

# **Education Bradford**

## **Paper for Education Policy Partnership**

### **Special Educational Needs Review**

**Deaf Provision – a report on the  
recent consultation and proposals  
for the future configuration of this  
provision**

**Date: July 2004**

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### Glossary of Terminology

- 1 Deaf – deaf. This paper uses the Woodward convention (1982). Lower case ‘deaf’ is used to indicate the audiological condition of having mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss. Upper case ‘Deaf’ is used to refer to a group of people who share a sign language and culture.
- 2 BSL – British Sign Language, used by over 70,000 people within the British Deaf Community
- 3 DSP – Designated specialist provision within a mainstream school
- 4 ESPP – a Department of Education and Skills and Department of Health initiative: Early Support Pilot Programme aimed at supporting parents/carers and professionals and to better ensure a ‘joined up approach’ to supporting young children aged 0 – 3 years.
- 5 NDCS – National Deaf Children’s Society
- 6 BDCS – Bradford Deaf Children’s Society
- 7 Decibel (dB): a measure of the loudness of sound. The human ear is sensitive to sound covering a wide range of loudness:

40 dB	Level of quietest human voice	60 – 65 dB	Conversational voice
90 dB	Pneumatic drill	120 dB	Jet aircraft taking off

There are three different decibel scales commonly used.

- 8 Degrees of deafness (mild, moderate, severe, profound): When considering degrees of deafness frequency and loudness (see Decibels above) are both factors to consider. Frequency is measured in Hertz (Hz). The ear is most sensitive to the frequency range important for human speech i.e. 125Hz to 8KHz. Low frequencies give us information on rhythm, intonation and the vowels. They also help us to distinguish between male and female voices. Most consonants are high frequency sounds and therefore high frequency hearing is particularly important for speech discrimination. A person is deemed to have hearing within normal limits if it is at or above 15dB across the frequencies 250Hz to 4KHz. The following definitions are used for degrees of deafness:

15 to 40 dB	Mild deafness	40 to 70 dB	Moderate deafness
71 to 95 dB	Severe deafness	95 + dB	Profound deafness

- 9 Unilateral deafness is deafness affecting only one ear.
- 10 Conductive deafness: when sound is impeded in its passage through the outer and middle ear to the cochlea and auditory nerve in the inner ear. Often caused by fluid – glue ear results and hearing loss is usually temporary.
- 11 Sensori-neural deafness, or nerve deafness: most often is caused by the loss of or damage to the hair cells in the cochlea preventing the cochlea converting the sound waves into electrical signals. Hearing loss is permanent.
- 12 Auditory-oral approach to language and communication development – this approach maintains that with the use of hearing aids, radio aids and cochlear implants to amplify residual hearing, children can develop their listening skills and so a spoken language. Auditory-oral approaches do not use sign language or finger spelling to support the understanding of spoken language.
- 13 Lip reading/speech reading – the ability to read lip patterns.
- 14 Sign bilingualism – an approach that systematically encourages the learning of two languages at one time, a sign language and a spoken/written language. In Britain, for deaf children, these are English or another spoken language and BSL.
- 15 Finger spelling – where each letter of the alphabet is given its own sign. It is usually used for signing names and places or for a word that does not have a sign.
- 16 Total communication – is a philosophy that involves deaf pupils using different methods of communication at anyone time so to provide a total understanding. The idea behind this is that sign language will not replace but support the use of the oral method of communication and the use of any residual hearing to help the development of speech and language skills.
- 17 Signed English – designed as a teaching tool, where a sign is used for every spoken word in English word order. Signs are frequently taken from BSL. Its aim is to develop reading and writing skills.
- 18 Signed supported English – similar to Signed English but does not attempt to sign every word that is spoken.

## 1 Purpose of the report

- a. To provide information for Education Policy Partnership on the process and outcomes of the initial consultation on the future of deaf provision across the District.
- b. To outline specific proposals for the future provision for deaf pupils across the Bradford District.

## 2. Introduction

In December 2003 EPP received a report outlining the context and current situation related to provision for deaf pupils in the District. That report also contained the principles, aims and objectives which should underpin the configuration of the District's provision for deaf pupils and proposed that a consultation be undertaken with interested parties on them, and to seek the views of these interested parties on the future configuration of deaf provision across the District.

This process is part of the overall review of special educational needs provision. EPP has previously received reports on special school provision, designated specialist provision in mainstream schools, Early Years provision for children with SEN and a review of the Learning Support Services.

## 3. Consultation process

Following EPP's agreement to consult on the proposed principles, aims and objectives which should underpin future deaf provision and gain interest groups' views for future provision a process was developed to engage as many interested parties as possible. Over 1400 copies of the consultation document were distributed and the document was also available on the Education Bradford website. A copy of the consultation document and response form is included as Appendix A. A breakdown of the distribution is included in table 1 below. Further publicity was given by contacting specific groups, for example, the Sanghat Centre and the Keighley Asian Women and Children's Centre, and the local newspapers.

**TABLE 1**  
**Overall percentage of response received to deaf consultation**

	<b>Sent Out:</b>	<b>Returns:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Parent / Carers	524	27	5.2
Officer Social Services	13	0	0.0
Officer Health	34	6	17.6
Officer Bradford Council	128	0	0.0
School Staff	135	31	23.0
Governors	227	6	2.6
Headteacher	215	9	4.2
Voluntary Groups	14	3	21.4
Other	13	10	76.9
Officer Education Bradford	87	0	0.0
Total:	<b>1390</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>6.6</b>

The parents/carers included in the above table are those who have a child/ren with a statement where the primary need is identified as deafness, and the parents/carers of children known to the Deaf Support Service who have been assessed at School Action Plus.

Dedicated administrative support has been provided to the consultation and has responded to telephone queries, requests for additional copies of the consultation paper and the arrangements for interpreters and translators. Each consultation response is recorded in detail on a data base.

In addition to the distribution of the consultation paper, a series of 14 public meetings was set up across the Bradford District, with British Sign Language Interpreters at most meetings and Punjabi translators provided at some of the meetings. A list of the meetings is included in Appendix A Table 1. Each consultation document (see Appendix B) was sent with a covering letter inviting requests for further copies and with the offer of attendance by Education Officers at meetings of interest groups. Additional meetings have included those with Health professionals, the Learning and Skills Council and the Elizabeth Foundation. There has been a total attendance at the 14 public meetings of 201 (which includes a number who attended two or more meetings); a break down of attendance by meeting is included in Appendix A Table 1. Notes of the key points raised at these meetings have been recorded against each of the headings in the response document on the database.

#### **4. Responses to the consultation**

Table 2 on the next page provides a breakdown of the written responses received.

A total of 92 written responses were received, representing a 6.6% return. The largest numbers of individual responses came from parents/carers and school staff, the latter providing the highest percentage return.

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TABLE 2	Number		Strongly			Strongly	Feel Unable		
Responses to proposed Principles, Aims and Objectives	Sent Out	Returns	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	To Comment	Stated	Total
<b>Headteacher</b>	215	9	3	4	1		1		<b>9</b>
Mainstream		6	2	3	1				6
Special		3	1	1			1		3
DSP		0							0
<b>Governor</b>	227	6	3	2	1				<b>6</b>
Mainstream		4	2	2					4
Special		1			1				1
DSP		1	1	0					1
<b>School Staff</b>	135	31	8	15	3	1	4		<b>31</b>
Teacher		21	7	11	1		2		21
Mainstream		7	3	4					7
Special		7		5	1		1		7
DSP		7	4	2			1		7
Nursery Nurse		2		1		1			2
Mainstream		1				1			1
Special		0							0
DSP		1		1					1
Teaching Assistant		8	1	3	2		2		8
Mainstream		3		3					3
Special		2			2				2
DSP		3	1				2		3
<b>Parent/Carer</b>	524	27	4	10	4	2	7		<b>27</b>
Mainstream		11	2	5	1		3		11
Special		13	1	4	3	2	3		13
DSP		3	1	1			1		3
<b>Voluntary Group</b>	14	3	2			1			<b>3</b>
<b>Officer Bfd Council</b>	128	0							<b>0</b>
<b>Officer Health</b>	34	6	2	3			1		<b>6</b>
<b>Officer Soc Serv</b>	13	0							<b>0</b>
<b>Officer Educ Bfd</b>	87	0							<b>0</b>
<b>Other</b>	13	10	1	6	1		2		<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1390</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>92</b>

A small number of responses indicated that the respondent was both, for example, a parent and a member of school staff. In these cases the response was recorded against the type which best reflected the response comments. Specific group responses were received from the National Deaf Children's Society, Thorn Park Special School, a primary school with designated provision, providers and commissioners within Bradford and Airedale NHS Trusts, the Learning and Skills Council and the Elizabeth Foundation.

In overall terms, a considerable majority of the respondents supported the proposed principles, aims and objectives. Sixty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed with them, 15% disagreeing and 16% felt that they were unable to comment.

Only six parents/carers did not agree with the proposed principles, aims and objectives.

Education Bradford's strategic partners supported these principles, as did the National Deaf Children's Society. Responses from the Health Authorities indicated that they wished to be invited at the earliest opportunity to discuss the implications of implementing these principles to ensure that the health agencies that provide support for deaf children are able to fully understand the workforce planning requirements.

The key points made by those agreeing to the principles, aims and objectives were:

- the principles are also applicable to all pupils with special educational needs;
- parents/carers must have an opportunity to express a preference based on good quality information and access to an independent key worker;
- all deaf pupils should have the opportunity of working with their hearing peers;
- a greater emphasis on pre – 5 early intervention and support is required across the District;
- the current polarity of views about educating deaf pupils is singularly unhelpful, and very stressful for parents/carers;
- the importance of deaf adult role models was essential; and
- appropriate commissioning arrangements needed to be developed between Education Bradford and the respective NHS providers.

The main points made by the respondents who felt that they could not support the proposed principles, aims and objectives were:

- the need for totally specialised and separate provision;
- that pupils who used British Sign Language as their preferred mode of communication would be considerably disadvantaged in a mainstream school and would not be able to adequately access the curriculum provided; and
- inclusion should not/does not mean that all pupils should be educated in mainstream schools.

Attendance at the consultation meetings (see Appendix A Table 1) was highly variable. By far the greatest number of people attended the two meetings held at each of Girlington Primary School and Thorn Park Special School. There was a clear indication at the Girlington meetings of support for the proposed principles, aims and objectives which should underpin future provision and overwhelming support for the provision at the school. Likewise at the meetings held at Thorn Park School, overwhelming support was recorded for the work of the school. Unfortunately, the specific reference made in the consultation document to the possible closure of the current, separate specialist provision amongst a number of particular options related to the future configuration of the District's deaf provision became the main focus of the two meetings held at Thorn Park. This prevented a discussion about the wider aspects of the consultation. There was also a view that the Deaf Community had been insufficiently involved in the development of the consultation paper.

Although outside of the official consultation period several other meetings were arranged for small groups of parents/carers of pupils attending Thorn Park School, Girlington Primary, Nab Wood Secondary and the Elizabeth Foundation to try to enable more in-depth discussions to take place on current and future deaf provision. The views expressed by these groups of parents/carers have been taken into account in the writing of this report. They reflect the key points raised during the consultation, both in terms of the proposed principles, aims and objectives and the views expressed about future deaf provision.

It was suggested by a few respondents that certain wording in the proposed principles, aims and objectives was changed to achieve greater clarity. These changes are included in italics in Section 5 which contains the amended principles, aims and objectives.

There were few detailed responses related to the configuration of future deaf provision. Those received varied considerably in their suggestions but there were a number of common elements:

- the need to have effective links between any provision;
- the need to have a clear pathway of provision for children from pre-school age through to the end of secondary education;
- that the specialist provision should provide both a staff training facility as well as a support facility for other settings/schools; and
- that the setting/school should be clear about its communication policy.

Other points made by two or more respondents included:

- the need to retain the current range of provision which already provides a range of communication modes;
- the need for a primary DSP in the north of the District;
- Children's Centres should be used also to provide specialist provision for deaf pupils;
- The Deaf support service should not be based at Thorn Park;
- the idea of a 'Learning Campus' should be explored;
- the current Thorn Park School building is not 'deaf friendly'; and
- the LEA should contribute to the running of the Elizabeth Foundation.

## **5. Proposals for the future configuration of deaf provision within the District.**

### **i) National context**

The 1997 Green paper 'Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' and a subsequent 'Programme of Action' published in October 1998 made a commitment by government to improving the statutory framework and procedures for SEN, building on experience and best practice. This commitment was taken forward through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the publication of the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

However, the Audit Commission's report 'Special Educational Needs – a mainstream issue' (2002) highlighted a number of continuing challenges:

- too many children wait for too long to have their needs met;
- children who should be able to be taught in mainstream settings are sometimes turned away and many staff feel ill equipped to meet the wide range of pupil needs in today's classrooms;
- many special schools feel uncertain about their future role; and
- families face unacceptable variations in the level of support available from their school, local authority or local health services.

In February 2004 the government launched its vision and strategy for pupils with special educational needs through the publication of 'Removing Barriers to Achievement'. This document builds on the proposals for the reform of children's services as set out in 'Every

Child Matters'. The 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' strategy document concludes by stating that the strategy will have made a difference when:

- “- children with SEN have their needs met as soon as they become apparent, without the need for a period of failure;
- children with SEN feel valued members of their school community;
- the barriers that divide mainstream and special schools have disappeared and all schools work in partnership with other services and the voluntary sector to meet the needs of local children; and
- there is much greater consistency in the quality of provision that children with SEN receive in school and from the local authority, and parents are confident of this.”

In addition, the Government officially recognised (March 2003) British Sign Language (BSL) as a language in its own right. Various education bodies; for example the Department of Education and Skills and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, are investigating how this recognition should influence education provision for deaf pupils. Education Bradford has also embraced this language in the recently published Policy on Bilingualism.

There is considerably synergy between the national strategies and what Education Bradford and Bradford Council is trying to develop in providing these proposals for pupils who are deaf, and their parents/carers, so that these deaf pupils achieve as highly as possible and are confident to undertake their adult role within society.

## ii) Local matters

The development of future deaf provision needs also to be undertaken within the context of other local initiatives and changes. In particular, the following will impact on future deaf provision:

- the wider Review of Special Educational Needs and the changes being proposed;
- the development of Children's Centres across the District;
- the development of Confederations to widen and provide a more coherent framework for secondary provision, 14 -19;
- the development of proposals for Children's Trusts;
- the development of extended schools; and
- the increasing numbers of deaf pupils across the District.

In the December 2003 report to EPP on the review of deaf provision section 3 and 4 provided information on the current provision for deaf pupils across the District. Below, is set out the updated information on this provision.

The table and commentary below provides specific information on the provision maintained by the Council and Education Bradford

Provider	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Jan 2003	Jan 2004	Projected Sept 2004	Budget 04 / 05	Approx. funding per pupil
Thorn Park	76	82	87 (84.5fte)	91 (87.5fte)	92 (83 fte)	<b>Estimated 81 (78 fte)</b>	Gross Formula £963, 373	£12,350
Girlington	6	6	15	16	24	30	£231,512	£7717

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Nab Wood	11	15	9	11	7	8	£179,960	£22495
Deaf Support Service	387	384	378	372	387	389	£430,000	£1105

Other facts and figures

The total number of pupils whose statement indicates that deafness is their primary need or they are being assessed within a specialist setting = 162 (March 2004)

This figure includes the following data:

- Thorn Park pupils
- pupils in mainstream designated specialist provision
- the Extra District pupils placed in Thorn Park – ten (September 2004).

The only significant difference between the data in this table and that provided in December 2003 is that the numbers at Girlington continue to rise and are expected to reach 30 by January 2005. With the agreement of the management of the school no further admissions above this number will be accepted.

The trends analysis provided in the December EPP paper is still valid; there are an increasing number of pupils with a hearing loss across the District. The Deaf Support Service is currently supporting just over 300 pupils in mainstream nursery/primary schools and 35 pre-school children who are in non-maintained settings.

**iii) The vision**

This incorporates the key points from the government's strategy for SEN 'Removing Barriers to Achievement', as quoted above, with the other essential elements of the DfES Special Schools Working Group which emphasises the role of specialist provision in providing bases for teaching methods, resources and support. In the context of deaf education this must lead to:

- a coherent, well co-ordinated District-wide provision in which pupils and parents/carers have confidence;
- provision which caters for a range of inclusive communication modes along a continuum from oral dominant to visual dominant, for example, British Sign Language;
- a range of provision which is understood by deaf pupils and their parents/carers so that informed preferences can be identified during each pupil's educational journey at the key points of transition: from early years, primary, secondary and post 16 education; and
- provision that is staffed by suitably trained staff.

The expectation is that these provisions will:

- promote the highest levels of achievement for deaf pupils;
- enable Bradford deaf children to have the opportunity to make appropriate and positive friendships/relationships with their peers;

- recognise that deaf children and adults form an identifiable cultural group and that deaf pupils should have the opportunity to become active members of the Deaf Community;
- wherever possible and with the full agreement with the pupils themselves, to provide opportunities for them to work with their hearing peers;
- ensure that the movement of pupils between placements be simple and straight forward and is undertaken on the basis of informed decision making and consultation with pupils and their parents/carers; and
- that achievement and progress of pupils should be rigorously and regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that the educational provision is successful and appropriate.

Each of the provisions identified within the models below should work towards becoming a Centre for Excellence, which would include the provision of high quality specialist assessment and teaching, outreach teaching, guidance and technical support to both mainstream and special schools, support for parents/carers and other agencies, and accredited training for school staff.

To support the implementation of these aspirations accommodation in all provisions will need to be provided that:

- can support effective curriculum delivery;
- is designed to meet the needs of deaf children;
- is sufficiently flexible in order that it can be reconfigured in order to accommodate changes in pupil groupings, or pupil numbers in the future, if necessary;
- includes provision for meetings with families/carers;
- provides high quality facilities for staff, including rooms for on-site delivery and receipt of in-service training and professional development;
- if, at all possible, could provide for delivery of multi-agency support for families/carers;
- could provide opportunities for inclusive after-school and extra-curricular activities linked with the other provision on the site and across the District during both the school term and school holidays.

#### iv) The specific proposals

**a) *It is proposed to adopt the principles, aims and objectives, stated below, in the formulation of the District's deaf provision.***

- a **The Provision** (a generic term which includes all education settings that support deaf children. It could also include other agencies that support schools and/or voluntary organisations.)
  - i The Provision as a whole must be inclusive *in respect of educational, social and health needs and promote educational achievement for deaf children, and improve their educational attainment.*
  - ii The Provision *across* the District must provide for children and families a range of communication options.

**b Communication**

- i There must be an agreed approach to communication *in the different* provisions. This will encompass all children regardless of setting or preferred communication mode, *and take into account wherever possible the pupils views.*

**c Settings**

- i Families and children must be made aware of provision available in Bradford. This will be through informed choice, starting at *identification* and leading into higher and further education.
- ii In order to make choices or state preferences, full and balanced information about childhood deafness and its implications must be provided to parents/carers indicating clear pathways and appropriate settings, for families to follow as their child moves through each phase of their education. These preferences *must be reflected in* the spectrum of communication choices open to families.
- iii Strong links between settings must be developed to ensure that there is a continuum of provision and that support for families who want to move within provisions is seen to be effective and supportive.
- iv The provision must be cohesive and well co-ordinated.
- v There must be appropriate funding for the different educational settings which provide support for deaf children.
- vi There must be agreed procedures for admittance of children to all maintained provision, aligned to the published criteria for the statutory assessment of pupils with special educational needs.

**d Early Years support and multi-agency collaboration**

- i There must be a commitment to support deaf children and their families from diagnosis. This will be on a principle of informed choice.
- ii There must be collaborative, multi-agency working across the provision.

**e Language, culture and ethnicity**

- i The cultural diversity of the deaf population in Bradford must be represented, *where ever possible*, within the provision.

**f Curriculum**

- i All deaf children must have access to a broad, relevant and balanced curriculum.

**g Training and information**

- i There must be equality of access to information and professional development for all education staff working with deaf children in Bradford

**b). A key issue arising from the consultation was the lack of balanced information and advice provided to parents/carers of deaf children at the time of assessment/diagnosis.**

Education Bradford is working with the National Deaf Children's Society on the development of a national Parental Toolkit, as part of the national Early Support Pilot Programme (ESPP), to provide balanced information and advice which should:

- provide a package of balanced information on methods of communication;
- information booklets which explain the range of provision available for deaf children within the area;
- clear information about Education Bradford's role in the process of assessment and decision making; and
- information about independent advocates and sources of support.

And in response to the consultation, the appointment of a 'link worker' who is able to provide independent advice and support to parents/carers at the time of assessment/diagnosis is seen as essential. (See Appendix C which contains a proposed brief for this post.)

***It is therefore, proposed that in addition to the development of balanced information, funding is secured for the appointment of a link worker to provide independent support and advice to parents/carers after their child(ren) have been diagnosed as being deaf.***

**c) Models for the configuration of future deaf provision**

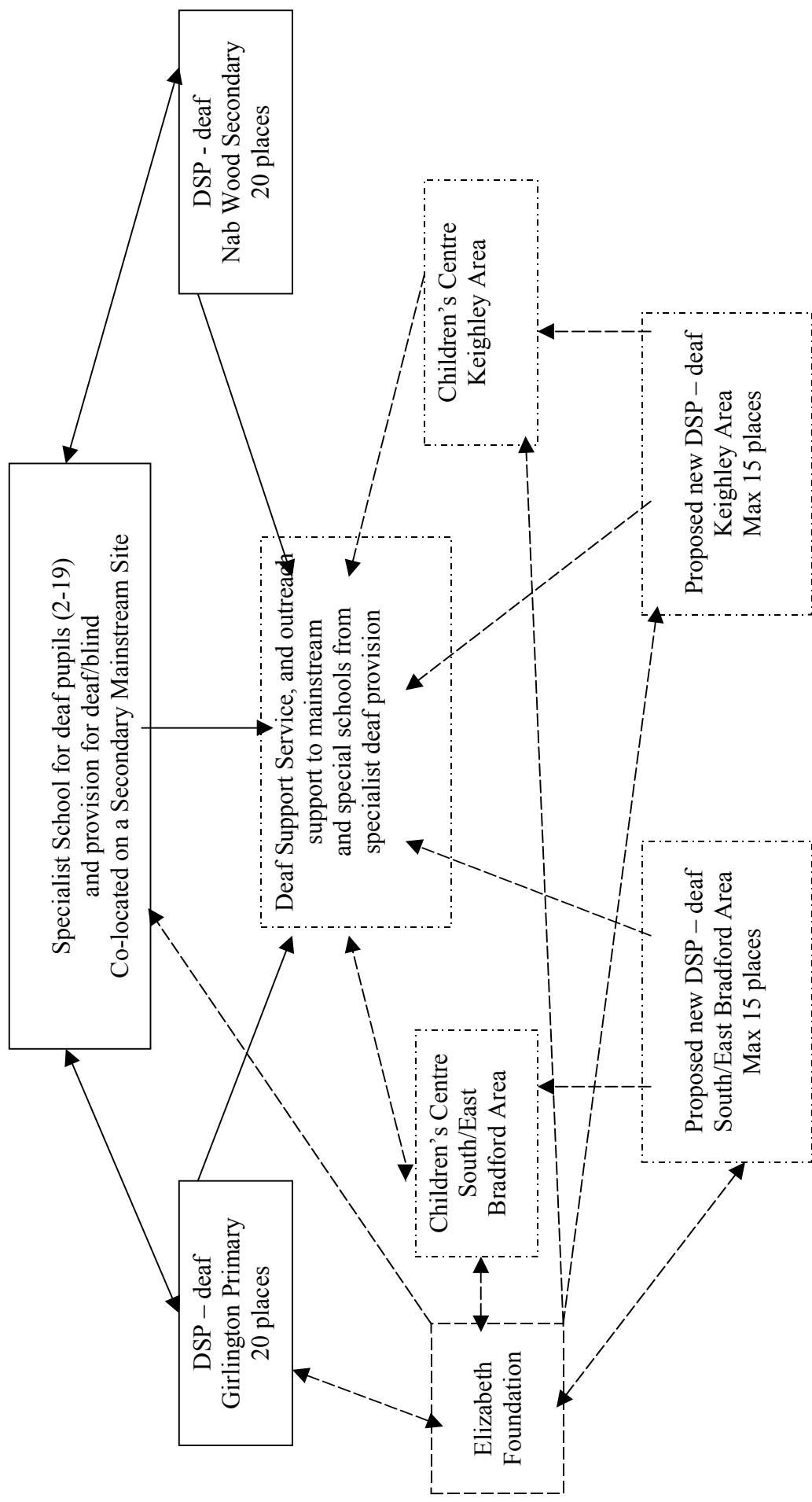
***The proposed models*** suggest possible ways in which provision could be developed to meet the agreed principles, aims and objectives. Elements of each model could be included in another. The dotted lines in the diagrams indicate new provision and where formal working arrangements need to be established.

**Model 1: An all age specialist school with formal links to other deaf provision.**

This model includes:

- an all age (2-19) specialist school for deaf pupils, co-located on a mainstream site;
- increased Designated Specialist Provision across the District;
- establishing formal links between the Elizabeth Foundation and Specialist Provisions;
- developing at least two Children's Centres (one in the North and one in the South of the District) to support the development of very young deaf children; and
- establishing a Deaf Providers Management Group.

**Model 1 – Specialist School for deaf pupils with formal links with formal links to other providers**



## Commentary

This model seeks to build upon and improve current provision for deaf pupils, enhance the level of mainstream provision and bring together the work of the providers formally through a management group.

This is not suggesting the creation of a single 'dispersed' school by formally linking the Designated Specialist Provisions with the specialist school. Through the management group what would need to be achieved is establishing links between the various provisions to determine ways to enhance the curriculum, social, cultural and linguistic opportunities for pupils, support mainstream inclusion for pupils where this is appropriate (using dual registration if required, particularly for secondary aged pupils) and providing high quality specialist training for school staff. This formal arrangement could also strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring and self-evaluating the quality of provision.

There is an increasing population of deaf primary aged pupils in Shipley and Keighley areas and parents/carers have requested Designated Specialist Provision in this area. The Designated Specialist Provision in Girdlington is increasing to 30 pupils in the next academic year and there is a demand for more places. This Designated Specialist Provision is becoming too large – this is recognised by the management of the school. It is necessary therefore, to both reduce the places, overtime, at Girdlington whilst increasing the overall number of places available in South and East Bradford. It is proposed to open an additional Designated Specialist Provision in this area.

Further, detailed work will need to be undertaken with the Early Years and Childcare Service, the Learning and Skills Council, confederation Boards, and Health Service Commissioners and providers on:

- the identification of specific Children's Centres;
- the services which might be provided from these provisions; and
- post 16 provision.

The Deaf Provision Management Group would report via Education Bradford to the EPP. Its possible membership might be a member from:

- each of the schools and centres
- the Deaf Support Service
- Bradford Deaf Children's Society
- the Parent Partnership
- The Elizabeth Foundation
- Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- the Council's Education Client Team; and
- Education Bradford.

Potential advantages of this model

- Builds upon the current structure of provision whilst increasing overall provision.
- Through establishing formal links between providers brings about greater coherence of deaf provision across the District.

- By re-locating and co-locating Thorn Park School provides the opportunity to provide accommodation which is 'fit for purpose' and to develop 'campus' provisions for deaf pupils.

#### Potential disadvantages

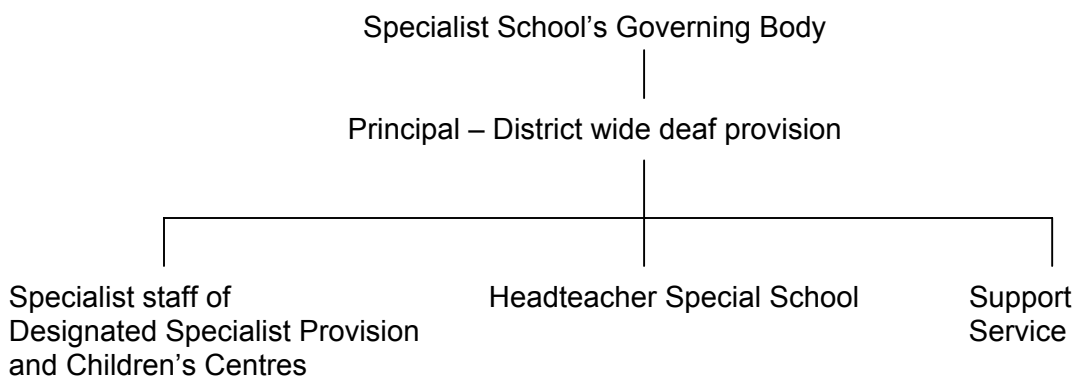
- All provision is discrete and therefore, District wide coherence might not be achieved.
- Based in the current formula funding model the special school may not be financially viable.
- Unless good links are established with a secondary school/confederation the special school would have difficulties in providing the curriculum width and subject choices at secondary level, normally available for students of this age.

### **Model 2: Deaf Provision – A dispersed Centre for Excellence**

This model is based on the configuration of Model 1 but with a fundamentally different management arrangement.

The proposed deaf provision in Model 1 stays the same but Model 2 assumes that all the maintained, specialist provision would be under a single management structure and an accountable body.

A diagrammatic representation of the concept is:



This model would include the entire specialist staff of the Designated Specialist Provisions, Children's Centres and the Deaf Support Service as integral members of the 'Centre for Excellence'.

Whilst the day-to-day management of the special school and the respective Designated Specialist Provision/Centres would rest with headteachers/heads of centres, the overall, leadership, co-ordination and management of this provision would be the responsibility of the Principal. This would include staff deployment, performance management, and the development of training programmes for both specialist staff and others, whilst ensuring consistency and high quality of provision across the District.

As outlined in Model 1 there would still need to be a Deaf Provision Management Group. It might be expected that the Principal chairs this group.

#### Potential advantages of this model

- Improved overall management of the District's deaf provision.
- Better co-ordinated training and support for specialist staff.
- Fully embraces the Centre of Excellence concept.
- More likely to achieve consistency and continuity of provision.
- Provides a designated 'centre' which can provide:
  - a centre for excellence;
  - a service/resource centre for pupils/parents and educators;
  - greater opportunities for early intervention; and
  - a training base for staff.
- Unified managed provision, thus supporting the management, development and deployment of staff and access to both specialist and mainstream settings.

#### Potential disadvantages

- Staff currently in Designated Specialist Provisions would have different line-management arrangements and possibly changes in their work base.
- The possibility of 'management tensions' between the needs of the school/centre and District wide requirements in terms of deployment of staff and pupil support.
- A large and complex structure to manage.
- Does not resolve several of the potential disadvantages highlighted with Model 1.

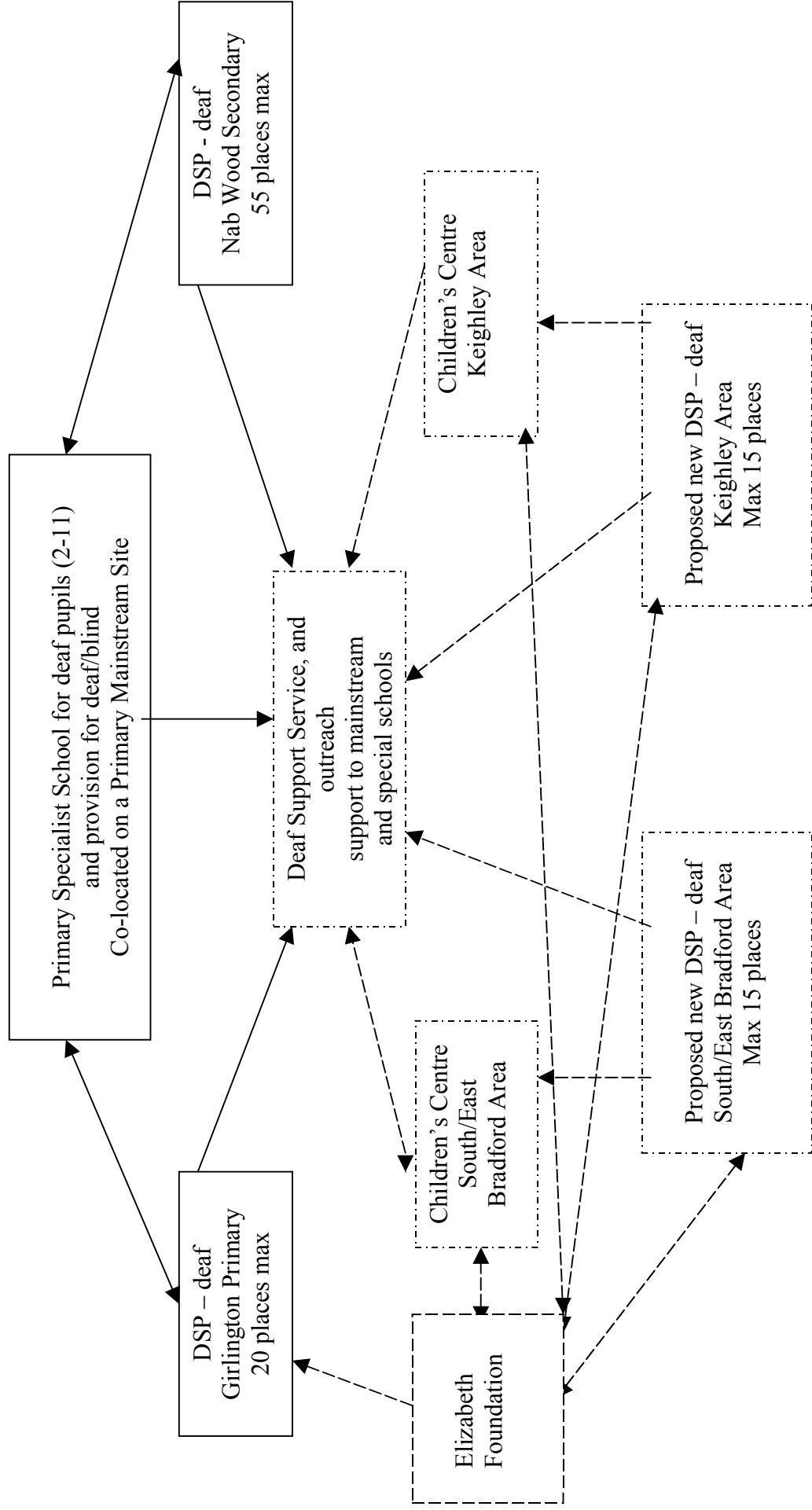
### **Model 3 – Specialist Primary School with formal links with other provisions**

In essence the model consists of:

- a primary special school for deaf pupils co-located on a primary mainstream school site;
- enhanced secondary provision in the current Designated Specialist Provision; and
- enhanced primary Designated Specialist Provision.

The diagram on the next page represents the proposed model.

**Model 3 – Primary Specialist School for deaf pupils with formal links with formal links to other providers**



## **Commentary**

Model 3 incorporates most of the proposals that are contained in Model 1, the significant difference being that it is proposed that Thorn Park's School's age range is changed from 2-19 to 2-11. This model recognises the difficulties of providing a comprehensive range of curriculum options for secondary pupils in a small specialist setting and proposes that the current provision within Nab Wood Secondary is expanded. This would enable secondary aged deaf students to access a greater range of accredited courses and by expanding its provision create the potential for a sizeable group of students, who prefer to use BSL as their preferred mode of communication, to be established.

The potential advantages and disadvantages of this model are similar to those outlined in Model 2, but with the following additions.

Potential advantages of this model.

- Retains the special school as a discrete primary entity though co-located on a campus.
- Recognises the need for highly specialised support for many pupils at primary level.
- Provides flexibility of response from highly specialist support to mainstream inclusion.
- Recognises the necessity for secondary deaf pupils to be prepared for life beyond school within a hearing environment.

Potential disadvantages.

- Thorn Park would lose its secondary provision and staff working with secondary aged pupils would need to be re-deployed.

## **Model 4 – Deaf Provision – A dispersed Centre for Excellence**

This model assumes the:

- configuration proposals of Model 3; and
- the management proposals of Model 2.

This model would include all the specialist staff of the Designated Specialist Provisions, Children's Centres and the Deaf Support Service as integral members of the 'Centre for Excellence'.

As outlined in Model 1 there would still need to be a Deaf Provision Management Group. It might be expected that the Principal chairs this group.

Therefore, Model 4 incorporates the proposals that are contained in Model 3 (that Thorn Park's age range is changed from 2-19 to 2-11) and embraces the management proposals for Model 2.

Potential advantages of this model.

- Improved overall management of the District's deaf provision.
- Better co-ordinated training and support for specialist staff.
- Fully embraces the Centre of Excellence concept.

- More likely to achieve consistency and continuity of provision.
- Provides a designated 'centre' which can provide:
  - a centre for excellence;
  - a service/resource centre for pupils/parents and educators;
  - opportunities for early intervention;
  - a training base for staff.
- Unified managed provision, thus supporting the management, development and deployment of staff and access to both specialist and mainstream settings.
- Retains the special school as a discrete primary entity though co-located on a campus.
- Recognises the need for highly specialised support for many pupils at primary level.
- Provides flexibility of response from highly specialist support to mainstream inclusion.
- Avoids the need to redeploy Thorn Park staff and would utilise their skills within a mainstream setting.

#### Potential disadvantages

- Staff currently in Designated Specialist Provisions would have different line-management arrangements and possibly changes in their work base.
- The possibility of 'management tensions' between the needs of the school/centre and District wide requirements in terms of deployment of staff and pupil support.
- A large and complex structure to manage.
- Thorn Park School would lose its secondary provision.

## 6. Consultation

- i. Subject to approval by the Council's Executive Committee, a full consultation on the proposals as outlined in Section 5 iv of this report will be undertaken. This will involve all interested parties and individuals, including headteachers, staff and governing
- ii. bodies of both mainstream and special schools, parents/carers, voluntary and statutory agencies, and elected members.
- iii. Consultation will be through open meetings, meetings for particular groups particularly for those who chose British Sign Language as their preferred mode of communication, briefing meetings provided on request, paper based consultation and the Education Bradford website. Use will also be made of the local media in order to ensure as many stakeholders as possible are engaged. Interpreters will be provided for interest groups for whom English is not their first language.

## 7. Recommendation

Education Policy Partnership is asked to:

- i) receive this report
- ii) to support the proposals as described in Section 5 iv of this report, and to approve the submission of this paper to the Council's Executive with a recommendation to approve that a consultation be undertaken during the autumn term 2004, with interested parties, on the proposals.

**APPENDIX A – Table 1 Meetings Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Presenters &amp; Facilitators</b>	<b>BSL Interpretation</b>	<b>Number of attendees</b>
Tuesday 3 February	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Eastwood Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Sue Marsden	Karen Seabrook	0
Thursday 5 February	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Nab Wood School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Paddy Kidd	Karen Seabrook	1
Monday 9 February	7.00 – 8.30 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Thorn Park School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Dave Muir	Karen Seabrook	54
Tuesday 10 February	6.30 – 8.30 pm	Voluntary Groups	Carlisle Business Centre	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Dave Muir	Karen Seabrook	2
Wednesday 11 February	6.30 – 7.30 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Girlington Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Sue Wright	Karen Seabrook	29
Wednesday 25 February	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Eastwood Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Sue Marsden	Karen Seabrook	3
Thursday 26 February	3.30 – 5.00 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Girlington Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Sue Wright	Karen Seabrook	28
Monday 1 March	4.00 – 5.30 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Thorn Park School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Christine Roche	Mavis Rhodes	57
Wednesday 3 March	3.00 – 4.30 pm	Staff, Governors, Parent/Carers	Nab Wood School	Clive Halliwell, Paddy Kidd	Tony Evans	9
Thursday 4 March	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Mainstream Headteachers, Governors and Staff	Carlisle Business Centre	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Sue Wright	No	5
Tuesday 9 March	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Voluntary Groups	Eastwood Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Christine Roche	Karen Seabrook	6
Wednesday 10 March	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Mainstream Parents/Carers	Carlisle Business Centre	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Sue Marsden	Karen Seabrook	3
Thursday 11 March	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Mainstream Parents/Carers	Eastwood Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Paddy Kidd	Karen Seabrook	4
Tuesday 16 March	6.30 – 8.00 pm	Mainstream Headteachers and staff	Eastwood Primary School	Clive Halliwell, Liz Singleton, Christine Roche	No	0

**Special Educational Needs Review:**

Consultation on the  
Review of specialist provision for  
deaf pupils

Date: 26 January – 19 March 2004

Contact: Elaine Watmough

Tel: 01274 385970

# Consultation Paper

## Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review: Review of specialist provision for deaf pupils

*This paper uses the Woodward convention (1972), lower case 'deaf' is used to indicate this audiological condition of having mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss. Upper case 'Deaf' is used to refer to a group of people who share a sign language and culture.*

### 1 Introduction

Education Bradford is currently undertaking a review of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). This part of the review particularly focuses on Bradford District's provision for deaf pupils. Education Bradford and Bradford Council share a desire for the development of the best possible provision for deaf pupils so that they have the highest quality of education to equip them for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A report on deaf provision was presented to The Education Policy Partnership (EPP), at its meeting 18 December 2003 (the full report can be found on the Bradford Council website: [www.bradford.gov.uk/home.asp](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/home.asp). To access the reports select *Council Minutes and Agendas* from the *Quick Links* section. Next select *Education Policy Partnership* from the left hand column and then the *2002/2003 Archive* heading also in the left hand column). The great majority of the report is reproduced in this consultation paper. The EPP resolved that:

“That a period of consultation on the proposed principles for underpinning the configuration of the District's provision for deaf pupils be approved and interested parties, as indicated, be involved in the development of proposals for the District's provision for deaf pupils.”

The period of consultation will be from Monday 26 January to Friday 19 March 2004. The consultation process will be managed by Education Bradford and the lead officer in relation to this is Clive Halliwell, Special Educational Needs Review Manager.

### 2 Context and current situation

Previous work has been undertaken in reviewing deaf provision. In 1999 Bradford District Council commissioned a review of this provision and a report was produced in the Year 2000. This report was formally received by the Council's Education Committee but the main recommendations were not implemented. During the year 2002, as part of the initial work undertaken by Education Bradford on the review of specialist provision, a limited, informal consultation was undertaken with a number of interested parties (Thorn Park School and Support Service staff and governors, Girlington Primary and Nab Wood Secondary designated specialist provision, a group of parents and the Elizabeth Foundation) on possible models of future provision. The outcomes of this work have helped to inform this consultation process.

- a There are also a number of key national initiatives which also relate to this area of provision, for example:
  - i In March 2002 the Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust began universal newborn hearing screening as part of a national pilot for the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme. NB Airedale NHS Trust is not part of this pilot. In Airedale, currently only babies deemed to be at risk of deafness are tested soon after birth;
  - ii the DfES guidance for early intervention, for example Developing Early Intervention/Support Services for Deaf Children and their Families;
  - iii Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, as amended 2002; and

- iv Modernising Children's Hearing Aid Services (MCHAS): Bradford has been a pilot site for the Department of Health's 'Modernising Children's Hearing Aid Services' programme (MCHAS) which is providing digital hearing aids for deaf children. The Bradford Health Trust began issuing digital aids to children in July 2003. Airedale Health Trust has not been part of the pilot but will be joining the programme in the near future.
- b The publication of a range of documents by the National Deaf Children's Society, for example, 'Deaf Friendly Schools' (in collaboration with the DfES); 'Charter for Parental Partnership in Education', and 'Quality Standards in Education – England' focusing on working with parents, 'Early Years Services and Provision and Inclusion' and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf's 'Review of Good Practice in Deaf Education' and their 'Effective Early Intervention for Deaf Children 0-5 and their Families', have also influenced the development of deaf provision.
- c In addition, the Government officially recognised (March 2003) British Sign Language (BSL) as a language in its own right. Various education bodies; for example the Department for Education and Skills and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, are investigating how this recognition should influence education provision for deaf pupils.

### 3 Current provision for deaf pupils

- a This consists of the following maintained provision:
  - i a special school, Thorn Park, which caters for pupils with severe/profound deafness aged 2 to 19. A small number of pupils with a moderate hearing loss may attend this school's 2 to 5 year old provision for assessment purposes before a suitable full-time placement is identified. The school specifically uses and supports a sign bi-lingualism approach to the education of deaf pupils;
  - ii two schools with Designated Specialist Provision for deaf pupils, Girington Primary School and Nab Wood Secondary School. These schools use and support all modes of communication specifically to match the needs of individual pupils; and
  - iii a Support Service for deaf children which majoratively supports pupils within mainstream schools. This service is managed on behalf of Education Bradford by the headteacher of Thorn Park School.
- b In addition, the following provision is also provided in the district:
  - i the Elizabeth Foundation. This is a voluntary organisation and registered charity for deaf babies, pre-school deaf children from 0-5 years, and their parents. This organisation particularly promotes a Multi-Sensory Oral approach for the development of speech, language and auditory training. It is situated on the Bradford Royal Infirmary site; and
  - ii further Education provision (Bradford, Shipley and Keighley Colleges). Bradford College has a dedicated team to support deaf students and also provides a specific English course for BSL users.
- c The table and commentary below provides specific information on the provision maintained by the Council and Education Bradford

Provider	Jan 2000	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Jan 2003	Projected Sept 2003	Budget 2002 / 2003	Approx. Funding Per Pupil
Thorn Park	76	82	87 (84.5fte)	91 (87.5fte)	91	Gross Formula £822,926	£10,387
Girington	6	6	15	16	24	£117,527	£7,190
Nab Wood	11	15	9	11	7	£168,785	£24,112

Education Bradford  
Special Educational Needs Review:

Deaf Support Service	387	384	378	372	387 (110 with Statements)	£362,300	£936
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d Other facts and figures

The total number of pupils whose statement indicates that deafness is their primary need or they are being assessed within a specialist setting = 165 (July 2003)

This figure includes the following data:

- Thorn Park pupils
- pupils in mainstream designated specialist provision
- Extra District pupils placed in Thorn Park is nine
- Pupils being educated outside of the Bradford District with a primary need of deafness:
  - independent school = 1
  - LEA primary school = 1
  - LEA secondary schools = 5
  - one pupil in a Bradford special school other than Thorn Park.

e Commentary

- i Considerable care needs to be taken when comparing the different funding levels per pupil, especially in relation to Nab Wood Secondary. The staffing level at that school has been 'protected' because of the need to retain qualified teachers of the deaf and other highly qualified staff because of the increased numbers of pupils coming through from the primary phase. It has been acknowledged, EPP September 2003 Ref BB Review of Designated Provision, that "an agreed funding model for all DSPs needs to be developed which reflects any changes in schools' formula". This would need to reflect how DSPs, whose pupil numbers fluctuate, are funded so that highly skilled and qualified staff are able to be retained. In addition, the specialist provision's funding should be such that it adequately reflects the running costs.
- ii The Support Service for Deaf Children provides support for pupils with a range of permanent hearing losses in mainstream and special schools throughout the Bradford District. Pupils with a unilateral hearing loss are included in the work of this service but those who have a temporary, conductive deafness, are not. Most pupils on the caseload have hearing aids. At the request of the Audiology Department of Bradford Royal Infirmary one-off visits are made to assess the auditory needs of pupils in schools in order to inform decisions on hearing aid matters. Support is provided from the time of diagnosis (which can be as early as three months of age) until school leaving age. Of the 387 pupils currently supported by the service (July 2003) 110 have statements of which 41 are identified as having deafness as their primary need. This reflects the fact that the service undertakes a substantial amount of its work in special schools.

**4 Trends**

- a In August 2001 a Needs Analysis of Children, Young People and their Families in the Bradford District was published by the Council's Children's Services. It provides a very wide range of information on various matters (population trends, indicators of deprivation, children with disabilities and complex needs). Some of the main points relevant to this review are:
  - i the overall pupil population which rose for much of the last decade has fallen in the past few years (1997 [90,000+], 2001 [88,000]) but forecasts indicate that the school population should be reasonably stable for the next five to seven years;

- ii the ethnic make-up of the youth population will change very significantly from 23% Pakistani and 69% White in 1998 to 34% Pakistani and 57% White by 2011;
  - iii the higher than national prevalence of children who have cerebral palsy, neuro-degenerative conditions, deafness, microcephaly and visual impairment.
- b Data provided by Bradford Health Authority indicates that the prevalence of deafness in children in Bradford is about two per 1000 children compared with a national prevalence of one per 1000 children. In particular Asian groups this incidence rises to well over four per 1000 children. As indicated above there is a projected increase in this youth population of some 10 percent over the next eight years.
- c Because of the different and unmoderated way in which data and information has, and still is, being collected by the various District agencies (Health, Social Services, Education) it is often very difficult to predict future education provision requirements with accuracy. The impact of such matters as technology and genetic counselling on the provision for and the numbers of deaf pupils are but two critical factors.
- d However, it is clear that currently, there is an increasing number of pupils who have a hearing loss.

## **5 Principles, aims and objectives upon which to consult**

- a The Provision (A generic term which includes all education settings that support deaf children. It could also include other agencies that support schools and/or voluntary organisations.)
- i The Provision as a whole must be inclusive in respect of educational, social and health needs and promote educational achievement for deaf children, and improve their educational attainment.
  - ii The Provision across the district must provide for children and families a range of communication options and settings. This approach will allow each setting to establish its preferred communication mode.
- b Communication
- i There must be an agreed approach to communication in the different provisions. This will encompass all children regardless of setting or preferred communication mode, and take into account wherever possible the pupils views.
- c Settings
- i Families and children must be made aware of provision available in Bradford. This will be through informed choice, starting at diagnosis and leading into higher and further education.
  - ii In order to make choices or state preferences, full and balanced information about childhood deafness and its implications must be provided to parents/carers indicating clear pathways and appropriate settings, for families to follow as their child moves through each phase of their education. These preferences must be reflected in the spectrum of communication choices open to families.
  - iii Strong links between settings must be developed to ensure that there is a continuum of provision and that support for families who want to move within provisions is seen to be effective and supportive.
  - iv The provision must be cohesive and well co-ordinated

- v There must be appropriate funding for the different educational settings which provide support for deaf children
- vi There must be agreed procedures for admittance of children to all maintained provision, aligned to the published criteria for the statutory assessment of pupils with special educational needs.
- d Early Years support and multi-agency collaboration
  - i There must be a commitment to support D/deaf children and their families from diagnosis. This will be on a principle of informed choice.
  - ii There must be collaborative, multi-agency working across the provision
- e Language, culture and ethnicity
  - i The cultural diversity of the deaf population in Bradford must be represented within the provision.
- f Curriculum
  - i All deaf children must have access to a broad, relevant and balanced curriculum.
- g Training and information
  - i There must be equality of access to information and professional development for all education staff working with deaf children in Bradford

## **6 Consultation process to engage interested parties in the development of proposals**

- a There are firmly held but differing views by the various deaf education providers about the approach which should be undertaken in educating deaf pupils. Broadly speaking these consist of two approaches: Sign Bilingualism (the learning and using of two languages at one time, a sign language and a spoken/written language); and Auditory-oral approaches (by using hearing aids, radio aids and cochlear implants to amplify residual hearing in order that pupils can develop their listening skills and spoken language. Sign language or finger spelling is not used to support the understanding of spoken language.)
- b It is Education Bradford's view that a range of provision should be available across the District so that parents are able to state a preference, having been previously provided with high quality information on the provision available, as to which of these approaches they would wish to pursue. It is also important to ensure that parents feel secure about changing the approach first adopted if that is deemed necessary.
- c It is therefore, crucial that interested groups, which includes pupils, agree the principles upon which future deaf provision is to be based and are involved at an early stage in the development of proposals for the configuration of provision for deaf pupils.
- d Through the consultation process views are being sought on such matters as:
  - Pre-5 provision – Children's Centres;
  - providing a primary specialist school for deaf pupils on a primary mainstream site;
  - retaining an all age, separate special school;
  - providing a secondary specialist school for deaf pupils on a secondary mainstream site;
  - 14 – 19 Confederation provision;
  - post 16 provision – colleges;
  - closing the current separate, specialist provision;

- 
- retaining current primary and secondary DSP <sup>1</sup> (see footnote below) provision (Girlington and Nab Wood)
  - increasing primary DSP provision in both the north and south of the district; as well as other possible configurations.

In particular, views are being sought on how the development of Children's Centres <sup>2</sup> might provide for deaf children and how the Confederation <sup>3</sup> proposals might also contribute to deaf students aged 14-19.

Consultation will be through open meetings, meetings for particular groups, briefing meetings provided on request, paper based consultation and the Education Bradford website. Use will also be made of the local media in order to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible are engaged. Details of the meetings are contained in Appendix A.

A further report will be provided to the Educational Policy Partnership informing them of the findings of this consultation and providing a proposal(s) for the future configuration of the District's deaf provision. It is likely that this report will be available in the summer term 2004. A further round of consultation would then be undertaken if the suggested proposals are agreed by both the Education Policy Partnership and the Council's Executive.

## 7 Responses to this consultation

As well as opportunities to attend a range of meetings, as outlined in Appendix A, we would welcome written responses to this consultation document. A proforma is attached at the end of this document with space for both responding to the principles, aims and objectives as well as providing suggestions on the future configuration of deaf provision. In addition, there is space at the end of the paper for further comments.

Responses should be sent to : Elaine Watmough  
Education Bradford, Future House  
Bolling Road, Bradford, BD4 7EB

This paper can also be downloaded from: [www.educationbradford.com](http://www.educationbradford.com)  
Strategic Plans, School Organisation Plan

Responses can be e-mailed to: [Elaine.watmough@educationbradford.com](mailto:Elaine.watmough@educationbradford.com)

**The closing date for receipt of responses is: Friday 19 March 2004**

We do hope that you will participate in this consultation and we look forward to working with you in this important development in educational provision in Bradford.

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<sup>1</sup> Designated specialist provision (DSPs) – a mainstream school which receives additional funding to meet the needs of deaf children. Whilst individual pupil support is provided as and when required pupils spend increasing amounts of time within the mainstream classes.

<sup>2</sup> Children's Centres – there are to be a minimum of 19 Children's Centres across the Bradford District. All will offer the core provision of integrated child-care and early education, health services and family support. Day care suitable for working parents, 5 days a week, 48 weeks a year, 10 hours a day is also provided.

<sup>3</sup> Post 16 Education. Groups of secondary schools, working with neighbouring Further Education Colleges, are formally developing links with one another to provide learning opportunities for students 14-19. These arrangements are called 'Confederations' and are expected to be fully operational from September 2005.

## **Appendix C – proposed draft remit for a Link Worker**

### **Context**

Following the launch of the National Deaf Children's Society 'Quality Standards in the Early Years' (January 2002) and the implementation of National Newborn Hearing Screening Programme, the Department for Education and Skills have produced guidance for the delivery of early intervention services. In the document 'Together From The Start' (May 2003) the DfES have identified the following central themes for professionals supporting families of children with a disability:

- Initial assessment of need
- Co-ordination of multi-agency support for families
- Better information and access for families
- Improved professional knowledge and skills
- Service review and development
- Partnership across agencies and geographical boundaries

Both the NDCS Quality Standards and 'Together From The Start' refer to the need for a key worker as a person who assumes the key care role, as case worker, with families. In addition to the key worker role Bradford recognises the need for an independent link worker to take responsibility for signposting families of newly diagnosed deaf children to professionals, services and the range of provision.

This will be particularly important in the first few weeks/months after diagnosis as parents come to terms with the implications of raising a deaf child for example in relation to communication choices. For the purpose of this document this role will be referred to as 'Link Worker'. Key workers from different agencies are already established. Support would reduce over time as key workers from other agencies take the lead – the Link Worker should be available as parents require. Although it is assumed that this person will work mainly with pre-school deaf children they may have a role with some children with late onset deafness.

### **Aim**

Bradford recognises the need to provide parents/carers of newly diagnosed deaf children with clear and unbiased information in order to empower them to make informed choices and decisions for their child's support and education.

This must be provided in an environment which respects the differing needs of families themselves including disability, communication, and the diversity of cultures, languages and ethnic groups within the community of Bradford District.

### **Objectives**

In order to achieve this aim the objectives are to:

- provide information that is easy to understand, accessible, comprehensive, unbiased and accurate;
- ensure parents/carers have access to support as and when required;
- provide parents/carers with opportunities for discussion (to talk and be listened to);

- enable and encourage parents/carers to be involved in early decision-making; and to
- clearly identify Education Bradford's role in the process of assessment and decision making.

These objectives will be achieved through the establishment of a post of Link Worker. Careful consideration will have to be given to where the Link Worker is based.

### **Role of the Link Worker**

Is to:

- be an independent person providing clear unbiased information by direct support to the families/carers in their preferred language using nationally agreed materials and guidelines (as developed through the Early Support Pilot Programme);
- have the skills and understanding necessary to work with families/carers;
- be able to be an advocate on behalf of parents/carers; and
- facilitate inter-agency working in order that families/carers have control of decisions and choices affecting their child.

### **Responsibilities of the Link Worker**

- To set up the first family plan and attend subsequent reviews where necessary.
- To advocate and facilitate good working practice between different agencies.
- To discuss with families the support they wish to receive.
- To provide information about services.
- To make contact with families/carers within 48 hours of confirmation.
- To ensure families are aware of the full range of support agencies.
- To facilitate effective contact with appropriate agencies.

### **Competencies of the Link Worker (taken from 'Together From The Start' 3.5 Page 24)**

- Specific training in working with young deaf children and their families.
- Knowledge of local and national services for the children they work with and how to access them.
- Skills in presenting information without bias.
- Knowledge and understanding of different methods to address the child's needs if appropriate.
- The ability to fully support families in their choice of provision.
- Knowledge of who the key professionals are and how to contact them.
- Counselling, communication and negotiation skills.
- The ability to introduce families to other families with deaf children.