for disabled people continue to be emphasised.
- There is a need for greater awareness of the communication needs of young people who are DHH in the workplace.
- Young people with low qualifications are particularly at risk of unemployment, low pay and insecure work. There is need for employers to ensure that young people who are DHH, particularly those with lower qualifications, are treated fairly in the workplace, and that attention is paid to career progression.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR DATA GATHERING

- There is a need for longitudinal pupil-level data so that the progress of children and young people who are DHH may be traced from school into post-school destinations and onwards into the world of work.

## Conclusion

This study has highlighted the wide range of post-school transition experiences and outcomes of young people who are DHH. We have identified patterns of post-school transitions, and the ways these are strongly associated with socio-economic status and educational outcomes at school. Students from more socially advantaged backgrounds are, at least to some extent, protected from risk. At school and university they receive better support, have access to social networks which facilitate access to well-paid employment, which in turn facilitates the establishment of an independent home and relationships. Young people who are DHH from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are, by way of contrast, exposed to many more risks, receiving less support in school and college, and finding greater difficulty in obtaining reasonably well paid work. For all young people who are DHH, negotiating a positive social identity is a major challenge, although here too the difficulties are mitigated for those with higher qualifications and greater financial security. Whilst most young people are positive about many aspects of their lives, the difficulties and tensions are also apparent. It is also evident that many young people could be helped to overcome some of the difficulties they encountered by provision of more carefully tailored services and the encouragement of more positive social attitudes.

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## Glossary of acronyms

<b>AGCAS</b>	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
<b>ASN</b>	Additional Support Needs
<b>AtW</b>	Access to Work
<b>BSL</b>	British Sign Language
<b>CSP</b>	Coordinated Support Plan
<b>DEA</b>	Disability Employment Advisor
<b>DHH</b>	Deaf or Hard of Hearing
<b>DLA</b>	Disability Living Allowance
<b>DSA</b>	Disabled Students' Allowance
<b>DWP</b>	Department for Work and Pensions
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>GRfW</b>	Get Ready for Work training programme
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HESA</b>	Higher Education Statistics Agency
<b>HI</b>	Hearing-impaired
<b>HID</b>	Hearing Impairment Department (in mainstream schools)
<b>HNC</b>	Higher National Certificate
<b>HND</b>	Higher National Diploma
<b>IEP</b>	Individualised Educational Programmes
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>ODI</b>	Office for Disability Issues
<b>RON</b>	Record of Needs

<b>SAAS</b>	Student Awards Agency for Scotland
<b>SCoD</b>	Scottish Council on Deafness
<b>SCQF</b>	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
<b>SDS</b>	Skills Development Scotland
<b>SEBD</b>	Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
<b>SIMD</b>	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>SQA</b>	Scottish Qualifications Authority
<b>SSE</b>	Sign-supported English
<b>SVQ</b>	Scottish Vocational Qualification
<b>ToD</b>	Teacher of the Deaf
<b>UCAS</b>	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service