



Consortium for Research in Deaf Education

2018 report for Northern Ireland

CRIDE report on 2017/18 survey on educational provision for deaf children in Northern Ireland

Introduction

In 2018, the Consortium for Research into Deaf Education (CRIDE) carried out its eighth annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children¹. It covers the 2017/18 academic year². This report sets out the results of the survey for Northern Ireland and is intended for policy makers and anyone with an interest in deaf education.

Summary of key findings

- There are at least 1,687 deaf children in Northern Ireland - a reported increase of 8% over the past year.
- There are at least 34.2 Teacher of the Deaf posts, of which 5 (15%) were vacant. Of the 29.2 staff working as Teachers of the Deaf, 28.4 (97%) held the mandatory qualification.
- The number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment fell by 3% over the past year. It has fallen by 19% since the CRIDE survey started in 2011.
- 54% of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 50 and thus are likely to retire in the next 10 to 15 years.
- There are 3 resource provisions across Northern Ireland.

Interpreting the results

There is now just one service in Northern Ireland covering the five different regions. The service was asked to give figures for the position as of 31st January 2018.

The survey acknowledges that services and children do not always fit into the boxes or options provided. The service was able to leave comments or clarify where needed throughout the survey.

¹ For the purpose of this survey, 'deaf children' were defined as all children and young people up to the age of 19 with sensorineural and permanent conductive deafness, using the descriptors provided by the British Society of Audiology and BATOD. We used the word 'deaf' to include all levels of deafness, from mild to profound.

² Reports from previous years can be found on the BATOD website at www.batod.org.uk/information/cride-reports/ or on the National Deaf Children's Society website at www.ndcs.org.uk/CRIDE.

Since the last survey was completed, services in Northern Ireland have merged from five to one. The response indicated that different databases from the former services are now being aligned into one. As such, caution may be needed in interpreting the results, and, in particular, when making comparisons against previous years.

Please note that all percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

Contents

PART 1: Deaf children in Northern Ireland	3
PART 2: Teachers of the Deaf and other specialist staff	5
PART 3: Support provided	7
PART 4: Background and methodology	8

PART 1: Deaf children in Northern Ireland

How many deaf children are there?

In 2018, the service was asked to give details of deaf children living in Northern Ireland³.

Based on the original response from the service covering the five regions across Northern Ireland, there are 1,642 deaf children in Northern Ireland. We have since established that this figure did not include 45 deaf children in a special school for deaf children in Ireland. **This means that the total number of deaf children in Northern Ireland is 1,687.** This is up from 1,553 in 2016/17, a reported increase of 8%.

The following table compares the total number of deaf children living in Northern Ireland with figures from previous years. As set out in the introduction, comparisons with earlier reports should be made with caution. In particular, it does not appear that children in special schools for deaf children have been included in previous years.

Table 1: Number of deaf children reported, over successive years

	Number of children reported
CRIDE 2018	1,687
CRIDE 2017	1,553
CRIDE 2016	1,497
CRIDE 2015	1,332
CRIDE 2014	1,574
CRIDE 2013	1,481
CRIDE 2012	1,249
CRIDE 2011	1,238

Number of deaf children on the service's caseload

CRIDE also asked about deaf children on the service's caseload. By asking about children on caseload, CRIDE means children who receive some form of support more than once a year. Examples of support included direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school and teachers, providing hearing aid checks, etc. Children with temporary deafness are also included in this question.

At least 926 deaf children with permanent or temporary deafness were on the service's caseload. The corresponding figure from 2017 was 1,205.

CRIDE asked the service how many of the children on their caseload had a temporary conductive hearing loss. There were 24 children with temporary conductive deafness supported by the service. This is a reduction from 52 children with temporary conductive deafness reported last year.

³ The definition for this question was given as: "How many children with permanent deafness live in the geographical area covered by your service? The answer should include: all children who have unilateral or bilateral sensori-neural or permanent conductive deafness, at all levels from mild to profound, using BSA/BATOD descriptors. Children with temporary deafness should not be included in your response to this question. All deaf children, regardless of whether they receive support from the service. Children who attend education provision outside of your area but who normally live in your area. Please note that for the purpose of this section of the survey we use the term 'children' to include children and young people up to the age of 19 years, 11 months (unless specified in the question). Please also note that we use the term permanent deafness to include those children with a syndrome known to include permanent conductive deafness, microtia/atresia, middle ear malformation, or those who have had middle ear surgery such as mastoidectomy. It also includes those children with glue ear who are not expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 10 years, such as those born with a cleft palate, Down's syndrome, cystic fibrosis, or primary ciliary dyskinesia. Under temporary conductive deafness, we include those children with glue ear who may have been fitted with hearing aids as an alternative to grommet surgery but who are expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 10 years.

Assuming the figures are broadly comparable, if there are 1,687 permanently deaf children living in Northern Ireland and 902 on the service's caseload with permanent deafness, there are at least 785 deaf children who are not being supported by the service more than once a year. In other words, the figures suggest that 53% of permanently deaf children receive support more than once a year from their local service. It does not automatically follow that 47% of permanently deaf children are not receiving any support at all; many may be receiving support once a year or less frequently from a service or elsewhere from, for example, a special school for deaf children or resource provisions not managed by the service. In addition, the service may also still provide support through the form of audiology reviews and advice to schools on teaching strategies and classroom arrangements.

How do CRIDE's 2018 figures compare to School Census figures?

Because of the differences in how data have been collected and different definitions used, CRIDE recommends the following figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

School Census figures for 2017/18 identify 1,072 deaf children within the education system. Of these, 769 had a mild or moderate hearing loss and 303 had a severe or profound hearing loss. This represents an increase of 9 from 2016/17 when the corresponding figure was 1,063 deaf children. The CRIDE survey has identified 1,687 deaf children, which suggests that the School Census is capturing just 64% of deaf children identified by CRIDE. This may be due to the School Census only being likely to record whether a child is deaf when the deafness is the primary need and when they have been identified on the SEN spectrum.

Separately, the School Census reports that 506 have a statement. This equates to roughly half (47%) of the deaf children identified by the School Census and around 30% of those identified by CRIDE.

PART 2: Teachers of the Deaf and other specialist staff

The survey asked how many Teachers of the Deaf are working in different settings, including those in a peripatetic role and/or working in resource provisions. Figures are expressed as Full Time Equivalent (fte) posts; a 0.5 Teacher of the Deaf fte post could, for example, indicate that a person spent half of the standard 'working week' as a Teacher of the Deaf.

CRIDE also separately asked about Teachers of the Deaf who work mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. The service in Northern Ireland did not identify any Teachers of the Deaf who fell into this category. Nor did the service identify any Teachers of the Deaf who worked flexibly between a peripatetic role and other settings.

It should also be noted that the figures below do not include Teachers of the Deaf in special schools, auditory implant centres, charities or any other settings.

In total, there are at least 28.4 fte fully qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment in Northern Ireland.

In total, there are at least 29.2 teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in Northern Ireland, of which 28.4 (97%) were Teachers of the Deaf who were fully qualified and 0.8 (3%) were in training.

At the time the survey was completed, there were 5.0 fte vacant posts. If the vacant posts are added to the total number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment, this would indicate there are at least 34.2 fte Teacher of the Deaf posts, of which 15% are vacant.

The following table provides a breakdown by type of setting.

Table 2: Number of Teachers of the Deaf in employment overall

	Working mainly as a peripatetic Teacher of the Deaf (total and percentage)	Working mainly in a resource provision (total and percentage)	Teacher of the Deaf posts overall (total and percentage)
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification	25.4 (89%)	3 (11%)	28.4 (100%)
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	0.8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0.8 (100%)
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	26.2 (88%)	3 (12%)	29.2 (100%)

The following table looks at changes in the number of qualified Teachers of the Deaf in employment and posts over successive years.

Table 3: Changes in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf from year to year

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification in employment	34.9	29.6	30	28.6	30.6	32.6	29.3	28.4
Number of teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in employment	37.3	34.2	35	32.6	34.4	33.4	30.1	29.2
Number of vacant posts	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (including vacancies)	38.6	34.2	35	32.6	34.4	33.4	31.1	34.2

Table 4: Percentage change in numbers of Teachers of the Deaf

	Percentage change over past 7 years (between 2010/11 and 2016/17)	Percentage change over past year (between 2016/17 and 2017/18)
Teachers of the Deaf with the mandatory qualification in employment	-19%	-3%
Number of teachers working as Teachers of the Deaf in employment	-22%	-3%
Number of Teacher of the Deaf posts (including vacant posts)	-11%	+10%

CRIDE asked if the service had experienced difficulties in recruiting Teachers of the Deaf to either permanent posts or for supply cover over the past 12 months. There were no reported difficulties in recruiting for a permanent post but there were difficulties recruiting for supply cover, attributed to a lack of qualified applicants for supply cover posts.

Age profile of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf

Services were asked about the age profile of Teachers of the Deaf. This was in response to continuing concerns that the number of newly recruited Teachers of the Deaf is significantly lower than the number of Teachers of the Deaf retiring from the profession. If true, this could potentially lead to a 'capacity crunch' where there are insufficient numbers of Teachers of the Deaf to meet the needs of future deaf children.

The following table indicates that 54% of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf are over the age of 49 and, hence, likely to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. In the previous year's report, this figure stood at 61%.

Table 14: Age profile of peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf

	Number of peripatetic teachers	Percentage of total
Aged 49 or under	12	46%
Aged between 50 and 59	11.2	43%
Aged between 60 and 64	3	11%
Aged 65 or over	0	0%
Total	26.2	100%

PART 3: Support provided

Number of resource provisions

Services were asked about the number of resource provisions (whether in mainstream or special schools) in their area. Two primary resource provisions and one secondary resource provision were reported. This is unchanged from previous years.

Eligibility criteria/frameworks

The service indicated that they could not respond to the question on whether there had been any changes to their support allocation between the 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years. This was attributed to there being no definite budget as a result of the suspension of the devolved administration in Northern Ireland. It was also noted that the alignment of five services into one made it difficult to respond.

Thematic questions: early years support

We asked whether parents of deaf children aged 0 to 4 are provided with radio aids/assistive listening devices for use within the home, and within early years settings. In both cases, parents are provided with radio aids/assistive listening devices.

The service stated that no formal eligibility criteria are applied and that assistive technology is provided according to individual need. The service also stated that there is a plan to produce eligibility criteria and guidelines for assistive technology in the preschool years. It was noted that in the transition from five services to one service, the differences in how the individual services provided assistive technology will be aligned.

Thematic questions: access arrangements

We asked how many deaf students in year 12 would be undertaking public examinations in summer 2018. The service had this data from three areas, and reported that 28 students would be undertaking the examinations. Of these, there were 22 students that had access arrangements, related to their hearing loss, requested or arranged that the service knew of. The majority of these was for extra time, where this was arranged for 16 students. A live speaker was arranged for five students, and an Oral Language Modifier and a BSL/ISL Interpreter were arranged for fewer than five students each. No access arrangement requests that the service knew of were rejected.

PART 4: Background and methodology

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in using research to improve the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children. At the time the survey was sent out, representatives included: the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD), City, University of London, the Ear Foundation, the Ewing Foundation, the National Deaf Children's Society, the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP), the former head of Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, Mary Hare School, the specialist education service for deaf children in Kent and Norfolk, University of Edinburgh, University of Leeds and UCL.

The survey was designed and created by members of CRIDE. The CRIDE survey alternates between a full and a shorter survey from year to year. In 2018, a short survey with a number of thematic questions was issued.

The survey was sent to the Education Authority in February 2018 by National Deaf Children's Society staff on behalf of CRIDE.

Analysis of the results and drafting of this report was largely completed by the National Deaf Children's Society, with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE.

CRIDE would like to thank the service for taking the time to complete this survey. The results from this survey will be used for research purposes, to influence government policy and to campaign to protect funding and services for deaf children.

If you have any feedback or questions on the results, please contact cride@ndcs.org.uk