

Good Outcomes Positive Futures

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

Family Information Pack

Deafness/Hearing Loss



Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service is hosted by Achieving for Children on behalf of RBWM as part of the Berkshire Joint Agreement between RBWM, Slough, Bracknell Forest, Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire.

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Your child may recently have been identified as having a hearing loss and subsequently been referred to the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (BSCS) by the Audiologists for support from a Teacher for Deaf Children and Young People (ToD).

We recognise that this can be a difficult time for families and hope that the information in this pack will help you understand more about hearing loss, its potential educational implications and how we can support you as a family.

You may not wish to read it from cover to cover immediately; it is there for you to refer to and to provide you with information as and when you need it.

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You can find out more about us on:

- Our website - <http://berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk/>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/berksscs/>

To see how BSCS collect, use, retain and disclose personal information about you and your child please visit our website: <https://www.berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk/privacy-notice/>

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

Good Outcomes Positive Futures

Your child has been allocated a Teacher for Deaf Children and Young People (ToD) from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (BSCS)

The ToD will use the time with you for a variety of activities and services, some of these are outlined below

- Providing support, information and advice
- Monitoring your child's speech, language and communication development
- Functional hearing, listening skills assessments
- Liaising with other professionals which may include attending audiology appointments
- Joint assessments with other professionals, i.e. Speech and Language therapists
- Liaising with nursery schools on transition into educational settings and writing reports for Education providers including Education, Health and Care Plans where appropriate
- 1:1 teaching in the home or nursery school environment
- Providing access to specialist pre-school groups
- Providing, maintaining and evaluating specialist equipment

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1. Information about the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

Specialist Education Support Service for children diagnosed with

Deafness/Hearing Loss
Visual Impairment
Multi-Sensory Impairment

A joint arrangement between all Local Authorities within Berkshire

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- Slough Borough Council
- West Berkshire Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

The primary aim of the Service is to work effectively in partnership with pupils, schools, families and other providers to empower young people with sensory impairment as learners and citizens within an inclusive community.

Service Description

The peripatetic teaching and advisory service is available for children and young people with educational needs arising from a diagnosed hearing and/or visual loss. Specialist Teachers of the Deaf and for the Vision and Impaired are available to work across the age range within the home environment in the first instance and later within educational settings. The team offers a range of additional skills above the mandatory specialist qualification. These include skills in Educational Audiology, mobility training, specific learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairment and curriculum and early years education.

As a Service we aim to respond effectively to the specific needs of each child and to provide support in a number of different ways. We work closely with colleagues in schools and with families, linking our work with Health teams and Local Authorities.

As a consortium service, we are available to all families and schools within the six Berkshire Local Authorities.

Principles

Early Intervention

- Recognising the benefits of early detection, diagnosis and intervention
- Immediate response to referral by a specialist teacher

Partnership with Parents

- Parents are provided with informed professional advice and practical support to enable them to make decisions to meet their needs and the needs of the child
- Close working with local parent groups and user consultation

Family Centred Intervention

- Family systems are acknowledged through a family centred approach to detection, diagnosis and early intervention

Collaborative Working

- Effective links and joint working with educational settings, health departments and Local Authorities in an effort to provide a seamless service
- Joint Education/Audiology Clinics
- Joint programme planning
- Regular multi-professional meetings

Equal Opportunity

- Range of provision regardless of area of residence
- Full information regarding options for education and methodology
- Commitment to quality educational experience regardless of communication mode, age, race, class or gender

Quality of Provision

- Annual review and audit of service delivery, outcomes and value
- User consultation
- High profile for training and development

2. Pre-school programme

Home Teaching Programme

A qualified ToD is allocated to work at home with you and your child. In consultation with you, the ToD will devise an individualised teaching programme. This will include effective use and management of your child's hearing aids and equipment, an early stimulation programme and preparation for school or nursery.

Habilitation Programme

A Habilitation Programme (Family Support following identification of deafness/hearing loss) is provided by the ToD.

This runs in collaboration with the local audiology services at King Edward VII Hospital, Windsor and the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading. The programme consists of family support in the home and in the clinic, attendance at the preschool group, Chatty Monkeys and parent workshops.

Parent Programme

BSCS offers a programme of workshops and speakers for families and children and young people. Online parent support groups and workshops are planned throughout the year. All families of pre-school children are welcome.

Information about national and regional parent events and organisations are passed on to families.

Early Support

The NDCS provide a resource to help monitor a child's development. It is called *Success from the Start* and is for the families of deaf children from birth to three years old. It can be found here [success from the start](#)

Your child's Teacher of the Deaf will look at this document with you to help monitor your child's speech, language and communication development.

Record Keeping and Liaison

All records are accessible and available to carers as specified by data protection regulations (GDPR) and Service policy. We always discuss any formal report with yourselves prior to circulation.

We plan and evaluate our teaching programmes with you and value the partnership approach which ensures that we learn as well as contribute to learning. We recognise that parents/carers are the experts about their child.

We facilitate multi-professional meetings, where we seek to share ideas and exchange information with you and plan how best to support your child/young person so that they can fulfil their potential.

Education, Health and Care Plans

All children and young people come onto our caseload upon identification of hearing loss/deafness. If there is a need to move to a formal assessment this will generally happen in time for nursery or school entry. Parents/carers are fully involved in such decisions and discussions.

Our Promise:

- To provide qualified, specialist staff
- To deliver the support plan we make with you to the best of our ability
- To respect your skills, knowledge and views
- To offer support as well as ideas
- To share all our written reports with you
- To actively listen to any concerns you have and take appropriate action
- To let you know as soon as we know if a member of staff is ill or an appointment needs to be changed

We ask you:

- To help us plan the support programme
- To share your ideas and views with us
- To let us know what things work well and what things don't
- To provide a safe and quiet place for our work with you at home
- To take a full and active part in all our sessions
- To keep a diary of all your appointments so that we can arrange sessions at times and dates that suit you
- To let us know as soon as you know if you need to cancel or change an appointment

As a Specialist Service our role is to:

- Share ideas and experience
- Contribute to the resources available to your family
- Work in partnership with yourselves and other services involved
- Offer real and practical support
- Offer specialist early years education programmes

Pre-school groups for children with identified hearing loss/deafness

BSCS provides a specialist pre-school group: Chatty Monkeys in 3 different locations across Berkshire: Slough, Spencer's Wood, Thatcham.

Please see this [link](#) on our website for more information.

Any child with a diagnosis of hearing loss/deafness is welcome to attend. Siblings are also welcome to come along and join in the activities. The sessions are run by qualified Teachers of the Deaf and Specialist Teaching Assistants who run a programme of fun activities to encourage language, listening and social skills. It is also an opportunity to meet other parents and to have earmould impressions taken.

3. Multi Agency Working

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service recognise the importance of multi-agency working and are partners with other professionals from:

- Health
- Local Authorities
- Education
- Voluntary Agencies and Charities

We aim to provide a family friendly service as outlined in the National Deaf Children's Society Quality Standards

In order to achieve this we:

- Host multi-agency days involving parents and other professionals to look at how we can provide better support and improve joint working
- Attend/Chair the Children and Hearing Services Working Groups in Berkshire
- Our Educational Audiologist attends joint Audiology Clinics at both King Edward VII and the Royal Berkshire Hospital and we provide regular attendance at Hearing Aid Reviews
- Joint planning and assessment with Speech and Language Therapy
- Attend and contribute to multi-agency habilitation meetings
- Provide training for other Health and Education professionals
- Provide technical updates for colleagues working with specialist equipment
- Run a number of joint parent workshops with Speech and Language Therapy

4. Educational Audiologist and Clinical Audiologist

Educational Audiologist

The Educational Audiologist is an integral part of a Service aiming to deliver an auditory-oral approach to language development

The Educational Audiologist:

- has an education background and a teaching qualification and also holds a Masters degree in Educational Audiology
- supports the link between the health professionals in the clinic setting and the education team working with the child
- has a responsibility to ensure that the equipment issued to each child is maximally effective in the educational setting and the home
- works as part of a multi-disciplinary team in a variety of settings including audiology clinic, school and home
- has a key role in interpreting and sharing educational and audiological assessments undertaken (particularly language and hearing) and the educational impact and significance
- will communicate audiological information with pupils, parents and colleagues (whether in schools or in a clinic setting)

Clinical Audiologist

Clinical Scientists in Audiology:

- are highly trained in the science of hearing and balance in adults and children
- have considerable theoretical knowledge about hearing, acoustics and balance which enables them to develop ways to assess the degree and origin of a hearing loss
- will inform the family of a child's hearing status, discuss options for management of any hearing impairment and recommend referral to other healthcare disciplines as necessary
- are responsible for fitting and maintaining a child's hearing aids and for ensuring hearing is reviewed on a regular basis
- are usually hospital-based but form part of the multi-disciplinary team who work directly with the child and their family

Outcome: all professionals are better able to deliver a co-ordinated and comprehensive service for families

5. Informed Choice

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service is an Education Service employed by your Local Authority. As such, it is committed to the Local Authority Policy of Inclusion as outlined in the Local Offer, available on the Local Authority website.

BSCS ToDs will:

- share their expertise with you about hearing loss and deafness
- be clear about what they can provide and what preferences and choices it may be more difficult to obtain
- support you in making decisions and expressing preferences and choices for your child and family
- assist you with any changes over time which may influence your preferences and choices

Your BSCS ToD will provide you with information about arrangements for supporting your child's special educational needs.

The Local Authority will always seek to provide support in the local community for your child unless this is not feasible in fully meeting your child's needs.

There are different types of Educational Provision for children with deafness or hearing loss. All children who have a sensory impairment will have different needs but they, in common with their peers, should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Early Years Setting and Mainstream Schools

This is often the preferred choice of parents and children who want to attend the local school with their friends.

A mainstream early years setting will offer the Foundation Curriculum which complements the National Curriculum. A mainstream school will offer the National Curriculum to a child with a sensory impairment making reasonable adjustments where necessary, which might include an appropriate level of additional adult support. Where appropriate an Education, Health and Care

Plan will indicate the outcomes expected and the type and level of support provided to meet these outcomes.

The support may include teachers and specialist support assistants with additional experience and/or qualifications for working with children and young people with sensory impairment. All schools are offered in-service and training for staff. Individual teaching programmes are provided as necessary.

Resource Base

In addition to the above a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf will be part of the school staff and therefore there is likely to be a higher level of access to specialist teaching and specific pastoral care programmes.

Special School

When a mainstream school or resource base is unable to meet the child's needs, a special school may be considered.

Some special schools support children with learning difficulties. Where the child also has a sensory impairment, additional inputs will be offered in the same way as for mainstream schools.

Specialist schools for sensory impairment often require some residence because of low incidence of need and thus few schools offering this type of provision. Special schools can offer a greater extended curriculum which may include a significant element of self help and independence skills. Class sizes tend to be smaller with more specialist staff and children have the opportunity to meet and work alongside others with similar challenges. They can also offer on-site provision of physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and other professional services as necessary.

6. Schools in Berkshire with Hearing Resources Bases

<p>Westwood Farm Infant School Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst RG3 6RY</p> <p>Tel: 0118 942 6113 https://westwoodfarmschools.w-berks.sch.uk/Infants/</p>	<p>Westwood Farm Junior School Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst RG3 6RY</p> <p>Tel: 0118 942 5182 https://www.westwoodfarmschools.w-berks.sch.uk/Juniors/</p>
<p>Wessex Nursery & Primary School St Adrian's Close Cox Green Maidenhead SL6 3AT</p> <p>Tel: 01628 629607 https://www.wessexprimary.org/hearing-resource-base/</p>	<p>The Langley Academy Langley Road Slough SL3 7EF</p> <p>Tel: 01753 214440 https://www.langleyacademy.org/</p>
<p>Emmbrook Infant School Emmbrook Road Wokingham RG41 1JR</p> <p>Tel: 0118 978 4259 https://emmbrookinfantschool.co.uk/</p>	<p>Emmbrook Junior School Emmbrook Road Wokingham RG41 1JR</p> <p>Tel: 0118 978 4259 https://emmbrookjuniorschool.co.uk/</p>
<p>Kennet School Stoney Lane Thatcham RG19 4LL</p> <p>Tel: 01635 862121 https://www.kennetschool.co.uk/</p>	

7. Additional Equipment

Hearing aids are essential pieces of equipment for those with a hearing difficulty, as they amplify speech. However, they can also amplify unwanted background noise. In some schools the acoustic quality of the classrooms can be influenced by thin walls and hard surfaces, which reflect unwanted noise around the room making listening difficult. Modifying the physical environment of the classroom can help to solve some of the difficulties e.g.

- laying carpets on the floor or fitting rubber 'feet' on tables and chairs
- installing double-glazing to cut down on noise from the outside
- putting pin boards on the walls and fitting vertical blinds on the windows to 'soften' hard surfaces

In addition to the above modifications, pupils with a hearing loss can benefit considerably in the school environment by using a **radio aid** or a **soundfield system**.

A **radio aid** is an assistive listening device which effectively reduces the distance between a teacher and a hearing aid wearer. The teacher's speech is transmitted via a microphone (or transmitter) to the pupil directly into small receivers inside (or worn on) the hearing aids. Changes in the distance between the speaker and the hearing aid wearer do not affect the volume of speech the child hears. The child receives a consistent sound level even when the teacher moves around.



The radio aid can help to mitigate some of the difficulty in listening when there is lots of background noise. As the teacher's microphone is only six inches away from his/her mouth the child receives the voice directly into his/her hearing aids uncontaminated by classroom noise.

For this reason, a radio aid system is of particular benefit in mainstream classrooms where acoustic conditions are poor and where the level of background noise is likely to be high.

Soundfield systems can also help a pupil hear more clearly in background noise in a classroom. This system can improve the ability to listen for *all* children in the classroom, not just those with a hearing difficulty. The radio aid can be connected to the soundfield system.

In both systems the teacher wears a transmitter, with a microphone around their neck, about six inches from their mouth, which transmits their voice. In the radio aid system a receiver, worn by the pupil, and connected to the pupil's hearing aids picks up this signal. In the sound field system the signal is broadcast from a speaker, which has the effect of equalising the level of the teacher's voice across the classroom.

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service uses a variety of radio aid systems. The choice of which system to use is based on each pupil's individual needs. As funding allows the Educational Audiologist supplies the most suitable system.

Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service supplies the radio systems on loan, and is happy to advise schools about sound field systems, however the purchase of these systems is the responsibility of the school.

Encouraging Your Child To Wear Hearing Aids

“When I had hearing aids I was 2 years old and I used to pull them out all the time. Now I am 10 and I am used to them, I don’t know they are on me” (Profoundly deaf pupil)

When your child first starts wearing hearing aids, it is important to encourage them to wear their aids regularly and to aim for them to wear them during *all their waking hours*. Your attitude is important because if you are positive then your child will be more accepting and positive about wearing them too. **Most children go through a period of pulling their hearing aids out.** Try to be consistent about putting them back in; it is just a phase and it will pass!

Helpful Tips

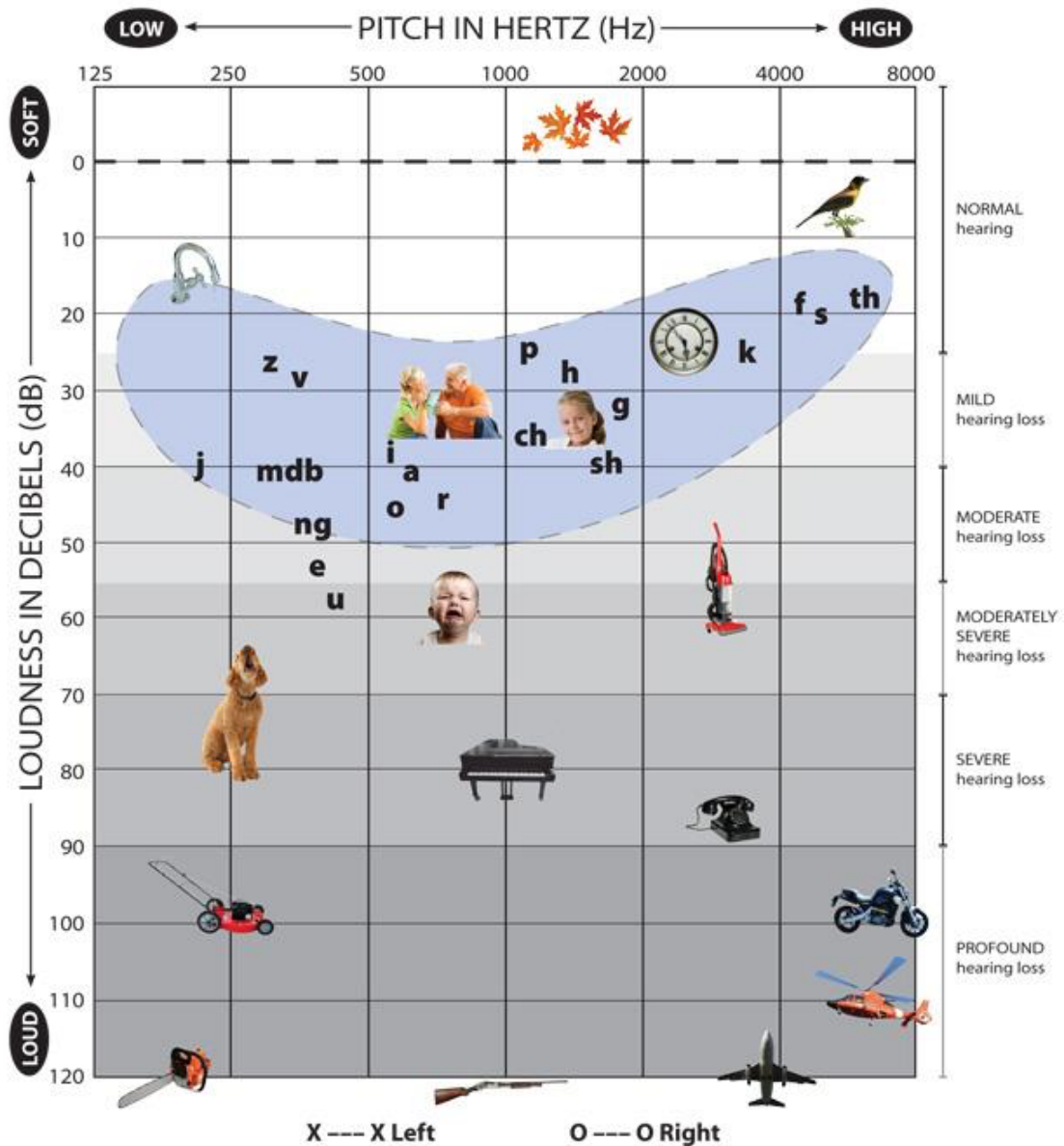
- Hold the earmoulds in your hand for a couple of minutes before putting them in as this makes them warmer and less of a shock than when they are cold. They will also be more pliable and may be easier to put in.
- Slowly build up the length of time your child is wearing the hearing aids. Initially you may start by putting them in for short periods several times a day. Don’t take them out if your child is happy to wear them! If you are feeling stressed, have a break and try again later when you are more relaxed. Remember however, you are aiming for consistent use as soon as possible to give your child the best opportunity to learn to listen.
- Have something ready to distract your child such as a favourite toy or try at meal times if they are distracted by eating. With small children give them something to hold – if they have something in each hand they have no hands left to pull the aids out with.
- Meet other parents so that they can share their experiences. This may also give your child the opportunity to see other children with hearing aids.
- Decorate the hearing aids with stickers and ask for favourite stickers to go inside the earmould. Choose coloured ear moulds – pink sparkly earmoulds or favourite football team colours

- Remember you decide when and how long your child wears their hearing aids and try not to let your child use taking them off as attention seeking
- Use a *kiddy clip* attached to your child's clothing if you are concerned that they will pull the hearing aids out and lose them. Huggies which attach around the aid and the ear can secure the aids in place and are sometimes worth a try if you are struggling to keep them on your child's ears. Some parents find toupe aid useful to stop the aids flapping off the ears on very young children.

Decorative add-ons for hearing aids and cochlear implants and headbands are now widely available online. Ask your visiting Teacher of the Deaf for advice.

The Audiogram

An audiogram is a chart on which the hearing thresholds (softest sounds that can be heard) are plotted.



The vertical axis shows the 'loudness' of the sound, measured in decibels (getting louder as you go down the chart)
 The horizontal axis shows the frequency (or pitch) of the sounds. Think of the keys on a piano- from left to right low pitched, mid pitched and high pitched sounds.

The grey shaded area is known as the speech banana; it shows where all the sounds of spoken English fall within the range of 'pitch' and 'loudness'.

You can plot your child's hearing thresholds on the chart and draw a line between each point.

Remember:

- sounds are quieter towards the top of the chart and
- louder towards the bottom and
- the points that you have plotted are the *quietest* sounds that your child can hear

Therefore any speech sounds above the line you have plotted will be very difficult for your child to hear without amplification (e.g. hearing aids)

Your child's ToD can discuss this in more detail with you.

Checking Hearing Aids

You will need:

- A stetoclip/listening tube
- Spare batteries
- A puffer

What to do

With young children and children with other special needs it is important for the hearing aids to be checked at least daily and immediately if the child becomes less responsive and does not appear to be listening as well

1. Remove the hearing aid from the child's ear
2. Pop the mould into the end of your stetoclip/listening tube
3. Listen to the hearing aid while talking, checking that the sound you are hearing is of good quality. You should hear a beeps or music when the aid is switched on
4. Listen for any crackles or breaks in the sound
5. If there is no sound, change the battery – dispose of it safely
6. Check the earmould and the hearing aid for cracks and damage to the switches, the earhook and the earmould tubing
7. If there is moisture in the earmould blow it out with the puffer
8. If there are holes or twists in the earmould tubing replace the tubing

If there is a problem with the hearing aid contact your child's Teacher of the Deaf or the Audiology Department to arrange for the hearing aid to be replaced with a spare as soon as possible.

Checking radio aids

What to do

It is important to check the hearing aid first to check it is working before checking the radio aid system. With young children and children with other special needs it is important for the system to be checked daily and immediately if the child becomes less responsive and does not appear to be listening as well.

1. Check the hearing aids first – see the Hearing Aids Daily Checking factsheet on the website
2. Attach the radio aid to the child's hearing aid
3. Pop the mould into the end of your stetoclip/listening tube
4. Check the status of the batteries in the radio aid system and/or hearing aids
5. Place the radio aid transmitter at a source of sound – e.g. with another child/teacher who will be speaking into it
6. Make sure the system is switched on
7. Listen through the hearing aid for the signal from the transmitter
8. Check that the sound you are hearing is of good quality
9. Listen for crackles or breaks in the sound
10. Check the radio aid system for damage
11. If it is not working contact your child's ToD

Retubing an earmould

It is important to replace the earmould tubing if it becomes cracked, discoloured or very stiff. The tubing may also have moved within the earmould

Look at the 'Retubing an Earmould' factsheet on our website for advice around how to do this

<https://berkshire-sensory-consortium-service.secure-primariesite.net/deafnesshearing-loss-factsheets/>

8 Developing Language And Listening

BSCS Communication Policy

It is recognised that there needs to be a degree of flexibility when implementing a communication policy for children and their families depending on the individual child and family profile. A child's communication method should promote an enjoyable and meaningful experience with other people through language. Parents should be fully involved in all discussions regarding how their child will communicate and how that will be promoted, developed and monitored. In this way they will be able to make an informed choice.

Most children with a hearing loss, who are identified through the newborn hearing screening programme, have the potential to acquire a high level of competency in spoken and written language. In recent years this has been facilitated by early identification leading to appropriate amplification and timely intervention by specialists.

The development of language in children with deafness or hearing loss will usually follow the same language acquisition process as for hearing children, through meaningful interaction and conversation. Although language may be delayed, for the majority of children with a hearing loss, language acquisition will match other aspects of the child's development. However, individual children with deafness/hearing loss have a variety of communication needs and these may change over time. Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service, together with partner agencies, provides the parents of newly diagnosed children with information about all methods of communication.

Please see our Communication Policy on our website for more information

<https://berkshire-sensory-consortium-service.secure-primarysite.net/our-policies/>

9. Useful Contacts

<p>National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) www.ndcs.org.uk Tel: 020 7490 8656 Email: ndcs@ndcs.org.uk</p>	<p>Berkshire Deaf Children’s Society (BDCS) https://berkshiredcs.org/ Email: berksdcs@gmail.com</p> <p><i>The Berkshire Deaf Children’s Society is the local group of the NDCS. It has been set up by parents for parents of hearing impaired children to provide support and share ideas locally.</i></p>
<p>Deaf Education through Listening and Talking (DELTA) www.deafeducation.org.uk Tel: 0845 1081437 Email: enquiries@deafeducation.org.uk</p>	<p>National Literacy Trust www.literacytrust.org.uk/talk to your baby</p>
<p>Council for Disabled Children www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk</p>	<p>Signature https://www.signature.org.uk</p>
<p>Deafax www.deafax.org Tel 0118 935 3685 Fax 0118 935 3686 Email: info@deafax.org</p>	<p>Cerebra www.cerebra.org.uk Freephone: 0800 3281159 (Grants, information and support for anyone closely connected with a child who has a brain injury, developmental problem, mental disability or neurological disorder)</p>
<p>RNID https://rnid.org.uk/</p>	<p>Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service www.rbfrs.co.uk/</p> <p><i>(Please ask your ToD to complete a referral form with you for a free home safety check)</i></p>

10. Funding Sources

<p>Family Fund</p> <p>https://www.familyfund.org.uk/FAQs/what-can-we-apply-for</p>	<p>Family Action</p> <p>'grants to individuals over the age of 14, looking to unlock their educational potential by participating in further education'</p> <p>https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/grants/educational-grants/</p>
<p>Cerebra (Grants, information and support for anyone closely connected with a child who has a brain injury, developmental problem, mental disability or neurological disorder) Freephone: 0800 3281159 http://www.cerebra.org.uk/</p>	<p>Children Today Charitable Trust</p> <p>http://www.childrentoday.org.uk/how-we-can-help/</p>
<p>Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children</p> <p>http://www.newlifecharity.co.uk</p>	<p>Lifeline 4 Kids</p> <p>http://www.lifeline4kids.org/what-we-do/</p>

11. Glossary

For glossary terms used in sensory impairment, please see the NATsip website:

<https://www.natsip.org.uk/doc-library-login/sersen-sesip-document-archive/109-si-glossary>