

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

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

Ymchwiliad i Eiriolaeth Statudol | Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy Provision

SAP 08

Ymateb gan : Y Gymdeithas Genedlaethol i Blant Byddar (NDCS Cymru)

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

About Us

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Cymru is the national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

We represent the interests and campaign for the rights of all deaf children and young people from birth until independence.

In referring to deaf, we refer to all levels of hearing loss.

Response

As identified in the *Social Services and Well-being Act Wales 2014: Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy)*, those with communication needs are particularly vulnerable when accessing services. It is, therefore, imperative that deaf children and young people are made aware of their rights to advocacy and that access to appropriate advocacy support is facilitated.

At the same time, it is essential that specific requirements are placed on advocacy services to ensure accessibility to the young deaf population. NDCS Cymru recommends that advocacy providers ensure:

- a basic level of deaf awareness
- an understanding of the barriers deaf children/young people encounter
- an awareness of different communication techniques
- knowledge of systems and structures for arranging appropriate communication support
- consideration of key pointers when arranging such support.

These are equally relevant in the development of advocacy services within the context of ALN Reform. In both contexts, NDCS Cymru would urge the Welsh Government to issue national minimum standards for advocacy services which take account of the distinct needs of deaf children and young people, and would welcome the opportunity to work with officials to this end.

As part of our response to the Welsh Government's consultation on the *Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Bill* in December 2015, we asked deaf young people at Queen Elizabeth High School in Carmarthen to describe their 'dream advocate'. We received the following comments:

- My dream advocate is going to be nice, not interfering how I present my work, helpful, one of my best friend, young, know my needs and how to explain it in my view of understanding. And I am asking for a familiar person I know.
- The things that would make me comfortable to ask help from the service are to ask other people such as the head of deaf, parent's opinions and ideas.
- Good conversation
- Trust
- Young
- Good English
- To make you confident
- One to one
- Important help people
- High level for sign language
- Knows about deaf
- My dream advocate would be nice, kind, friendly and personally close.
- The skills they should have should be brainy and skilful.
- Respect
- Important to be a nice person and friends
- To talk to someone you met it not good to meet someone you don't know.
- Sign would help me boost my confidence
- It would be good to include someone close and friendly.
- We need help with English
- Some Deaf need sign
- I want to be involved
- Help plan

Many of the young people indicated a wish to contact an advocacy service by text, email or other social media (snap chat) and also the need for an interpreter for those who use sign language.