

## Help improve support for deaf children in your area

Information for parents in England about Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

### Introduction

From May 2016, Ofsted and the CQC will be inspecting support for children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND in England. This factsheet has more information about these inspections and how you can get involved.

Ofsted and the CQC are completely independent from local councils and health services. As part of the inspections they will speak to parents and young people in each area, before publishing a report on how good or bad they think the local support is.

This is an important opportunity to help improve support for your deaf child and **we want to make sure that you and your child have a say.**

At the time of writing, Ofsted inspections are still new. We'll update this factsheet regularly – so check [www.ndcs.org.uk/sen](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/sen) for the latest version.

### What are these inspections about?

Ofsted already inspects nurseries and other early years settings, schools and colleges. However, until May 2016, they didn't inspect the support that children with SEND got from their local council and health services.

We felt this was wrong. **Why should you get less information than other parents about the quality of support your child is getting?** We thought that Teachers of the Deaf and local authority specialist education services for deaf children should be inspected as well. Thanks to the hard work of our campaigners, the Department for Education agreed.

### What exactly is being inspected?

Ofsted and the CQC will be inspecting 'local area' support for children with SEND. Local area means any support from the local council and health services (for example, support from Teachers of the Deaf, audiologists and speech and language therapists). They will also look at how well the local council works with nurseries, schools and colleges.

Ofsted will be focusing on three main areas.

1. How well local areas **identify** children's needs.  
*What steps does a local authority take to make sure all deaf children are identified as needing support?*
2. How well those needs are **assessed** and **met**.  
*How does a local authority decide what support is needed?*
3. Whether the local area is good or bad at **improving outcomes** for children with SEND.  
*What progress are deaf children in the area making? Are they making the same progress as other children?*

Ofsted and the CQC will be looking at support for a wide range of SEND in each area. **They may not always look in detail at support for deaf children.** So if you want to make sure that Ofsted looks at the quality of support for deaf children **you'll need to get involved.**

## How will I know when there's an inspection?

Ofsted and the CQC will only give **five days warning** that an inspection will take place. It could happen at any point over the next five years.

You might find out that an inspection is taking place through:

- your local authority
- your local parent carer forum or Information Advice and Support (IAS) Service (see below)
- your child's specialist nursery, school or college
- Ofsted and the CQC if you've given the local authority permission to share your details.

### What is a parent carer forum?

A parent carer forum is a group of parents of disabled children who work with local authorities, nurseries, schools and colleges, health services and anyone else who provides support to children with SEND to make sure the services they plan and deliver meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

There are forums in most local authorities in England.

For more information and details of your local forum visit [Contact a Family](#).

### What is an Information Advice and Support (IAS) Service?

IAS Services have a duty to provide information, advice and support to disabled children and young people, and those with SEND, and their parents. Every local authority in England has an IAS Service.

For more information and details of your local service visit the [IAS Services Network](#).

If we find out that an inspection is taking place in your area, we'll email you to let you know. You just need to make sure you're a member of the National Deaf Children's Society and that we have the right email address for you. Contact [membership@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:membership@ndcs.org.uk) if you're not sure.

If you find out about an inspection in your area, please get in touch with our Campaigns team ([campaigns@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@ndcs.org.uk)) so that we can let other parents know.

## What will happen during an inspection?

The inspection will take around five days. Inspectors will talk to:

- managers within the local authority and local health services
- head teachers and staff in early years settings, schools and colleges
- parents, children and young people.

## How can I get involved?

You can give your views on local area support when an inspection is taking place:

- through your local parent carer forum (many local authorities have good relationships with these forums so joining may mean you can share your views with the local authority at other times too)
- through your child's nursery, school or college if it's being inspected
- by joining in a webinar (this might not be available in all areas).

It's likely that Ofsted and the CQC will write a letter giving more details about how you can get involved, and ask the local authority to circulate this in your area. Local authorities could do this in different ways, for example, by publishing it on their website or by asking schools to send it to parents via pupils.

If you'd like to get involved but aren't able to take part, you can ask the inspectors to contact you directly. Their contact details should be in the letter that the local authority will circulate. Let us know at [campaigns@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@ndcs.org.uk) if you have any problems with this.

We're also encouraging Ofsted and the CQC to contact local deaf children's societies to ask parents and young people to share their views and experiences.

**You don't have to wait until an inspection is taking place to have your say.** We know that Ofsted and CQC will also consider the following.

- Any consultations or surveys that the local authority has carried out in recent years. Make sure you have your say if the local authority asks for your views at any time on local support.
- Any complaints they receive about the local area. If the local authority has done something you feel is wrong, make a formal complaint.
- Any complaints made to Ofsted or the CQC about support for deaf children in your area. You can do this by emailing [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## What should I say during an inspection?

We believe that a good service for deaf children is one which helps your child to:

1. achieve good outcomes, so they do as well as other children of the same ability
2. make good progress, so they develop at a similar rate to other children
3. catch up, if they've fallen behind.

If you're asked to give feedback about local support, think about whether the support you and your child are getting is helping them to meet the three objectives above.

There are lots of other, more specific questions to think about if you're asked to give your views on local support. You can find our suggestions on pages 6 to 10 of this factsheet.

## Will what I say be kept confidential?

Ofsted and the CQC should make sure that any information they pass on to the local authority or local health services is anonymous.

The exception to this is if there are safeguarding concerns about a child.

## What happens after an inspection?

Ofsted will write a report which the local authority **must** publish on their website. The report will also be available on the [Ofsted website](#) within about five weeks.

The report will not give what's called a 'graded judgement'. In other words, it won't say if the local area is 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' or is 'unsatisfactory' like they do for schools. Instead, the report will outline key strengths in the area and make recommendations for where support needs to be better.

If Ofsted and the CQC have any serious concerns, they will ask an organisation in the local area to make a written statement explaining what action they will take to deal with these concerns. The organisation must do this within 70 days of receiving the inspection report. They must also publish the statement on their website.

It will be up to Ofsted to decide which organisation will need to write the statement but in most cases we would expect this to be the local authority.

## What if I'm not happy with how the inspection was done or what the report says?

You have the right to make a complaint to the inspection team. Their contact details should be given on the inspection report. You should do this as soon as possible.

If you aren't happy with their response, you can make a formal complaint to Ofsted by emailing [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## How else can I have my say?

Don't wait until the inspection to have your say. There are other ways you can let the local authority know what you think about local support.

- Leave a comment on the Local Offer. Each area has a Local Offer which gives details of support, activities and information for children and young people with SEND. Local authorities **must** involve parents and young people in developing their Local Offer. They **must** also respond to any comments you have on it. You can find out more about the Local Offer by reading our factsheet, [Local Offers and Special Educational Needs](#).
- Think about making a formal complaint to, for example, the local authority or your child's nursery, school or college. You should always try to resolve any issues by talking to the relevant person first. But if that doesn't work, all public bodies should make it clear to you how you can complain.

If you have any questions or need support, get in touch with our Freephone Helpline or visit our **website**.

## How you can help our campaigns work

If there's already been an inspection in your area, please let us know by emailing [campaigns@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@ndcs.org.uk). We're really keen to hear about your experiences of Ofsted and CQC inspections so that we can tell the Government how it's going and what could be improved.

## More information

Ofsted and the CQC have produced a handbook, [Local Area SEND Inspection: Guidance for inspectors](#), which has more detailed information about how the inspections are carried out.

The National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) has produced [Quality Standards for Sensory Support Services in England](#) which outlines what services should be providing. You'll need to register on the NatSIP website to get hold of this document.

We have lots of information about education, SEND and your child's rights at [www.ndcs.org.uk/sen](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/sen).

## Questions to think about when asked to give your views on local support

Don't feel you have to respond to every question – ignore any that aren't relevant to you.

<b>Identification of need</b>	
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<b>Your notes</b>
<p>After your child was diagnosed as deaf by an audiologist, were you contacted quickly (within two to five days) by a Teacher of the Deaf?</p> <p>Did you feel that the audiologist and the Teacher of the Deaf worked well together to share information about your child's hearing loss?</p>	
<p>Have there been regular specialist assessments of your child's needs, for example, by a Teacher of the Deaf? These might look in detail at things like your child's language development.</p>	
<p>Do these specialist assessment reports give you a clear sense of what needs to happen next?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they set targets for your child, particularly focusing on developing hearing, listening, language and communication?</li> <li>• Do they say what support your child will need to meet these targets?</li> </ul>	
<p>Assessments should also be carried out before any significant 'transition' or change for your child, for example, if your child is moving from primary to secondary school or if they're leaving education. Has this happened for your child?</p>	
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<b>Your notes</b>
<p>Did your child have an early health check (when they were around two years old)? This is</p>	

<p>normally done by a health visitor.</p> <p>If so, was this helpful? Did you feel that it helped to identify your child's needs, related to their hearing or anything else?</p>	
<p><b>Meeting needs</b></p>	
<p><b>Questions to consider</b></p>	<p><b>Your notes</b></p>
<p>Did someone from the education service (such as a Teacher of the Deaf) come to visit you soon after diagnosis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain what support is available?</li> <li>• Explain what impact your child's deafness would have?</li> <li>• Answer any questions you had?</li> </ul> <p>Was the information clear and easy to understand?</p> <p>Did the visit happen soon after diagnosis (within about 10 days)?</p>	
<p>How well do you feel that professionals who support your child understand their hearing loss and how it impacts on their learning?</p>	
<p>Do you feel listened to when you explain what support you think your child needs?</p>	

Questions to consider	Your notes
<p>Is your child encouraged to share their views on their needs and what support would help them?</p> <p>Do the professionals who work with your child listen to their views?</p>	
<p>Do you feel that everybody works together to make sure your child's needs have been assessed properly?</p> <p>For example, has an audiologist or social worker for deaf children contributed to any assessment of your child's needs?</p> <p>Have you received reports of these assessments? Were they clear and easy to understand?</p> <p>Did people take steps to make sure that you didn't have to repeat the same information to different people?</p>	
<p>Are you kept up to date about your child's progress and about any problems they may have in their learning?</p>	
<p>Have you seen the Local Offer for your area?</p> <p>Does the Local Offer tell you clearly what support there is for deaf children in your area?</p> <p>Have you been given an opportunity to have your say on the Local Offer or to be involved in its development?</p>	

### Is the local support making a difference?

Questions to consider	Your notes
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<p>Thinking about your child's education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you happy with your child's hearing, listening, language and communication development?</li> <li>• Are they doing as well as other children of the same age or ability?</li> <li>• Are they making the same rate of progress as other children?</li> <li>• If they've fallen behind, are they catching up?</li> </ul> <p>Are there any particular areas where you feel your child is not getting the support they need?</p>	
<p>Does your child receive support from a Teacher of the Deaf and/or the specialist education service for deaf children? How good is this support? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your child hasn't started school yet, does a Teacher of the Deaf give you clear information and advice about how you can support your child's language and communication at home?</li> <li>• Does your child's Teacher of the Deaf work well with the nursery, school or college to make sure they're able to meet your child's needs?</li> </ul>	
<p>Do you or your child get any support from social care services to help them be independent and to mix with other people?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your child have opportunities to meet other deaf children and young people?</li> <li>• Does your child have any equipment they need at home (such as fire alarm or doorbell alerts)?</li> </ul>	
<p>If your child is nearly or over 14, how well has your child been supported to think about and plan for their transition into adulthood?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has your child received clear and impartial careers advice? Did this start in Year 9? Do they know about the different support available in work (such as Access to Work)?</li> <li>• If they're moving into higher education, do</li> </ul>	

<p>they know about the different support available (such as Disabled Students' Allowances)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is your child ready to live independently? For example, can they look after their own finances and sort out their own shopping?</li></ul>	
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<b>Other comments and thoughts</b>

If you'd like more detailed information about the questions that inspectors may ask during an inspection, take a look at their handbook, [Local Area SEND Inspection: Guidance for inspectors](#).

## About the National Deaf Children's Society

We are the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people across the UK.

We use the term 'deaf' to refer to **all types of hearing loss or impairment from mild to profound**. This includes deafness in one ear or temporary deafness such as glue ear.

We use the word 'parent' to refer to all parents and carers of children.

For more information take a look at our website: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk).

For information and practical support on issues related to your child's deafness, call our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880, email us at [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk) or contact us via live chat at [www.ndcs.org.uk/livechat](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/livechat).

If you prefer to speak a language other than English, tell us the language of your choice and your phone number (in English). We will call you back with an interpreter within a few minutes.

**This information can be requested in large print or as a text file.**

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Full references for this factsheet are available by emailing [informationteam@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:informationteam@ndcs.org.uk).  
Give us your feedback by emailing your comments to [informationteam@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:informationteam@ndcs.org.uk).