

# Hearing Impairment

Hearing is crucial to developing spoken language, performing academically, and engaging socially. Children with hearing loss therefore benefit from being identified early in life and offered appropriate interventions. The impact of a hearing loss varies according to several factors including degree and type of loss, age and onset of diagnosis, and age of identification and intervention. Not all types of hearing loss are educationally significant, but for those that are, early diagnosis and access to effective amplification is key.

For Hearing Impairment (HI) and children and young people, effective amplification is critical if they are to be able to access the curriculum and achieve their potential. It is therefore vital that schools work in partnership with the Hearing Support Team (HST) to ensure that a child has access to working amplification at all times, and that every effort is made to facilitate the best possible listening conditions.

## Leicester City's approach to Hearing Impairment

Children with a hearing loss will receive advice and support from Leicester City's HST to both families and educational settings to reach their full potential. The team includes specialist teachers (Teacher of the Deaf) and teaching assistants with a qualification in teaching hearing impaired children. The HST support hearing impaired children and young people in Leicester who have an educationally significant hearing loss, from 0 to 19, or 25 if they have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). All children are supported according to their level of need, including level of hearing loss, age, if they have any additional difficulties, and educational setting. The level of support is determined by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) Eligibility Framework alongside professional judgement. The level and frequency of this may range from multi weekly to advice only.

The HST offer individual support, observations, monitoring, advice and training on best endeavours and reasonable adjustments as appropriate. This includes deaf awareness strategies such as positioning of the child and acoustically favourable conditions, assistive devices as appropriate as well as guidance on teaching strategies, social and emotional well-being, and the Preparing for Adulthood Curriculum.

Where a pupil has Multi-Sensory Impairments (for example deafness and blindness) specialist advice will be given by a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) specialist teacher from the special education needs and disability support services (SENDSS).

# People and services for children and young people with a Hearing Impairment

Role and expectations of the school:

Senior management team & SENCO should:

- develop and promote an understanding of deaf awareness throughout the school through training and sharing of information. School staff are aware of the potential impact of deafness and communication difficulties on a child or young person's confidence, self-esteem, and mental health, and implement teaching and pastoral support strategies to address this.
- ensure staff access to training in the use of audiological equipment and promote positive attitudes so they understand the value of it and manage it correctly.
- ensure the provision of a TA, Communication Support Worker or Note Taker where appropriate.
- ensure the class teacher monitors the use of equipment, progress and the impact of support and interventions and if necessary, refer any concerns to HST.
- monitor the use of radio systems across the school and ensure access to training so they are consistently and appropriately used by all relevant staff – e.g., remove keys/lanyards to reduce interference with the mic.
- request acoustic advice to ensure the best listening conditions for the child and plan how these reasonable adjustments can be implemented. Staff understand the importance of noise management and implement strategies to manage noise within the classroom and whole school environment.
- provide support to ensure that linguistic access for deaf children and young people reflects their preferred language and communication method. For example, teaching British Sign Language or Sign Supported English as part of the curriculum for those who need it or providing support for developing auditory-oral approaches.
- ensure that hearing-impaired children and young people know who to speak to if they are experiencing difficulties and who they can talk to in their preferred communication method or language. This adult understands and has knowledge of the child or young person's needs.

Teachers and TAs should:

- work effectively together with HST to implement advice and strategies and be available to meet and discuss needs. The class teacher retains overall responsibility for the child and must ensure they are aware of, implement and oversee guidance. It is not reasonable to delegate this to a teaching assistant/communication social worker (CSW).
- work with the HST, when appropriate, to ensure that the curriculum for the hearing-impaired children and young people is challenging but accessible. differentiation by task, support and resources should be implemented as well as by outcome.
- work with HST to agree targets and to monitor progress, if appropriate. This

may include setting small steps for the hearing-impaired child or young person to identify their own achievements and progress, with opportunities for meaningful praise.

- recognise that 'challenging' behaviour and/or lack of progress may be caused by mishearing/misunderstanding and respond appropriately by addressing the child's needs.
- understand and use audiological equipment (hearing aids/radio systems) effectively e.g., retubing ear moulds, checking hearing aids are working, changing batteries, when wearing a radio aid consider microphone position, remove lanyard to reduce unnecessary noise and mute as appropriate.
- understand how deafness can impact on a child or young person's learning. they should attend training to understand the child or young person's hearing loss, its implications, audiological equipment, and deaf awareness strategies to support their inclusion e.g.
  - sit child or young person near to front of the room.
  - repeat back other student's comments.
  - reduce background noise.
  - face the child or young person's and ensure they can see your face clearly when speaking.
- ensure wherever possible that information provided verbally is supplemented by visual resources e.g., when homework is set, it is written on the whiteboard or available on the school intranet, in addition to being announced to the class.
- provide visual resources and practical experiences to support the development of new language and concepts.
- all staff using a radio system must have had appropriate training to enable them to use it effectively.
- not expect hearing impaired children to take notes while watching and listening. Support staff should be appropriately skilled and trained in specialist support in notetaking.
- provide opportunities to promote good listening and language skills which can be supported by the HST eg.1-2-1 time for pre/post teaching of vocabulary in a quiet area.
- the communication social worker (CSW) needs to be qualified to at least British Sign Language (BSL) level 3 and would need opportunities to further their skills e.g., subject specific language and curriculum content. The school should appoint a suitably qualified CSW but the funding for that worker could come through the schools Special Education Needs Budget and Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). These staff are paid on a higher grade than a TA, to reflect their specialist skills, more in line with a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA).
- plan and implement areas of the Preparing for Adulthood agenda into the curriculum e.g., understanding feelings and developing independence skills.

## Role and expectations of the local authority

The designated HST member should:

- assess and monitor hearing, language, listening and educational levels.
- work closely with the NHS Paediatric Audiologists who assess hearing levels and fit hearing aids as appropriate. Monitor listening and support hearing aid/cochlear implant use.
- ensure the Educational Audiologist offers and fits radio aid systems where appropriate, gives advice about other assistive devices and provides acoustic reports when requested/where needed.
- offer mentoring, advice and modelling for the TA/CSW working directly with hearing-impaired children and young people.
- facilitate access to BSL training where appropriate.

## **Provisions and practice for children and young people with a Hearing Impairment**

### Role and expectations of the school

Schools should:

- ensure that the whole school is deaf aware and this influences school ethos in terms of how children and young people with hearing impairment are perceived, supported, and included in all school activities, not just learning.
- have effective communication systems and processes in place to ensure that HST advice and strategies are accessed and implemented by all staff.
- work in partnership with the HST to ensure timetabling arrangements give the best possible outcomes and experiences for hearing-impaired children and young people. This could include reducing subject areas/timetable to ensure the curriculum offer is appropriate and prioritises the development of core skills related to their language, communication levels/needs and Preparing for Adulthood agenda.
- consider the timetable and location of activities to facilitate the best possible listening conditions for the hearing-impaired children and young people e.g., a room with good acoustics, and ensuring that where there is withdrawal time, this does not impact negatively on the student's experience e.g., not being withdrawn from their favourite subject.
- ensure that children have access to effective pastoral care as this is especially important for them. As noted elsewhere, behaviour might be related to mishearing or misunderstanding something, or a hearing-impaired child not understanding expectations. Effective pastoral support can play a key role in improving this.
- be proactive in recognising the importance of support and planning for all hearing-impaired children and young people, not just those with ECHPs. For example, when planning for transition, facilitate meetings –invite parents, HST & SENCO from next school.

- ensure the school does not discriminate on attendance levels and that there are effective procedures in place to record absence for clinics appropriately as a medical absence.
- identify any necessary exam access concessions and apply for these within the published JCQ deadlines. Provide practise exam arrangements in the same format as final exams e.g., live speaker, quiet room.

## Role and expectations of the local authority

The designated HST member should:

- provide suggestions for classroom management to improve outcomes and experiences for hearing-impaired children and young people. HST staff will observe and suggest strategies to address any issues.
- provide deaf awareness training.
- provide advice for access arrangements.

## Environment for children and young people with a Hearing Impairment

### Role and expectations of the school

Schools should:

- assess the listening conditions, with support from HST and be prepared to take advice/ appropriate action to ensure the best possible listening conditions e.g.
  - this might necessitate moving a class or session to another room which has better acoustics.
  - avoiding a room which is next to a noisy setting such as the canteen or drama room, or which has skylights creating unnecessary ambient noise when it rains.
  - improving lighting.
  - removing unwanted noise sources wherever possible, and/or making adaptations to the environment such as carpets and curtains or putting rubber on chair legs.
- ensure that acoustic considerations are taken into account such as ceiling height, carpets, curtains, acoustic tiles, lighting, and location when considering new developments or changes to existing environments.
- ensure that a withdrawal room/quiet space is available for a hearing-impaired children and young people to work in, for some of the time as appropriate to need and learning activity, taking advice from HST. Allocated space should be prioritised and maintained for this purpose for the duration of the year and not be routinely removed because of exams/meetings.
- ensure that a withdrawal room is available for the HST to work in when they visit the child. It is important that this room has good listening conditions. Allocated space should be prioritised and maintained for this purpose for the duration of the year and not be routinely removed because of exams/meetings.

## Role and expectations of the local authority

The designated HST member should:

- provide acoustic reports when requested/where needed by the Educational Audiologist.
- provide guidance to improve listening conditions.
- provide advice about equipment and where appropriate a sound field system to improve listening conditions.
- ensure that training for staff includes developing understanding of the impact of the environment on listening.

## **Resources for learning for children and young people with a Hearing Impairment**

### Role and expectations of the school

For children and young people with a hearing impairment, schools should:

- understand that the use of audiological equipment (hearing aids/radio systems) is critical and be proactive in ensuring that children and young people use it appropriately e.g., put aids back in for young children who need it. Be proactive in informing HST and/or family where faults are identified with equipment which cannot be rectified by basic trouble shooting.
- consider the installation of a Sound field system where the Hearing Support Team (HST) advises this would be of benefit.
- put processes in place to ensure that audiological equipment is checked and working (daily for KSI & 2 children). Be clear about who is responsible for day-to-day management. Seek advice from the HST about managing equipment.
- provide support to encourage/develop hearing-impaired children and young people skills in managing audiological equipment independently.
- where relevant, make arrangements to ensure that radio systems are effectively and consistently charged at school.
- understand and consistently apply health and safety procedures when using amplification, for example, when charging radio aids. Ensure there are batteries and there is somewhere safe to store them (new and used).
- understand, manage, and troubleshoot equipment e.g., changing batteries, retubing ear moulds.
- be proactive in using the radio system consistently and ensure staff have the necessary training and skills to use it effectively/correctly e.g., remind child or young person to use it, use mute when not talking to the hearing-impaired child or young person.
- ensure that cover staff or staff who only work with hearing-impaired child or young person occasionally e.g., in assembly or at lunchtimes, have the skills and understanding to use audiological equipment correctly. Do not accept

when staff/visitors feel their voice is loud enough and consider they do not need to use the equipment.

- provide visual resources and practical experiences to support the development of new language and concepts.
- where relevant and appropriate, provide resources such as an iPad/Equipment for note taking.
- work with the HST to provide opportunities for areas of the Preparing for Adulthood Agenda to be included in the child or young person's curriculum.
- provides opportunities outside school for children and young people to meet and develop Preparing for Adulthood skills. E.g., youth get together, primary days and little listeners.

## Role and expectations of the local authority

The designated HST member should:

- supply radio system according to HST policies where appropriate.
- provide training and information on audiological equipment as required/appropriate, particularly about any new equipment.
- provide training to identified staff about how to use and check audiological equipment, including trouble shooting.
- advise on teaching strategies including the use of learning resources.
- provide parts for audiological equipment e.g., direct input leads and technical help to facilitate better use of radio systems.
- provide training in maintenance of equipment.
- provide a timely response from HST if audiological equipment is faulty.