**National Deaf Children’s Society Radio Aids Freedom of Information Request 2020**

This request asks about the provision of radio aids by the local authority for families to use within the home. It is split into 4 parts

Part 1: Radio aids in the early years (0 to 4)

Part 2: Radio aids for school-aged children

Part 3: Radio aids for deaf young people post-16

Part 4: Radio aids for all deaf children – general questions

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| Name and role of person completing this request | Glenda Irvine- Lead Manager, Sensory Team Countywide |
| Local authority (or authorities if replying on behalf of more than one)  | Nottinghamshire County Council |

*Part 1: Radio aids in the early years*

1. Does your service provide parents of deaf children **aged 0 to 4** with radio aids/assistive listening devices for use **within the home**? Please tick yes if it is your service’s policy to allow this (even if no radio aids/assistive listening devices are currently being provided at this time) (please select one answer)

[x] Yes

[ ]  No – please go to question 5

1. Approximately how many deaf children **aged 0 to 4** in your area have been provided by your service with a radio aid/assistive listening device to use within the home in the last year?

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1. Please specify below the make/manufacturer of the radio aids/assistive listening devices that your service normally provides to parents of deaf children **aged 0 to 4** to use within the home.

GN Resound Mini Mics

Phonak Roger Inspiro systems

1. Are there any particular barriers or challenges that are preventing you from making radio aids/assistive listening devices available or more widely available to parents of deaf children **aged 0 to 4** to use within the home?

 Please see attached NCC ALD (FM Systems) Flow Chart (attached).

*Part 2: Radio aids for school-aged children*

1. Does your service provide radio aids/assistive listening devices for use by deaf children of school-age **within the home**? Please tick yes if it is your service’s policy to allow this (even if no radio aids/assistive listening devices are currently being provided at this time) (please select one answer)

[x]  Yes

[ ]  No

1. Are there any particular barriers or challenges that are preventing you from making radio aids/assistive listening devices available or more widely available to parents of deaf children of school-age to use within the home?

We consider requests for radio aids to be used within the home on a case by case and it is after a discussion with parents and young people about the benefits, use and security of the devices that a decision would be made. We clearly state in our paperwork that if equipment is to be used at home as well as school/setting the parents need to take steps to insure the equipment so any loss, theft or damage can be compensated. There is no charge for repairs or replacement in the event of the equipment failing.

*Part 3: Radio aids for deaf young people post-16*

1. In what circumstances would your service provide radio aids for deaf young people to use once they had left school? (please tick all that apply)

[ ]  Radio aids are not provided to any deaf young people who have left school

[x]  For use in further education

[ ]  For use in higher education

[ ]  For use in apprenticeships, internships or training

[ ]  For use in paid employment

[ ]  For general use in the home

[ ]  Other – please specify

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| This is when a deaf young person accesses a Post 16 within a school context |

*Part 4: Radio aids for all children – general questions*

1. Does your service have a policy which includes the provision of radio aids to deaf children/assistive listening devices for use within the home? (please select one answer)

[ ]  Yes

[x]  No

1. If yes, please attach a copy of your policy to your response to this FOI **or** provide a link to where we can find this policy on your website (please select one answer)

[x]  Not applicable – we don’t have a policy

[ ]  I have attached a copy of our policy to our response

[ ]  I have provided a link to our response in the box below

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1. Are any of the below factors taken into account in decisions on whether radio aids/assistive listening devices can be provided to individual families to use?

If your service does not provide radio aids at all to any child or young person to use within the home, please skip this question and go straight to question 12.

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| Factor | Is this a factor?  | If you have said yes or sometimes, please outline how and the circumstances in which this factor would be taken into account |
| Parents required to take out insurance as a condition before radio aids/assistive listening devices can be provided to use within the home | [x]  Yes[ ]  Sometimes [ ]  No[ ]  N/a – radio aids can’t be taken home  | If a piece of equipment is used jointly at school or at home, each party must agree to accept responsibility for the equipment whilst it is in their care. Everyone is made aware before an agreement is signed off, of the liability of having the equipment and the replacement costs |
| Child must be of a certain age | [ ]  Yes[x]  Sometimes [ ]  No |  |
| Child must have a certain level of hearing loss | [ ]  Yes[ ]  Sometimes [x]  No |  |
| Child must have a statutory plan: (e.g. an Education, Health and Care plan (England), a statement of SEN (Wales/Northern Ireland) or a coordinated support plan (Scotland)) | [ ]  Yes[ ]  Sometimes [x]  No  |  |
| Parents must leave a deposit or make a contribution to the cost  | [ ]  Yes[ ]  Sometimes [x]  No[ ]  N/a – radio aids aren’t provided to parents to use in the home |  |
| Education setting must leave a deposit or make a contribution to the cost  | [ ]  Yes[ ]  Sometimes [x]  No |  |

1. Are there any other eligibility criteria, factors or conditions relating to the provision of radio aids/assistive listening devices to use within the home? If so, please outline how and the circumstances in which this would be taken into account.

 Please see responses in 13 below.

1. In your area, are radio aids/assistive listening devices jointly commissioned between health and education? (please select one answer)

[ ]  Yes - always

[ ]  Yes - in most cases (more than half the time)

[ ]  Sometimes but mostly not (less than half the time)

[x]  No

1. Please use this space if you have any comments or if there is anything else you want to tell us about your responses in this section.

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| Nottinghamshire County Council has guidelines and a process in place to ensure provision of personal radio aids to children and young people, living in Nottinghamshire irrespective of age, based on an assessment of need. Personal Radio Aids are particularly useful for children when they spend valuable listening time in adverse listening conditions such as at a distance or in noise. The Sensory Team would assess whether an FM system would be of benefit to children and young people, the family or the setting- if the child attends one. The devices may also be used at home. Some children take time to adjust to listening through hearing aids, Bone Anchored Hearing Aids (BAHA) or Cochlea Implants. The Sensory Team within Nottinghamshire’s Schools and Families Specialist Service spends time supporting families to encourage their children to get the best out of their amplification equipment, suggesting activities, strategies and games which would make listening through assistive devices enjoyable and pleasant. Working together with parents the Sensory Team would decide whether a personal radio aid would be appropriate for their child. The Sensory Team provide advice and guidance to parents, carers, schools and settings regarding health and safety in relation to the use and maintenance of Radio Aids.  There are on-going discussions with audiologists at local hospitals regarding the use of new technologies to reduce the health and safety implications particularly for, but not exclusively limited to young children and their families. We have recently been sent a document issued by NHS England regarding the ‘Risk of harm to babies and children from coin/ button batteries in hearing aids and other hearing devices.’ This raises concerns about the risks of young children potentially ingesting batteries and the implications of that on their health. Any decision to issue an FM system would need to consider this NHS advice as any changes to paediatric tamper proof battery cases would be a cause for concern. This adds an additional layer to the decision-making process around issuing an appropriate FM system and the need to purchase integrated receivers and tamper proof battery drawers. As these cannot be removed, Teachers of the Deaf would need to ensure parents were happy to add the cost of the receivers onto their household insurance in case of accidental loss or damage.Children who have had Cochlea Implants or BAHA’s have had ‘Mini Mics’ provided by health. These are monitored and maintained by our service and we have over the years provided FM systems to children under 4 who attend nurseries or other settings. The Sensory Team were also involved in the Ear Foundation study looking into personal FMs for under 4s . Whilst some parents involved in that study did value the FM, other parents chose to return the equipment as to them it was not useful. That is why we as an authority do not routinely provide all under4’s with personal FM systems. We prefer to involve the families in a person-centred decision-making process supported by Nottinghamshire’s Sensory Team.  |

This is the end of this request. Please return your response, along with a copy of your policy (where applicable – see question 9), by email to campaigns@ndcs.org.uk.