

The role of the Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD)

What is a QToD?

A Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QToD) is a qualified teacher with the additional skills, knowledge and expertise required to provide quality teaching to deaf children and young people (CYP) in mainstream settings and those in specialist provisions. They should have trained or be in training to achieve an additional mandatory qualification for teaching deaf learners. This should be completed within a fixed number of years of appointment (it varies from country to country).

How do QToDs work to ensure the best outcomes for deaf CYP?

The premise of an effective QToD role is to work in partnership with others to ensure a depth of understanding of the needs of deaf CYP and how to meet them, enabling them to reach their potential. We do this by supporting and promoting:

- Family-centered practice
- Partnership working with educational professionals
- Multi-agency working with partners health, social care and third sector organisations

Why do deaf CYP need to be taught by QToDs?

A deaf CYP, regardless of their deafness levels, has a right to specialist input from a QToD. This is also the case for CYP with a complex profile, where deafness may not be seen as their primary need. The needs of deaf CYP are complex and can be wide-ranging and there is a body of knowledge which deaf CYP needs to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and tools to thrive throughout their childhood and adult lives. Some deaf CYP will have a statutory document outlining their needs and support needed to achieve their potential (in line with guidance as relevant to the nation in which they live) but the majority will not. In order to provide this specialist input QToDs have additional understanding and expertise in these areas:

- impact of deafness on all aspects of life
- social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH)
- language acquisition
- specialist assessment
- policy and practice

Where are deaf CYP taught?

Deaf CYP may be taught in a variety of settings. These include family homes, state private and voluntary settings for children aged 0 – 5 years, mainstream settings (primary and secondary), specialist/enhanced provisions attached to mainstream schools, special schools for deaf CYP, local authority funded trust and free schools, special schools for CYP, post 16 provisions, university. They may also work with children who are electively home educated or in health settings. A QToD may be working directly with deaf CYP in any of these settings.

What are the statutory requirements? – both for deaf CYP and the QToD MQ

Deaf CYP have a right to specialist input from a QToD. This may be identified as part of a statutory document. The various governments of the UK have long recognised the need for the mandatory training and this dates back to the early 1900s.

Other supporting information

Further information and guidance can be found at the following –

- BATOD website - <https://www.batod.org.uk/information-category/deaf-education/being-a-teacher-of-the-deaf/>
- Routes into training - <https://www.batod.org.uk/information/training-as-a-teacher-of-the-deaf/>
- England - Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice. www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25. Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 Section 32 Children and Families Act 2014
- Scottish Government - Additional Support for Learning Act Code of Practice. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland/>
- Department for Education Northern Ireland - Draft Code: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-sen-code-practice>
- 'Additional Learning Needs' Code of Practice for Wales <https://gov.wales/the-additional-learning-needs-code-and-regulations>

Supplementary information about how QToDs work

QToDs work collaboratively with

- stakeholders to identify learning needs and advise on, and provide, appropriate support.
- parents, other professionals and deaf learners to develop a clear understanding of the nature of deafness, and provide a range of evidence-based information via written text, face to face, audio or video.
- class teachers, support staff, other specialists to provide and modify materials to match needs such as access to information, communication and mobility, and supply training and advice on the use and adaptation of curriculum materials, alongside providing appropriate curriculum advice and support for deaf learners, to embed normal working practice required for reasonable adjustments in public examinations.
- the team around the CYP to ensure
 - transition between educational phases is effective across a wide range of ages and contexts, ensuring that appropriate specialist equipment is in place in any new settings and that staff have the necessary training, knowledge and skills to facilitate its use and inform staff of appropriate teaching methodology for cognition, learning and social development
 - regular training and support to stakeholders, using evidenced-based strategies, to facilitate the successful inclusion of learners with sensory impairment in educational settings.
 - improved physical learning environments using a range of interventions, such as improved room acoustics, lighting or greater access to assistive technology.
 - preparation for adulthood from the earliest years
 - support for young people in their preparation with DSA funding
- **social, emotional and mental health needs**
 - working with deaf CYP to develop the self-esteem of deaf CYP and maximise their independence and use of specific assistive technology to teach and promote independent learning and self-advocacy skills.
 - work collaboratively and train stakeholders to improve the social and emotional development, independence and well-being of the learner.
- **language acquisition**
 - work in partnership with parents/carers through early intervention to promote the development of language (all modalities).
 - teach, develop and/or plan challenging, well organised programmes across the age and ability range of deaf CYP including those with additional needs.
- **specialist assessment**
 - carry out, interpret and report on the outcomes from specialist assessments used with deaf learners which informs target setting, monitors the efficacy of current provision, teaching delivery, guides decision making. Drawing on the specialist assessment of others such as audiologists, and speech and language therapists to inform their own assessments and advice.
- **policy and practice**
 - embedding national and local legislation, guidance, initiatives and research in own teaching and other work with deaf children, parents and settings.