

## **Specialist speech and language therapist for children and young people who are deaf: person specification**

The specialist SLT is required to have additional post qualification training, skills and experience to deal competently with the severe to profoundly deaf client group in the context of the wider hearing impairment team.

The additional knowledge, skills and experience are detailed below.

### **Experience**

- A minimum of five years post graduate experience working as an SLT
- At least three of which should be working with deaf clients.

### **Knowledge**

#### **Detailed knowledge of:**

- Different types of hearing loss, amplification, aetiology and possible implications for individuals.
- Audiological tests available and understanding of the findings and implications for the individual.
- Acoustic phonetics to inform intervention and management decisions.

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Spoken language (English or language of the home), Sign (British Sign Language), Sign Supported English and bilingualism.
- Augmentative communication systems such as Cued Speech, Sign Supported English, Signed English.
- Communication strategies that support communication between deaf and hearing people.
- Typical developmental patterns for deaf children (as well as knowledge of patterns for hearing children).
- D/deaf culture.
- Current research evidence for this population and its application for service improvement.

#### **Understanding of:**

- The range of audiological equipment and amplification available and an understanding of how the technology works and is impacted by the environment
- The roles of different specialists, including Teachers of the Deaf and audiologists
- The impact of deafness on children and their families.
- Speech acoustics and its relation to hearing and speech.
- The range and interpretation of assessments that can be used with children and young people who are deaf.

## Skills

- Non-verbal communication (including use of sign to equivalent of Signature level 2).
- Practical management of hearing aids/cochlear implants, for example, the ability to troubleshoot devices and change batteries.
- Practical logistics of conducting speech and language assessments with deaf children and interpreting the results.
- Use of family-centred intervention techniques, including making necessary adaptations to those designed for hearing children.
- Speech and language therapy contribution to the differential diagnoses assessment between deafness and conditions such as developmental language disorder, autistic spectrum disorder, auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder and how these relate to the findings of the wider team
- Adaptation of speech and language expectations and objectives in the context of the type and degree of hearing loss.
- Advanced transcription of atypical speech patterns, including non-segmental features.

## Continuing professional development (CPD) and training

- Ongoing CPD evidenced by attendance at and learning from short, specialist postgraduate training courses/ independent learning activities to maintain and develop own specialist knowledge and expertise in deafness.

If a specialist speech and language therapy service is in place, specialist advice and training can be provided for:

- generalist SLTs
- parents and families
- schools
- further education colleges
- nursing or residential homes.

This includes support to deaf children and young people who are in specialist schools that meet needs that are additional to deafness.

Some deaf children and young people have severe communication needs but may have a moderate or severe hearing loss and the expertise of a specialist SLT may be needed for these deaf children and young people. This tier of specialist resource needs to be in place in the first instance with referral onwards as appropriate.

Specialists are not easy to recruit or retain. To minimise these difficulties, a local training provision within the services is recommended with access to ongoing specialist training and peer support.