

Supporting the achievement of deaf young people in further education

For college staff working with young people with hearing impairment



Our vision is of a
world without barriers
for every deaf child.

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Introduction

The National Deaf Children's Society uses the word 'deaf' to refer to all levels of hearing loss. We include pupils who may have been identified as having a hearing impairment in the School Census.

Further education is the most common post-school destination for deaf young people. It is therefore important that staff working in these settings understand deaf young people's needs and strategies to meet them, so that the best outcomes can be achieved. Further education marks a significant change from school in many ways, and both the young person and staff need to be prepared for the challenges and opportunities involved in this transition.

The wide range of hearing and communication technologies now available to many deaf young people has transformed their ability to access college life. However, this also means that deaf students in further education now have a greater diversity of needs, many of which may not be immediately apparent to college staff, and will therefore present new challenges.

The aim of this resource is to help staff in further education to:

- make effective provision for deaf students so that they make good progress and develop the independent learning and life skills they will need in adulthood
- prepare deaf students effectively for the range of different pathways after further education including higher education, apprenticeships and employment
- take the reasonable steps required under the Equality Act (2010) (or the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) in Northern Ireland) to ensure that deaf students are not treated less favourably than other students.

This resource will achieve this by:

- explaining the implications of deafness on language and learning
- providing advice on how to help a deaf student make a successful transition both into college and beyond
- describing the measures college staff can take to enable a deaf student to succeed.

The content of this resource is informed by evidence from recent research by the University of Manchester into the experiences of deaf young people in further education.¹

NOTE

The National Deaf Children's Society uses the word 'parent' to refer to all parents and carers of children.

1. University of Manchester, *Identifying Effective Practice in the Provision of Education and Education Support Services for 16–19 Year Old Deaf Young People in Further Education in England* (National Deaf Children's Society) 2015

Overview

1

“My college is not deafaware enough. They think that because I can speak that I understand everything. If I used sign, my needs would be obvious.”

— Deaf student

Effective provision for a deaf student should entail:

- a thorough assessment of the student’s needs and strengths
- a plan setting out how the college will meet those needs and overcome any barriers to the student making good progress
- effective implementation of the plan
- A review of the student’s progress and the success of the plan to establish whether changes need to be made and what these are.

In England, this ‘assess, plan, do, review’ cycle has been incorporated into statutory guidance set out in the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice* (2015).

It should be remembered that deafness in itself is not a learning disability and, given the right support, deaf students can make the same progress and achieve the same as other students of similar cognitive ability. Having high expectations of deaf students is vital.

This resource is intended to help you follow this approach, as set out below.

Assessing what support is needed

An accurate and thorough understanding of a student’s needs and strengths underpins good planning and progress. A good assessment will include:

1. the student’s self-evaluation of any support requirements
2. information from the school and information on levels of attainment
3. the views of parents about appropriate provision
4. the involvement of specialists such as a Teacher of the Deaf
5. the use of specialist assessments
6. the need for access to technology and communication support
7. consideration of support needed to meet any specific course requirements.

Deafness will impact on a range of factors that contribute to a student's ability to learn including:

- listening skills
- attention and concentration
- language development
- literacy skills
- working memory
- auditory memory
- processing time
- incidental learning
- social skills
- self-esteem
- learning style.

It is therefore likely that assessments will focus on these areas. Further advice on specialist assessments can be found on page 20.

Chapter three of this resource (page 13) provides more information about the steps that should be taken to ensure there is a proper assessment of the student's needs to guarantee an effective transition to college. A checklist to support this can be found on page 23.

Planning the right support

Plans should be developed with the student and should consider:

- the outcomes the student is expecting to achieve at college in preparation for adulthood
- the shorter term targets to achieve those outcomes
- the provision and adjustments required to achieve the outcomes and targets, meet needs and overcome any barriers to accessing teaching and learning. This would include support strategies and intervention, access arrangements and support from external agencies
- arrangements for monitoring and reviewing.

The challenges presented by a hearing loss mean that for many deaf students their plan is likely to include:

- targets related to the development of language, communication, literacy, confidence and social skills, and the support and interventions required to achieve the targets
- the provision and maintenance of hearing technology

- the provision of communication support
- measures to ensure teaching and learning takes place in rooms which provide a good listening environment and have good acoustics
- access arrangements for assessments/examinations
- access to support from specialist staff such as Teachers of the Deaf
- the provision of pre- and post-lecture tutoring
- teaching strategies and approaches to ensure access to teaching and learning
- ensuring staff and other students are 'deaf aware'
- details of who is responsible for the overall coordination of the plan and who is responsible for delivering key aspects of the provision.

Again, a checklist to support assessment and transition planning can be found on page 29.

Implement or do: putting the provision in place

A student's plan should set out who is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the plan. This could be a tutor or course leader and/or the member of staff with responsibility for the coordination of SEN support or additional support.

They will have responsibility for the following.

- Ensuring that relevant staff receive the necessary information, advice, guidance and training to support the deaf student and help them to access teaching and learning (a template information sharing sheet can be found on page 34).
- Ensuring the student's progress is monitored.
- Liaising with and obtaining feedback from the student on what is going well and not so well.
- Ensuring that support and provision are in place (for example, employment of qualified communication support staff, hearing technology, adjustments to teaching spaces to improve the listening conditions).

Chapter four of this resource provides advice on the reasonable adjustments that can be made to teaching strategies to meet the needs of deaf students.

The college should also put all necessary modifications and adaptations in place to ensure the deaf student has equal access to examinations. More information on access arrangements can be found on page 48.



Keeping support and its impact under review

The effectiveness of support and its impact on the student's progress should be regularly reviewed and evaluated, taking into account the student's views. The college should have developed systems and processes for doing this. Key areas that are related to the student's deafness and may require consideration include the following.

- Levels of progress in areas of language and communication.
- Levels of overall progress and whether any gaps with other students are widening or narrowing.
- The accessibility of the course content. For example, checking if the student is able to understand the language and concepts used in lectures or establishing where and when the student may experience most difficulty in hearing what is said.
- The effectiveness of communication support. For example, is the communication support worker able to interpret accurately and fluently what the lecturer is saying.
- The effectiveness of technology.
- Any changes to the student's level of hearing.
- Their success in communicating with others, socialising and forming friendships.

Where the student is not making expected levels of progress, the specialist assessments, particularly in language and communication, may be helpful in identifying the source of difficulties and revising the plan and support strategies. A Teacher of the Deaf can again provide advice on this.

More widely, colleges should take steps to review the general effectiveness of provision for deaf learners. On page 55, we provide a checklist for how college leaders can do this.

An effective college will:

- ensure that the assessment of a student's needs is based on accurate information about their prior attainment, reflects the type and level of their hearing loss and its effect on their learning and identifies key barriers to making progress
- seek students' views on the barriers they are experiencing and the strategies and support that will benefit them
- consider the implications of a student's deafness when planning how to meet their needs. This will include a recognition that good speech intelligibility may mask underlying linguistic difficulties and problems of accessing what is said in lectures
- ensure that the necessary support is provided, whether this is through modification of teaching strategies, meeting language and communication needs, the effective use of technology, staff training, improving the listening environment and providing for social and emotional needs
- review the effectiveness of their provision for the deaf student, monitoring the extent to which the student is achieving the expected outcomes.

The above steps should be carried out with support from a Teacher of the Deaf.

Deafness and its impact on learning

2

Deaf students cover the whole range of ability. Deafness is not a learning disability and deaf students have the potential to attain and achieve the same as any other student, given the right support and access to the curriculum. However, as most teaching and learning takes place through the main senses of sight and hearing, this presents deaf students with particular challenges when trying to access teaching and learning.

Deaf young people have a diverse range of needs, including the type of hearing technology used and their preferred way of communicating. It is therefore important to find out what the specific student's needs are and their impact on learning.

Levels and types of deafness

There is considerable variation in the levels and types of deafness.

Young people who are deaf may have a permanent mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss in one or both ears or a temporary loss such as glue ear.

The Teacher of the Deaf will be able to explain the individual deaf student's level of hearing by showing you an audiogram. An audiogram is a chart used by an audiologist to record the results of the hearing assessment.

Further details on the types and levels of deafness are given in Appendix 1.

Hearing technologies

Deaf young people use different types of personal hearing technology supplied by the NHS such as hearing aids, bone conduction hearing implants or cochlear implants. More information about the technology that deaf young people may use can be found in Appendix 2.

The audiologist will have assessed and recorded how much the deaf young person can hear with their hearing technology fitted. However, it is important to understand that while the hearing technology used is set and programmed to enable the deaf young person to access sound as near to typical hearing levels as possible it does not replace normal hearing.

Acquired deafness

Pupils may start school without a diagnosis of deafness, or acquire a permanent deafness while at school. At further education age this is most likely to happen following a serious illness, such as meningitis, but it can happen at any time. It is important for staff to look out for any possible signs of deafness. It is also essential to monitor deaf students' hearing levels in case of deterioration.

Deafness and additional needs

There is a relatively high prevalence of deafness in students who have learning difficulties/other disabilities. Often the student's deafness is overshadowed by their other difficulties. It is important to take steps to address the impact of the deafness so that they can access learning, communicate and socialise.

Impact of deafness on language

Childhood deafness has a major impact on learning spoken language as it is usually acquired through hearing and vision together. Early hearing screening of babies and improved hearing technologies mean that more deaf students now enter further education using spoken language (with or without signed support) and some form of hearing technology. However, their language, communication and learning needs may not be immediately apparent, with good speech intelligibility masking their level of linguistic ability.

The impact of deafness on a student will also be influenced by factors such as:

- the age at which they became deaf
- whether deafness was diagnosed and managed early or late
- support from parents
- the quality of professional support they receive
- their cognitive ability
- personal characteristics, such as determination
- the functioning of their hearing technology and how often it is worn.

Impact of deafness on access to learning

The impact of deafness on language development can mean a deaf student has difficulty in being able to:

- make sense of what people say and understand what is happening around them
- learn to think things through and problem solve
- understand and express what they are feeling and manage their emotions.

Deaf students are likely to require additional support if they are to make the same progress as other pupils of a similar age and cognitive ability. Adaptations and strategies will need to be put in place that manage and minimise the impact of their hearing loss, develop their learning skills, provide access to the curriculum and lead to higher levels of academic achievement.



Moving into further education

3

“The practical nature of the further education vocational curriculum can play to my son’s strengths, enabling him to become independent.”

— Parent of deaf student

Supporting prospective students

In a review of post-16 provision in England for disabled students, Ofsted identified that the following activities help a successful transition to further education.²

- Link courses where learners can attend the setting during the final years of schooling for a set time each week to follow a specified programme.
- Taster opportunities where the learner can sample subjects, including tasters during the summer break.
- Opportunities to get to know the building and the facilities and to meet the tutors and support staff before starting.
- Holding interviews which focus on attainment and capability.
- Discussion and agreement about any adjustments required.
- Opportunities for students to familiarise themselves with college life.

This section sets out the specific measures that further education providers can take to help prospective deaf students, building on the links that they may have developed with local authority specialist services and local schools.

2. *Progression Post-16 for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities*, Ofsted 2011

Helping prospective students choose and apply for a course

Providing information

A deaf young person will be reliant on access to reliable, comprehensive, independent advice and guidance in order to make informed choices.

In addition to the information the college provides for all students, deaf young people will be interested in:

- the college's experience of educating deaf students and the specialist support available to them, including case studies to show how the college has met the needs of deaf students
- specific detail on courses, the content and how they are delivered
- detail on how the college environment has been adjusted to make it accessible to deaf students (for example acoustics, use of a soundfield system)
- contact information (including email addresses) of the key staff members who will be able to answer questions on support and facilities, course requirements, etc.
- clear information regarding the admissions process and what needs to be done to obtain funding for additional support such as communication support workers, notetakers, interpreters and equipment
- signposting to key organisations that may be able to offer help and advice to deaf students
- information on how they can arrange communication support for college open days and induction days.

Any information the college provides, such as DVDs, online videos or podcasts, should have subtitles.

Post-16 option meetings and open events

Many prospective deaf students will welcome the opportunity to meet college staff at post-16 option meetings or open events that are held outside the college. It is important to have a member of staff available who has at least a basic understanding of the potential communication needs of a deaf student, the support the college offers to deaf students, help deaf students can get in applying and contact details of the key member of staff.

For any open days held within or outside the college, it is very helpful if:

- a request is made that deaf students contact the college prior to the event to discuss communication needs
- key personnel are present to discuss any support available
- any current or former deaf students are available to discuss their experiences with potential students, if possible.

Further discussions

Prospective deaf students may appreciate further meetings to explore the appropriateness of courses in relation to their knowledge and skills and the support needed to ensure the course is accessible. Any communication support needs should be identified before the meeting, such as a quiet room, an interpreter, written notes and information.

No assumption should be made as to the appropriateness of a course for a deaf student until such a meeting has been conducted. For example, deaf students have successfully completed studies in music and modern foreign languages.

The application process

The application form

It will be helpful to provide the contact details of someone who can assist with filling out the form if needed by the deaf student. It is important to include on the form an explanation as to why they need to provide details of their disability. Some young people are reticent about putting down details of their disability during the application process, so this reassurance can help.

Interview

If an interview is part of the application process, it is essential that staff members involved have an understanding of the communication requirements of the candidate and an interpreter or support worker is provided if required. The interview should also be held in a room with good lighting, no or low levels of background noise and good acoustics..

Preparing for a successful start to college – assessment and planning

Transition is not an event but a process. A successful transition requires the coordination of various individuals, systems and agencies. In recent research by Manchester University³, the following key factors of a successful transition were identified.

1. Starting the process early (Year 9 (or S3 in Scotland) onwards).
2. Prioritising communication support needs in all meetings and discussions.
3. Targeting efforts towards developing the skills and knowledge required for full participation, for example, confidence, self-advocacy and ability to consider the pros and cons of decisions and their implications.

3. University of Manchester, *Identifying Effective Practice in the Provision of Education and Education Support Services for 16–19 Year Old Deaf Young People in Further Education in England* (National Deaf Children's Society) 2015

4. Providing opportunities for practical learning to give students a better understanding of which option will work best for them.
5. Considering the full range of possible options available.

A relationship should be established between the school and the new further education setting in order to pass on important information about effective practices for the young person, their needs and their preferences. Later in this section we feature a checklist that can be used for this purpose.

Ensuring an effective transition will be the responsibility of a staff member within the school who knows the young person well and a representative from the further education setting (for example, a transition coordinator, someone from disability support or a personal tutor). A Teacher of the Deaf should play a key role in this process.

Assessment of the student's needs

Good assessment is critical to a successful start to further education.

In a review of post-16 education for disabled students in 2011, Ofsted identified the attributes of the most effective assessments as including:

- the student's self-evaluation of any support requirements
- detailed consideration of documentation from previous providers and previous levels of attainment
- the perspective of parents about the type of provision they felt would be most appropriate
- the involvement of specialists (for deaf students this would include a Teacher of the Deaf and/or education audiologist)
- specialist assessments, where required, to identify specific adjustments such as enabling technologies, communicators and access to facilities
- consideration of support/adjustments needed to meet any specific course requirements such as oral presentations or residential fieldwork.





Prior to the student applying to a college, their local authority should have arranged an assessment covering:

- the current education situation, achievement and attainment
- future vocational aims/ambitions
- the student's main learning difficulties as detailed in a statement of special educational needs, Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or coordinated support plan including relevant audiological information
- any environmental, family or social issues that affect future plans
- current support provided at the school
- details of learning support that need to be put in place by the post-16 provider (for example, technology, communication support, additional tuition with basic skills)
- details of any support to enable the young person to access the college (for example, transport)
- any funding barrier likely to prevent accessing or succeeding in the chosen post-16 provider.

Any assessment should reflect the impact of the student's hearing loss on learning (see page 13). This should be completed by the end of January to give time for the college to make sure additional help and equipment is in place for the start of the academic year.

However, not all students will have received a sufficiently detailed assessment and many colleges feel they need to review and update the assessment to reflect this, the course finally chosen and examination results. An accurate profile of a deaf learner (created from an assessment) will inform effective teaching strategies, practice and provision of support. The following table features a checklist of assessment information that should be sought to ensure an effective transition from school to a further education setting.



Checklist: Information for the school to provide to assist with post-16 transition planning

Hearing and personal hearing technology	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
<p>In this section record:</p> <p>Degree and nature of deafness:</p> <p>Un-aided hearing level:</p> <p>Aided hearing level:</p> <p>Ability to discriminate speech in different environments (class, workshops, halls):</p> <p>Sounds/words that are difficult to hear:</p> <p>Personal hearing technology used:</p>	<p>In this section record:</p> <p>What needs to be done to improve access to sound, for example, using radio aids, improving acoustics, using soundfield systems?</p> <p>What needs to be done to ensure optimum use of hearing technologies?</p> <p>What are the health and safety implications, for example, fire drills, giving instructions in workshops where machinery is used?</p>
Communication	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
<p>In this section record:</p> <p>Preferred way of communicating in different locations and situations (class, home, friends):</p> <p>Competence in preferred way of communication:</p> <p>Lipreading ability:</p>	<p>In this section record:</p> <p>What needs to be done in the college to support access to teaching and learning, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seating position to allow for speech reading? • using radio aids? • using soundfield systems? • advice/training for the teachers/lecturers? • providing communication support workers with Level 3 qualification for students who use BSL? <p>What needs to be done in the workplace to facilitate good communication?</p> <p>What needs to be done to promote communication and social interaction with other students/work colleagues?</p>

Checklist: Information for the school to provide to assist with post-16 transition planning

Language	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
In this section record: Levels of understanding of language: Level of expressive language: Vocabulary level: Grammatical constructions: Social interaction and use of language:	In this section record: How does this compare with hearing students? What are the implications for learning (for example, more processing time)? If a gap exists, what targets should be set to close the gap and what support/interventions are required to achieve them? What are the implications for teaching? What are the implications for career choices and the workplace?
Cognition	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
In this section record: Non-verbal cognitive skills to: a) ensure teachers/lecturers have high expectations: b) check whether there are other underlying learning difficulties:	In this section record: What needs to be done to address any other underlying difficulties the student may be experiencing? What are the implications for career choices and the workplace?
Progress in curricular areas	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
In this section record: Progress in different curricular and extracurricular areas. Are there particular strengths? Are there particular difficulties?	In this section record: Is more support required in particular areas? What needs to be done to build on the strengths and address the weaknesses? What targets need to be set?

Checklist: Information for the school to provide to assist with post-16 transition planning	
Social and emotional aspects	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
In this section record: Level of social interaction in class/school, friendship groups:	In this section record: If low, how can they be increased? Do other students need deaf awareness training and information on how to communicate? What support can be put in place in the workplace?
Student's views	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
In this section record: What are the student's aspirations and concerns about moving on? What information and help do they think they need to ensure the move to college is a success?	In this section record: Provision of information and opportunities to help with the transition.
Parents' views	
Information required	Implications for transition plan
In this section record: What are the parents' aspirations and concerns about moving on? What information and help do they think they need to support the transition to college? What provision do they think is appropriate?	In this section record: Provision of information and opportunities to help with the transition.

Checklist: Information for the school to provide to assist with post-16 transition planning
Other considerations
Information required
Implications for transition plan
In this section record:

Any other information, for example:

- any other difficulties or medical conditions or medication needs:
- attendance issues:
- behaviour issues:

Existing support provided by the school:

Further advice on assessment

A Teacher of the Deaf can provide advice on the range of specialist assessments available to support deaf young people. In addition, the National Deaf Children's Society, in collaboration with the Ear Foundation and with support from the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) has produced a new online resource to support professionals in assessing and monitoring the progress of deaf young people in communication, language, listening, literacy, numeracy, cognitive development and social/emotional well-being.

The resource includes examples of a range of assessments commonly used with deaf children and young people of all ages. It also includes guidance on issues to consider when carrying out assessments as well as examples of assessments in practice. Assessments in other areas will be added to the resource over time.

The resource is aimed at Teachers of the Deaf and other professionals working with deaf children and young people. However, it may also be of interest to other professionals who would like more information on the assessments being carried out with a deaf pupil. The resource and an accompanying short video are available to download from **www.ndcs.org.uk/assessments**.

Information on initial and diagnostic assessment is also given on the Learning Skills Improvement Service's website at **www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/eg5378**.

Planning for a successful start to college

In its review of post-16 education, Ofsted identified the most effective outcomes of the assessment as being:

- an individual support plan which identified periods of review and possible adjustments to support
- an indication of training required for tutors and support staff working with the student
- a profile of the student's strengths and needs, and guidance for staff about effective strategies and ways of working with the student
- guidance for staff working in service areas of the college, such as the refectory or learning centres.

Following the assessment, the plan should set out timescales and who is responsible for ensuring that at the start of the academic year:

- intended outcomes and targets for the deaf student have been set up
- funding is available for additional support
- hearing technology is purchased and tested
- additional support staff with the required qualifications and/or competencies are available, including interpreters
- appropriate advice and training has been given to relevant staff on meeting the deaf student's needs and the technology used
- arrangements are in place to enable the student and staff to access specialist support
- any required improvements to the acoustic quality of teaching areas are made
- arrangements are in place to ensure curriculum differentiation
- the timetable is arranged to ensure as far as possible the student is taught in rooms with the best acoustic qualities and any additional tuition does not clash with other curriculum requirements.

Review of needs

As a young person's needs may alter and the demands of the course change it is essential that the student's progress is monitored and the assessment of need is reviewed. This should be done at least annually or more frequently if required and fully involve the student.

Checklist: Ensuring an effective transition into further education

The table below summarises the actions that should be taken to ensure that a deaf young person makes an effective transition into further education.

Has the deaf student been provided with comprehensive and independent advice and guidance so that they can make informed choices about the options for different courses that they can apply to?	
Is the above information accessible to deaf young people?	
Has the deaf student been provided with an opportunity to attend open days and taster sessions? Has communication support been provided, as appropriate, for these?	
Has the deaf student received support, where appropriate and needed, for the application process and for any interviews?	
Does the deaf student have a clear understanding of the transition process?	
Does the deaf student have the skills and confidence to participate in the transition process and self-advocate their needs?	
Does the deaf student have a named contact at the further education setting for any queries about the setting and/or support needs?	
Has a relationship been established between the school and the new further education setting to ensure information is shared as appropriate?	
Has there been an in-depth assessment of the student's needs and preferences? Has a specialist Teacher of the Deaf been involved in this process?	
Has the assessment informed the development of a transition plan that includes information on, for example, funding, equipment and specialist staff so that the setting can support the deaf student effectively from day one?	

For students already in further education

4

Supporting your deaf student in further education

“I think it’s imperative to support a deaf young person, to meet every need, I don’t think it’s just about them being able to succeed in a qualification. It’s bigger than that and I think quite often our deaf young people need support for their social skills and their independence and understanding the world around them. It’s that full package of support that enables these young people to achieve in the future. It’s not just about getting them through a qualification; it’s about everything else that goes alongside supporting them.”

— Professional, quoted in University of Manchester research

Deaf young people who may have coped very well at school without additional support may have increased support needs as they enter the less structured environment of further education. Colleges will need to be flexible to support these emerging needs.

In its review of post-16 education for disabled students, Ofsted found *“The best provision included some or all of the following features, depending upon the needs of learners:*

- *planned reviews of the adjustments made and support provided to evaluate their effectiveness and make any changes*
- *flexible arrangements so that learners could identify when they required more or less support*
- *a focus on capability and building on what learners did well*
- *opportunities for in-class support on a one-to-one basis or one-to-one support outside the classroom or for group support that focused on specific learning needs*
- *a mentor/key worker to remain a constant point of contact throughout a learner’s programme year to year*
- *use of technological devices such as digital recorders that enabled learners to become independent*
- *arrangements to ensure that employers understood fully what adjustments were required for learners.”*

This section sets out the measures further education providers can take to help ensure deaf students achieve.

“In my son’s college the whole college has a high level of deaf awareness – this is hugely helpful. They are not regarded as different and we are all on the same page. ”

— Parent of deaf student

“We look after ourselves – it’s not like school. ”

— Deaf student

The role of tutors and course leaders

Tutors and course leaders have the responsibility to ensure that the deaf student is fully included in all aspects of the course, can fully access lectures and tutorials and makes satisfactory progress.

“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! ”

— Deaf student

An effective tutor/course leader will:

- expect the progress of deaf students to be at least the same as hearing students of similar cognitive ability
- develop an understanding of the impact of deafness on a particular student
- work effectively with specialist advisers such as a Teacher of the Deaf (page 38) and specialist support staff, involving them in the planning of lectures/tutorials (page 39)
- evaluate the outcomes of additional support to inform future planning
- ensure that strategies to aid communication are implemented (see page 35)
- include the effective use of technology
- adapt teaching style and strategies to maximise the deaf student’s involvement and learning (see page 35)
- monitor the progress of the student and take advice from specialist support if issues emerge (see pages 38 and 39)
- develop and support measures to improve the social and emotional well-being of students (see pages 49–51)

- understand the significance of their influence on the aspirations and motivation of deaf learners
- take full responsibility for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including support staff
- support deaf learners to both work collaboratively with their peers and develop self-directed learning
- allow the student the opportunity to feed back on what is working well for them and what is not.

Where a deaf student will be working with a number of different staff, the tutor/ course leader or person responsible for students with special or additional needs may want to consider drawing up an information sheet or profile about the student that can be shared with all those who may come into contact with the student. The student will ideally be involved in drawing up this profile. An example is shown overleaf.



Sharing information

The following example information sheet⁴ can be distributed to staff in contact with the deaf student (with the student's permission).

--- Example: Information sheet to share with colleagues

<p>Student: _____ Year: _____</p> <p>Personal tutor: _____</p> <p>[Name of student] has [subject] with you:</p> <p>Timetable details:</p>	Photo
Background information	
Hearing loss, hearing technology and communication	
Factors affecting learning and access	
Teaching strategies to support (name of student)	
Exam arrangements	

4. Based on the NATED Initial Assessment Report. Developed with support from Carrie MacHattie, Sensory Support, Access to Education, Birmingham.

Student _____

Teacher of the Deaf _____

Date _____

Please contact Teacher of the Deaf to discuss support.

Contact details for Teacher of the Deaf:

All staff within a college should have received deaf awareness training, and those working closely with the deaf young person should have detailed knowledge and understanding of their needs. Deaf awareness training should also be delivered to other students. Vigilance that the young person's needs are being met should be the responsibility of all staff members. This needs to be monitored by the college lead for students with additional needs or disabilities.

Teaching strategies

This section briefly summarises the difficulties that may be encountered by deaf students and sets out strategies that teaching staff can use to minimise the impact that these difficulties can have.

Registering what is said during lectures

Many deaf students will not be able to receive the same amount of information as hearing students during lectures; it can be difficult to take in new information and make notes while listening and using visual clues.

It is therefore helpful to give deaf students and their specialist support workers copies of handouts, PowerPoint slides and lecture notes before a lecture. Students report that they appreciate pre-lecture tutorials so that they are aware of new terminology and concepts – this enables them to concentrate more fully in the lecture. Post-lecture tutorials provide an opportunity to check for understanding.

Language and specialist terminology

Deaf students may have difficulty in understanding and learning new terminology in many subjects, particularly when complex specialist terms are introduced for the first time.

It is therefore helpful to provide glossaries of the key terms for the student and support staff prior to the lecture or course. Try to use plain spoken and written language and use open questions and other checks for comprehension. This will also be an important consideration for any support staff who may not have existing knowledge of specialist terms.

Student participation in discussion

For deaf students who use a notetaker, lipspeaker or interpreter there will be a gap in time between what a lecturer says and its reception by the deaf student. They may therefore lose the opportunity to participate in discussion.

It is therefore important to allow sufficient time for the deaf student to receive and respond to what the lecturer or another student says. Signposting who is speaking is very helpful.

Use of video clips or DVDs

It is important to ensure that any video clips or DVDs used or produced by the college have subtitles. If they are not available, then a transcript needs to be provided and/or the student should be able to see the DVD or video clip before or after the lecture with an interpreter or notetaker, with key information about what they should be taking note of. Alternatively, you may wish to pause the DVD or video clip at key moments throughout to summarise the content. Online video clips (such as from YouTube) may not always have subtitles or the subtitles might be of a poor quality so the student should be supported to access the content.

PowerPoint presentations

When viewing a PowerPoint presentation with low lighting, the deaf student will have difficulty reading manual notes from the notetaker, lipreading the lecturer or watching the interpreter.

It is helpful to provide a brief pause, with no speaking, between slides to enable the student to view the slide. Use of anglepoise lamps will enable the student to see the support worker and lecturer.

Demonstrating equipment

Deaf students cannot see the demonstration and watch the notetaker or the interpreter, or the lips of the lecturer, at the same time. It is helpful if the lecturer explains the equipment and what they will do with it before a demonstration. The explanation should be repeated during the demonstration and the student's understanding then checked afterwards.

In group work and discussions

It is helpful if a quiet area is found for group discussion. Seating should be arranged so that the deaf student is able to see the other students. Contributors should raise their hand so that the deaf student is able to identify and look at the person speaking. Where the student uses a radio aid, ensure other students in the group use the transmitter (microphone).

“One to one or a small group is fine but big group discussions are a pain. I miss who is talking... and then lose the plot.”

— Deaf student

Assessments

Reasonable adjustments will be required to ensure deaf students are assessed on an equal basis. The adjustments will need to take account of the particular needs of the student but should include:

- ensuring the deaf student has a clear understanding of the task and what is being assessed
- enabling the deaf student to use alternative methods to complete tasks where this is necessary, giving them credit for any additional tasks
- clearly written examination/test questions with short sentences and direct questions
- allowance for mistakes in syntax and grammar where a written assignment is set to assess knowledge and understanding of a subject, making the student aware of these errors so that they can be addressed
- ensuring a support worker is present for any group work that is being assessed
- ensuring students who do not use speech can use a signed interpreter for oral presentations.

Further information

The general advice above is based on two documents produced by the University of Wolverhampton (*A Guide to Good Practice of Staff Teaching d/Deaf students in Science and Engineering* and *A Guide to Good Practice of Staff Teaching d/Deaf students in Art, Design and Communication*). For more specific advice in these subjects (for example, experiments, teaching in workshops with machinery, health and safety considerations) please consult these documents: www2.wlv.ac.uk/teachingdeafstudents/.

The role of the Teacher of the Deaf

Many deaf students will require support which should be provided by a specialist Teacher of the Deaf who holds the mandatory qualification in deaf education. If the setting does not have a Teacher of the Deaf as part of its support team, regular visits from a visiting Teacher of the Deaf should be arranged.

Planning for the deaf student's start at college should have already identified the level and type of support required from specialist staff. This should be kept under review, taking account of the student's progress.

The Teacher of the Deaf should:

- help tutors/course leaders to have a clear understanding of the impact of deafness on the student
- advise tutors/course leaders on ensuring access to the curriculum, including communication, teaching and learning strategies
- provide advice on how to improve the acoustic quality of teaching spaces
- assist tutors/course leaders with planning to ensure inclusion for the deaf student
- assist tutors/course leaders and the student in maximising the benefits of technology
- advise, train and support learning support staff and communication support workers
- help college staff monitor deaf students' progress through carrying out specialist tests and assessments and assisting in interpreting standard tests
- work directly with individual deaf students to enhance their skills and understanding, both of the course concepts and of language and functional skills in language and literacy
- undertake regular group work with deaf students
- advise on meeting the social and emotional needs of deaf students
- advise on the adjustments that can be made to enable equal access to examinations.

Additional support for learning

Some deaf students may have less well-developed literacy, language skills and other skills. Because of this they may find the content of the course more challenging than hearing students. Additional one-to-one tuition or tuition in a small group will often be essential to support the student's attainment targets and develop their language and literacy skills.

Additional tutorials should normally be delivered by a qualified Teacher of the Deaf. Some students will value support by regular email. These sessions may involve:

- reinforcing new vocabulary and concepts being taught
- structuring and reinforcing revision of course content prior to formal and informal assessment
- providing opportunities to guide students in their planning and approach to assignments. This may also include help with referencing and researching
- providing specific learning support in terms of language, literacy and numeracy
- pre-tutoring so that the deaf student has some of the general knowledge and terminology required prior to starting new topics
- post-tutoring to ensure the student has fully understood the lecture.

The sessions should also include:

- developing the student's independent learning skills, encouraging them to articulate their own needs
- opportunities for students to discuss any social issues they may have so they can be addressed as soon as possible.

Specialist communication and learning support staff

Many deaf students will need additional support to access what the tutor and other students are saying. There are different types of specialist support worker:

- communication support workers
- notetakers
- sign interpreters
- lipspeakers.

The needs of each student will determine the nature of the support that is required. Sometimes more than one type of support may be necessary.

Communication support worker

A good communication support worker will be a highly skilled professional with a qualification in communication support. Duties typically include:

- supporting students by interpreting between spoken English and British Sign Language (BSL), notetaking and lipspeaking
- supporting students with understanding and producing written material in class
- adapting learning materials so that students understand them more easily
- suggesting ways that the school or college environment can be improved to make it easier for students to use hearing aids or lipread.⁵

Communication support workers can also take on a role of key worker: ensuring hearing technology is working, promoting deaf awareness in the college and supporting the student's independence and social integration.

An effective communication support worker will develop a good understanding of the student's language level and needs. The communication support worker will develop a good rapport with the student and allow them to take the lead when required. If they support a sign-dependent student the communication support worker should have a minimum qualification of BSL Level 3.

“I would like a notetaker and communication support worker and prompter all in one go.”

— Deaf student

Notetakers

A deaf student who is concentrating on listening and lipreading or watching an interpreter cannot take notes at the same time. A notetaker writes down what is being said in lectures and tutorials. They record everything that is happening in the lecture/tutorial which the deaf student reads as the notetaker writes – it can also be read later. To ensure effective support the notetaker should have an OCN qualification in notetaking for students with disabilities or NVQ/Stage 2 or 3 in notetaking.

Notetaking can be done either manually or electronically. Manual notetaking may be preferable in subjects where many diagrams, formulae or flow charts are used and during visits away from college. Sometimes the language may be modified to suit the reading skills of the student. The notetaker should record as far as possible student discussions, asides, jokes, etc.

An electronic notetaker types notes into a laptop connected to the student's laptop. Special software, such as Speedtext, Stereotype and Typewell, enables the student to add their own notes. Electronic notetakers use a normal 'qwerty' keyboard and therefore cannot type at the same speed as spoken language.

5. Taken from the FAQ page of the Association of Communication Support Workers website: www.acsw.org.uk.

Palantypist/speech-to-text reporter

A palantypist/speech-to-text reporter will type a verbatim transcript of what is being said which is delivered in real time. It may be possible for this support to be provided remotely with the reporter listening in via Skype and the transcript being provided by a webpage.

“I landed lucky with my notetaker – he enabled me to listen to the lecturer while he wrote up the notes for me to read later.”

— former deaf student

Sign language interpreters

A sign language interpreter interprets what is said into British Sign Language (BSL) and/or Sign Supported English (SSE), depending on the student's preference. They may also translate written documents into signed versions or vice versa. They may also voice over what a deaf student is saying if their speech is difficult to understand.

An interpreter would not normally assist the deaf student in completing their tasks, provide explanations or advocate for the student. In this way their role differs significantly from that of a communication support worker.

Professional interpreters are registered with the Association of Sign Language Interpreters or Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

Lipspeaker

A lipspeaker is trained to produce perfect lip patterns using unvoiced speech. They will sit facing the deaf student providing the optimum lip movements to aid lipreading, reproducing the rhythm and phrasing of speech as used by the speaker and incorporating facial expressions and natural gesture to clearly convey the message. Depending on the needs of the deaf student, a lipspeaker may also use additional forms of communication support such as fingerspelling.

A lipspeaker works with deaf students who have a good understanding of English, often people who have become hard of hearing or deafened after acquiring spoken language. To ensure effective support, lipspeakers should have an NVQ/Stage 2 or 3 qualification in lipspeaking.

To ensure effective specialist support for a deaf student the college should ensure that:

- all specialist communication support staff have the appropriate qualification and skills
- support staff are available at all appropriate times, including for meetings, trips, work experience placements, formal interviews and social events organised by the college
- if a professional interpreter is to be used they are booked in advance
- there is sufficient time for the lecturer and support staff to liaise and plan the course and lectures so that preparations are made to support the student
- notetakers have access to technology
- ongoing training is provided which is appropriate to the role support staff are required to undertake such as key working, use and maintenance of technology, subjects the student is studying
- the student is able to negotiate the type of support they require and feed back on the effectiveness of the support
- the effectiveness of the support is evaluated.

More information on the specialist staff working in further education and the qualifications they should hold can be found in Appendix 4.

Making it easier for deaf students to listen and communicate

“My biggest problem is people don’t know enough and need instruction like being able to speak clearly and providing the best support.”

— Deaf student

Communicating with deaf students

To help the student understand what you are saying:

- allow the student to see your face to aid lipreading. Try not to impede their view of your face with hair, hands or objects or by turning to write on the whiteboard
- stay at the front of the room and minimise moving around. Ensure you are not standing with your back to a light source (for example, the interactive whiteboard or a window), as a shadow cast across the face can impede recognition of lip patterns
- ask the deaf student where they would prefer to sit, as this will aid communication depending on their type of hearing loss and the hearing technologies they use. The student’s cochlear implant or hearing aid

has an optimal range of one metre in which to access speech clearly. A location just back from the front to the side enables the student to view most clearly what is being said by students around the room. Speak clearly and at your normal pace

- be aware that speaking too slowly or over-exaggerating your mouth patterns will make it harder for the student to understand, distort the speech signal and make it more difficult to lipread. Both shouting and whispering make mouth patterns and the speech signal more difficult to understand
- make sure that you have the student's attention before you start talking
- check that the student understood what was said. Repeat or rephrase what you have said if the student has not understood. Repeat contributions and questions from other students – this will benefit hearing students too
- work with specialist communication support staff to deliver the lecture at an appropriate pace for signing and notetaking. Speak directly to the student and not the communication support worker or interpreter
- ensure audio material is subtitled/captioned, offer a transcript or provide an overview during the lesson
- check that the hearing technology is working
- if a lecture requires lights to be turned off (for example to watch a DVD) make sure all spoken instructions or explanations are given before the lighting is dimmed
- be aware that brightly coloured clothing or big, colourful earrings can be distracting and/or make it more difficult for lipreading
- monitor how well the student is able to communicate with their peers and how well they respond.

Additional technology

For those using hearing technology of any kind, large rooms, poor acoustics, background noise and large groups make listening and accessing what is said difficult. The college can make it considerably easier for the deaf student (and others) by providing additional technology and by managing background noise and acoustic conditions.

Radio aids

Radio aids are essential for some deaf students. They reduce the problems caused by the distance between the student and lecturer and by background noise. A radio aid carries the tutor's voice directly to the student's receiver attached to their hearing aid/bone conduction hearing implants or cochlear implant. Radio aids consist of two parts:

- a transmitter worn by the lecturer
- a receiver worn by the student.

The voice is then carried via radio waves directly to the receiver worn by the student.

Advice should be sought from a qualified Teacher of the Deaf or educational audiologist about which system best suits the student's needs, its effective use and its maintenance.

When using radio aids, lecturers and tutors are reminded to:

- ensure the transmitter is switched on
- wear the microphone about 15cm from the mouth
- check with the student that the aid is working
- switch it off or mute the microphone when having a conversation that the deaf student does not need to hear
- avoid standing in a noisy place, such as next to an overhead projector or open window, as the microphone will pick up background noise and transmit this to the deaf student
- avoid letting the microphone knock against clothing or jewellery.

Soundfield system

A soundfield system reduces the impact of distance between the speaker and student. The tutor's voice is transmitted via a microphone to a base station placed within the room. This amplifies and enhances the speech and then broadcasts it from speakers that are carefully positioned around the room. This enables the tutor's voice to be accessible, at normal conversational levels, across a significant area.

Loop systems

Loop systems reduce the background noise. A microphone picks up sound from the speaker (or a radio/TV) and feeds it to a wire loop running round a room. The student in the room then switches their hearing aid or cochlear implant to a T setting so that it picks up sound from the loop.

Loop systems are not widely used in educational settings, but may be available in some lecture rooms.

An effective college will:

- check that deaf students are able to manage their own personal hearing technology, including ensuring the correct settings and its maintenance
- support the student to organise the repair or replacement of personal technology if required
- provide radio aids to students who require them
- ensure that all relevant staff know how to make effective use of technology and its limitations
- designate a suitably trained member of staff to oversee the maintenance and repair of the equipment and undertake troubleshooting tasks
- ensure there is a spare radio aid available or knowledge of how to obtain one quickly in the event of breakdown, as without it the student will be unable to access the course effectively.



Acoustics and background noise

No technology can replace normal hearing and its effectiveness depends on the acoustic quality of the college. The listening environment can make it difficult for deaf students to make best use of their hearing technologies. Adaptations that can be made to improve the acoustic quality of teaching spaces (reduce reverberation/echo) include carpets, blinds or curtains at the windows, low ceilings with acoustic tiles, plenty of soft surfaces, including wall displays and reduced noise from heating systems.

✚ Background noise can be reduced by

Managing the room	Managing the lecture
Closing doors to noisy areas or corridors	Introducing strategies that establish and maintain a quiet working atmosphere, including good behaviour management
Closing windows to outside noise, closing curtains and blinds if necessary	
Positioning full bookshelves and cupboards against partition walls (to minimise noise transfer from other rooms)	Encouraging students to develop an understanding of how noises such as chairs scraping, doors banging, dropping objects and talking while others are speaking can interfere with what the deaf student can hear
Ensuring heating and air conditioning systems operate within acceptable noise levels through regular maintenance	
Turning off IT equipment such as interactive whiteboards, computers and overhead projectors when not in use	Waiting for students to be quiet and settle down before giving instructions

The National Deaf Children's Society has developed a range of resources called *Creating Good Listening Environments for Learning in Education* which provide advice and guidance to schools and local authorities on how to:

- create a better learning environment to improve the attainment of all children and young people and particularly those who are deaf
- prepare their Accessibility Plans and Disability Equality Schemes as required by the disability and special needs legislation
- meet their 'anticipatory' duties under the Equality Act (2010).

These resources are available online at www.ndcs.org.uk/acoustics.

An effective college will:

- ensure that staff are aware of the need to manage background noise
- undertake an acoustic audit of its buildings and use this as a basis for planning improvements (including investment in soundfield systems)
- ensure that deaf students are taught in areas that meet minimum acoustic standards.

Access arrangements for examinations

Many deaf students are entitled to certain adjustments for their examinations. **These arrangements should be in place early on in the course, especially if there is a coursework or modular element to the assessment process.** The support they get in exams and assessed coursework must reflect the support they usually receive.

The deaf student may be allowed:

- extra time (generally 25% but can be 50% or even 100% in special circumstances)
- supervised rest breaks
- assistance from a scribe, reader, BSL interpreter, oral language modifier (OLM)⁶ or prompter
- word processing
- a transcript of any oral/aural component.

Deciding what arrangements should apply requires a full understanding of the student's communication and learning needs, the nature of the assessment, the criteria for adjustments set by the awarding body and familiarity with the adjustments available.

The application for adjustments will require the college to provide evidence. The examinations officer should work with professionals supporting the student to ensure the correct adjustments are in place, particularly the Teacher of the Deaf.

An effective college will:

- decide on access arrangements for an individual student at the start of a course
- complete all application procedures early so that modifications are available throughout the course
- ensure that all modifications are in place for each exam.

6. The task of the OLM is to respond to a request from the candidate for clarification of the carrier language in the examination. They must not explain any technical terms and a modified paper has to be ordered and used. The paper can be opened an hour before the start of the exam to allow the OLM time to prepare. The OLM would usually be the student's Teacher of the Deaf.

For further information on access arrangements for examinations, see:

- National Deaf Children's Society's factsheet for parents, *Access Arrangements for your Child's Examinations*
- Joint Council for Qualifications: www.jcq.org.uk – access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration for candidates in England and Wales
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA): www.sqa.org.uk – introduction to access arrangements for schools and colleges.

Social support

Deafness may have a significant impact on a student's social experience because of difficulties with communication. Up to 40% of deaf children and young people experience emotional or behavioural difficulties.⁷

It can be difficult for deaf students to talk in a group and to follow fast-moving conversations. For those who use sign language, making friends may not always be easy, especially if there are no other BSL users present. This may have an impact on confidence and learning. In research by the University of Edinburgh,⁸ two thirds of young people in the study sample mentioned that they had been bullied or felt isolated because they were deaf.

The college can help facilitate friendships and encourage the student to take responsibility for managing the impact of their deafness within social situations by providing a support worker who can:

- ensure other students understand the nature of the deaf student's difficulties and help them communicate effectively with the deaf student, suggesting adjustments if necessary
- encourage conversation and socialising and suggest to the student strategies for initiating relationships
- provide communication support for college clubs and societies
- help the deaf student to develop the confidence and skills to let others know when communication is difficult.
- provide a 'peer mentor' scheme whereby a deaf young person is able to get in touch with or obtain support from other deaf students in a nearby college or university.

7. NHS. *Mental Health and Deafness: Towards equity and access*. (Department of Health, 2005)

8. University of Edinburgh, *Post-school Transitions of People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing* (National Deaf Children's Society, 2013)

Lunchtime can be particularly difficult for a deaf student so it can be extremely valuable to provide a quiet area for the deaf student and their social group to meet for lunch. It is often beneficial to bring deaf students together by encouraging them to organise regular meetings or events, which could help reduce loneliness.

If problems of loneliness persist, involvement in the local deaf community might help and the student could be referred to social workers for deaf people, the local deaf club or social networks.

It may also be useful to arrange for students to meet with a deaf adult who will understand their feelings more readily and give them strategies for coping. Just being deaf does not qualify somebody for this sensitive role. Care should be taken in selecting a deaf adult who has the necessary training, skills and experience of mentoring and knowledge of professional boundaries and codes of conduct to fulfil this role.

Deaf awareness training for hearing students

It is helpful if fellow students are made fully aware of the problems presented by deafness and what they can do to make sure that the deaf young person feels included and a valued member of the group. Some deaf students may feel understandably uncertain about drawing attention to their needs in front of the rest of the group and such training should only be carried out in consultation with the deaf young person. Experienced support staff or a Teacher of the Deaf could facilitate this training.

Counselling

There may be times when a deaf student needs additional support to help them to come to terms with their deafness, academic worries, problems at home or relationship difficulties. It is important that the deaf student is made aware of the college's counselling service and how to access it.

If the student's difficulties are complex and relate specifically to their deafness, a professional who is used to working with deaf young people should be involved. Colleges should refer young people to other agencies if they feel that their internal support mechanisms cannot address the student's needs. For example, college students could be referred to social work services for deaf people, local mental health services or specialist deaf child and adolescent mental health services⁹ for those up to the age of 18.

9. There are a small number of specialist deaf CAMHS across the UK which your local CAMHS should be aware of. The National Deaf Children's Society Freephone Helpline can also help identify nearby deaf CAMHS.

An effective college will:

- provide communication support for social occasions when requested
- be sensitive to the social needs of the deaf student and recognise if a student is lonely or isolated and act to address this
- facilitate relationships between the deaf student and other students
- provide opportunities to meet other deaf students/people
- ensure the student's key worker and/or support worker knows how to raise confidence and encourage socialising
- employ support workers who can recognise and manage the possibility of a student becoming so reliant on support that it inhibits the ability to socialise and become independent
- make deaf students aware of how to contact counselling services provided in college
- ensure that counsellors have appropriate training prior to working with a deaf student so that they know how to communicate with the student, are aware of deafness and its possible implications on emotional well-being and know where to seek specialist advice
- ensure that an independent sign language interpreter or communication support worker is available if requested by the student
- refer to outside agencies if the problem cannot readily be sorted or escalates
- direct students to advocacy services.

Transition to university or work

A successful transition out of further education will require input from a range of different agencies, and the college should facilitate this relationship management between, for example, the young person, parents, careers advisers and employers. College staff must also have regard to non-educational outcomes: personal development, independence skills and emotional well-being.

Deaf students will need support from experienced members of staff who understand their needs to help them decide what to do after they have completed further education and prepare for the future. Information on the full range of options available across education, employment and training, the range of support available in these settings and how to access them will need to be provided.

All teaching and learning should maintain a focus on vocational relevance, and deaf learners should understand how current tasks relate to their future aspirations.

“We did not know what was available in the future, we do not know what we can do. To be informed about choices so that you can be prepared with confidence and to be assertive to say what you want for your future, that would have been a great help. ”

— Deaf student

Deaf students are likely to need:

- plenty of information and the opportunity to discuss future options (for example, what will the job involve? What qualifications or experience are required?)
- first-hand experience through work experience placements
- help in identifying issues they may encounter in another education establishment or at work and in considering possible solutions
- help in identifying the type of support they may receive at university or in the workplace (for example, information on the Access to Work scheme or Disabled Students' Allowance)
- help in applying for Access to Work funding or Disabled Students' Allowance and dealing with the possible difficulties in this process
- help to ensure that those assessing the application have a full understanding of the implications of the hearing loss and required support
- advice on making applications and completing application forms for work or university
- help in identifying higher education establishments and courses most suited to the student's requirements and in contacting the university's disability service
- help in preparing for interview, including rehearsing, and knowledge on how to ensure appropriate communication support is available
- help in discussing the new experience and environment, developing new friendships and ways of informing new work colleagues or other students of their deafness.

“I think for me the new experience 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 [...] But usually I try to play it down. And then hopefully ask for their support later! ”

— Deaf jobseeker

Where students are moving to higher education, the university disability service team will value information on the support needs of the deaf young person.

The following table¹⁰ sets out a number of considerations for a deaf student's transition into higher education.

Steps to take during transition	This means	When?*
Consider and discuss possible future pathways. Preliminary decisions may determine subject choices, for example	Support from independent careers adviser, supplemented by discussions with Teacher of the Deaf	Year 9/S3 onwards
Consider university choices	Discuss choices with Teacher of the Deaf and careers adviser	Year 12/S5
Visit universities	Visit disability support service (DSS) at the university and ask about available support	Year 12/S5
Complete application	Work on your personal statement with school and Teacher of the Deaf	Autumn term Year 13/S6
Prepare for interview if asked to attend one	Request any communication support from the university	Spring term Year 13/S6
Apply for grant and tick disability box. This generates an application form to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)	Return form	Summer term Year 13/S6
Following your application you may receive an invitation to a DSA assessment	Ask Teacher of the Deaf if they can supply a letter based on the headings on the National Graduate School in Education (NATED) initial assessment headings Gather any medical evidence as requested Be honest and open about your needs	Summer term Year 13/S6
University place confirmed	Before start date, make contact with DSS to confirm support in lectures and equipment needs with university	August/September (before starting)

* References to S3, S4, etc. apply to Scotland

10. Developed with support from Carrie MacHattie, Sensory Support, Access to Education, Birmingham

Work experience

For all young people, work experience forms a core part of their further education studies. It can help them to explore opportunities in the labour market and inform their future choices. For deaf young people, this can be particularly important, providing them with supported experience in the workplace and helping them to make appropriate decisions for their future.

The student may require support from their Teacher of the Deaf and the college to assist with prior visits and information about communication and technology needs. This is an opportunity to help the young person to prepare their response to queries about their hearing loss and for the independent management of any communication or technological needs.

Work experience can provide a real opportunity to experience the wider world and to contribute towards future vocational choices – particularly if they are encouraged to think more widely and to follow their interests.

The college should ensure that communication support is available and provided during any work experience placement.

Information for young people

The Buzz contains and signposts to further information about work experience, apprenticeships, university, becoming independent, communication support, technology and moving into employment: www.buzz.org.uk/myfuture.

Information for parents

Parents can find information on education and future career options for their child on our website by visiting www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool.

Reviewing effectiveness of provision for deaf learners

The checklist below provides some measures colleges could use to evaluate their success in meeting the needs of deaf students.

Data showing deaf students make at least satisfactory progress in line with hearing students with similar starting points.	
Data showing that the college has 'added value', with deaf students making greater progress than hearing students (i.e. the gap in attainment between deaf students and all students on entering college is narrowing).	
Evidence which shows the students have achieved individual learning goals (for example, the student has made significant improvement in functional skills such as language, literacy and numeracy, from assessed levels on entry to college).	
Evidence that deaf students have improved the quality of their work over time.	
Evidence that deaf students gain qualifications, skills and knowledge that will enable them to progress to their chosen career, employment and/or further education and training.	
The dropout rate of deaf students from courses compares favourably with other students.	
The destinations of deaf students compares with other students.	
Deaf students report that the college environment is welcoming to them, they are respected and they have opportunities to comment on and influence the provision that is made for them.	
The take-up of opportunities to participate and be involved in the life of the college (for example, student union/council, social events and course representatives) by deaf students is similar to other students.	
Deaf students develop independence and personal and social skills and have a good circle of friends. Deaf students are able to self-advocate their needs confidently.	

Checklist: Ensuring effective support within further education

The table below summarises the actions that should be taken to ensure that a deaf student is supported effectively within further education so that they can achieve their potential.

Does the tutor/course leader have a good understanding of the deaf student's needs and the impact of their deafness on their learning? Do they have high expectations of what the deaf student can achieve?	
Has information about the deaf student been shared with staff within the college (assuming that the student has agreed to this)?	
Does the tutor/course leader have a good understanding of the different teaching strategies and reasonable adjustments that should be made? This includes, for example, ensuring that lectures are accessible and that the student receives support, as needed, on language and specialist terminology.	
Has specialist advice been sought from a Teacher of the Deaf?	
Where needed, does any additional support clearly match the needs of the deaf student? Have steps been taken to ensure any communication support is in place consistently where needed? Is the support provided by qualified staff?	
Is the tutor/course leader clear on the steps they need to take to ensure effective communication within lectures and classes? Is hearing technology – such as radio aids – being used effectively?	
Have steps been taken to improve listening conditions within the learning environments?	
Have appropriate arrangements been put into place from early in the course for access arrangements for any examinations?	

Has the college considered what social support is needed by the deaf student?	
Is there a comprehensive transition plan for any transition the deaf student is making into employment or higher education?	
Does the deaf student have clear and accessible information on their options?	
Is support in place to help deaf students with applications and interviews?	
Where applicable, has information been shared with higher education placements?	
Have any links been made with local employers to ensure there are suitable work experience opportunities?	
Is the college reviewing the effectiveness of its provision for deaf learners through, for example, attainment data?	
Is the college monitoring the extent to which the deaf student can explain and manage their own support and needs? Does the student need additional support around self-advocacy?	

Appendix 1: Types and levels of deafness

Conductive deafness and glue ear

Conductive deafness occurs when sound cannot pass through the outer and middle ear to reach the cochlea and auditory nerve in the inner ear. The most common cause during childhood is a temporary build-up of fluid in the middle ear known as 'glue ear'.

For some children glue ear can reduce hearing considerably for a protracted period and this has a significant impact on learning and progress.

Sensori-neural deafness

Sensori-neural deafness results from damage to the inner ear. It is generally caused through loss or damage to the hair cells in the cochlea that means the cochlea is not processing sound effectively or, in some cases, when the auditory (hearing) nerve itself is not working.

Congenital and acquired deafness

Congenital deafness refers to children who are born deaf. Other children acquire deafness due to illness, accident or a late onset genetic condition.

Levels of hearing loss

Deafness is measured in two ways:

- how **loud** the sound has to be so that the young person can hear it, measured in **decibels**
- which frequencies (pitch) the young person can or cannot hear, measured in **hertz**.

Each young person's deafness is different depending on which frequencies are affected and how loud a sound has to be before they can hear.

Few young people are totally deaf. Most young people can hear some sounds at certain pitches and volumes, known as their 'residual hearing'. There are different degrees of deafness classified as follows.

Mild hearing loss

Although for many young people mild loss does not require audiological interventions such as hearing aids, in terms of education it can mean a significant loss.

- Students can usually hear everything that is said to them in a quiet room, but not if there is background noise or if they are far away from the speaker.
- A student would not be able to follow a whispered conversation.
- Some students with a mild hearing loss will use hearing aids.

Moderate hearing loss

- Most students with a moderate hearing loss will use hearing aids.
- Without hearing aids a student is likely to be able to hear most of what someone says to them within a quiet room as long as they speak clearly.
- With hearing aids they are likely to be able to follow a conversation within a quiet room.
- They will find it extremely difficult to follow a conversation in a large group, if there is background noise or they are far away from the speaker.

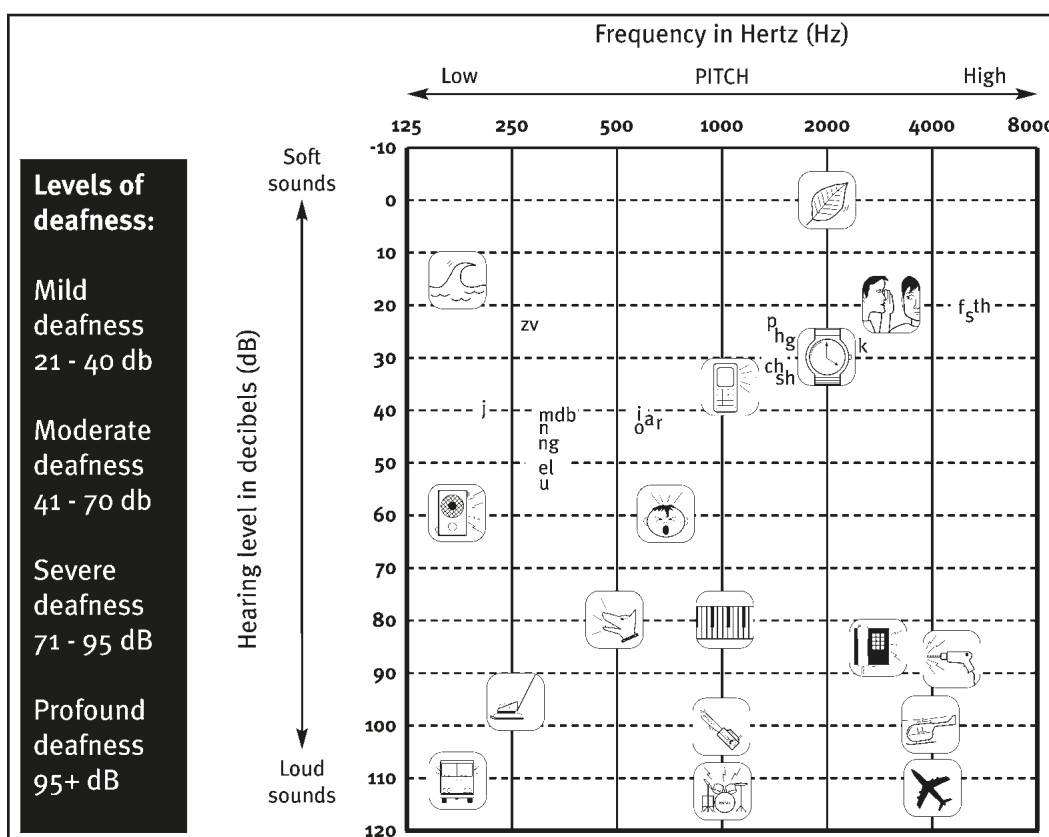
Severe hearing loss

- A student will be unable to access conversation at normal levels without hearing aids or a cochlear implant but may be able to hear loud sounds such as a dog barking or a drum.
- With hearing aids or a cochlear implant most students will be able to follow a conversation within a quiet room provided that the speaker is within two to three metres of them.
- A student is likely to require additional communication support, for example sign support or lipreading, to understand speech in the presence of any background noise or within a group conversation.
- In the presence of background noise the student may find it extremely difficult to understand speech even with communication support.

Profound hearing loss

- The majority of profoundly deaf students will use a cochlear implant or hearing aids.
- Without a cochlear implant or hearing aids a student will not be able to hear speech or other sounds. They may be able to feel very loud sounds such as a lorry passing them in the street.
- Without a cochlear implant or hearing aids the student is likely to use a sign-based language to communicate directly with another person.
- With cochlear implants or hearing aids the student may require additional communication support for example, through sign language or cued speech to access speech, especially within background noise or within a group conversation.
- In the presence of background noise the student will find it more difficult to understand speech.

Visual representation of the loudness and pitch of a range of everyday sounds



This diagram is based on the British Society of Audiology definitions of hearing loss.

Some pupils may have a malformation of the inner ear – an absence or malformation of the cochlear or auditory nerve. This will mean they will have no access to sound at all. In these situations hearing aids or cochlear implants would offer no benefit. The student will therefore use sign language as their main means of communication.

Unilateral deafness

- There may be little or no hearing in one ear, but ordinary levels of hearing in the other.
- The student will be unable to localise sound and follow group conversations and will find it difficult to understand speech in the presence of background noise.

Auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder

Auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder occurs when there are faults which affect how sound is transmitted along parts of the auditory nervous system. It affects the brain's ability to process all sound including speech. Pupils will experience fluctuating hearing levels and often find it difficult to access speech, especially in the presence of background noise. Some pupils with auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder will use hearing aids or cochlear implants; others will not find them beneficial and therefore not use them.

Deaf culture

About 10% of deaf young people have deaf parents. These families often use British Sign Language (BSL)¹¹ as the first language of the home. Other families may also choose to use BSL as a first language with their family members. These families, and indeed many other deaf young people and adults, consider deafness as a culture rather than a disability. Within their community they are able to communicate and function effectively with each other. They describe themselves as 'Deaf' with a capital D. British Sign Language is the language of the Deaf community.

11. Where the deaf student lives in Northern Ireland, Irish Sign Language may be used.

Appendix 2: Personal hearing technology

It is likely that your deaf students will rely on various hearing technologies. The following is an overview of the types of technology you may come across, how they work and what limitations they have. It is important to note that hearing technologies do not replace normal hearing.

Hearing aids

A hearing aid amplifies sound and is worn in or behind the ear. It has three basic parts: a microphone, amplifier and speaker. Modern digital hearing aids can be programmed very closely to match the wearers' hearing loss and provide a radically different listening experience compared with those of the past for deaf people.

Hearing aids are designed to maximise the hearing the wearer has (known as their residual hearing). If the student has no measurable hearing at all at certain frequencies, especially the higher frequencies such as 'ss' and 'th' then a hearing aid will not improve this.

For more information on hearing aids see the National Deaf Children's Society's resource *Hearing Aids: Information for families*.





Cochlear implants

This is a surgically implanted hearing device that can provide access to spoken language for many profoundly deaf people. A profound hearing loss occurs when there is significant damage to either the cochlear hair cells, which are the mechanism by which sound waves are converted into electrical impulses that the brain can then interpret, or to the auditory nerve itself. A cochlear implant works by stimulating the auditory nerve directly so bypassing damage to the cochlear. If an implant is fully functional then it can provide the user with access to sounds across the full range of speech frequencies. For many users this gives them access to speech in good listening conditions.

More information on cochlear implants can be found in the National Deaf Children's Society's resource *Cochlear Implants: A guide for families* or you can visit www.soundingboard.earfoundation.org.uk.



Bone conduction hearing implants

A bone conduction hearing implant is designed for people who have a functioning cochlea but the middle or outer part of the ear prevents the information reaching the cochlea in the usual way.

It consists of a sound processor that is held on the head behind the ear. This might be clipped to a fixture, known as an 'abutment', a small titanium screw that has been implanted in the skull just behind the ear (known as a bone-anchored hearing aid) or with a magnet holding the processor in place. This allows sound to be conducted through the bone rather than through the ear canal and middle ear. This allows sound waves to be transmitted directly to the cochlea in the inner ear.

For more information see the National Deaf Children's Society's resource *Bone Anchored Hearing Aids: Information for parents and families*.



Radio aids

A radio aid carries the teacher's voice directly to the pupil's receiver attached to their hearing aid, bone conduction hearing implant or cochlear implant. It reduces some of the problems presented by distance from the teacher and background noise. The microphone and transmitter are worn by the teacher and the receiver is worn by the student and attached to their hearing technology such as a hearing aid. Some radio aids can be used by students without personal hearing technology by wearing an earpiece receiver. This may be particularly useful for students with unilateral deafness with the earpiece worn in their good ear.

Most pupils will have their hearing technology programmed to allow them to hear from both the radio aid and their surroundings so that they can hear other students as well as the teacher. However, it is possible to programme their hearing technology to only hear the radio aid. The microphone can be passed to students speaking in group work or class discussion to aid clarity. The radio aid transmitter can also be connected to equipment such as televisions or computers to assist clarity.

For further information see the National Deaf Children's Society's resource *How Radio Aids Can Help*.



Soundfield systems

Soundfield systems rely on a radio or wireless microphone worn by the teacher and loudspeakers, which are placed around the room. They project the teacher's voice at a consistent level around the classroom. These systems can improve the listening conditions for all students.

Portable systems are available that can be moved between learning spaces as required. Some systems can link with other classroom equipment such as interactive whiteboards.

A student may need to use radio aids alongside the soundfield system and both can be set up to work side by side.

Appendix 3:

Communication options

The information below covers the variety of communication options that deaf students in your college may use.

Spoken language

Most (more than 90%) of deaf children are from families with no first-hand experience of deafness and where spoken languages are used. It is important to remember that whichever language is used in the home, some deaf students may still experience a significant delay. In many cases, spoken language will be supported by signing and lipreading.

British Sign Language (BSL)

Deaf young people with deaf parents who use BSL as their first language are likely to also have BSL as their first language. BSL is a visual language that uses hand shapes, facial expression, gestures, body language and fingerspelling. It has a structure and grammar different from that of written and spoken English. Many students using BSL will also use spoken English. Some students may grow up with spoken language but choose to learn BSL as they grow up. Deaf young people brought up by deaf parents will often start school with age-appropriate or near age-appropriate language in BSL.

Some deaf students in Northern Ireland may use Irish Sign Language instead.

Sign Supported English (SSE)

For many students their spoken English may be supported with signs taken from BSL. When signs are used to support spoken English in this way it is known as Sign Supported English. This is used to add clarity to what is being said, for example, in situations where they may struggle with background noise or if they are too distant from the speaker.

Speech reading/lipreading

Speech reading or lipreading has an important role in helping young people access spoken language. Lip patterns of spoken words can help the deaf student identify what is being said, supporting the interpretation of the speech sounds that can be heard. If used on its own it has a number of limitations but it is a natural support to understanding spoken communication that everyone uses and is especially helpful to the deaf student.

Appendix 4:

Specialist staff working in further education

Language support providers (LPS)

Qualified communication support worker (CSW)

A qualified support worker in education, communication and sign language. Should be qualified to a minimum of level 3 in BSL. There are also additional qualifications available to communication support workers.

Qualified BSL/English interpreter

Qualified to translate between languages with specialist training in interpreting. Should be qualified/registered with NRCPD* and hold a Level 6 qualification in BSL.

A trainee BSL/English interpreter should be undertaking an approved interpreter training course that leads to registered status.

Qualified notetaker (electronic and manual)

Qualified to make precise notes during lectures, tutorials, etc. Should be qualified/registered with NRCPD and hold a relevant qualification.

Qualified speech to text reporter (STTR)

Qualified to make verbatim notes during lectures, tutorials, etc. Sometimes known as a palantypist. Should be qualified/registered with NRCPD and hold a CACDP Level 3 notetaker qualification.

Qualified lipspeaker

Qualified to relay the content of lectures, tutorials, etc. using clear speech supported by fingerspelling, gesture or sign. Should be qualified/registered with NRCPD to a Level 3 standard.

Trainee lipspeakers may instead be qualified to a Level 2 standard.

Qualified deafblind communicator/guide/interpreter

Qualified to communicate in BSL, hands on sign, block and fingerspelling and to guide in the environment. Should be qualified/registered with NRCPD deafblind communicator/guide to Level 3.

Oral language modifier

Qualified to modify language during examinations, usually a Teacher/Tutor of the Deaf, CSW or interpreter.

Teaching/tutoring**Qualified Teacher of the Deaf**

A qualified teacher with specialist qualifications (usually to postgraduate level) in deaf education, including audiology, with minimum requirement of BSL Level 1. Additional qualifications may include BSL, linguistics and adult literacy/numeracy.

Tutor of BSL

A qualified teacher in post-16 education. Additional qualifications in BSL (up to Level 6) and linguistics of BSL.

Educational audiologist

A qualified Teacher of the Deaf with an additional qualification in audiology and hearing assessment.

*NRCPD – The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People

** CACDP is the previous name for the awarding body now called Signature.

Appendix 5: Useful resources

Action on Hearing Loss

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Association of Deaf Education Professionals and Trainees

www.adeptuk.co.uk

Association of Lipspeakers (ALS)

www.lipspeaking.co.uk

The British Association of Teachers of the Deaf

www.batod.org.uk

Deaf Action

www.deafaction.org

Deaf Connections

www.deafconnections.co.uk

National Careers Service

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

The Ear Foundation

www.earfoundation.org.uk

The Ewing Foundation

www.ewing-foundation.org.uk

Signature

www.signature.org.uk

About the National Deaf Children's Society

The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people across the UK. We support deaf children, their families and the professionals who work with them, and challenge governments and society to meet their needs.

We provide information on all aspects of childhood deafness and hearing loss including:

- education
- audiology
- benefits
- technology
- communication
- additional needs
- parenting.

At the National Deaf Children's Society we use the term 'deaf' to refer to all levels of hearing loss in children and young people, including a partial or total loss of hearing. This includes those who may describe themselves as having a 'hearing loss', 'hearing impairment' or as 'deaf', and includes those with temporary deafness, such as glue ear. We support all deaf children and young people, regardless of their level of deafness, how they communicate or what technical aids they use.

Got a question?

Our Freephone Helpline can answer your questions about any issues relating to deaf children's education or development. Give us a call on **0808 800 8880**, email us at **helpline@ndcs.org.uk** or take part in a Live Chat at **www.ndcs.org.uk/livechat**. You can also order our publications through the Helpline.

Raising awareness

Deafness isn't a learning disability. With the right support, most deaf children and young people can achieve the same outcomes as other students. We produce lots of resources to support professionals who work with deaf children and young people to promote best practice and raise expectations. Our guidance, written by expert Teachers of the Deaf, set out the interventions and reasonable adjustments that can be made in education settings to improve deaf children and young people's outcomes.

All of our resources are **free** to download or order. They include:

Assessing and Monitoring the Progress of Deaf Children and Young People

Here to Learn DVD: A resource for schools. Also online at www.ndcs.org.uk/heretolearn.

Look, Smile, Chat Deaf Awareness Pack

Bullying and Deaf Children: A guide for primary and secondary schools

Creating Good Listening Conditions for Learning in Education

To order any of our free resources, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/publications or contact the National Deaf Children's Society Freephone Helpline.

About our free support

We support families from initial diagnosis to adulthood across education, health and social care in a range of ways including:

- free information resources for families including our seasonal *Families* magazine and email updates with the latest news and family stories
- a Freephone Helpline offering clear, balanced information – we offer a free interpreting service for families who do not speak English as a first language
- local support from our Children and Families' Support Officers
- events where families can meet one another and get support from professionals
- support for mainstream art, sport and leisure organisations to run their activities in a deaf-friendly way, with free resources at www.ndcs.org.uk/me2
- Technology Test Drive loan service that enables deaf children and young people to try out equipment, including radio aids, at home or school.

Buzz website

Our Buzz website is a safe space where deaf children and young people can get support. It also provides deaf young people with a range of information on education and growing up. www.buzz.org.uk

Find us on YouTube

We have a YouTube channel full of videos starring deaf teenagers, parents of deaf children and the professionals who work with them, available from www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam.

For more information about the National Deaf Children's Society:

Visit our website: www.ndcs.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NDCS.UK

Twitter: twitter.com/NDCS_UK

Become a professional member

Join the National Deaf Children's Society for free today by calling our Freephone Helpline on **0808 800 8880** or go to www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support.

About the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP)

The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) is a partnership of organisations working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with sensory impairment (SI). The agreed purpose of NatSIP is:

- to improve educational outcomes for children and young people with sensory impairment, closing the gap with their peers, through joint working with all who have an interest in the success of these young people
- to help children achieve more and fulfil the potential of children and young people who have SI
- to promote a national model for the benchmarking of clear progress and impact criteria for children and young people who have SI
- to support a well-trained SI workforce responsive to the Government agenda for education
- to inform and advise the Department for Education in England and other national agencies on the education of children and young people with SI
- to promote collaboration between services, schools, professional bodies and voluntary bodies working with children and young people who have SI
- to promote collaborative working between education, health and social care professionals in the interest of children and young people who have SI.

For more information about NatSIP and to access to resources, visit **www.natsip.org.uk** – a major gateway for SI professional practice.

The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

**National Deaf Children's Society's Freephone Helpline:
0808 800 8880 (voice and text)**

Email: helpline@ndcs.org.uk

www.ndcs.org.uk

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www.natsip.org.uk



Department
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