

Moving towards using positive language around Deafness

The Berkshire Sensory Consortium has been reviewing their use of positive language and in particular the terms deafness and hearing impairment linked to our support of children and young people. Historically hearing impairment' or 'hearing impaired' (HI) has been widely used in deaf education and in services for deaf children however there is a growing conversation around what this should now look like going forward.

Currently the terms deaf and deafness are increasingly used within the UK to represent all levels of hearing loss from mild to profound. It is also used to include those who identify culturally as Deaf, hearing impaired, hard of hearing or deafened

Consultation with young people supported by the Service found that they used a range of terminology. To reflect this the Service has decided to use Deafness/Hearing loss although recognises that within the Code of Practice and in Local Authorities the term hearing impairment is still current and therefore in some circumstances for reporting this terminology may still be used. The term hearing loss is widely used by the World Health Organisation.

As a Service we also feel that young people and their families should be able to choose how their hearing is referred to in for example reports or training within settings and their view will be proactively sought and may change over time.