

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i Waith Ieuencid | Inquiry into Youth Work

YW 13

Ymateb gan : Cymdeithas Genedlaethol Plant Byddar Cymru (NDCS)

Response from : National Deaf Children's Society Cymru (NDCS)

## About Us

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is a national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. We represent and campaign for the rights of all deaf children and young people from birth until they reach independence.

## Response

NDCS Cymru works closely with deaf children and young people throughout Wales in a variety of ways, including:

- Offering support through our Helpline and Child and Family Support Officer services
- Events
- Information
- Campaigning
- Projects which aim to increase confidence and resilience, such as our current *Gearing Up*<sup>1</sup> project in Wales, which works with deaf young people transitioning into adulthood.

NDCS Cymru is not in a position to provide a full response to this inquiry, but would like to take this opportunity to highlight the following points which have been observed by our *Gearing Up* project leader.

- Deaf young people often face communication barriers and, as a result, can be vulnerable to feelings of social isolation or low self-esteem. Deaf young people have said they can be dissuaded from accessing youth provision due to communication barriers, or a fear that their communication needs might not be met.
- A focus on accreditation can discourage young people who struggle with more formal structures and learning styles. Although this can be a problem for many, NDCS Cymru is aware that (without appropriate support) deaf young people are more likely to struggle with literacy.
- There is not a holistic overview of support available, and so there are gaps in provision. This is especially the case for 19-25 year olds.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on *Gearing Up*, please visit:  
[http://www.ndcs.org.uk/for\\_the\\_media/press\\_releases/new\\_project\\_for\\_deaf.html](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/for_the_media/press_releases/new_project_for_deaf.html).

- Although there are some valuable opportunities for deaf young people through voluntary sector projects, it is important to acknowledge that these opportunities can be time-restricted and limited due to the nature of grant funding.

In addition, it should also be recognised that, while many deaf young people will benefit from a deaf-specific project and from meeting other deaf young people, they will also want to (and have a right to) access the same opportunities as their peers. Furthermore, some young deaf people who do not regard themselves as culturally deaf may prefer to access mainstream opportunities. As such, we would welcome a greater emphasis on inclusion within general youth opportunities delivered by public bodies.

We would suggest that the Welsh Government could provide further steer and advice on how to ensure that youth services are delivered in an accessible way. We would also suggest that the Welsh Government could utilise existing systems and structures to promote disability awareness training (including deaf awareness training) among youth workers.

## **Contact**

For further information, please contact [campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns.wales@ndcs.org.uk).