



Consortium for Research in Deaf Education

2025 report for Scotland

Education provision for deaf children in Scotland in 2024/25

Introduction

In 2025, we carried out the 13th Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children in Scotland.¹² This report sets out the results of the survey for Scotland and is intended for heads of services, policy makers in local and central government and anyone with an interest in deaf education.

The survey alternates from year to year between a standard survey and a survey with a mix of core and thematic questions. The 2025 survey was the standard version covering the 2024/25 academic year.³

A number of changes were made to the standard survey in 2025 to streamline and reduce the number of questions⁴.

The analysis in this report is based on responses from 30 services in Scotland, covering 32 authority areas and giving a response rate of 100%.

¹ For the purpose of this section of the survey, unless otherwise stated, we use the term 'deaf children' to include children and young people under the age of 19 with sensori-neural or permanent conductive deafness.

² No survey was issued to services in Scotland by CRIDE in 2012 and 2016.

³ Reports from previous years can be found on the National Deaf Children's Society website at www.ndcs.org.uk/cride or on the BATOD website at www.batod.org.uk/information/cride-reports/.

⁴ For example, questions about deaf children with cochlear implants, bone conduction devices, who use English as an additional spoken language at home, who are new to the country, and post-16 support have been removed. A reference document that summarises this data from previous years has been produced and is available via the links shown in the above footnote.

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Interpreting the results

Services were asked to give figures for the position as of 31st January 2025.

In the survey, we acknowledge that services and children do not always fit into the boxes or options provided. Services were able to leave comments or clarify where needed throughout the survey. This report notes particular issues that emerged in some areas.

As we see later, it is clear that some services experience difficulties in extracting data about deaf children in their area and there remain inconsistencies in how different questions are completed throughout the survey. The response rates to individual questions may sometimes vary and anomalies occasionally appear. We make every effort to investigate any inconsistencies that appear particularly strange. However, services do not always respond to such queries. Therefore, the results should continue to be used with caution. Caution is also needed due to differences in response rates to individual questions and potential mistakes in data provision between surveys.

Please note that percentages in this report have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Please also note that where there is a reported cohort of less than five children in any of the tables in this report, we have replaced the figure with a '<5' and suppressed the actual figure to zero when calculating the totals in that table unless otherwise stated. This is indicated by an asterisk against the total.

Summary of key findings

Deaf children in Scotland

- There were 3,649 deaf children. This figure of 3,649 is a reported increase of 91 (3%) from 3,558 deaf children reported by services in 2024.

Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People and other specialist staff

- There were at least 173.17 fte Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) posts, of which 4% were vacant.
- Of the 165.57 fte working as TODs, 64% held the mandatory qualification, whilst 31% were in training and 5% were qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training.
- There were at least 74.54 fte specialist support staff posts (other than TODs) directly employed by services, of which 8.4 fte (11%) were vacant posts.

Resource provisions

- There were a reported 17 resource provisions specifically for deaf children and young people. There were 16 reported by services in 2024. On average, there is one resource provision for every 214 deaf children.

Support following identification of deafness

- Services reported they had received 500 referrals during the 2024 calendar year.
- 16% of referrals to services came from the newborn hearing screening programme.
- 23% of referrals to services came from outside the newborn hearing screening programme and before a child had started statutory education.
- 61% of referrals to services came from outside the newborn hearing screening programme and after a child had started statutory education.

PART 1: Deaf children in Scotland

How many deaf children are there?

Services were asked to give details of deaf children living in the geographical area covered by their service.⁵

When giving figures for numbers of deaf children living in the area, we first asked for an overall figure and then asked for breakdowns by level of deafness, age, and educational setting. We found that some services did not always provide this data consistently; some services gave broken-down figures where the sum generated a different total from that given elsewhere in the survey.

Coming up with a clear answer to the question of how many deaf children there are is therefore not straightforward. For this report, we have taken the approach of using the highest figure from either the overall total, given totals for questions, or the totals generated through the sum of the broken-down figures. We do this because we want to ensure we've captured as many deaf children as possible. Where we have done this, we refer to the "adjusted total".

Based on the responses from all 30 services, there were 3,649 deaf children.⁶ This figure of 3,649 is a reported increase of 91 (3%) from 3,558 reported by services in 2024.

Unadjusted figures are provided in the table that follows.

⁵ Services were asked to include, as much as possible: All children who have a unilateral or bilateral sensori-neural or permanent conductive deafness, at all levels from mild to profound, using BSA/BATOD descriptors; All deaf children, regardless of whether they receive support from the service; Children under the age of 19; Children who attend education provision outside of your area but who normally live in the area. Children with temporary deafness should not be included. We use the term permanent deafness to include those children with a syndrome known to include permanent conductive deafness, microtia/atresia, middle ear malformation, or those who have had middle ear surgery such as mastoidectomy. It also includes those children with glue ear who are not expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 12 years (such as those born with a cleft palate, Down's syndrome, cystic fibrosis, or primary ciliary dyskinesia). Under temporary conductive deafness, we include those children with glue ear who may have been fitted with hearing aids as an alternative to grommet surgery but who are expected to 'grow out' of the condition before the age of 12 years.

⁶ Adjusted total.

Table 1: Figures generated when calculating the number of deaf children

	Total generated
Adjusted total	3,649
Total when asked how many children overall	3,633
Total when asked about number of children, broken down by age group	3,534 ⁷
Total when asked about number of children, broken down by level of deafness (including 'Level of deafness not known')	3,633 ⁸
Total when asked about number of children, broken down by educational setting	3,609 ⁹

The smallest service reported 14 deaf children living within their boundaries. The largest reported 369 deaf children. The average number of deaf children living in each service area was 122.

The following table compares the total number of deaf children living in Scotland with figures from previous years. As set out in the introduction, comparisons with earlier reports should be made with caution due to differences in the quality of the responses and response rates between the surveys.

Table 2: Number of deaf children reported, over successive years

	Number of children reported	Number of services that responded to the survey
CRIDE 2025 (adjusted total)	3,649	30
CRIDE 2024	3,558	30
CRIDE 2023 (adjusted total)	3,418	29
CRIDE 2022 (adjusted total)	3,313	30
CRIDE 2021 (adjusted total)	2,841	25
CRIDE 2020	2,898	27
CRIDE 2019 (adjusted total)	3,647	30
CRIDE 2018	3,363	30
CRIDE 2017 (adjusted total)	3,174	30
CRIDE 2016	No survey issued by CRIDE	-
CRIDE 2015 (adjusted total)	2,942	29
CRIDE 2014	3,057	28
CRIDE 2013 (adjusted total)	2,842	28
CRIDE 2012	No survey issued by CRIDE	-
CRIDE 2011 (adjusted total)	2,526	26

⁷ 3,534 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 3,619.

⁸ 3,633 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 3,357.

⁹ 3,609 was the sum of the broken-down figures provided by services after category totals of lower than 5 were suppressed. The sum of the totals given by services was 3,251.

Issues or gaps in the data

Five services (17%) indicated that there were no known issues or gaps in data.

24 services (80%) indicated there were known issues or gaps in the data they provided for the number of children and young people,¹⁰ these included:

- services only having figures for children who are receiving support from the service (60% of all services)
- services not holding figures for children who have left school (60%)
- ENT services not referring children with mild hearing loss to services (13%)
- ENT services not referring children with unilateral hearing loss to services (10%)
- services not able to split out figures for children with permanent or temporary deafness (3%)
- services only having figures for children who are hearing-aid wearers (3%)
- other (20%). Some of the 'other' answers given were different ways of expressing the above set options. Other reasons given included:¹¹
 - ENT not referring all deaf children and young people to services
 - ENT not referring any deaf children and young people to services – in some cases audiology make referrals following ENT input
 - some data missing for children who attend private/funded schools
 - some data missing for children attending out of area education provision
 - lack of accurate information stored.

The extent of these issues and gaps is a reminder that the figures generated from the CRIDE survey need to be used with caution. The data in this report are only as good as the data held by and provided to us, by local authorities, and the above section raises questions about how we can improve the data collected on deaf children. At the same time, we believe that data generated through the CRIDE reports remain amongst the best sources of data available.

What the survey tells us about the population of deaf children in Scotland

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

¹⁰ One service did not answer this question.

¹¹ Additionally, one service did not provide figures for groups of fewer than five children, meaning these could not be included in the figures. Another service withheld some information on where children were normally educated. Another service reported they did not have accurate information stored for children with unilateral or mild deafness, for children by their age group, and for languages used by children. One service provided figures indicating a large increase in children and young people in the area and said they would be working with the local authority to set up better data gathering for the future.

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

Age group	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total
Early years/pre-school	557	16%
Primary-aged	1,445	41%
Secondary-aged	1,294	37%
Post-16 up to the age of 19	238	7%
Total	3,534 ¹²	

Since 2023 the proportion of deaf children in different age categories has changed as follows:

- early years/pre-school age – increased by two percentage points
- primary-aged – decreased by one percentage point
- secondary-aged – decreased by one percentage point
- post-16 category – increased by one percentage point.

Table 4: Number of children living in the area, by level of deafness

Level of deafness	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total (where known)
Unilateral	700	21%
Mild	621	19%
Moderate	1,098	33%
Severe	313	10%
Profound	549	17%
Total (excluding 'not known')	3,281	
Not known	352	
Total (including 'not known')	3,633 ¹³	

Since the 2023 survey, the proportion of children and young people:

- with a unilateral deafness has remained the same
- with a mild level of deafness has decreased by two percentage points
- with a moderate level of deafness has increased by one percentage point
- with a severe level of deafness has decreased by one percentage point
- with a profound level of deafness increased by one percentage point.

Based on feedback from services, a change was made to the question on deaf children in education settings in the 2025 survey, to include a new option for services to tell us about deaf children in resource provisions¹⁴ that are not

¹² 3,534 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 3,619.

¹³ 3,633 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 3,357.

¹⁴ In the CRIDE survey, we have historically used the term 'resource provision' to include all schools with a resource provision, base or unit, specifically for deaf children and young people, regardless of whether staff in the resource provision are employed by the local authority or by the school.

specifically for deaf children. This means that the results will not be directly comparable to those in previous years.

Table 5: Number of children, living in the area, by educational setting

Type of educational provision		Number of deaf children	Percentage of total (where known)
In local authority	Supported only at home – pre-school children	193	5%
	Early years setting – pre-school children	359	10%
	Supported at home – of school age and home educated	<5*	0%
	Mainstream state-funded schools	2,490	69%
	Mainstream independent (non-state-funded) schools (for example, Fettes)	<5*	0%
	Resource provision (specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	159	4%
	Resource provision (not specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	118	3%
	Schools for deaf pupils	45	1%
	Other special schools, not specifically for deaf children (whether state funded or non-maintained)	229	6%
	All other post-16 provision	8	0%
Out of local authority	Early years setting – pre-school children	<5*	0%
	Mainstream state-funded schools	<5*	0%
	Mainstream independent (non-state-funded) schools	<5*	0%
	Resource provision (specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	8	0%
	Resource provision (not specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	<5*	0%
	Schools for deaf pupils	<5*	0%
	Other special school, not specifically for deaf children (whether state funded or non-maintained)	<5*	0%
	All other post-16 provision	0	0%
Other	NEET (Not in Education, Employment or in Training) (post-16 only)	0	0%
	Other (e.g. Pupil referral units)	0	0%
Total (excluding 'not known')		3,609*	
Not known		0	
Total (including 'not known' and suppressed figures)		3,628	

The following table presents the same information as above but without splitting figures for whether in or out of the local authority, whilst also showing summary percentages for just school-aged deaf children.

Table 6: Breakdown of types of educational provision

Type of educational provision (regardless of whether in or out of local authority)	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total	Percentage of total school-aged children (i.e. excluding pre-school children and young people post-16)
Supported only at home – pre-school children	193	5%	
Early years setting – pre-school children	359*	10%	
Supported at home – of school age and home educated	<5*	0%	0%
Mainstream provision (including state-funded and independent schools)	2,490*	69%	82%
Mainstream provision: resource provision for deaf children	167	5%	5%
Mainstream provision: resource provision not specifically for deaf children	118*	3%	4%
Schools for deaf children	45*	1%	1%
Other special schools, not specifically for deaf children (whether state funded or non-maintained)	229*	6%	8%
All other post-16 provision	8	0%	
Other (e.g. Pupil referral units, NEET, not known)	0	0%	
Total	3,609*	100%	
Total (excluding pre-school children and other post-16 provision and 'other')	3,049*		100%

Comparing with figures on school-aged deaf children and young people from 2023, the proportion of children and young people:

- in mainstream provision (including state-funded and independent schools) has decreased by one percentage point from 83% to 82%
- resource provisions (including those specifically for deaf children and those not specifically for deaf children) is unchanged at 9%
- in schools for deaf pupils has decreased remained unchanged
- in other special schools not specifically for deaf children has increased from 7% to 8%.

Table 7: Breakdown of types of educational provision, by whether in or out of home local authority (where known)

Type of educational provision	Number of deaf children	Percentage of total
In home local authority	3,601*	100%
Out of home local authority	8*	0%
Total (not including 'not known and 'other')	3,609*	

Since 2021, the number and proportion of deaf children in and out of home local authority has remained the same.

Incidence of additional support needs

Services reported that the number of deaf children with another additional support need¹⁵ was 772¹⁶. This is 21% of the adjusted total of deaf children.

Languages used

Services were asked to tell us about the languages mainly used in school/other education setting. Caution is needed when looking at the results because services identified 3,323 children. This is lower than the figure of 3,649 identified earlier in this report (see table 1).

Table 8: Number of deaf children, by languages mainly used in school/other educational setting

Language	Total	Percentage of responses (where known)
Spoken English	2,901	88%
British Sign Language	117	4%
Spoken English together with signed support	198	6%
Gaelic	15	0%
Other combination	82	2%
Total known	3,313	
Not known	10	
Total including not known	3,323 ¹⁷	

Comparing with data from the 2023 survey when this question was last asked the proportion of children and young people using:

- spoken English has decreased from 89% to 88%
- British Sign Language has increased from 3% to 4%
- spoken English together with signed support has increased from 5% to 6%

¹⁵ Defined as any other additional support need apart from deafness, regardless of whether this recognised as a 'primary' or 'secondary' need.

¹⁶ Three services did not provide a figure for this question. Additionally, two services reported gaps in the data they provided.

¹⁷ 3,323 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 3,218.

- Gaelic has remained the same at 0%
- other combination has decreased from 3% to 2%.

We saw earlier in table 4 that there were 862 children with severe or profound deafness. If it is assumed that children with severe or profound deafness are more likely to use sign language, it can be estimated that 14% of children with severe/profound deafness used British Sign Language in education whilst 23% used signed support with spoken English. Combined, 37% of children with severe/profound deafness used some form of sign language in education. It should be stressed that this is a very rough approximation made for illustration purposes only.

It must also be stressed that the use of spoken/sign language in education may not always match the use of spoken/sign language within the home or the child's own preferences.

Pupil Equity Fund

We asked services how many children were known to be eligible for the Pupil Equity Fund. Seven out of the 30 services provided a figure of over zero in answer to this question, reporting a total of 79 children and young people. This amounts to 10% of the total number of deaf children identified in these seven areas. However, two of the seven services also commented that the data they provided was not necessarily complete or accurate. If we include only the data provided by the other five services, 58 children were reported to be known to be eligible for the Pupil Equity Fund, 17% of the total for these five areas.

How do CRIDE's figures compare to School Census figures?

Because of the differences in how data have been collected, definitions used, and the number of areas involved, we recommend these figures be used as a basis for further debate and analysis, rather than to reach firm conclusions.

These data are published in accordance with the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act and since 2010 have included pupils with Co-ordinated Support Plans, Individualised Education Plans, Child Plans as well as those receiving 'other' types of support. These may be needs which are of short-term duration, or which do not need significant differentiation of learning and teaching to overcome barriers to learning.

The latest available data on deaf pupils in Scotland from the Scottish Pupil Census¹⁸ recorded 4,156 children with additional support needs, for whom the reason for requiring additional support was a hearing impairment, in primary, secondary and special schools as at 2024, compared to the figure of 3,649

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/> Pupils in Scotland 2024 supplementary statistics, table 1.8.

children and young people under the age of 19 reported by local authorities to CRIDE.

It should be noted that the CRIDE figures include children in the early years, whilst these are not included in the Scottish Pupil Census figures. However, it is noteworthy that the Scottish Pupil Census figures still report a higher number of deaf children than CRIDE.

PART 2: Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People and other specialist staff

We asked how many Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (TODs) were working in different settings, including those in a peripatetic role, working in resource provisions¹⁹, in schools for deaf children and young people, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. We found that:

- overall, there were at least 165.57 fte teachers working as TODs in Scotland
- 64% of these posts were occupied by fully qualified TODs, 31% were occupied by teachers in training for the mandatory qualification, and 5% were occupied by qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training
- at the time the survey was completed, there were 7.6 fte vacant posts reported
- if the vacant posts are added to the total number of TODs in employment, this would indicate there were at least 173.17 fte TOD posts, of which 4% were vacant.

The following table provides a breakdown by type of setting.

¹⁹ In the CRIDE survey, we use the term 'resource provision' to include all schools with a resource provision, base or unit specifically for deaf children, regardless of whether staff in the resource provision are employed by the local authority or by the school.

Table 9: Number of ToD posts overall²⁰

	Working mainly as a peripatetic TODs (total and percentage)	Working mainly in a resource provision (total and percentage)	Working mainly in a school for deaf children and young people (total and percentage)	Working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a school for deaf children and young people, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people (total and percentage)	TOD posts overall (total and percentage)
TODs with the mandatory qualification	63.89 (70%)	31.6 (58%)	9.2 (53%)	1.6 (62%)	106.29 (64%)
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	25.4 (28%)	16.6 (31%)	8.2 (47%)	1 (38%)	51.2 (31%)
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	2.08 (2%)	6 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8.08 (5%)
Total - in employment	91.37 (100%)	54.2 (100%)	17.4 (100%)	2.6 (100%)	165.57 (100%)
Vacant posts	4.5 (5%)	2.1 (4%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	7.6 (4%)
Total – posts	95.87 (100%)	56.3 (100%)	18.4 (100%)	2.6 (100%)	173.17 (100%)

No TODs were reported as working mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children.

²⁰ Percentages for TODs with the mandatory qualification, Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within three years, and Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training are out of the total in employment. Percentages for vacant posts are out of all posts.

Table 10: Number of TODs in employment overall by role (fte)

	Total TODs in post	Percentage
Working mainly as a peripatetic TODs	91.37	55%
Working mainly in a resource provision	54.2	33%
Working mainly in a school for deaf children and young people	17.4	11%
Working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a school for deaf children and young people, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people	2.6	2%
Total of figures given	165.57	100%

For the 30 services for which we were able to compare figures, we found that 23% of services had seen an increase in the number of TODs in employment between 2024 and 2025, 43% of services had seen no change, while 33% of services had seen a decrease.

Figures for TODs in the Scottish Cochlear Implant Centre were collected in a separate survey, who reported that there was 1 TOD with the mandatory qualification in employment, and no vacant posts.

Changes in numbers of TODs

The following tables look at changes in the number of qualified TODs in employment and posts over successive years.

As set out earlier, when making year on year comparisons, there are varying response rates to the surveys over the years, and anomalies can sometimes appear from year to year. CRIDE makes every effort to investigate any anomalies that appear particularly strange. Sometimes, issues only become apparent when completing analysis in the following year. Ultimately, we would like to see the Scottish Government take responsibility for ensuring there are accurate figures on the number of TODs in Scotland.

Table 11: Changes in numbers of TODs from year to year

	Number of TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment	Number of teachers working as TODs in employment	Number of services
2025	106.29	165.57	30
2024	116.38	168.34	30
2023	103.64	167.24	29
2022	100	161.7	30
2021	89.91	131.89	25
2020	77.48	117.98	27
2019	99.63	151.53	30
2018	121.68	154.88	30
2017	101.15	166.5	29
2016	No survey	No survey	No survey
2015	129.5	198	29
2014	138.7	204.7	28
2013	140.6	208.5	28
2012	No survey	No survey	No survey
2011	165.3	218.1	26

It should be noted that in 2017 the CRIDE Scotland survey began to ask about TODs who work mainly in a school for deaf children and young people, and TODs who mainly work in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. This means that figures for 2017 onwards may not be directly comparable with those from previous years. However, feedback suggests that they may have been included in previous years also. This makes it harder for us to judge what a sensible like-for-like comparison looks like – i.e. should we exclude or include TODs in special schools for deaf children in the 2024 figures when making long-term comparisons to the 2011 figures? In the tables that follow, we have set out both sets of figures separately for long-term comparisons.

Table 12: Long-term trends in number of qualified TODs (excluding TODs in schools for deaf children in 2025)

2025 total (fte)	97.09
2011 total (fte)	165.3
Difference (fte)	-68.21
% change	-41%

Table 13: Long-term trends in number of qualified TODs **and** trainee TODs (excluding TODs in schools for deaf children in 2025)

2025 total (fte)	140.09
2011 total (fte)	208.5
Difference (fte)	-68.41
% change	-33%

Table 14: Long-term trends in number of qualified TODs (including TODs in schools for deaf children in 2025)

2025 total (fte)	106.29
2011 total (fte)	165.3
Difference (fte)	-59.01
% change	-36%

Table 15: Long-term trends in number of qualified TODs **and** trainee TODs (including TODs in schools for deaf children in 2025)

2025 total (fte)	157.49
2011 total (fte)	208.5
Difference (fte)	-51.01
% change	-24%

Table 16: Short-term trends in number of qualified TODs (including TODs in special schools for deaf children)

2025 total (fte)	106.29
2024 total (fte)	116.38
Difference (fte)	-10.09
% change	-9%

Table 17: Short-term trends in number of qualified TODs **and** trainee TODs (including TODs in special schools for deaf children)

2025 total (fte)	157.49
2024 total (fte)	161.28
Difference (fte)	-3.79
% change	-2%

Table 18: Short-term trends in number of teachers working as TODs in employment (including TODs in special schools for deaf children)

2025 total (fte)	165.57
2024 total (fte)	168.34
Difference (fte)	-2.77
% change	-2%

In terms of any changes of TODs in post in specific roles:

- the total of 91.37 fte peripatetic TODs in employment is down marginally from 92.04 in 2024 (a 0.7% change)
- the total of 54.2 fte TODs in resource provisions is down marginally from 54.6 in 2024 (a 1% decrease)
- the total of 17.4 fte TODs reported as working mainly in a school for deaf children or young people is an increase from 16.4 fte in 2024 (a 6% increase)
- the total of 2.6 fte TODs reported as working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a school for deaf children, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people is a decrease from 5.3 fte in 2024.

Recruitment of TODs

In terms of recruitment of TODs over the past year:

- 15 services (50%) had sought to recruit a TOD over the past year, of these:
 - 12 services (92% of services that provided an answer)²¹ appointed to all roles
 - one service (8%) appointed to some roles but not all roles.
- If services were able to appoint, services were asked if those appointed were already a qualified TOD:
 - two services (15% of services that provided an answer)²² reported that all TODs appointed were qualified TODs
 - three services (23%) reported that some TODs appointed were qualified but not all
 - eight services (62%) reported that TODs appointed were not qualified.

Services were then asked about what steps were being taken if they were not able to appoint someone or that person was not a qualified TOD:

²¹ 13 services provided an answer to this question. Additionally, one service reported that the recruitment outcome was unknown at the time of the survey.

²² 13 services provided an answer to this question.

- Appointed teacher enrolled on the postgraduate course and started training.
- Appointed staff due to start training for the mandatory qualification or waiting for funding to be able to start the training.
- A person appointed has an honours degree in BSL and linguistics, and was due to start training for the mandatory qualification.
- Staff learning BSL.
- After not being able to appoint, recruitment was paused due to a staffing review which was part of a wider ASN review.

Services were also asked what the impact of not being able to appoint someone, or that person not being a qualified TOD was having on deaf children and families. Some services said there was no or minimal impact due to the measures they were taking. These included:

- Mentoring, support from the wider team, informal training while awaiting the start of the formal training
- Adjusted case lists
- Staff appointed are deaf themselves
- Staff appointed has lived experience as a parent of a deaf child
- Staff appointed has experience of working with deaf children
- Staff appointed has a high level of BSL skills.

Additional qualifications and background of TODs

Table 19: TODs who use BSL as a first language or have a Level 3 qualification or SCQF 6 (or equivalent) or above

	Number of teachers (fte)	Percentage of TODs in employment in relevant category	Number of services with staff in relevant category
Working mainly as a peripatetic TOD	21.54	24%	14
Working mainly in a resource provision	23.8	44%	6
Working mainly in a school for deaf children and young people	10.2	59%	3
Working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a school for deaf children and young people, and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people	0.6	23%	1
Total	56.14	34%	

In terms of other qualifications:

- 10.5 fte TODs (6% of all TODs in employment) held an additional post-graduate qualification in early years support; 9.1 fte were working mainly as

a peripatetic TOD, whilst 1.4 fte were working mainly in a resource provision

- 2.1 fte TODs (1% of all TODs in employment) held an additional specialist qualification as an educational audiologist. 0.7 fte were working mainly as a peripatetic TOD, 0.4 fte were working mainly in a resource provision, and 1 fte were working mainly in a school for deaf children and young people.

Additionally, 15 fte TODs were deaf themselves (9% of all TODs in employment). 8% of TODs working mainly as a peripatetic TOD, 9% of TODs working mainly in a resource provision, and 15% of TODs mainly in a school for deaf children and young people were deaf themselves.

Other specialist staff

We found that there were at least 66.14 fte specialist support staff, other than TODs, employed by services, supporting deaf children.²³ There were at least 8.4 fte vacant post reported. This means there were at least 74.54 fte specialist staff posts, of which 11% were vacant.²⁴

²³ Additionally, there were 6.4 fte staff in employment in roles not specified in table 20.

²⁴ One serviced reported staff time differently this year compared to last year, to more accurately reflect sessional staff adjustments. Additionally, some services reported no other specialist staff this year, whereas they had in previous years.

Table 20: Number of specialist support staff, by role

	Posts in total		...of which are staff in employment		...of which are vacant and unfilled posts	
	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with posts	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with staff in employment	Number of staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with vacant and unfilled posts
Pupil Support Assistants/Classroom support assistants etc	36.99 (100%)	13	34.99 (95%)	13	2 (5%)	1
Communication support workers etc	28.65 (100%)	12	23.75 (83%)	10	4.9 (17%)	4
NRCPD/SRLPDC registered BSL/English interpreters	2.5 (100%)	3	1 (40%)	1	1.5 (60%)	2
Deaf instructors/Deaf role models/Sign language instructors etc	4.4 (100%)	5	4.4 (100%)	5	0 (0%)	0
Educational audiologists/Audiologists in Education who do not also hold a qualification as a TOD	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technicians, etc	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speech and language therapists	2 (100%)	1	2 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	0
Family support workers/Liaison officers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social workers/Social workers for deaf children and young people	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	74.54 (100%)		66.14 (89%)		8.4 (11%)	

We then asked, of these other specialist staff in post directly employed by the services, how many were deaf themselves. Services reported that 11.2 fte (17%) of specialist support staff were deaf themselves.

Information on other specialist staff roles directly employed by services was reported separately in this survey. Where services gave an estimated fte, these roles totalled 6.4 fte, and included:

- Early years practitioners
- Early years deaf support worker
- Admin support
- Nurses
- BSL Tutor (not registered)

- Speech to text reporter.

Additionally, some services commented that they share staff with other services (and they are not allocated to work only with deaf children).

PART 3: Support provided

Table 21: Where services are based

	Number of services	Percentage
Based in the local authority	22	73%
Based in a school with a resource provision	3	10%
Based in a school for deaf children	3	10%
Based in a special school not specifically for deaf children	2	7%
Provided by another body or organisation	0	0%
Total	30	

Number of resource provisions

In the CRIDE survey, we use the term ‘resource provision’ to include all schools (mainstream or special) with a resource provision, base or unit specifically for deaf children, regardless of whether staff in the resource provision are employed by the local authority or by the school.²⁵

Table 22: Number of resource provisions

	Managed by the local authority	Managed by the schools	Total
Resource provisions for primary-aged children	5	3	8
Resource provisions for secondary-aged children	4	5	9
Total	9	8	17

We found that:

- eight services (27%) had at least one resource provision for primary-aged children in their area
- eight services (27%) had at least one resource provision for secondary-aged children in their area.

The total of 17 resource provisions across Scotland is up from the 16 reported in 2024. A service reported one new resource provision opening.

We also looked at the number of resource provisions against the number of deaf children.²⁶ This is intended to indicate the spread of resource provisions across Scotland, relative to the overall population of deaf children. We found that, on

²⁵ Where a service reported management of resource provisions differently this year to last year, it wasn't clear whether this was a change in management or a change in how they had reported the management of the resource provisions.

²⁶ The number of children and young people with permanent deafness reported as living in the area by services.

average, there was one resource provision for every 214 deaf children. This has changed from 2024 when there was one resource provision for every 222 deaf children. This is **not** a measure of the number of places available or individual deaf children enrolled at each resource provision; figures for places or deaf children enrolled will vary from provision to provision.

Number of schools for deaf children

Three schools for deaf children were reported across Scotland.

PART 4: Support following identification of deafness

We asked services how many referrals they received over the calendar year of 2024.²⁷

Table 23: Referrals

	Number and percentage of referrals	Number of services ²⁸
For children identified as deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme	81 (16%)	22
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and before they had started statutory education	115 (23%)	21
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and after they had started statutory education	304 (61%)	25
Total of figures given	500 ²⁹ (100%)	

In terms of changes since the 2024 survey:

- the total number of referrals over the calendar year reported by services has decreased from 530 to 500. However, one service did not provide an answer to this question and one service provided a partial answer. If they had both provided figures similar to their 2024 figures, the total referrals would have been 526.
- the proportion of referrals through the newborn hearing screening programme has increased from 11% to 16%
- referrals for children identified outside newborn hearing screening and before statutory education has decreased from 24% to 23%
- referrals for children identified outside newborn hearing screening but after they had started statutory education has decreased from 65% to 61%.

We then asked services about arrangements for first TOD visits for referrals made during the summer holidays.

²⁷ One service reported all referrals as unknown. One service did not provide full information on referrals. Where broken-down figures were provided as "<5", or information was withheld, these referrals were not included in table 23. Some services stated that the figures provided are for referrals for children with permanent deafness, and they also receive referrals for children with temporary conductive deafness.

²⁸ This is the number of services that provided a figure over 0.

²⁹ 500 was the sum of the broken-down figures. The sum of the totals provided by services was 512.

Table 24: TOD first visits for referrals made during the summer holidays

	Number of services	Percentage of services
Cover arrangements are in place to enable a TOD to provide a visit during the summer holidays within the same timescales as if referred during term time	1	3%
Cover arrangements are in place to enable a TOD to provide a visit during the summer holidays but not necessarily within the same timescales as if referred during term time	2	7%
A TOD visits as soon as possible after the school holidays	21	70%
Other	6	20%
Total	30	

Comments on other arrangements included:

- Educational audiologist makes contact with parents/carers during the holiday. Time for visits is voluntary and not given as time back.
- Service manager provides visits during the summer holiday and doesn't get the time back.
- Families are called by a TOD when a referral is received and provides a visit after the summer holiday.
- Trainee educational audiologist visits as soon as possible after the holiday, then a TOD is allocated.
- Deaf specialist speech and language therapist/speech and language therapist makes initial contact or visits with families during the summer holiday, then a TOD visits after the summer holiday.
- Agreement in place with speech and language therapy and TODs to provide contact and visits through the summer holiday.

PART 5: Issues or challenges

Services were asked if there were any wider issues or challenges that had emerged over the past year that had a significant impact on the support they were able to provide to deaf children. These included:

Providing support:

- Increase in caseloads, particularly in terms of numbers of children with temporary conductive deafness, and numbers of children with complex needs.
- Children arriving from other countries who've had no amplification and haven't previously attended school, and no access to spoken or sign language.
- Recent broadening of eligibility criteria for cochlear implantation has led to a rise in children requiring intensive rehabilitation support from a TOD.
- Significant waiting lists and staffing crisis in paediatric audiology and paediatric ENT resulting in children with temporary or unconfirmed hearing losses who are struggling with speech and language development and social skills in early years settings.

Staffing:

- Providing adequate support without a qualified TOD in post.
- Lack of a permanent line manager, and retirement of service manager.
- Lack of support of an educational audiologist.
- Challenges in recruiting suitably qualified CSWs and education support workers.
- Difficulties in recruiting qualified staff.
- Lack of supply cover.

Other:

- Difficulties arranging service level agreements.
- Challenges in matching up local authority data and data held by TODs.

PART 6: Background and methodology

CRIDE is a consortium bringing together a range of organisations and individuals with a common interest in using research to improve the educational outcomes achieved by deaf children. At the time the survey was sent out, representatives included: British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People Cymru, Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, Longwill School for the Deaf, National Deaf Children's Society, Royal School for the Deaf Derby, UCL, University of Edinburgh, former heads of services or consultants with expertise in deafness, and specialist education services for deaf children in Cambridgeshire, Camden, Kent, Leeds and STARS Sensory Support Service (Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland).

This is the ninth year that a CRIDE Scotland reference group has been in place. Members of this group have worked to improve how the CRIDE survey fits within the Scottish education context, whilst ensuring the data collected can still be compared with the rest of the UK. At the time the survey was sent out, representatives included: National Deaf Children's Society, Scottish Sensory Centre, University of Edinburgh, British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People, Ayrshire Hearing Impairment Service, West Lothian Hearing Impaired Service and Highland Deaf Education Service.

The survey alternates from year to year between a standard survey and a survey with a mix of core and thematic questions. The 2025 survey was the version with a standard survey.

The survey was disseminated to services in Scotland in February 2025 by National Deaf Children's Society staff on behalf of CRIDE. Where there was no response by 14 March, members of CRIDE contacted services by email and/or telephone.

Table 25: Response rate by services to the CRIDE survey

	Number of responses	Cumulative total
First deadline – 14 March 2025	22	22
Second deadline following contact from CRIDE	8	30

Services were able to respond by completing an online survey. Analysis of the results using Excel and drafting of this report was largely completed by the National Deaf Children's Society, with guidance and clearance from members of CRIDE.

CRIDE would like to thank the services 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.

Annex: Information by local authority

The table that follows sets out some individual data from services. Local authorities were asked to provide figures as of 31 January 2025.

Figures for TODs include TODs with the mandatory qualification (MQ) and TODs in training for the MQ or intending to train within three years.

Figures for the average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision are intended to show the spread of resource provisions across each area. It is calculated by dividing the number of children living in the area covered by a service and number of resource provisions in a service area. Where there is no resource provision in the area, this is indicated by a ratio of the population in the area to 0. Care should be used in interpreting these figures. In some cases, the ratio may be influenced by the presence of special schools in the area or other resource provisions in neighbouring areas. It should be noted that this is **not** a measure of the number of places available in or individual deaf children enrolled at each resource provision; figures for places or deaf children enrolled will vary from provision to provision.

Table 26: Data by local authority

	Number of permanently deaf children living in the geographical area covered by the service	TODs in the specialist peripatetic service	TODs in resource provisions	TODs mainly in a school for deaf children	TODs working flexibly³⁰	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Aberdeen City	126	6.4	No resource provisions reported	4.5	0	126:0
Aberdeenshire	102	4.6	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	102:0
Angus	77	2.2	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	77:0

³⁰ TODs working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision, in a school for deaf children and young people and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people.

	Number of permanently deaf children living in the geographical area covered by the service	TODs in the specialist peripatetic service	TODs in resource provisions	TODs mainly in a school for deaf children	TODs working flexibly³⁰	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Argyll & Bute	71	1	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	71:0
Clackmannanshire	53	1	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	53:0
Dumfries and Galloway	100	1.6	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	100:0
Dundee City	83	1.6	1	No schools reported	0	42:1
East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	214	9.2	7.6	No schools reported	None reported	71:1
East Dunbartonshire	110	2.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	110:0
East Lothian	64	1.4	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	64:0
East Renfrewshire	86	2	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	86:0
Edinburgh City	259	5.95	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	None reported	259:0
Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	18	0 ³¹	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	18:0
Falkirk	131	1	No resource provisions reported	8.9	0	131:0
Fife	262	11.2	2.7	No schools reported	0	131:1
Glasgow City	369	4.6	16	No schools reported	0	185:1
Highland	188	3.6	3.4	No schools reported	0.6	94:1

³¹ At the time of the survey there was a vacant post.

	Number of permanently deaf children living in the geographical area covered by the service	TODs in the specialist peripatetic service	TODs in resource provisions	TODs mainly in a school for deaf children	TODs working flexibly³⁰	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Inverclyde	46	1	4.2	No schools reported	1	23:1
Midlothian	79	2	1	No schools reported	1	79:1
Moray	46	1.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	None reported	46:0
North Lanarkshire ³²	213	5	9.3	No schools reported	0	107:1
Orkney	14	0 ³³	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	14:0
Perth & Kinross	102	1.8	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	102:0
Renfrewshire	315	4	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	315:0
Scottish Borders	42	1.44	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	42:0
Shetland Islands	15	0 ³⁴	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	15:0
South Lanarkshire	207	5	3	4	0	207:1
Stirling	69	1.6	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	None reported	69:0
West Dunbartonshire	65	2	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	0	65:0
West Lothian	107	3.5	No resource provisions reported	No schools reported	None reported	107:0

³² The response from North Lanarkshire includes information from the services for primary aged children and secondary aged children.

³³ At the time of the survey there was a vacant post.

³⁴ At the time of the survey there was a vacant post.