



Consortium for Research in Deaf Education

2025 report for Wales

Education provision for deaf children in Wales in 2024/25

Introduction

In 2025, we carried out the 15th Consortium for Research in Deaf Education (CRIDE) annual survey on educational staffing and service provision for deaf children. This report sets out the results of the survey for Wales and is intended for heads of services, policy makers 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 version with core questions, covering the 2024/25 academic year.¹

A number of changes were made to the standard survey in 2025 to streamline and reduce the number of questions².

The analysis in this report is based on responses from 14 services in Wales, covering 22 authority areas and giving a response rate of 100%.

¹ 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 <https://www.batod.org.uk/information/cride-reports/>.

² 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 still 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

Numbers of deaf children

- There were 2,147 deaf children reported by services. This figure of 2,147 is a reported decrease of 80 (4%) from 2,227 in 2024.
- 64% of services indicated there are known issues or gaps in their data on numbers of deaf children.

Teachers of Deaf Children and other specialist staff

- There were at least 64.7 fte Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (TOD) posts, of which 2.6 fte (4%) were vacant.
- Of the 62.1 fte working as TODs, 98% held the mandatory qualification, whilst 2% were in training.
- There were 26.72 fte specialist support staff posts (other than TODs) directly employed by services, with no vacant and unfilled posts reported.

Resource provisions

- There were a reported 19 resource provisions, which is the same as reported in 2024. Looking at the spread of resource provisions across Wales, on average, there is one resource provision for every 113 deaf children.

Support following identification of deafness

- Services stated they had received 504 referrals during the 2024 calendar year, a decrease from 564 reported in the 2024 survey.
- 8% of referrals to services came from the newborn hearing screening programme.
- 15% of referrals to services came from outside the newborn hearing screening programme and before a child had started statutory education.
- 76% 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 Wales

How many deaf children are there?

Services were asked to give details of deaf children living in the geographical area covered by their service.³

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. In previous CRIDE surveys, we have found that some services do not always provide this data consistently; occasionally services give broken-down figures where the sum generates a different total from that given elsewhere in the survey. Where there is a difference, we have used the highest figure available from either the overall total, given totals for questions, or the totals generated through the sum of the broken-down figures, and refer to this as the “adjusted total”. In this survey, however, most of the totals are the same, except in relation to education settings.

Based on the responses from all 14 services, there were 2,147 deaf children. This figure of 2,147 is a reported decrease of 80 (4%) from 2,227 in 2024.

³ Services were asked to include: All children under the age of 20 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 who attend education provision outside of your area but who normally live in your area. For the purpose of this section of the survey we use the term ‘children’ to include children and young people under the age of 20. Please also note that 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). Children with temporary deafness should not be included in responses to this question. 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.

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

	Total generated
Total when asked how many children overall	2,147
Total when asked about number of children, broken down by age group	2,147
Total when asked about number of children, broken down by level of deafness (including 'Level of deafness not known')	2,147
Total when asked about number of children, broken down by educational setting	2,133* ⁴

The smallest service reported 30 deaf children living within their boundaries. The largest reported 427 deaf children (this was a service covering five local authority areas). The average number of deaf children living in each service area was 153.

The following table compares the total number of deaf children living in Wales 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.

⁴ 2,133 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 2,145.

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

	Number of children reported
CRIDE 2025	2,147
CRIDE 2024	2,227
CRIDE 2023 (adjusted total)	2,260
CRIDE 2022 (adjusted total)	2,329
CRIDE 2021 (adjusted total)	2,324
CRIDE 2020*	1,384
CRIDE 2019 (adjusted total)	2,486
CRIDE 2018	2,625
CRIDE 2017 (adjusted total)	2,642
CRIDE 2016	2,374
CRIDE 2015 (adjusted total)	3,288
CRIDE 2014	2,880
CRIDE 2013 (adjusted total)	2,904
CRIDE 2012 (adjusted total)	2,743
CRIDE 2011 (adjusted total)	2,775

* In 2020, there were 11 responses to this question.

Issues or gaps in the data

Nine services (64%) indicated there were known issues or gaps in the data they provided for the number of children and young people. These included:

- services only having figures for children who are receiving support from the service (50% of all services)
- services not holding figures for children who have left school (50%)
- services not able to split out figures for children with permanent or temporary deafness (14%)
- services only having figures for children who are hearing-aid wearers (7%)
- other (21%). Some of the 'other' answers given were different ways of expressing the above options, other reasons included:
 - not having figures for some children without hearing aids (i.e. children with very mild glue ear)
 - not having figures for those who have left school and are not in further education settings
 - not having figures for those whose parents have opted not to have support from services.

Five services (36%) reported that there were no known issues or gaps in the figure provided for children with permanent deafness living in the area.

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 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 among the best sources of data available.

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

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

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

Age groups	Number of deaf children reported	Percentage of total
Early years/pre-school	194	9%
Primary-aged	896	42%
Secondary-aged	898	42%
Post-16 and under the age of 20	159	7%
Total	2,147	100%

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

- early years/pre-school age – no change
- primary-aged – increased by two percentage points
- secondary-aged – increased by one percentage point
- post-16 category – decreased by three percentage points

By way of comparison, we looked at figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on population estimates by age⁵ to see if there were any differences in the proportion of children in different age groups. It should be noted that in the CRIDE survey, we did not ask the specific age of children but whether they were of “primary age”, etc. so the data below should be taken as a rough approximation

⁵<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

only. In addition, the incidence of deafness is known to vary by age, reflecting the fact that many deaf children acquire deafness as they grow up. The figures below are therefore not directly comparable.

Table 4: Proportion of children and young people by age

ONS (mid-2024 data)		CRIDE	
Category	Percentage of all children aged 0-19	Category	Percentage of total
Children aged 0 to 4	21%	Early years/pre-school	9%
Children aged 5 to 11	35%	Primary-aged (reception to year 6)	42%
Children aged 12 to 16	27%	Secondary-aged (year 7 to 11)	42%
Young people aged 17 to 19	16%	Post-16 and under the age of 20	7%

Table 5: 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	500	24%
Mild	530	25%
Moderate	682	32%
Severe	186	9%
Profound	215	10%
Total (excluding 'not known')	2,113	
Not known	34	
Total (including 'not known')	2,147	

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

- with a unilateral deafness has increased by two percentage points
- with a mild level of deafness is unchanged
- with a moderate level of deafness has decreased by one percentage point
- with a severe level of deafness is unchanged
- with a profound level of deafness decreased 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 provisions⁶ that are not specifically for deaf children. This means that the results will not be directly comparable to those in previous years.

⁶ 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.

Table 6: 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	71	3%
	Early years setting – pre-school children	97	5%
	Supported at home – of school age and home educated	16	1%
	Mainstream state-funded schools	1,523	71%
	Mainstream independent (non-state-funded)	10	0%
	Resource provision (specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	116	5%
	Resource provision (not specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	77	4%
	Other special schools, not specifically for deaf children (whether state funded or non-maintained)	141	7%
	All other post-16 provision (not including school sixth form)	53	2%
Out of local authority	Early years setting – pre-school children	<5*	0%
	Mainstream state-funded schools	16	1%
	Mainstream independent (non-state-funded) schools	<5*	0%
	Resource provision (specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	<5*	0%
	Resource provision (not specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	0	0%
	Special schools for deaf pupils (whether state funded or non-maintained)	8	0%
	Other special school, not specifically for deaf children (whether state funded or non-maintained)	<5*	0%
	All other post-16 provision (not including school sixth forms)	5	0%
Other	NEET (Not in Education, Employment or in Training) (post-16 only)	0	0%
	Other (e.g. Pupil referral units)	<5*	0%
Total (excluding 'not known')		2,133*	
Not known		0	
Total (including 'not known' and suppressed figures)		2,145 ⁷	

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.

⁷ 2,145 was the sum of the broken-down figures, 2,147 was the sum of the totals given by services.

Table 7: 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 at home – pre-school children	71	3%	
Early years setting – pre-school children	97*	5%	
Supported at home – of school age and home educated	16	1%	1%
Mainstream provision (including state-funded and independent schools)	1,549*	73%	81%
Resource provision (specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	116*	5%	6%
Resource provision (not specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools	77	4%	4%
Special schools for deaf pupils	8	0%	0%
Other special schools, not specifically for deaf children	141*	7%	7%
All other post-16 provision (not including school sixth forms)	58	3%	
Other (e.g. Pupil referral units, NEET, not known)	<5*	0%	
Total	2,133*	100%	
Total (excluding pre-school children and other post-16 provision and 'other')	1,907*		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 remained unchanged

- in resource provisions (including those specifically for deaf children and those not specifically for deaf children) in mainstream schools has increased by 2%. However, as noted earlier, due to a change to the options offered in the survey, the 2025 data is not directly comparable to the 2023 data
- in other special schools not specifically for deaf children has decreased by 2%
- supported at home – of school age and home educated has remained unchanged.

Table 8: 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	2,104	99%
Out of home local authority	29*	1%
Total (not including 'not known' and 'other')	2,133*	

Incidence of additional learning needs (ALN)

Twelve services reported that the number of deaf children with another additional learning need⁸ was 620.⁹ This is 29% of the total of 2,147 deaf children. This is an increase from 24% in 2024.

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 for this question. This is because the one of the services reported all the children in their area as 'not known'.

⁸ Defined as any other additional learning need apart from deafness, regardless of whether this is recognised as a 'primary' or 'secondary' need.

⁹ One service did not respond to this question whilst another service reported that they didn't collect this data.

Table 9: Number of deaf children, by languages mainly used in school/other educational setting

Language	Total	Percentage of responses (where known)
Spoken English	1,221	72%
Spoken Welsh	303	18%
British Sign Language (BSL)	28	2%
Spoken English together with signed support	81	5%
Spoken Welsh together with signed support	0	0%
Other combination	63	4%
Total known	1,696	
Not known	451	
Total (including not known)	2,147 ¹⁰	

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

- spoken English has increased by two percentage points
- spoken Welsh has remained unchanged
- BSL has decreased by one percentage point
- spoken English together with signed support has decreased by two percentage points
- spoken Welsh together with signed support has remained unchanged
- other combination has remained unchanged.

It must 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.

Free school meals

We asked services how many deaf children were known to be eligible for free school meals. Eight services provided a figure in answer to this question, reporting a total of 288 children and young people. This amounts to 34% of the total number of deaf children identified in these eight areas. However, three of the eight services commented that the data they provide was not necessarily accurate. If we include only the data provided by five services that did not indicate the data may not be

¹⁰ 2,147 was the sum of the broken-down figures provided by services. The sum of the totals provided by services was 1,720.

accurate, 165 children were reported to be known to be eligible for free school meals, 37% of the total for these five areas.

It was noted by a few services that, in Wales all primary school children are entitled to free school meals. However, it was not always clear if and how this was reflected in the figures provided.

How do CRIDE's 2025 figures compare to School Census figures?

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

Services reported 2,147 deaf children aged 0 to 19 in Wales in the CRIDE 2025 survey. The Welsh Government's School Census¹¹ figures indicate there are 1,135 deaf pupils¹², and 340 pupils with a multi-sensory impairment. It should be noted that Welsh government data shows the number of times each type of additional learning need was reported.

We recognise that School Census figures mostly cover pupils aged 5 to 15 in primary, middle or secondary schools, both maintained and independent, whilst the above CRIDE figures are for children aged 0 to 19. The School Census figure of 1,135 deaf pupils represents 63% of the 1,794 primary-aged and secondary-aged children and young people with permanent deafness reported by services to CRIDE.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.wales/schools-census-results-january-2025>. The School Census uses the term 'hearing impairment'; in this report, we have changed this term to deafness.

¹² It is important to note that the Welsh Government rounds numbers to nearest five. It is also worth noting that the Welsh Government stated that School Census returns are authorised by headteachers and validated by local authorities.

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 provisions¹³ and/or working in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. We found that:

- overall, there were at least 62.1 fte teachers working as TODs in Wales
- 98% of these posts were occupied by fully qualified TODs and 2% were occupied by teachers in training for the mandatory qualification
- at the time the survey was completed, there were 2.6 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 64.7 fte TOD posts, of which 4% were vacant.

The following table provides a breakdown by type of setting.

¹³ 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 10: Number of ToD posts overall¹⁴

	Working mainly as a peripatetic TODs (total and percentage)	Working mainly in a resource provision (total and percentage)	Working mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people (total and percentage)	Working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision 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	34.8 (100%)	23.1 (94%)	1 (100%)	1.8 (100%)	60.7 (98%)
Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years	0 (0%)	1.4 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.4 (2%)
Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total - in employment	34.8 (100%)	24.5 (100%)	1 (100%)	1.8 (100%)	62.1 (100%)
Vacant posts	1.6 (4%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2.6 (4%)
Total – posts	36.4 (100%)	25.5 (100%)	1 (100%)	1.8 (100%)	64.7 (100%)

The following table summarises the above by just showing the numbers of TODs in employment by their role only.

¹⁴ Percentages for TODs with the mandatory qualification, Teachers in training for the mandatory qualification within 3 years, and Qualified teachers without the mandatory qualification and not in training are out of the total in post. Percentages for vacant posts are out of all posts.

Table 11: Number of TODs in employment overall by role

	Total TODs in post	Percentage
Working mainly as a peripatetic TODs	34.8	56%
Working mainly in a resource provision	24.5	39%
Working mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people	1	2%
Working flexibly as a peripatetic TOD, in a resource provision and/or in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people	1.8	3%
Total of figures given	62.1	100%

Figures for TODs in cochlear implant programmes were collected in a separate survey. There were at least 1 fte fully qualified TODs reported in post, and 0.8 vacant and unfilled posts reported.¹⁵

Changes in numbers of TODs

The following table looks 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, anomalies can sometimes appear in the responses. We make every effort to investigate anomalies that appear particularly strange; however, services do not always respond to such queries.

¹⁵ These 1.8 fte posts were for the South Wales Cochlear Implant Programme.

Table 12: Changes in numbers of TODs from year to year¹⁶

	TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment	TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment or in training	Number of teachers working as TODs in employment	Number of vacant posts	Number of TOD posts (including vacancies)
2025	60.7	62.1	62.1	2.6	64.7
2024	60.8	61.8	62.8	2	64.8
2023	59.7	64.3	64.3	1.6	65.9
2022	57.8	62.8	62.8	2.4	65.2
2021	54.4	58.8	60	2.4	62.4
2019	57	66	66	0	66
2018	56.425	61.825	61.825	1	62.825
2017	57.63	60.33	60.73	3.9	64.63
2016	65.45	69.25	69.25	1	70.25
2015	69.86	73.66	74.26	0.8	75.06
2014	67	69.2	70.2	0.6	70.8
2013	66.5	71.5	71.5	3	74.5
2012	91.75	100.55	100.55	0	100.55
2011	71.95	73.95	75.95	0	75.95

(2020 data not included because of lower response rate to survey)

¹⁶ In 2017, we began to ask about TODs in special schools or colleges not specifically for deaf children or young people. Figures from before/after are therefore not directly comparable. However, it is worth noting that the inclusion of these figures did not lead to a noticeable increase in the number of TODs.

Table 13: Percentage change in numbers of TODs

	Percentage change over past 14 years (between 2011 and 2025)	Percentage change over past year (between 2024 and 2025)
TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment	-16%	0%
TODs with the mandatory qualification in employment or in training	-16%	0%
Number of teachers working as TODs in employment	-18%	-1%
Number of TOD posts (including vacancies)	-15%	0%

In 2024, there was one teacher working as a TOD but without the mandatory qualification and not in training. None were reported in this category in the 2025 survey. This partly explains why the number of posts has dropped by 1% since 2024.

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

- The total of 34.8 fte peripatetic TODs is up very slightly from 34.7 in 2024. Since 2011, there has been a 17% decrease from 42 peripatetic TODs.
- The total of 24.5 fte TODs in resource provision is a slight decrease from 24.7 fte in 2024. Since 2011, when there were 34 TODs in post in resource provisions, there has been a 28% decrease.
- There were 1 fte TODs with the mandatory qualification reported as working mainly in a special school or college not specifically for deaf children or young people. This is a decrease from 2 fte in 2024.
- There were 1.8 fte TODs with the mandatory qualification reported as working flexibly between different roles/settings. This is an increase from 1.4 fte TODs reported as working in this way in 2024.

We found that 36% 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 21% of services had seen a decrease.

Recruitment of TODs

In terms of recruitment of TODs over the past year:

- Six services (43%) had sought to recruit a TOD over the past year, of these:

- Four services (80% of services that provided an answer)¹⁷ appointed to all roles
- One service (20%) appointed to some roles but not all roles.

All services except one reported¹⁸ that they were able to appoint a qualified TOD to the role. The service that was unable to appoint a qualified TOD reported that vacant posts were readvertised for wider audiences three times. The impact on deaf children and families in the area was that deaf children in a resource provision had no qualified TOD, with the peripatetic service supporting equipment needs only, as assessment and support were not under the remit of the peripatetic service.

Additional qualifications and background of TODs

Services reported that:

- 2.5 fte TODs, working in a peripatetic role, held an additional post-graduate specialist qualification in early years support for deaf children. This amounts to 7% of TODs working in a peripatetic role, and 4% of all TODs in employment
- 1.2 fte TODs, working in a peripatetic role, held an additional specialist qualification as an educational audiologist. This amounts to 3% of TODs working in a peripatetic role, and 2% of all TODs in employment
- 15.5 fte TODs could support deaf children through the Welsh language. This amounts to 25% of all TODs in employment. Of these:
 - 10.5 fte TODs worked mainly in a peripatetic role (30% of TODs working in a peripatetic role)
 - 4.5 fte TODs worked mainly in resource provisions (18% of TODs working in resource provisions)
 - 0.5 fte worked flexibly between different roles/settings (28% of TODs working flexibly).

The 2025 CRIDE survey included new questions about the BSL language skills of TODs, and whether TODs were themselves deaf.

- 20.9 fte TODs used BSL as a first language or held a Level 3 qualification (or equivalent) or above in British Sign Language. This amounts to 34% of all TODs in employment. Of these:
 - 20.9 fte TODs worked mainly in a peripatetic role (30% of TODs working in a peripatetic role)

¹⁷ Five services provided an answer to this question. One service did not provide an answer to this question as they were working through the recruitment process at the time of the survey.

¹⁸ Five services provided an answer to this question.

- 9.5 fte TODs worked mainly in resource provisions (39% of TODs working in resource provisions)
 - 1 fte worked flexibly between different roles/settings (56% of TODs working flexibly).
- 7 fte TODs were deaf themselves. This amounts to 11% of all TODs in employment.

Other specialist staff

We found that there were 26.72 fte specialist support staff, other than TODs, employed by services, supporting deaf children. There were no vacant posts reported. This means there were 26.72 fte specialist support staff posts, of which none were vacant.

Table 14: 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 staff (full time equivalent)	Number of services with posts	Number of staff (full time equivalent)
Teaching assistants/Classroom support assistants/Learning support assistants etc	21.75 (100%)	12	21.75 (100%)	12	0 (0%)	0
Communication support workers etc	3 (100%)	1	3 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	0
NRCPD registered BSL/English interpreters	0 (100%)	0	0 (100%)	0	0 (0%)	0
Deaf instructors/Deaf role models/Sign language instructors etc	0.87 (100%)	2	0.87 (100%)	2	0 (0%)	0
Educational audiologists/Audiologists in Education who do not also hold a qualification as a TOD	0 (100%)	0	0 (100%)	0	0 (0%)	0
Technicians, etc	1 (100%)	2	1 (100%)	2	0 (0%)	0
Speech and language therapists	0.1 (100%)	1	0.1 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	0
Family support workers/Liaison officers	0 (100%)	0	0 (100%)	0	0 (0%)	0
Social workers/Social workers for deaf children and young people	0 (100%)	0	0 (100%)	0	0 (0%)	0
Total	26.72 (100%)		26.72 (100%)		0 (0%)	

The number of posts is down slightly from 28.7 fte in 2024.¹⁹

We then asked, of these other specialist staff in post directly employed by the services, how many were deaf themselves. Fewer than 5 fte staff were reported to be deaf themselves.

No other specialist staff in other roles were reported as directly employed by the peripatetic services. Some services commented on staff employed more widely, including:

- CSWs
- Senior Specialist Support Officers
- Learning Support Officers
- Special Needs Support Assistants.

¹⁹ One service originally reported some staff in their 2025 response that they had also reported previously. As the service commented this year that these staff were seconded from the resource provision and were used flexibly between the peripatetic service and resource provision, they were not included in the figures this year. This may partly account for the decrease in posts.

PART 3: Support provided

All but one of the 14 services (93%) stated that the service was based in the local authority. One service (7%) stated that they were a consortium service hosted in one local authority.

Number of resource provisions

In the CRIDE survey, we use the term ‘resource provision’ to include all schools with any specialist 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 15: Number of resource provisions

	Managed by the local authority	Managed by the schools	Total
Resource provisions for primary-aged children	3	6	9
Resource provisions for secondary-aged children	4	6	10
Total	7	12	19

The total of 19 resource provisions across Wales remains the same as in 2024. We found that:

- nine services (64%) had at least one resource provision for primary-aged children in their area
- nine services (64%) had at least one resource provision for secondary-aged children in their area.

Table 16: Number of resource provisions over time²⁰

Year	Number of resource provisions
2025	19
2024	19
2023	19
2022	19
2021	20
2019	24
2018	25
2017	25
2016	24

We also looked at the number of resource provisions against the number of deaf children. This is intended to indicate the spread of resource provisions across Wales, relative to the overall population of deaf children. We found that, on average, there is one resource provision for every 113 deaf children. In 2024 there was one resource provision for every 117 deaf children.

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. It should also be kept in mind that the information services are able to provide on the numbers of deaf children in their area varies in terms of gaps and known issues.

The annex provides figures on the spread of resource provisions against the local population of deaf children in each local authority.

²⁰ 2020 data not included because of lower response rate to the survey

PART 4: Support following identification of deafness

We asked services how many referrals they received over the calendar year of 2024.

Table 17: Referrals

	Number and percentage of referrals	Number of services ²¹
For children identified as deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme	41 (8%)	12
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and before they had started statutory education	78 (15%)	12
For children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing programme and after they had started statutory education	385 (76%)	12
Total of figures given	504 ²² (100%)	

In terms of changes since the 2024 survey:

- the total number of referrals over the calendar year has decreased from 564 to 504
- the proportion of referrals through the newborn hearing screening programme has increased from 7% to 8%
- referrals for children identified outside newborn hearing screening and before statutory education has remained unchanged at 15%
- referrals for children identified outside newborn hearing screening but after they had started statutory education has decreased from 78% to 76%.

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

²¹ This is the number of services that provided a figure over 0.

²² 504 was the sum of the broken-down figures given by services. The sum of the totals given by services was 489. One service only provided figures for children identified as deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme and not for children identified as deaf outside of the newborn hearing screening programme.

Table 18: 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	7%
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	5	36%
A TOD visits as soon as possible after the school holidays	4	29%
Other	4	29%
Total	14	

Comments on other arrangements included:

- the head of service working year-round and if on leave, visits the family as a priority on return, meanwhile Audiology are informed
- a TOD visiting during the holidays at their own discretion.

Issues or challenges

Services were asked if there were any issues or challenges, other than those they may have already reported elsewhere in the survey responses, 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:

- Staffing difficulties related to:
 - recruiting qualified ToDs (including ToDs with Welsh as a first language)
 - retirement of staff leaving temporary gaps or reductions in management or service provision
 - TOD posts being frozen for periods of time if TODs have requested flexible working arrangements
 - recruiting qualified LSAs
 - concerns about training and keeping assistants with a high level of BSL
 - shortage of trained relief assistants available to provide cover

- the need to 'futureproof' the specialist workforce in the light of the age profile of TODs increasing.
- Schools' budgets being stretched and high numbers of children with additional learning needs.
- An increasing number of referrals from audiology for children issued with hearing aids.
- Children with emerging needs impacting the support a service provides.
- An increasing number of children with Individual Development Plans (IDP) resulting in extra meetings, paperwork and administration.
- Lack of clarity around support for post-16 young people due to lack of additional funding for workforce.

PART 5: 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).

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 Wales 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. The table below sets out the response rate at each stage.

Table 19: Response rate by services to the CRIDE survey

	Number of responses	Cumulative total
First deadline – 14 March 2025	11	11
Second deadline following contact from the CRIDE steering group	3	14

Services were able to respond by completing an online survey. If they were not able to do this they could complete a Word document of the 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 20: 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 special school or college not specifically for deaf children and young people	TODs working flexibly	Average population of deaf children covered by each resource provision
Bridgend	167	1	1	0	0.8	84:1
Cardiff	264	4.4	6.8	0	0	132:1
Carmarthenshire	154	2.2	3	0	0	77:1
Ceredigion	55	1	1	0	0	55:1
Gwynedd and Anglesey	117	2.5	No resource provisions reported	0	0	117:0
Merthyr Tydfil	30	0.8	No resource provisions reported	0	0	30:0
Neath Port Talbot	111	2	3	0	0	56:1
North East Wales (Flintshire, Denbighshire, Wrexham, Conwy)	295	4.5	2.5	0	0.5	98:1
Pembrokeshire	58	1	No resource provisions reported	0	0	58:0
Powys	99	2.8	No resource provisions reported	0	0	99:0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	135	2.6	1	1	None reported	135:1
South East Wales (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouth, Torfaen and Newport)	427	7	3.2	0	0	214:1
Swansea	142	2	1.5	0	0	71:1
Vale of Glamorgan	93	1	1.5	0	0.5	47:1