



**REQUEST 18770**

We would like to request the following information for the period between 1 September 2019 – 31 July 2025, unless otherwise stated.

For the purposes of this request, the term “deaf” is used inclusively to encompass pupils recorded as deaf, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, deafened, or similar descriptors, including those identified as British Sign Language (BSL) users. If information is not available under “Deaf,” please provide figures for the SEND category “hearing impairment” or any other terms as described above or similar.

**1. Deaf Pupils (Numbers)**

The total number of pupils identified as deaf in your schools, by academic year.

**RESPONSE**

Specialist Sensory Education Team (SSET)

2019-2020 – 237

2020-2021 – 208

2021-2022 – 192

2022-2023 – 206

2023-2024 – 213

2024-2025 – 228

**2. Interpreter / Communication Support Worker Provision**

The number of deaf pupils formally provided with sign language interpreters or Communication Support Workers (CSW), by academic year.

Deaf children and young people who use BSL as their first language are educated out of authority at a school for the deaf in a neighbouring local authority.

2019-2020 – 3

2020-2021 – 3

2021-2022 – 4

2022-2023 – 4

2023-2024 – 4

2024-2025 – 3

### **3. Requests for Support**

The number of requests made by parents/carers for sign language interpreter or Communication Support Worker support, and how many were:

- Granted in full
- Granted in part
- Refused and with reasons for refusal, if recorded.

1 – Granted in part – HLTA with BSL level 2 qualification in the first instance, supported weekly by the Sign Language Specialist from SSET.

Currently in Specialist Provision - Total Communication used in school. TA in class (not CYP 1:1 TA) – BSL level 4 qualified.

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### **4. Appeals / Complaints**

The number of appeals or complaints made against your decisions regarding sign language /communication support in education, and the outcomes of those appeals/complaints.

### **5. Spend on Support**

The total annual spend on sign language interpreting and communication support services in education, broken down by financial year.

SSET Sign Language Specialist  
2019-2020 – 1x NJC grade 7  
2020-2021 – 1x NJC grade 7  
2021-2022 – 2x NJC grade 7  
2022-2023 – 2x NJC grade 7  
2023-2024 – 2x NJC grade 7  
2024-2025 - 2x NJC grade 7

Zero spend on BSL interpreting.

### **6. Policy & Guidance**

Copies of any policies, guidance, or criteria used by the authority to decide on providing communication support such as sign language interpreter and Communication Support Worker for deaf pupils, including any references to British Sign Language Act 2022.

BSL Qualifications

QToD:  
BSL level 1 – 1  
BSL level 2 – 3  
BSL level 6 – 1 (started interpreter training September 2025)

Sign Language Specialist  
BSL level 6 – 1  
BSL level 3 – 1

We provide BSL family sign to all families of newly diagnosed deaf children, delivered by 2 Sign Language Specialists who work for SSET. This is a 10-week programme based on the NDCS family sign. Once this initial training comes to an end we sign post families to the local Deaf club, which runs Signature BSL level 1 and 2 courses.

Schools have been introduced to the Highlands BSL programme, and we have a number taking part in this who have a deaf child in their school. Some schools

choose to run this as part of the curriculum replacing MFL or as an after school / lunch time club. We are hoping to roll this out on a larger scale across the authority.

We also introduced (2024-present) signed stories delivered by 2 members of the Deaf community in a few of our primary schools. They are volunteers and their input has been gratefully received by schools. This initiative has been a huge success.

## **7. Teachers of the Deaf**

The number of Teachers of the Deaf (ToD) employed by your authority and how many hold the mandatory qualification for Teachers of the Deaf.

### **July 2025**

All our teachers hold the mandatory qualification.

Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (QToD) – 5.2 FTE

Vacancy – 0.4 from September 2024 due to reduction in hours via flexible working.

### **September 2025**

QToD – 4 FTE

Vacancy – 1.6 (recruited 1 FTE due to start January 2026)