

SW Every Deaf Child Matters

All Ages, All Stages and the Spectrum of Need: Summary Conference Report

The conference (Exeter, July 8th 2014), focused on the responsibilities of decision-makers in funding services for deaf children and how to improve support for all deaf children to achieve. Key messages from speakers and delegates include:

Using Rights and SEND Reforms to better support deaf children and young people, including:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- the Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- the SEND Code of Practice

Deaf children and young people (with and without Statements / Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) are supported by the duty of **reasonable adjustment** in the Equality Act 2010 to make sure they can access and participate equally in education.

➤ **Support for deaf children 0-2 years to achieve language and communication:**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance 0 to 5 years is important for professionals in health, education and social care, working with deaf babies, infants and their families. A new NHS-led proposal for a National System for Children and Young People with Hearing Impairment stresses that deaf children should have language and communication skills at the key developmental stages comparable to their hearing peers; this is essential for future health, well-being and education outcomes.

➤ **Use and improve the Local Offer:**

Local Authorities (LAs) must publish a Local Offer giving information about services for all children with SEN or who are disabled, including specialist provisions e.g. audiology, mental health, parents support, family sign, BSL courses, deaf role models, social media, using technology, employment support. LAs must publish all feedback so letting LAs know where this is not happening or not good enough is vital.

➤ **Involve children and young people and their parents in decision-making:**

This is central to the SEND reforms. Actively seeking the views of deaf young people and working together to make sure deaf children have the right support at the right time, helps deaf children to achieve and be happy. Professionals and parents working together are able to support deaf children better with shared goals and consistency.

SWEDCM 2014 delegates told us they appreciated the networking, new information and updates from a range organisations and companies supporting deaf children.