

Report



Title **NDCS Education Survey 2009 – Briefing Paper 2: Number of deaf children belonging to local authorities and education settings in England**

Prepared by National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2009, NDCS conducted a short survey on education provision for deaf children. The survey asked local authorities to provide information on the number and qualifications of each Teacher of the Deaf, the number of deaf children living in their area, where they attended school, levels of support provided for deaf children, use of eligibility criteria, budgets, delegation and academies.
- 1.2 133 hearing or sensory support services responded to the questionnaire. Some of these services support more than one local authority; therefore responses were received from 144 local authorities in England. In some cases, the services supporting more than one local authority did not disaggregate the data for each local authority it serves. This means that individual local authority information may not be available for authorities working in a consortium.
- 1.3 This is the second in a series of briefing papers that analyses the results from the survey. It describes the age profile of deaf children supported by services and their education setting. It also highlights differences in prevalence rates and considers differences between the data obtained from the survey and that published by the Government on the number of pupils with a hearing impairment.

2. Background

- 2.1 Services were asked to give details of deaf children ‘belonging’ to the service (i.e. children whose home address is located within the local authority for which the service has responsibility, irrespective of where they attend school). Services were also asked to provide details of age group and the type of school attended.
- 2.2 Responses from nine areas¹ were either incomplete or unusable. Discrepancies in the data provided by some services also resulted in discrepancies in the totals in this report. For example, some of the sub-totals relating to the age of children given by services did not tally with the total figure they gave for deaf children.

¹ These areas are: Cambridgeshire (although figure submitted subsequently), Nottingham, Barking and Dagenham, Wandsworth, Camden, Southwark, Lancashire (figures submitted for early years but not for school age children), and Brighton and Hove

3. Results for England

- 3.1 The services who provided a usable response to this question recorded 34,668 deaf children. However, information on the age and the type of education was provided for 34,487 children.
- 3.2 The number of deaf children recorded by each service has been compared with the Office of National Statistics mid-year estimates of the total population aged 0 to 19 to calculate prevalence rates. For England, these rates expressed as deaf children per thousand are:
 - a) For 0-4 years: 1.3 deaf children per thousand.
 - b) For 0-16 years: 3.4 deaf children per thousand.
 - c) For 16-19 years: 0.9 deaf young people per thousand, possibly indicating a significant reduction in stay-on rates post 16 or a significant reduction in the number supported by services (or a mixture of the two).
- 3.3 A breakdown of the age and type of education provision for the 34,487 children is shown in Table 1 overleaf. It has been necessary to provide two totals because two services were unable to provide an age breakdown of school age children. The column “total 1” excludes figures for those services and is used to calculate the age distribution of children. The column “total 2” includes figure for that service and is used to calculate the percentage of school age pupils in different types of provision.

**Table 1: Number of deaf children recorded by local authorities:
Age profile and type of education provision**

	Babies and early years	Primary	Secondary	Post 16	Total 1	Total 2	% of school aged in:
Mainstream	1632	11578	9499	1427	24136	24906	75.2%
Out of authority mainstream	8	118	215	38	379	380	1.2%
Mainstream with resource centre/unit²	83	1378	920	55	2436	2436	7.9%
In local authority special school for the deaf	36	286	357	81	760	760	2.4%
Other in local authority (mainly other types of special school)	801	879	1156	264	3100	3230	7.7%
Out of authority. Special school or mainstream with a unit	9	205	347	73	634	634	2.1%
Non maintained special	7	109	404	107	627	627	2.1%
Other	1118	167	188	59	1532	1514	1.4%
Total	3694	14720	13086	2104	33604	34668	100.0%
Age distribution	11%	44%	39%	6%	100%		

3.4 With regard to age profile:

- a) 83% of deaf children are of compulsory school age.
- b) 6% are in post 16 education.
- c) 11% are in early years.

3.5 With regard to the type of provision attended:

- a) 76% of school aged pupils attend mainstream schools either within the local authority they reside or, in a few cases (1.2%), in neighbouring local authorities.
- b) A further 8% attend mainstream schools with a specialist resource base.
- c) 2.4% attend special schools for the deaf in the local authority area in which they reside.
- d) 7.7% attend other types of special schools in the area in which they reside.
- e) 2.1% attend non maintained special schools.

² Note: The following services did not provide details of the number of pupils in mainstream schools with resource centres for hearing impairment, although it is understood such provision exists in these areas: Cornwall, Northumberland, Plymouth. This will make a marginal difference to the analysis of provision for England as a whole but could be more significant for the regional analysis in the South West and to some extent the North East.

- f) 2.1% attend other local authority special schools or mainstream schools with resourced provision outside the local authority area in which they reside.

Comparison with the 2000 BATOD Survey

- 3.6 Although the information is not directly comparable because of differences in the way the surveys were conducted, there are significant differences between the 2009 figures and the results from the last major survey that looked at the number of deaf children, conducted by the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) in 2000.
- 3.7 In the 2009 survey, far more children have been identified, despite the return rate being slightly lower³:
- 2000 BATOD survey identified 25,000 children with monaural, mild, moderate, severe and profound loss support by special schools for the deaf, mainstream school resourced centres and/or local authority specialist services.
 - 2009 NDCS survey identified 34,700 children.
- 3.8 This indicates a 39% increase in deaf children. However, in the 2009 survey a number of local authorities included children with a conductive loss on their survey form. Between 2000 and 2009, there have been increases in deaf children in their early years, of statutory school age and in post 16 education. However, there has also been a change in the age structure with children in the early years and post 16 accounting for a higher proportion of deaf children and young people, as table 2 below shows.

Table 2: Age profile of children in 2000 and 2009 surveys

	Percentage of children aged:	
	2000 BATOD survey	2009 NDCS survey
Early Years	9%	11%
School age	89%	83%
Post 16	2%	6%

- 3.9 Comparison of the two surveys shows a reduction in the number of pupils attending specialist provision for the deaf:
- a) In 2000, 1,929 pupils were recorded as attending special schools for the deaf and 3,428 were recorded as attending specialist resource centres in mainstream schools.
 - b) In 2009, 1387 pupils were recorded as attending special schools for the deaf and 2,436 were recorded as attending specialist resource centres in mainstream schools. A further 634 were recording as attending local authority special schools for the deaf or specialist resource provision in a mainstream school outside the local authority in which they reside.

³ The 2009 survey is missing data on 6 local authorities

3.10 The number of deaf pupils recorded as attending other types of special school has increased:

- a) In 2000, 2,857 deaf pupils were recorded as attending other types of special schools (i.e. special school not specifically for the deaf).
- b) In 2009, 3,230 deaf pupils were recorded as attending other types of special schools.

	Number of deaf pupils attending	
Year	Special schools for the deaf or special resourced centres in mainstream	Other types of special school
2000	5,354	2,857
2009	4,457	3,230
% change ⁴	-16.8%	+13.1%

(Note: the 2009 data is missing information from 6 LAs so any decrease has been overstated and any increase understated)

Comparison with the 2009 Department of Education's School Census

3.11 The School Census records pupils placed at School Action Plus and with statements where hearing impairment is the prime type of special educational need. In 2009, the Census recorded 14,770 such pupils in all authorities, including pupils over 16 years of age in education. 10.6% of these pupils attended special schools. The returns from services for the NDCS survey gave a total of 27,800 pupils of primary and secondary school age.

3.12 Bearing in mind that the NDCS survey is also missing data from nine services, there is a significant difference between the number of deaf children identified in the School Census and the data held by local authority services. The possible explanations for the differences may be:

- a) The School Census only identifies pupils where hearing impairment is the main type of special educational need. Published information does not provide details of children where hearing impairment is the secondary need, even if the degree of loss is very significant.
- b) The School Census does not identify deaf pupils placed at School Action of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.
- c) Under-recording of deaf pupils by schools.

4. Prevalence rates in different regions of England

4.1 Table 3 shows the number of deaf children and young people per thousand in the nine regions of England.

⁴ The 2009 survey is missing data from 6 local authorities so any reduction has been over stated and any increase understated.
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Table 3: Number of deaf children recorded by services per thousand children

Prevalence rates for deaf children per thousand			
Region	0-4 years	5-16 years	16-19 years
East	0.8	1.9	0.4
East Midlands	1.7	3.1	0.9
London	1.1	3.4	1.0
North East	1.1	3.7	1.2
North West	1.2	3.9	0.7
South East	1.4	3.5	1.3
South West	1.1	3.2	0.7
West Midlands	1.9	3.8	1.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	1.2	4.2	0.5
England	1.3	3.4	0.9

Note: figures rounded to one decimal point

4.2 Table 4 shows how the prevalence rate in each region differs from the average for England:

Table 4: How the number of deaf children per thousand children in each region differs from the average for England

Difference expressed as a percentage			
Region	0-4 years	5-16 years	16-19 years
East	-34%	-45%	-60%
East Midlands	+30%	-11%	-7%
London	-13%	0.5%	13%
North East	-11%	8%	36%
North West	-4%	14%	-24%
South East	+6%	3%	45%
South West	-16%	-7%	-25%
West Midlands	+47%	12%	54%
Yorkshire and the Humber	-7%	24%	-47%

4.3 Of particular note is:

- a) the high variability in all age groups, particularly in the 16-19 year age group
- b) the low prevalence rates in the East across all age groups
- c) the relatively high prevalence of deaf children in their early years in the West Midlands and East Midlands, compared with the rest of the country
- d) the high prevalence rate in Yorkshire and the Humber for children aged 0-16 years but a low rate for post 16
- e) the higher prevalence rates for 16-19 year olds in the West Midlands, South East and North East

f) the lower prevalence rates for 16-19 years in East England, North West, South West and Yorkshire and the Humber.

4.4 With regard to 0-4 years, 5 out of the 9 regions had a prevalence rate of 1.1 or 1.2 per thousand. This indicates some consistency across England, apart from the relatively high rate in the Midlands and low rate in the East. Further investigations would be necessary to test whether the differences between regions are due to:

- a) services using different criteria to support and record deaf children
- b) genuine differences in the incidence of deafness in the community (e.g. evidence suggests that there is a significantly higher incidence of deafness in some black and ethnic minority groups).

4.5 With regard to 0-16 years, further investigations would be necessary to test the extent to which the differences resulted from:

- a) services using different criteria to support and record deaf children
- b) genuine differences in the incidence of deafness in the community.

4.6 With regard to 16-19 years, further investigations would be necessary to test the extent to which the differences resulted from:

- a) differences in post 16 stay-on rates
- b) differences in services' policies on supporting deaf young people in Further Education
- c) differences in types of provision (e.g. some areas have Further Education colleges with specialist resourced provision)
- d) genuine differences in the incidence of deafness.

5. Regional variation in age structure

5.1 Table 5 indicates the age structure of deaf children in each region:

Table 5: Age structure of deaf children in each region

Region	Babies and pre school	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
England	11%	44%	39%	6%
North East	9%	46%	38%	7%
North West	10%	49%	37%	4%
Yorkshire and the Humber	9%	43%	45%	3%
East Midlands	16%	39%	38%	7%
West Midlands	14%	39%	39%	8%
East ⁵	14%	44%	38%	4%
South East	11%	43%	38%	9%
London	11%	44%	39%	6%
South West	10%	47%	38%	5%

5.2 Table 6 shows how the age structure in each region differs from the national average. Of interest is:

- a) the relatively high number of children in the early years in the East Midlands, West Midlands and East
- b) The variation in students over the age of 16 (see paragraph 4.6).

Table 6: How the age structure in each region differs from the national average

Difference from the average expressed as a percentage				
Region	Babies and pre school	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
North East	-18%	5%	-3%	17%
North West	-9%	11%	-5%	-33%
Yorkshire and the Humber	-18%	-2%	15%	-50%
East Midlands	45%	-11%	-3%	17%
West Midlands	27%	-11%	0%	33%
East	27%	0%	-3%	-33%
South East	0%	-2%	-3%	50%
London	0%	0%	0%	0%
South West	-9%	7%	-3%	-17%

⁵ Also excludes information for Norfolk
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6. Regional variation in type of provision

- 6.1 Table 7 shows the type of education provision school age children in different regions attend.
- a) North East: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without specialist provision is near to the national average. Within specialist provision, greater use is made of resource centres in mainstream schools. Greater use is made of non maintained or independent schools, but use of local authority special schools is much lower than the average.
 - b) North West: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without specialist provision is near to the national average. Within specialist provision, more use is made of special schools that are not specifically schools for the deaf. Lower use is made of non maintained and out of authority special schools, although it should be noted that pupils placed in “other” is above the average.
 - c) Yorkshire and the Humber: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without specialist provision is near to the national average. Within specialist provision more use is made of local authority special schools for the deaf, but less use of out of authority and non maintained special schools.
 - d) East Midlands: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without specialist provision is above the national average. Less use is made of local authority specialist provision but a higher proportion of pupils attend non maintained or independent schools.
 - e) West Midlands: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without specialist provision is near to the national average. Within specialist provision, more use is made of local authority special schools and less use made of non maintained and out of authority schools.
 - f) East England: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without resourced provision is below the average. The proportion attending resource centres, local authority special schools for the deaf, and independent special schools is above the national average. However, the low prevalence rate in the East may explain the difference from the average if this is due to services in the region using a different threshold for identifying and recording deaf children (see section 4).
 - g) South East: The proportion of pupils in mainstream schools without specialist provision is very near to the national average. Slightly less use is made of resource centres in mainstream schools and local authority special schools, although this is balanced to some degree with a higher use of non maintained or independent schools.
 - h) London: A lower proportion of pupils attend mainstream schools without specialist provision. More use is made of local authority specialist provision with, as anticipated, considerable movement of pupils across local authority boundaries. Use of non maintained / independent special schools is above the average.

- i) South West: As expected for a predominantly rural area, the proportion of pupils attending mainstream schools without specialist resource provision is above the average. However, it should be noted that the absence of usable data on pupils attending resourced centres in Cornwall and Plymouth will have reduced, to some extent, the figures for those in mainstream specialist provision.

6.3 It is not possible from the data available to assess whether there is a statistical relationship between the proportion of pupils attending mainstream schools and the proportion attending specialist provision and the attainment gap.

Table 7: Percentage of school aged pupils in different types of provision by region

	Percentage of school aged children attending:						
	Mainstream schools (in or out of the authority)	Mainstream school with resource centres (in local authority)	Special school for the deaf (in local authority)	Other in local authority (e.g. other types of special school)	Out of authority special schools/resource centres	Independent special school	Other
England	76.4	8.0	2.4	7.7	2.1	2.1	1.4
North East	78.0	9.9 ⁶	0	8.0	0.9	2.8	0.4
North West	77.7	7.5	0.9	9.9	1.5	0.9	1.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	77.0	8.7	3.9	7.7	0.4	1.2	1.4
East Midlands	81.7	7.3	1.2	5.0	0.7	3.7	0.7
West Midlands	77.2	5.5	5.4	7.9	1.4	0.7	1.9
East	65.1	18.7	5.5	3.7	2.8	4.0	0.2
South East	77.0	7.4	1.2	7.9	1.5	2.9	2.1
London	69.2	8.8	1.8	8.7	7.4	2.6	1.4
South West	85.7	2.4 ⁷	2.6	6.6	0.6	1.6	0.6

⁶ This figure is marginally lower than the case because data was not provided on the school with a resource centre in Northumberland

⁷ This figure is lower than the case because data was not provided on children attending the resource centres in Cornwall is missing along with deaf children in Plymouth who attend the resource centres at Eggbuckland Junior and Eggbuckland secondary school.