

In 2023, we carried out the 19<sup>th</sup> Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) annual survey on educational staff. (, ) q 0.000008871 0 595.32 841.92 re W\* n BT /F1 12 Tf 1 0 0 1 189.77u

Caution is also needed due to differences in response rates to individual questions and between surveys over the years, particularly from before 2019 when the survey was completed by five different offices and it is believed there were different interpretations of questions and possible double counting.

Please note that all percentages in this report have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

## Numbers of deaf children

There were at least 1,428 deaf children in Northern Ireland.

77% of schooled deaf children attended mainstream schools; 1% attended mainstream schools with resource provisions, whilst 21% attended special schools not specifically for deaf children.

36% of deaf children were recorded as having another additional special educational need. This is an increase from 27% in 2021.

6% of deaf children use English as an additional spoken language at home.

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The tables below provide breakdowns by age, level of deafness, and education setting

Table 2: Number of children living in the area, by age

Early years/preschool	150	11%
Primary aged	549	38%
Secondary aged	529	37%
Post 16 and under the age of 20	200	14%
Total	1,428	

Since 2021 the proportion of deaf children in different age categories has changed as follows:

- early years/preschool age decreased by three percentage points
- primary aged decreased by one percentage point
- secondary aged no change
- post-16 category increased by four percentage points

Table 3: Number of children living in the area, by level of deafness

Unilateral	384	27%
Mild	420	29%
Moderate	397	28%
Severe	74	5%
Profound	153	11%
Total <sup>8</sup>	1,428	

Since the 2021 survey, the proportion of children and young people with:

- unilateral deafness has increased by one percentage point
- mild level of deafness has increased by six percentage points
- moderate level of deafness has decreased by one percentage point
- severe level of deafness has decreased by five percentage points
- profound level of deafness has decreased by one percentage point.

There were at least 21 deaf children in Northern Ireland with Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD), 1% of all deaf children. This is a decrease from 2021 from 2%.

ANSD is most often identified in babies at the stage of the universal newborn hearing screening. However, the screening protocols used for the babies who are different from those used for babies who have spent time in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU), which means that babies in NICU with ANSD are likely to be identified early, but well babies are not. This is because NICU babies are at much higher risk of ANSD and other types of deafness compared with well babies as the screening test is designed to identify

<sup>8</sup> No child

these babies. This means that ANSD is unlikely to be identified in well babies until they are much older, if at all.

Figures provided through the newborn hearing screening programme indicate that around 1 in 10 congenitally deaf children has ANSD. But the true figure may be higher, as ANSD is likely to remain unidentified in well babies who pass the newborn hearing screen.

The CRIDE figures indicate that ANSD is under-reported by education services. This could be partly due to under-identification of ANSD in older deaf children on their caseloads and screening and were identified later, as well as those with acquired/progressive deafness who have not been tested for ANSD.

*Table 4: Number of children, living in the area, by educational setting<sup>9</sup>*

Children with severe to profound deafness are eligible for cochlear implants. We saw earlier in the table that there were 227 children with severe or profound deafness. Whilst this can only be a rough approximation, it can be estimated that 52% of children with severe or profound deafness have at least one cochlear implant. If one were to make an assumption that nearly all children with cochlear implants are those with a profound deafness, this percentage would rise to 77%.

Services also reported that 53 children (4%) had a bone conduction device. The proportion has increased from 3% in 2021.

There were 80 children (6% of the adjusted total of deaf children reported) who have English as an additional spoken language at home. This is an increase from 2021 when 5% were known to have English as an additional spoken language.

It must also be stressed that the use of spoken/sign language in education may not always match the use

There were 47 deaf children known to be at their service from outside of the UK in the past year. This is 3% of deaf children.

By caseload, we mean children who receive some form of support. Examples of support include direct teaching, visits to the family or school, liaison with the family, school teachers, providing hearing aid checks, etc. We asked the service to include children supported but who do not live in its geographical area. Children with temporary deafness could be included in the response to this question if they were on the service caseload.

The survey response indicated that at least 1,259 deaf children with permanent or temporary deafness were on the caseload. This is a 12% decrease from 2022 when the service reported that 1,430 deaf children were on its caseload.

We also asked the service to split out how many children on their caseload had a temporary conductive hearing loss they gave a figure of 129 children.

The service reported that they do not provide support to deaf young people over the age of 19.

Because of the differences in how data have been collected and different definitions used, CRIDE recommends the following figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

School Census figures for 2023<sup>14</sup> identified 512 pupils recorded with hearing impairment. The F1 12 Tf medical register. This amounts to 9% of the 1,428 children identified by CRIDE.

Some of these pupils have been recorded with an SEN for hearing impairment on the SEN register also. Of these, 546 had a mild or moderate hearing loss and 287 had a severe or profound hearing loss.

Separately, the School Census reports 512 deaf children on the SEN register as a statement of SEN. This equates to 36% of the deaf children identified by the School Census. It also equates to 36% of school age children identified by CRIDE (n=1,428). We note that the School Census figure with 30 children (n=47) -









In simple terms, and for consistency across all parts of the UK, we calculate the theoretical caseloads by dividing the number of permanently deaf children living in any given area and in specialist provision<sup>20</sup> by the number of visiting TGDs who are qualified or in training for the mandatory qualification<sup>21</sup>.

The CRIDE survey results show that each visiting (peripatetic) TGD had a theoretical average caseload of 59 deaf children. In 2022, this figure stood at 66.

The service reported no specialist support staff (other than TGDs) directly employed by the service. This was also the case in 2022 and 2023. The service commented that it was rolling out a programme in BSL Level 1, 2 or 3 from September 2023 for classroom assistants who work with deaf children in schools. This also benefits from sign support. However, these classroom assistants were not employed by the service.

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<sup>20</sup>

pre-school children, Early years stage, pre

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There were 140 deaf young people reported to have left school at the end of 2021/22 academic year.

In the final section of the survey, we ask some broader questions about how the service operates and how support is provided. We found that:

the service is managed by a qualified  
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We asked the service how many referrals they received over the calendar year 2021.

Table 8: Referrals

For children identified as deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme	33	25%
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and they had started statutory education	25	19%
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and they had started statutory education	72	55%
Total of figures given	130	100%

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest using research to improve the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children. At the time the survey was sent out, representatives included: BATO, ATBD Cymru, Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, National former heads of services consultants with expertise in deafness, and specialist education services for deaf children in Cambridgeshire, Kent, and Leeds.

The survey alternates from year to year between a standard survey and a survey with a mix of core and thematic questions. The 2022 survey was the version with core questions

The survey was sent to the Education Authority in February 2023 on behalf of CRIDE.

Society, with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE.

CRIDE would like to thank the service for taking the time to complete this survey. The results from this survey will be used for research purposes, to influence government policy and to campaign to protect funding and services for deaf children.

If you have any feedback or questions on the results, please contact [cride@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:cride@ndcs.org.uk)