

Radio Aid Policy for Deaf Children In Home & Educational Settings



Advances in technology are continuing to have a positive impact on the ability of deaf children to access spoken language. It is recognised that every child has the right to access the full range of technological equipment relevant to their needs regardless of their learning environment.

Radio aids enhance the listening experience of deaf children by improving the audibility of speech in situations where distance, background noise and reverberation make the listening and learning process challenging.

“Evidence of the benefits of radio aids is compelling and deaf children deserve the very best opportunities. All those concerned with the provision of services have a responsibility to ensure that radio aid systems are used appropriately to enhance the experience of all deaf children, both at home and in educational settings.”

NDCS Quality Standards - February 2017
Wendy McCracken - Professor of Deaf Education

January 2019

Aims of this policy

- ❖ To ensure that all children make best use of their residual hearing and derive maximum benefit from amplification.
- ❖ To ensure that all children and young people will have optimum access to sound and speech across a range of listening environments.

Candidacy

Every deaf child is a potential candidate for the provision of a radio aid as part of their amplification package.

“The listening environment in most pre-schools, schools and homes is less than ideal and deaf children are likely to spend 40–50% of their listening time in noisy environments. For this reason, young children as well as school-age children can benefit from using personal radio aids.”

NDCS Quality Standards - February 2017

Criteria for issuing a radio aid

Before requesting a radio aid for a deaf child, the Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) must adopt a holistic approach to assessing a child's needs including their social, emotional and linguistic development, functional listening and communication skills, as well as the acoustic learning/teaching environment.

Factors to consider include:

- Hearing levels.
- Functional listening skills.
- Use of hearing aids/cochlear implants in the educational and/or home setting.
- Language development/ National Curriculum levels / progress made.
- Developmental levels / additional difficulties.
- Emotional and social development.
- Classroom acoustic parameters.
- Ease of operation/ suitability of situations.
- Compatibility with other equipment already in use.
- Pupil voice e.g. LIFE (Listening Inventory for Education) & Supporting Achievement questionnaires.
- School support
- Family support

Where a CYP attends an out of borough school it would normally, be the responsibility of the LA in which the school is situated to provide the radio aid and maintain it. This applies to CYP at SEN Support and not to those with an EHCP. It is the responsibility of the home borough to provide a radio aid for a CYP with an EHCP.

Practice Guidelines

- ✓ The Sensory Support Team will purchase and loan radio aid systems to Haringey educational settings and homes.
- ✓ Enfield educational settings need to apply to Enfield SEN team for funding for a radio aid system with a supporting letter from the Sensory Support Team.
- ✓ Haringey educational settings will agree to take responsibility for the safekeeping of the radio aid system by signing a loan form. Where the child is not in an educational setting, families will agree to take responsibility for the safekeeping of the radio aid system.
- ✓ The Sensory Support Team will arrange for any repairs to Haringey radio aids.
- ✓ Enfield educational settings will agree to take responsibility for the safekeeping of the radio aid system and are responsible for liaising with the Enfield SEN team for losses and repairs.
- ✓ For school age CYPs, radio aids are allowed to be used outside school hours in agreement with the family, school and the TOD. A routine should be agreed to ensure safekeeping, regular charging and management of the radio aid. Parents are responsible for the radio aid and its correct use out of school.
- ✓ In line with the government's IEC safety guidance, deaf children under 36 months old will be issued with integrated receivers.
- ✓ Radio aids are set up and balanced by the audiological technician from the Ewing Foundation.
- ✓ Develop and support the CYP's independence in their use of the radio aid and ability to report issues. The TOD will advise the school on appropriate strategies for progression of these skills.
- ✓ The TOD will increase the level of support in the short term in order to support a child and the mainstream staff in becoming used to the new amplification equipment.
- ✓ Staff in educational settings will attend any training offered about appropriate use of the radio aid system. TODs will support and train parents in the home environment.
- ✓ Written information about the radio aid system, its settings and appropriate use will be shared with the classroom teacher/LSA and Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO).
- ✓ A designated member of mainstream school staff will take responsibility for the management of the radio aid system.
- ✓ Daily equipment checks should be carried out
- ✓ The Sensory Support Team will liaise with audiology and cochlear implant clinics as appropriate.

This Radio Aid policy was written by the Hearing Impairment Team and will be implemented in homes and educational settings in both Haringey & Enfield. The policy will be reviewed in January 2021.