

Date: July 2016



ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIPS RESEARCH - SUMMARY

1. Introduction

A small piece of research was carried out for the National Deaf Children's Society on access to apprenticeships for deaf young people through a Whitehall Industry Group project.¹

A total of 72 parents of deaf young people, 19 deaf young people and 20 apprenticeship training providers were surveyed.

2. Main Findings

The main findings were:

- Apprenticeship providers unaware of advice or support available to deaf young people on apprenticeships.
- British Sign Language (BSL) qualifications are not recognised which can be a barrier to applying for and completing apprenticeships due to English functional skills requirements.
- Parents require more knowledge about apprenticeships and what support is available on them to support their child with making a decision on whether an apprenticeship is the right option for them.

We were informed that Deaf children could not do apprenticeships by our Local Education Authority's Connexion Service"

Parent of a deaf young person

- Young people reported inconsistent or unavailable advice and support to find and complete an apprenticeship.

... the government agency were useless. It was only through research with my mother that we could find out any information whatsoever. In fact my mother has becomes quite an advisor to my friends.

A deaf young person

- Apprenticeship training providers said that young person's quality of work does not suffer as a result of them being deaf. However, communication and social interaction can be difficult. Some providers commented on social anxiety and a reluctance amongst deaf apprentices to request assistance.

...Need a training pack for providers offering apprenticeships so that they work in partnership with the learner and the employer to prepare...

Apprenticeship provider

¹ The full report is confidential to the National Deaf Children's Society.

2. Recommendations

Recommendations included:

- Improved online information is required for parents, young people, training providers and employers in order to increase awareness of apprenticeships can work for deaf young people.
- Targeted information about deaf people on apprenticeships should be provided to careers and advice bodies in schools.
- There is a greater recognition of BSL qualifications to ensure that deaf young people who use BSL as their main language are not disadvantaged.
- Availability of one to one support and mentorship to deaf young people perhaps by means of a buddy system pairing ex-apprentices with aspiring ones.
- Identifying good practice in dissemination of careers advice for deaf young people and establishing a framework for replication in schools.
- Apprenticeship providers are fully briefed before a deaf young person starts an apprenticeship with them to reduce stress and anxiety on behalf of the deaf young person and ensure an inclusive environment.

The National Deaf Children's Society and the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) will consider how they can act on these findings to inform their ongoing work to support deaf young people in preparing for adulthood.