Childhood deafness: whose experience is it anyway!
Anda Bayliss PhD and Molly Dibblebrowne PhD, Research and Insights, National Deaf Children’s Society
19th Annual Conference of the British Academy of Audiology, November 2023

This report brings together three surveys of parents and carers of deaf children, professionals and audiology services, run by the National Deaf Children’s Society. We summarise key perspectives and challenges and welcome the opportunity to discuss ways to work collectively for system improvement.

### 1. Deaf Children Today 2023

**Annual survey of parents and carers of deaf children**
- UK-wide.
- Running since 2018
- Experiences, reflections, beliefs, attitudes.
- Embedded British Sign Language (BSL).
- 80% found the support received at audiology was good/very good.
- Consistent year on year.
- Not much difference whether coming through Newborn Hearing Screening (NBHS) (81% satisfied) or not (78% satisfied).

#### Experiences of audiology services

Differences according to whether children had permanent or temporary deafness (82% v 71%), use hearing technology (only 60% of non-users found services good) and having used NHS (81%) or private (47%) audiology services.

**Referrals to audiology outside NBHS**
- GP or direct route equally likely.
- Nearly half were satisfied overall.
- The rest reported their concerns not taken seriously or acted upon; took too long to get appointment.

### 2. Listen Up 2022

**Annual survey of NHS paediatric audiology services**
- England FOI spring 2022.
- Running since 2017
- Service delivery information, challenges.
- N=114/124 (82%).

#### Service provision

- Caseload: Number of children with permanent childhood hearing impairment (PCHI) ranged from 21 to 1,124 (average 392).
- Hearing technology for gl dropped from 92% in 2021 to 75% in 2022.
- Waiting times: from newborn screening, 38% reported average ≤ 28 days.
  - Outside screening: only 61% reported average waiting ≤ 42 days.
  - Review of hearing aids: on average 62.5 days later than agreed.
  - No hearing aids users: 84% appointments delayed; ≥91 days than planned.

#### Staffing

- Drop in staffing levels in the past two years
  - 6.5 permanent full time equivalent (FTE) average per service (was 7.7 in 2019).
  - No increase in vacant posts (1.4 FTE average, was 1.5 in 2019).
  - Drop in temporary posts (1.2 FTE average, was 1.5 in 2019).
  - Only 19 services (17%) had trainees in post.
- Difficulties recruiting and retaining staff; some staff wanted to reduce their hours.

#### Quality assurance

- Low take up
  - Only 26 services (23%) currently accredited by Improving Quality in Physiological Services (IQiPs).

### 3. Professionals questionnaire 2023

**National Deaf Children’s Society survey of audiologists**
- UK-wide.
- May/June 2023.
- N=97; 35% deaf.
- Working in variety of settings.
- Most working with children aged 0 to 19.

#### Challenges faced by audiologists

- Many audiologists view the National Deaf Children’s Society as a credible source of information and guidance for families.
- Audiologists are using their leaflets to give to families at diagnosis.
- Families are being signposted to the National Deaf Children’s Society for further information (via websites).
- Audiologists are mindful that they give families a lot of information following diagnosis and do not want to overwhelm them.

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ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/professionals/research-and-data/paediatric-audiology/
anda.bayliss@ndcs.org.uk
molly.dibblebrowne@ndcs.org.uk