



**RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF  
PUPILS WITH A  
HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

**EFFECTIVE WORKING  
WITH  
TEACHING ASSISTANTS  
IN SCHOOLS**

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## GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations have been adopted in the text:

BSL	British Sign Language
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSW	Communication Support Worker
DFE	Department for Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
NDCS	National Deaf Children's Society
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SSE	Signed Supported English
TA	Teaching Assistant
ToD	Teacher of the Deaf

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# 1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE

*'There is clear evidence that there is a positive effect on pupils' progress where teaching assistants are effectively trained to deliver specific support programmes, alongside well-planned lessons..... We do know that the most effective deployment of teaching assistants is still patchy.'*  
(London Institute of Education – published by Department for Education and Skills 2009).

*'Members of the wider workforce who were well trained and deployed appropriately made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when they provided **intervention for specific groups or individuals.**'*  
(Workforce Reform in Schools - has it made a difference? Ofsted 2010).

The purpose of this guidance is to help schools ensure there is effective support from teaching assistants (TAs) for pupils with a hearing impairment.

Effective working with TAs should:

- raise the achievement of deaf pupils, narrowing any attainment gap with other children;
- enable the inclusion of deaf pupils in school activities;
- encourage independent learning.

The guidance reflects findings from research commissioned by the Department of Education into the work of TAs and reviews by Ofsted and Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (Scotland).

## 2. DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

### 2.1 Deafness, hearing impairment and hearing loss

The term deaf is used to refer to all types of hearing impairment including a mild to profound hearing loss, a hearing loss in one ear and temporary hearing loss such as glue ear<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed description of the types and level of deafness see NDCS 'Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Children in Primary Schools' and 'Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Children in Early Years Settings'. Free copies can be downloaded from the NDCS website.

In most circumstances deaf pupils receiving additional support at school have hearing equipment such as hearing aids, cochlear implants and radio aids.

## **2.2 Teaching Assistants, Learning Support Assistants, Communication Support Workers**

There is a range of titles used to describe adults who provide additional learning support to deaf pupils. The most commonly used is teaching assistant (TA) although an increasing number of schools are using the title learning support assistant (LSA) to reflect that the focus of the job is on learning.

For the purposes of this document the term TA will be used to cover LSA.

For deaf children who use sign language to access the curriculum, the adult supporting them is a communication support worker (CSW).

There may be occasions when schools may use a qualified sign language interpreter. A sign language interpreter interprets what is said into British Sign Language (BSL) and/or Signed Support English (SSE). They may also voice over what the deaf pupil is saying. However they would not offer the wider education support provided by a CSW and they are not used to a significant extent in mainstream schools.

## **2.3 Definitions**

A TA is defined in this document as an adult who is employed to support the learning, social and emotional development and access to the curriculum of deaf learners.

A CSW falls within this broad description but also has a specific role defined as ‘a professional who generally provides bilingual communication support working for individuals or groups of deaf learners’<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice for Communication Support Workers (2007). National Association for Tertiary Education for Deaf People. [www.nated.org.uk](http://www.nated.org.uk)

### 3. IMPLICATIONS OF DEAFNESS ON LEARNING: THE NEED FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

*‘Support from additional staff, including Teachers of the Deaf, learning assistants or communication assistants, was the most significant resource which enabled access to the curriculum.’ (Count Us In - Achieving Success for Deaf Pupils. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education – Scotland).*

#### 3.1 The need for support

Pupils who are deaf cover the whole range of ability. They have the same potential to attain and achieve as any other pupil given the right levels of support and access to the curriculum.

Most teaching and learning takes place through the main senses of sight and hearing, presenting pupils who have hearing difficulties with particular challenges which often need to be addressed with support from specialist staff including TAs.

The development of effective communication and language skills is the key to successful emotional social development, learning and inclusion in school. The difficulties posed by hearing loss to developing language and communication are well documented and evidenced in the under-achievement of deaf pupils.

All schools are now expected:

- to ‘narrow the gap’ between different groups of learners in their schools, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disabled pupils and others who do not have SEND;
- to be proactive in providing for any known barriers that might impede pupils’ smooth personal and educational development and progress. Under the Equality Act (2010) there is a clear duty placed on schools (and others) to ensure that pupils have access to the support they need to overcome barriers to their learning and inclusion and to monitor carefully how effective they are in enabling access and inclusion for all.

### 3.2 Barriers to deaf pupils' development

By working with a child's teacher and Teacher of the Deaf (ToD), the TA can make an important contribution in supporting deaf pupils to overcome barriers that can impede the pupil's development in many ways:

- **Educational progress** - deaf learners do not have the same access to information; the incidental learning experiences (particularly those which are linguistically based) are limited; everyday conversation and communication is not as easily accessible as that of their hearing peers.
- **Language and communication skills including literacy** - despite early identification of a hearing loss, too many deaf children are entering school with delayed communication and language skills, which impacts on the successful acquisition of literacy skills. Some still have underdeveloped language skills during secondary school with much lower levels of literacy than hearing pupils of the same age and similar ability.
- **Social inclusion and interaction** – as this becomes more linguistically based and the pace of interchange and repartee increases, deaf pupils can become more isolated. If their preferred language is BSL, many deaf pupils are limited with who can communicate fluently with them in their preferred language and therefore social interaction and conversation can remain at a rudimentary level.

*“I was getting more self conscious, feeling left out and nearly giving up in listening to what people were saying as I found it hard. I was also getting stressed.” (Deaf teenager)*

- **Self esteem** - for example, one pupil with a hearing loss described himself as *“... always seeming behind and never catching up. It makes me feel everyone else is cleverer than me; they must be too; I am in all the bottom groups.”*

Hearing aids and other audiological technology enable the pupil to access sound more effectively but they do not replicate normal hearing or restore it. The pupil is still at significant risk of not being able to access the detail of what is being said to them without support.

In particular, deaf children will need support for extending and developing age appropriate language skills if they are not to fall further and further behind in their learning.

TAs can play a vital role in minimising the barriers to learning, social development and inclusion in a range of ways which are described in detail in the next section.

*“If I didn’t have any extra support in the classroom, I would detest school. Unthinkable. Arrrgh.”* (Pupil with a hearing impairment)

## **4. TEACHING ASSISTANTS: ROLE, DUTIES, SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDINGS**

### **4.1 The role of a TA**

TAs play a vital role helping the teacher ensure that deaf pupils access learning and participate in the life of the school. They help to minimise the barriers to accessing the curriculum and support the inclusion and achievement of deaf pupils.

Their involvement in supporting deaf pupils’ learning has traditionally been threefold, recognising the impact of hearing loss on learning:

- To further secure the communicative, language and listening development of the pupil so that any gap between the pupil’s current level of development and that of their peers is reduced.
- To ensure the pupil is able to access the lesson and achieve the objectives set for him or her.
- To ensure the pupil is socially included and has similar opportunities to be involved and to contribute to lessons and the school community as other pupils.

TAs have supported specialist interventions specifically aimed at helping deaf pupils improve:

- their attending and listening skills;

- their language and literacy levels and communication skills;
- their access to lessons and social experiences.

The TA's role is practical and 'hands on' with the pupil, focused on ensuring the objectives of the pupil's personal education plan or individual education plan are being implemented. This includes ensuring that everyday experiences and opportunities for incidental learning and extension of language and concepts are seized on so that learning is reinforced in a variety of contexts.

TA support aims to enable achievement, independence and self determination and not the learned helplessness that some of the literature identifies. This means TAs will not simply support the content of lessons but may also:

- devise materials that enable the pupil understand a concept better or
- spend more time discussing an idea with a pupil so that the next steps/targets in their language and communicative development are enhanced.

TAs may be asked to carry out specific watching, listening or language activities to help accelerate an aspect of the pupil's development that is holding back learning. They may also need to be involved in ensuring that the emotional needs of the pupil are understood and met. This will involve deaf awareness and the ability to foster emotional resilience and independence.

The allocation of learning support time to a pupil will generally be linked to a detailed assessment of need, the challenges they might face as a learner and their individual education or personal learning plan. Regular evaluation of the impact of the support should be in place and be centred on outcomes relating to the pupil's personal and academic targets.

A qualified ToD would normally advise and support classroom teachers and school staff and parents and carers in implementing such interventions and in identifying next steps for the pupil.

## **4.2 Specific duties of a TA**

The model job description in Appendix 1 describes the specific duties a TA will undertake in helping to ensure the objectives of the pupil's personal education plan or individual education plan are achieved. As part of the role

in implementing individual education plans TAs may be given responsibility for:

- **The technological equipment<sup>3</sup>** - ensuring that the pupil's technology and equipment is working and is being used as agreed with the pupil's teachers. This might include the checking of personal hearing aids and notification of faults, checking of FM systems and their use in classrooms, ensuring DVD and video materials are used with subtitles wherever possible, with transcripts being available if appropriate, ensuring audio equipment is connected to FM systems and encouraging the deaf pupil to work towards managing his/her own equipment

*"I can look after my own hearing aids and my radio aid. When I don't know what to do I put my hand up and ask the teacher"*  
(7 year old pupil)

- **Implementing learning programmes set by the teacher** - carrying out specific programme designed to promote a specific language or literacy or study skill that will enhance the pupils' more general access to the curriculum.
- **Pre-tutoring or post-tutoring** the pupil in individual withdrawal sessions or small groups, to enable the pupil to access curriculum more independently and to ensure that key concepts are understood and their associated language reinforced.
- **Adapting learning resources and teaching material** so that they are accessible and more understandable to the pupil.

### 4.3 Skills and understandings required

TAs who work with deaf pupils fall into the 'specialist' category of support staff and have a very specific role with an individual pupil.

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<sup>3</sup> The National Deaf Children Society has produced a booklet 'Hearing Aids Information for Families'. It contains information on what can be done to keep hearing aids in good working order and will provide practical advice for Teaching Assistants on how they can discharge their role. The NDCS also has produced 'Quality Standards for the use of personal FM systems - Promoting easier listening for deaf children'. TAs will find this helpful in maintaining radio aid systems. Also pages 55-59 of 'Deaf Friendly Teaching' contain advice on technology. Free copies of all three documents can be ordered from the NDCS helpline 0808 800 8880 or downloaded from the website [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

The role requires a skilled trained professional who can anticipate aspects of a lesson that may not be understood by the pupil, help them access concepts and language used in lessons and facilitate their language, learning and development.

Appendix 2 contains a person specification for a TA identifying some of the attributes and skills, knowledge and understanding required if they are to provide effective support for a deaf pupil.

These attributes will differ according to the school, age of pupil and specific needs identified. When recruiting a TA it is essential to determine:

- The starting point for the TA in terms of the skills, experience and other attributes which must be evidenced and demonstrated on the application form and at interview.
- The TA's developmental needs in terms of training, coaching and support needed to develop sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills to be able to effectively support the deaf pupil.

A ToD should be able to advise schools on the person specification and the questions to ask to test whether candidates meet the specification. They may also be able to serve on interview panels.

## **5. THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION SUPPORT WORKERS/ SIGN INTERPRETERS**

*School can be quite noisy, so I have someone who helps me. She signs what the teacher is saying, so I keep up with everyone else. When I am playing sport, I have to take my cochlear implant out so she waves at me from the sidelines if the whistle's blown. I really enjoy school and my hearing friends practice sign language with me" (Secondary aged pupil)*

Some pupils require use of sign language to communicate and require sign support to access the curriculum. These pupils will be assigned either a CSW or in some cases an interpreter.

## **5.1 Qualified CSWs**

The CSW<sup>4</sup> will support pupils by communicating between spoken English and BSL and/or SSE to the best of their linguistic ability. To support the language development of children and young people, the support staff must have the requisite BSL skills for the academic level and be a positive linguistic model for the pupil in question.

Qualified CSWs will have a qualification in BSL at NVQ 3.

In some instances schools try to use support staff who interpret with only a level 2 qualification in BSL. However, with this qualification they will not be able to interpret the language used by teachers in key subjects in secondary schools and could experience difficulties in interpreting some of the language used by primary school teachers denying the deaf pupil the opportunity to access learning.

It is desirable that CSWs who work with BSL users also undertake interpreter training and achieve a recognised qualification in BSL/English Interpreting.

## **5.2 Qualified Sign Interpreters**

Sometimes a pupil will need access to a qualified sign language interpreter particularly as they get older and the language of lessons becomes more complex. Interpreters will interpret from the source to the target language accurately with no additions/omissions. To be a qualified sign interpreter they must have obtained a qualification such as a Level 6 in BSL/English Interpreting Level 6 NVQ. Interpreters do not offer education support beyond interpreting.

## **5.3 Guidance for Class or Subject Teachers**

When working with a CSW it is good practice for class or subject teachers to:

- Remember there is a time lag between what they say and it being interpreted. Thus for example if you ask the class a question, allow the pupil time to watch the CSW and form a reply.

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<sup>4</sup> A more detailed description of the role of CSWs is set out the Code of Practice for Communication Support Workers (2007), National Association for Tertiary Education for Deaf People, located on the website [www.nated.org.uk](http://www.nated.org.uk).

- Ensure the CSW has a copy of the lesson plan and resources (textbooks, videos etc) you intend to use so that they can prepare and ask questions if they don't understand anything.
- Plan activities so that the CSW has a break from signing and the deaf child a break from watching as interpreting and reading an interpreter can be hard, tiring work.
- Speak to directly to the deaf child and not the interpreter.
- Remember that the deaf pupil will be watching the CSW to access the lesson so try to avoid tasks that require divided attention. For example if carrying out a demonstration build in time so that the pupil can look at the demonstration and turn their attention back to the CSW, otherwise they will miss the explanation.
- Make sure there is space to enable the CSW to stand near them and the lighting is good

## 6. ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING SUPPORT

*'Members of the workforce who were well trained and deployed appropriately made a considerable difference to pupils' learning when they provided intervention to specific groups or individuals.' ..... 'When teaching assistants provided general support in class, they made less of a difference to pupils' learning.'* (Ofsted Workforce Reform in Schools 2010)

*"I have worked with deaf children for a number of years now. I think because I spend a lot of my time working with individual children I get to know them very well and I have a good understanding of their needs. At the school where I work teaching assistants take part in departmental meetings and we have dedicated time with teachers to plan lessons for the next term. As I know in advance what topics are going to be taught I can make sure that the materials are suitable for the deaf child and change any worksheets or resources. I also contribute to the children's individual education plans and annual reviews"* (Teaching Assistant)

*'Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting children with SEN in the classroom but only if there is clear thought to how they are*

*deployed, and they receive proper training to provide that support.'* (Lamb Report. Department for Education 2009)

## **6.1 Measures to support effective TA practice**

There are a number of measures the school leadership should have in place to ensure the TA provides effective support for pupils with hearing impairment. They include:

- Well trained staff with a continuing professional development (CPD) programme.
- Appropriate deployment of TAs focussing support on individual pupils or groups.
- Joint monitoring (Leadership team) of TAs in the classroom and discussion of outcomes.
- Ensuring clarity and understanding of roles of those involved in the pupil's education.
- Agreeing targets and intended outcomes for the deaf pupil and evaluating the impact of support and interventions and recording the outcomes of the lesson.
- Good collaborative planning and communication between teachers and TAs.
- Effective partnership working ensuring the use of consistent approaches.
- Giving TAs clear professional status and holding them accountable for their work.

## **6.2 Guidance for Class or Subject Teachers**

When working with TAs it is good practice for the class or subject teachers to:

- Provide TAs with copies of schemes of work and lesson plans in advance.

- Give TAs copies of any texts, books or resources that will be used in advance.
- Set aside time to meet with the TA to plan and discuss lessons.
- Explain the role they want the TA to take during different parts of the lesson.
- Remember that over time the TA is likely to have developed considerable knowledge of the deaf child. Therefore consult the TA about meeting the deaf pupil's needs and involve them in assessment and target setting.
- Keep the TA informed of the pupil's progress.
- Develop a relationship with the deaf pupil, remember they are the teacher and avoid relying on the TA to be the only person teaching the deaf child.

### **6.3 TA practice to be avoided**

The DfE funded Deployment and Impact of Support Staff Project (2009) identified possible **negative features of TA support** that needed to be avoided:

- The TA taking responsibility for task away from pupil.
- Prioritising the end product of task rather than understanding.
- Reactive and unplanned intervention.
- TA explanations that are sometimes inaccurate or confusing.
- TAs frequently supplying pupils with answers.
- Teachers delegating responsibility for teaching to the TA.

### **6.4 Clarity of roles**

The TA is part of a wider team supporting the pupil's learning and well being and it is important to be clear about respective roles of staff.

The **TA's** support is focused on improving the skills and access of the pupil such that they become increasingly independent as a learner. The TA may be involved in some direct teaching under the guidance of the ToD, class or subject teacher. The role of the TA for deaf pupils is described in greater detail in section 4 and the job description in Appendix 1.

The **class or subject teacher** is responsible for the overall teaching and learning of the pupil. This includes planning the TA's role in lessons and ensuring lesson plans are clear about outcomes. The class or subject teachers, in liaison with the SENCO, TA and ToD will:

- agree when and if the pupil might be withdrawn from a lesson for one to one or small group support including the objectives for such withdrawal;
- agree whether pre-lesson or post-lesson tutoring is required;
- be involved in the evaluation of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of the support provided to the pupil, monitoring progress towards targets and outcomes.

The **ToD** will be able to provide support and training to the TA and teaching staff and to advise on all areas of the pupil's development. In terms of supporting the work of the TA, the ToD can:

- advise on the use and maintenance of hearing equipment;
- undertake specialist assessments to inform the setting of learning objectives and provision of appropriate support strategies;
- advise on how deaf pupils can access all learning activities;
- support planning;
- advise on the outcomes that may reasonably be expected for deaf pupils when support is sustained and developed effectively over time;
- offer training and coaching.

## **6.5 Clarity of outcomes and evaluation<sup>5</sup>**

The effectiveness of additional support to pupils must be considered in relation to the clearly defined purpose and intended outcomes of that support – what is the support meant to achieve and is it working? The effective deployment and ultimate success of any additional support provided will be directly linked to:

- How clearly the priority learning needs of the pupil(s) and next steps have been identified and defined.
- How well these have been shared with and understood by those responsible for the pupil's learning.
- How the time available and the activities carried out in it are related to these priority needs.

The quality of targets set in the pupil's annual review and/or individual education or personalised learning plan are crucial in securing effective deployment of available support to the pupil.

## **6.6 Communication and planning**

Support from the TA should be discussed at the time of the pupil's entry to the school taking into account the views of parents. Agreement should be reached on how:

- the support available to the child and the school will be used;
- its impact will be reviewed;
- the class or subject teacher, ToD, support staff and others will plan together;
- the support staff and school will be trained;
- parents will be included;
- the views of the pupil will be taken into account.

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<sup>5</sup> For information on lesson planning, differentiation and curriculum planning see pages 41-43 of 'Deaf Friendly Teaching' produced by the NDCS. This can be ordered free from the NDCS helpline 0808 800 8880 or downloaded from [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

Measures the school can take to facilitate planning and communication include:

- Enabling teachers and the TA to make time to discuss lessons and the pupil's participation before/after the school day.
- Enabling the teacher and TA to work together to evaluate pupil progress and participation and plan and review short and medium term curricular plans and the pupil's objectives and targets.
- Ensuring the TA is invited to attend meetings where there are issues of relevance to them.
- Supporting TAs to take responsibility for planning and reviewing some specific learning opportunities ensuring they have the necessary training, knowledge and skills to do this.

### **6.7 Partnership working with parents and other agencies**

The school can support effective working relationships with other people involved in the pupil's education by:

- Being clear about the respective roles and responsibilities of the TA, teacher and SENCO for liaising with parents and other professionals supporting the pupils such as the ToD and Audiologist.
- Ensuring that where the TA is asked to liaise with parents and other professionals from outside the school this is overseen by the teacher/year teacher and/or SENCO, the TA is given time to record that contact and information is passed to relevant school staff.
- Ensuring the TA has the opportunity to meet to discuss pupil issues and give feedback to relevant people (e.g. ToD, SENCO).

### **6.8 Continuing professional development**

The TA's development needs will need to be identified and supported and continually reviewed. They will require support and guidance on appropriate strategies for supporting pupils with hearing impairment that are specific to the needs and objectives of the pupils.

Measures the school can take to support CPD include:

- A planned induction for the TA followed by regular review meetings that continue until the school and TA feel confident in their new role. The TA is offered a planned programme of mentoring/coaching including support from specialists such as the ToD, Educational Audiologist, Speech and Language Therapist.
- An ongoing CPD programme for the TA based on competencies required to undertake the role, their objectives and the monitoring of teaching and learning. A ToD will be able to provide support.
- Providing opportunities to attend externally provided courses leading to accreditation/qualifications, e.g. BSL, Online Inset, CSW Qualification<sup>6</sup> or equivalent.
- Enabling the TA to network with TAs in other schools, particularly those supporting children with a hearing impairment.
- Ensuring that the TA has clear objectives or performance management targets and opportunities for regular discussion with team leaders about their work and professional development needs, enabling them to identify specific requirements with regard to supporting pupils with a hearing impairment.
- Providing the TA with feedback on their performance including feedback from classroom observations.
- Providing training for the class or subject teacher on how to work effectively with teaching assistants and meeting the needs of pupils with a hearing impairment (ref. sections 5.3 & 6.2).

Where training needs are identified, there should be a clear timescale indicated by the school and service as to when the training will take place, how the impact of that training will be evaluated and when certain skills (such as the ability to check hearing aids effectively) will be in place.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the Signature website contains details of training for Communication Support Workers including the Level 3 qualification in BSL and Certificate in Learning Support (Communication Support Workers) Level 3. [http://www.signature.org.uk/qualification\\_specs2011-12.php](http://www.signature.org.uk/qualification_specs2011-12.php)

# **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX 1: MODEL JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **1.1 SCHOOL BASED TEACHING ASSISTANT OR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT WHO DO NOT REQUIRE SIGNED COMMUNICATION SUPPORT**

This job description can be modified to reflect the needs of the pupil and the school.

The duties of the TA and the emphasis put on each duty will depend on the needs of the pupil and the school context.

A qualified Teacher of the Deaf should be able to advise on how to adapt the job description below to best meet the needs of the pupil.

This model job description sets out the tasks/role in more detail than a normal job description to give those agreeing the final version a little more information on why the task is needed and how it is discharged. Having considered each duty, schools may want to reduce the quantity of text.

This job description is not appropriate for supporting a deaf pupil who is dependent on a signed support to access the curriculum.

## **JOB TITLE: SPECIALIST TEACHING ASSISTANT FOR HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

(Some schools may prefer the term Learning Support Assistant to reflect that the focus of the job is on learning).

**Reports to:** *(Give details of the line manager – e.g. the Special Educational needs Co-ordinator or another member of the school leadership team.)*

**Day to day management/supervision:** Class/Subject teacher.

**Guidance and Support:** Qualified Teacher of the Deaf

### **JOB PURPOSE**

Work with teachers to support the learning, educational progress and inclusion of pupil(s) with a hearing impairment, with the aim of narrowing any attainment gap they have with their hearing peers on entry to school. Give assistance to pupil(s) or student(s) with a hearing impairment so that they can access the curriculum, participate in learning, experience a sense of achievement and develop independence in learning and other aspects of school life.

### **MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES**

#### **Supporting the Teacher in the Planning, Delivery and Evaluation of Lessons**

- 1) Work in partnership with the teacher in the planning of lessons including the adaptations, materials and support hearing impaired pupils will need to be included and make progress.
- 2) Support the delivery of learning by:
  - Providing support as agreed with the teacher (and Teacher of the Deaf). This may include pre-tutoring support to ensure pupils have the necessary knowledge and familiarity with the vocabulary and concepts used in the lesson. It may also involve post-tutoring to check understanding, and reinforce key learning points.
  - Obtaining and using the agreed learning resources, adapting resources and teaching materials as necessary so that the pupil is

able to access the key ideas of a lesson and achieve the objectives set for him or her.

- Supporting the pupil(s) in following instructions.
  - Using praise, assistance and encouragement to motivate the pupil(s) and to help them stay on task.
  - Supporting the pupil(s) understanding of any follow up tasks set by the teacher.
  - Taking lesson notes, if required, to support deaf pupils' understanding of what is being said and the pupils' own record of lessons as deaf pupils may experience difficulty in lip reading what the teacher says and take notes at the same time.
- 3) Support the class or subject teacher in evaluating the deaf pupils' learning and access by:
- Providing constructive feedback to the teacher on the how the deaf pupil has responded to the lesson.
  - Discussing with the teacher any difficulties experienced in providing the support the pupil(s) needed.
  - Providing information on how well the child is engaging in the lesson, any difficulties they appear to be experiencing, work they find relatively easy and work they find more difficult.

### **Implementing Individual Learning Programmes for Pupils**

- 4) Support the development and implementation of individual learning programmes focused on delivering priority learning targets for pupils. (These might include work in the areas of language, literacy, personal, social and emotional development and numeracy as required). This will be achieved by:
- Working with the SENCO, class or subject teacher, and Teacher of the Deaf and other specialists where appropriate to plan and agree the programme which contains clear, challenging but achievable objectives for the pupil.

- Delivering the agreed programmes, under the guidance of the teacher, SENCO and the Teacher of the Deaf, focussing on .....(to be specified depending on the age and needs of the pupil but they are likely to include language, literacy and numeracy).
- Providing feedback to relevant colleagues about the pupil's progress towards targets and the effectiveness of the programme in securing this and the pupil's engagement.

### **Observing and Reporting on Pupil Progress**

- 5) Observe and report on pupil progress, gathering information about their knowledge, skills and understanding, including their progress towards targets to support teachers in re-assessing need, evaluating teaching strategies and interventions, setting new learning targets and formulating new learning plans.

### **Contributing to Maintaining Pupil Records**

- 6) Contribute to the maintenance of pupil records as agreed with the teacher and/or SENCO and help to maintain the record keeping system.

### **Using Technology to Support Pupils' (or the Pupil's) Learning**

- 7) Support the use of hearing aids and other technology to promote pupil's learning by:
  - Checking that the pupil's personal hearing technology is functioning (*in primary schools this would be daily and more frequently for the youngest children*).
  - Taking steps to ensure any problems with equipment are dealt with as quickly as possible.
  - Making sure that the technology is available and functioning and promptly informing the teacher/technician if there are any problems.
  - Checking the technology is switched on and ready for use and undertake basic maintenance and repairs.

- Support the pupil(s) and staff in the use of technology encouraging pupils to use the equipment independently.

## **Supporting Children's Emotional and Social Development**

- 8) Support social and emotional development by:
- Supporting positive behaviour giving praise and encouragement as appropriate to build confidence and self esteem.
  - Provide support to enable the pupil(s) to have the opportunities to participate in all school activities, to make choices and take decisions for themselves.
  - Encouraging pupils to evaluate their own progress and to take an active part in reviews of their progress, when appropriate.
  - Observing how pupils express their feelings and emotions and relate to others and feedback to the teacher and/or SENCO, recording any findings accurately.
  - Delivering programmes designed by specialists to support this area as appropriate.

## **Listening Environment and Learning Environment**

9. Working with colleagues to ensure the classroom and its layout provides a good listening environment.

## **Liaising with Parents**

10. Support teachers and SENCOs discharge their responsibility in involving parents by providing information on the pupil's engagement with learning and interactions with other pupils and helping to maintain home-school liaison records.

## **Continuing Professional Development**

11. Participate in training and other learning activities to develop the competencies to effectively support deaf pupils and to ensure knowledge and skills are kept up to date.

## **1.2 SCHOOL BASED TEACHING ASSISTANT OR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT TO WORK WITH A PUPIL WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT REQUIRING SIGNED SUPPORT**

The above job description will need to be changed if the pupil requires signed support.

The following would need to be added to the job description:

*Support pupil's access to the curriculum and participation in the life of the school by communicating between spoken English and British Sign Language or Signed Supported English depending on the pupil's communication preference.*

Depending on the needs of the pupil, it may also be necessary to add:

*Translate written documents into signed versions or what the pupil is signing into writing.*

and/or

*Voice over what a deaf pupil is saying if their speech is difficult to understand.*

In these circumstances, for the pupil to access learning and make progress, support will be required from a fully qualified Communication Support Worker and the post advertised as such. The Teacher of the Deaf can advise on when it is necessary for the pupil to have support from a qualified Communication Support Worker.

### **Cued Speech<sup>7</sup>**

If a pupil uses or requires the use of cued speech to develop language then support for this approach would need to be incorporated into the job.

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<sup>7</sup> For information of cued speech please visit the Cued Speech Association's website [www.cuespeech.org.uk](http://www.cuespeech.org.uk)

# APPENDIX 2: PERSON SPECIFICATION

## 2.1 PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR A TA SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT WHO DO NOT REQUIRE SIGNED COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

The person specification below indicates some attributes and skills which are essential if the deaf pupil is to be effectively supported. Some may not be part of the TAs skills and understandings on appointment but will need to be developed quickly through training and guided experience.

Ideally TAs supporting pupils with a hearing impairment should be able to demonstrate all the essential attributes given below at the point of appointment. However, hearing impairment is a low incidence need and it is recognised that candidates with the all required knowledge, experience and skills may not be living within reasonable commuting distance of the school. It is also possible that the school may already have a highly skilled TA in its employment with transferable skills who, with focussed training on aspects of specification they are not able to meet immediately, will be able to provide the support required for the pupil to access learning and make good progress.

The person specification below does not cover the requirement of a Communication Support Worker for a pupil who is reliant on signed support to access the curriculum.

Attributes of the post holder	Essential to have at the time appointed	Essential to develop with training	Desirable
<p><b>Education:</b></p> <p>GCSE 5 A-Cs grades including English and maths or equivalent</p> <p>GCSE A levels</p> <p>Education to degree level (or equivalent qualification on the National Qualifications Framework)</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X if supporting an A level student</p>		<p>X if GCSE student</p> <p>X</p>



<b>Skills and abilities:</b>			
Can check the functionality of hearing equipment and undertake basic troubleshooting and repairs	X much preferred	X to be acquired within the first 6 weeks	
Ability to take full, accurate and legible notes during lessons on behalf of the pupil so that they have a good written record.	X particularly in secondary schools		
Good communication skills – both oral and written	X		
Good communication skills with children and the potential for being an effective communicator with children with hearing impairment		X	
At least basic IT skills	X		
An ability to establish an appropriate balance between supporting the pupil to complete a task while encouraging independent learning and ensuring the pupil(s) has full understanding of the learning points of the lesson		X	
An ability to adapt materials and resources for lessons		X	
An ability to understand the lessons being taught so that pre-lesson and post-lesson support/tutoring can be offered to the pupil		X	
An ability to contribute to the planning and identification of strategies to meet the pupil's needs and the confidence to contribute with ideas based on detailed knowledge gained through supporting the pupil			
An ability to identify and gather information about the pupil's academic progress and personal development and share this with others such as the class teacher and SENCO	X		

<p>and Teacher of the Deaf</p> <p>An ability to observe and report to the teacher/SENCO/Teacher of the Deaf on pupil progress gathering information about their knowledge, skills and understanding.</p> <p>An ability to observe, record and report to the teacher/SENCO/Teacher of the Deaf the pupil's social and emotional development and his/her social relationships with other pupils</p> <p>An ability to develop an understanding of the school's arrangements for assessing pupil progress and record keeping and contribute to the maintenance of records</p>			
<p><b>Personal qualities</b></p> <p>An ability to establish good professional relationship and rapport with pupils and parents</p> <p>Good organisational skills and time management skills</p> <p>A preparedness and ability to take initiative</p> <p>An awareness and acceptance of the need for confidentiality</p> <p>A willingness to learn and to undertake further training to ensure the required knowledge for the post is kept updated</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>		

## **2.2 PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR A TA WORKING WITH A PUPIL WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT REQUIRING SIGNED SUPPORT**

It is crucial that the post holder is able to accurately interpret what is being said and can evidence this with the required qualification in BSL. This requires a qualified Communication Support Worker with a level 3 qualification in BSL. A support worker with a level 2 qualification will not be able to interpret the language used by teachers in secondary school lessons and could struggle to interpret much of the language used in primary schools. A Level 3 NVQ in BSL is the minimum required to give reasonable access to the curriculum.

However, recruiting CSWs with a Level 3 qualification has proved to be very problematic for schools. A practical but not ideal compromise therefore is appointing staff with a level 2 qualification and ensuring the CSW completes level 3 training in BSL.

If the student requires support from a qualified sign interpreter to access the curriculum to be qualified that person must have an Interpreting qualification.

### **Cued Speech**

If a pupil uses cued speech to develop language, then the ability to use cued speech to the required level of competence would need to be incorporated into the specification for the job.

### **Salary Grade**

This guidance does not provide detailed advice on pay and conditions but the additional responsibilities and skills required of the TA supporting a deaf child may need to be recognised within the school's grading and salary structure.

### **The Interview**

A qualified Teacher of the Deaf would be able to advise on the attributes that are most essential to meet the needs of a particular pupil and advise on questions that may be asked at interview to test the extent to which candidates meet essential criteria in the person specification. Interview panels will want to ask more generic questions such as "Why do you want this job and what experience do you bring?" Questions specific to the TA role may include:

1. Think about a deaf child (or if no experience of working with deaf children – any child with SEND) with whom you have worked.
  - What particular needs did he/she have when it came to learning?
  - Choose one of these needs and describe the support you provided.
  - Can you identify any ‘hidden’ needs that a deaf pupil might have?
2. Describe a situation where you felt that there was possibly a misunderstanding between yourself and the class teacher (Teacher of the Deaf, SEN specialist teacher) regarding the support for the child you were supporting.
  - How was the situation resolved?
  - What did you learn from this situation?
3. (If experienced in technology only) Describe the actions you take in your current/last post to ensure that the child’s hearing equipment was functioning effectively.
4. What is your understanding of safeguarding issues for a deaf pupil?
5. Describe a situation where the child might have been difficult to manage and/or motivate.
  - What did you do?
6. What do you think the main roles of a TA, in support of deaf pupils, are?  
(In a subsidiary question you can tease out task completion v pupil understanding).
7. Describe a situation where you have been asked to observe a child’s learning and then report back to the class teacher.
  - What were you looking for?
  - What did you feed back?

8. In the local supermarket, you meet the mother of a child you are supporting and she wants to know how her child is progressing – how do you respond?

Where a child requires sign support, a BSL assessment should be undertaken by a Deaf Instructor or a native BSL user.

# APPENDIX 3: CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY 1

### **Effective use of technology - hearing aid and radio aid first aid box *Rushy Meadow Primary School***

#### Brief description

Trained specialist Teaching Assistants (TAs) check the pupils' hearing aids and radio aids every morning. Mainstream staff have been trained to link up the younger pupils' radio aids to their hearing aids in the absence of the specialist TAs. Each class with a hearing impaired pupil is issued with a First Aid Box.

- The first aid box contains the following:
- Puffer (to dry condensation in the tubing)
  - Pack of spare hearing aid batteries
  - Rechargeable battery for Radio Aid/Transmitter
  - Stetoclip (for listening checks)
  - Spare leads and shoes
  - Antiseptic spray

Contact: Debbie E Staneva, Head of the Hearing Impairment Resource Unit, Rushy Meadow Primary School Rushy Meadow Lane Carshalton SM5 2SG

## **CASE STUDY 2**

### **Supporting the development of literacy skills *Holsworthy Primary School, Devon***

#### Brief description

The Teacher of the Deaf recommended a programme using cued speech aimed at developing the literacy skills of a pupil with profound hearing loss, a cochlear implant and a language disorder. Training was provided to the class teacher and TA. The pupil's mother was also offered training and supported by the TA to enable her to support her child at home.

Targets for developing literacy skills were agreed with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator (e.g. to be able to cue some single words, a group of THRASS words and then to cue a reading book). The Teacher of the Deaf visited weekly and provided written guidance for the class teacher and TA on next steps. These were followed with the TA taking notes on the pupil's progress.

Over a 12 month period the pupil expanded her use of some spoken vocabulary at home and school which had been very limited, she started reading books that were previously signed and began writing words using her phonological knowledge from a cue given rather than finger spelling the whole word.

Contact: Charlotte Lynch, Hearing Support Service, Devon  
[Charlotte.Lynch@devon.gov.uk](mailto:Charlotte.Lynch@devon.gov.uk)

## **CASE STUDY 3**

### **Coaching support for TAs and supporting access to the curriculum *Harrow***

#### Brief description

- (i) The Hearing Support Service employs an experienced specialist Teaching Assistant who offers mentoring and coaching support to school based Teaching Assistants.
- (ii) The Teacher of the Deaf works in partnership with the TA and class teacher to plan ahead to ensure curriculum access using weekly 'planning for access' sheets. The class teacher and TA liaise to record the curriculum for the week prior to the visit by the Teacher of the Deaf. There is then a discussion about what should be provided in terms of (a) pre-tutoring (b) teaching strategies and resources (c) additional support such as homework, involving parents, additional reading.

Contact: Pauline Grant, Head of Sensory Services, Harrow  
[Pauline.Grant@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:Pauline.Grant@harrow.gov.uk)

## **CASE STUDY 4**

**Access to the curriculum, supporting independence, supporting liaison with parents and pre and post tutoring  
*Mayfield Primary School, Cambridge***

### Brief description

TAs compile vocabulary books to support pupils' acquisition of new vocabulary across curriculum subjects and their understanding of how the vocabulary can be used in different contexts. Vocabulary is taken from teacher's planning and/or recorded during teaching input in lessons.

TAs illustrate new vocabulary with pictures/symbols/sign symbols/photographs and/or short explanations depending on the child's age and language level.

Where possible they involve the pupils in finding examples and sorting vocabulary into their book. Example: metal – pictures of items made from metal can be added to by gluing in a coin, some aluminium foil and then the child can be given a camera to collect photos of more metal objects around the school to consolidate their understanding.

Mind maps are also used in the books to group words into topics and categories and to show links.

The vocabulary books are used for discussion before and after lessons, in lessons for pupils to use independently and in future lessons to activate prior knowledge. The books can also be shared with parents by taking them home at weekends which gives the parents opportunities to see the areas of learning they can reinforce with their child at home.

Contact: Jo Brass, Cambridgeshire Sensory Support Service  
jbrass@mayfield.cambs.sch.uk

## **CASE STUDY 5**

### **Induction and training for TAs *Oxfordshire***

#### Brief description

A TA induction pack has been developed to support the TA taking ownership of their skill development when supporting a student as well as developing their awareness of their responsibilities in the work place in relation to both the setting and the Service. The pack incorporates both specialist knowledge requirements and wider expectations relating to workforce development. Key is encouraging the TA to think about the balance of support provided with a view to empowering the student to become independent – a simple independence tracking tool has been developed to track this as part of record keeping.

Contacts: Clare Lester/Helen Womack, Oxfordshire Sensory Support Service  
[clare.lester@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:clare.lester@oxfordshire.gov.uk); [Helen.womack@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.womack@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## CASE STUDY 6

### **Recruiting TAs** ***Mayfield Primary School, Cambridge***

#### Brief description

The interview process for new staff comprises 4 elements:

#### **Formal Interview**

Questions are asked to test the extent to which the candidate understands the role and meets the essential and desirable criteria in the person specification.

#### **Tour of school with pupils**

The candidate is shown around the school by some of the deaf pupils. This allows experienced TAs to comment on the candidate's interest in and ability to interact and communicate with the deaf pupils. The pupils also get to comment on the ease of communication and how well they are able to understand the candidate including how easy they are to lip read.

#### **Differentiation Task**

This task is used to test the candidate's understanding of the complexities of what may seem a straightforward learning activity. They are given a worksheet similar to one that they may have to support a deaf child to access and asked to demonstrate using pen, pencil, felt tips, coloured pencils etc. how they would differentiate the activity. The response always gives insight into the candidate's understanding of language levels, listening needs and even social and emotional development.

#### **Communication Task**

The candidates are asked to communicate a story and a science concept (life-cycle of a frog) to an experienced CSW as if they were a 5-year old deaf child using whatever communication skills and style they feel would be appropriate. This shows the candidate's current level of signing skills, ability to use eye contact, body language, facial expression and gesture to maintain interest and support communication and their overall aptitude for communicating or learning to communicate with deaf children.

Contact: Jo Brass, Cambridgeshire Sensory Support Service  
jbrass@mayfield.cambs.sch.uk

## **CASE STUDY 7**

### **Effective TA support as part of a multi-agency team *Mainstream School in Berkshire***

#### Brief Description

A TA supporting a Year 3 profoundly deaf pupil with bilateral cochlear implants in a mainstream school is a valued member of the multi-agency support network for this pupil.

The objective of the support is to ensure the pupil has full access to learning and the curriculum and is fully included in all aspects of school life.

The TA has accessed all training opportunities provided by the ToD and Cochlear Implant Centre.

She contributes to target setting/review at IEP and Annual Review meetings with parents, class teacher, SENCO, ToD and Speech and Language Therapist.

The TA supports the pupil discreetly. She promotes independence with equipment and learning, checks the pupil's understanding of tasks, provides additional resources which can be used by all pupils, observes the pupil and feeds back observations to the ToD, class teacher and parents.

The class teacher and TA work well together, planning and delivering lessons using excellent visual resources e.g. PowerPoint presentations and practical demonstrations. The TA, class teacher and ToD promote peer deaf awareness, enabling the pupil to work and play effectively with her peers.

A recent initiative by the TA has been planning for class swimming lessons. The TA was anxious to ensure the pupil's safety and enjoyment of swimming lessons without singling her out. Through discussion with parents, ToD, class teacher and SENCO, the TA has a plan of action which includes her idea of holding up a red card if the pupils need to evacuate the pool in an emergency.

Through the dedicated support of her TA and wider support network, the pupil is a very happy and popular girl who is achieving within the high

average range in core subjects as well as enjoying extra-curricular activities such as drumming and Beavers.

Contact: Hilary James, Teacher of the Hearing Impaired, Berkshire  
Sensory Consortium Service  
Hilary.James@RBWM.gov.uk

## CASE STUDY 8

### **Social interaction groups** ***Birmingham***

#### Brief Description

In Birmingham TAs are supported to develop and run social interaction groups for deaf pupils from Nursery to KS4.

The Specialist Support Assistant (SSA) from the peripatetic support service and the school based TA run the group and plan the sessions together. The SSA models good practice and builds up the school TA's skill set. Resources and idea sheets are available to enable social interaction groups to be run effectively and efficiently to achieve identified outcomes.

The aim is that the school TA is then skilled to run the group. This will continue until the deaf pupil has achieved the initial aim.

#### Aims for pupil:

- Confidence enhanced when participating in a small group
- Friendships promoted
- Focus on listening skills and confident use of equipment (e.g. radio aids)
- Focus on additional skills needed to participate in a group: sitting; looking; turn-taking; ability to focus on topic of discussion.

#### Aims for peers:

- Understanding of needs of pupil with hearing impairment
- Confidence using equipment ( e.g. sharing radio aid transmitter)
- Friendships promoted.

**Contact:** Cherry Thomas, Team Lead, Team for Children with Hearing Impairment, Sensory Support, Access to Education, Birmingham  
Cherry.Thomas@birmingham.co.uk

## APPENDIX 4: TRAINING PROVIDERS

Many Specialist Hearing Support or Sensory Support Services offer coaching support and training for Teaching Assistants. Schools are advised to consult their local service for details.

Some national organisations that offer training are listed below:

**Cued Speech Association** [www.cuespeech.org.uk](http://www.cuespeech.org.uk) runs workshops on how to learn cued speech.

**The Ear Foundation** [www.earfoundation.org.uk](http://www.earfoundation.org.uk) includes courses for teaching assistants in its annual training programme. These non-accredited courses are recognised by the DfE SEN Support Scholarship Scheme: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/careers/traininganddevelopment/funding/b00208137/sen-support-scholarship>

The **Ewing Foundation** [www.ewing-foundation.org.uk](http://www.ewing-foundation.org.uk) offers courses including one recognised by the DfE SEN Support Scholarship Scheme as well as the BTEC in Audiology Technology in Education Settings with **Mary Hare School**: [www.maryhare.org.uk/training\\_home](http://www.maryhare.org.uk/training_home)

**Mary Hare School** in partnership with **Berkshire Sensory Consortium** [www.maryhare.org.uk/teaching\\_assistant\\_courses](http://www.maryhare.org.uk/teaching_assistant_courses) offers training including the BTEC Level 3 Advance Level Qualification for Teaching Assistants working with sensory impaired young people (HI and VI). Mary Hare also offers a range of short courses suitable for TAs working with deaf children [www.maryhare.org.uk/training\\_home](http://www.maryhare.org.uk/training_home).

**On Line Inset** [www.sentrain.net](http://www.sentrain.net) offers an online certificated course (non-accredited) which involves 15-20 hours specialist tutor-led learning, including face to face training.

The **Signature** website [www.signature.org.uk](http://www.signature.org.uk) gives details of the Level 3 Certificate in Learning Support for Communication Support Workers, providing details of training centres around the country that offer this course.

## APPENDIX 5: EVALUATION FOR NatSIP

### EFFECTIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN SCHOOLS

#### Introduction

NatSIP is committed to the pursuit of excellence in its work to improve outcomes for children and young people with sensory impairment. To this end, NatSIP routinely evaluates and reports upon its initiatives. ***Your support in the completion and return of this brief evaluation questionnaire would therefore be very much appreciated.***

The questionnaire form is split into two parts. Part A concerns ***initial feedback*** on the publication before any of the guidance is put into action. This can be returned soon after receipt and consideration of the document. Part B, a ***longer term evaluation***, focuses on feedback with regard to any particular uses that have been made of the guidance and can be returned as and when any such applications have been completed.



Lindsey J Rousseau  
NatSIP Facilitator

Email: [lindsey.rousseau@natsip.org.uk](mailto:lindsey.rousseau@natsip.org.uk)  
Mobile: 07711 030711

## EFFECTIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN SCHOOLS

### EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE – HEARING IMPAIRMENT PART A – INITIAL FEEDBACK

Your name:	Organisation:
Role in organisation:	
Email:	

#### Having considered the document:

1. How helpful do you think this publication is likely to be as a resource for use in schools? Please rate by highlighting the appropriate number:

*Little/no  
value*

*Considerable  
value*

1

2

3

4

Please comment if you have any general observations about the resource.

2. Are there any particular aspects of the guidance you would like to introduce or put into practice in due course? If so, please summarise:

*Thank you for your time and support*

**Please return to:** Bob Denman **Email:** bob.denman@natsip.org.uk

**Postal address:** Rookmead, Main Road, Wellow, Isle of Wight, PO41 0SZ

## EFFECTIVE WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN SCHOOLS

### EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE – HEARING IMPAIRMENT PART B – LONGER TERM EVALUATION

Your name:	Organisation:
Role in organisation:	
Email:	

**If you have introduced or put into practice any aspect of the guidance:**

1. Describe briefly what was done:

2. If you are able to, please comment on any outcomes (e.g. any evaluation of training sessions delivered; any feedback on impact upon classroom practice; any feedback from pupils etc):

**Please repeat if you are reporting on more than one application:**

1. Describe briefly what was done:

2. If you are able to, please comment on any outcomes

*Thank you for your time and support*

**Please return to:** Bob Denman **Email:** bob.denman@natsip.org.uk

**Postal address:** Rookmead, Main Road, Wellow, Isle of Wight, PO41 0SZ