

# Haringey Radio Aid Policy

May 2022

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NOTE: *The term 'deaf' refers to children and young people with an educationally significant hearing loss. It is used to describe all types and degrees of hearing loss.*

This policy was reviewed by Haringey Hearing Support team using the National Deaf Children's Society Guidelines and Quality Standards. These were co-produced with parents through the Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

### Rationale

Advances in technology are continuing to have a positive impact on the ability of deaf children to access spoken language. It is recognised that every child has the right to access the full range of technological equipment relevant to their needs regardless of their learning environment.

Radio aids enhance the listening experience of deaf children by improving the audibility of speech in situations where distance, background noise and reverberation time make the listening and learning process challenging.

*"Evidence of the benefits of radio aids is compelling and deaf children deserve the very best opportunities. All those concerned with the provision of services have a responsibility to ensure that radio aid systems are used appropriately to enhance the experience of all deaf children, both at home and in educational settings." (February 2017) Wendy McCracken, Professor of Deaf Education, University of Manchester, NDCS Quality Standards for the Use of Personal Radio Aids, NDCS.*

*"The listening environment in most pre-schools, schools and homes is less than ideal and deaf children are likely to spend 40–50% of their listening time in noisy environments. For this reason, young children as well as school-age children can benefit from using personal radio aids." p.10, NDCS Quality Standards for the Use of Personal Radio Aids, NDCS.*

Under the Equality Act 2010, local authorities and education settings have a duty to 'make reasonable adjustments' to ensure that deaf children are not disadvantaged. There is a specific duty to provide 'auxiliary aids' when they are needed. A radio aid is an example of an 'auxiliary aid'.

### Aims of this policy

- To ensure that all children make best use of their residual hearing and derive maximum benefit from amplification.
- To ensure that all children and young people (CYP) will have optimum access to sound and speech across a range of listening environments.

## Provision of radio aids

*“Every deaf child should be considered as a potential candidate for provision with a personal radio aid as part of their amplification package, at first hearing aid fitting. This position requires that providers ask why a deaf child **should not** be considered as a potential candidate for a personal radio system, rather than which child **should**.”* **Quality Standard 1, NDCS Quality Standards for the Use of Personal Radio Aids, NDCS.**

Provision of a radio aid for all children will be considered on an individual basis, including CYP with complex needs.

This will include:

- CYP with bilateral moderate to profound sensorineural hearing loss.
- CYP with long-standing conductive hearing loss.
- CYP with cochlear implants or BAHAs who may benefit from a radio system in addition to their Mini Mic.

\*CYP with mild sensorineural hearing loss or unilateral loss will also be considered on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with use of equipment and listening environment.

The Qualified Teacher of the Deaf (QTOD), in collaboration with the deaf child and family will agree the best timing for the introduction of a radio aid system.

Provision of radio aids will be reviewed annually for each child.

## Practice Guidelines

- The Sensory Support Team will purchase and loan radio aid systems to Haringey educational settings and homes.
- Enfield educational settings need to apply to Enfield SEN team for funding for a radio aid system with a supporting letter from the Sensory Support Team.
- Haringey educational settings will agree to take responsibility for the safekeeping and appropriate use of the radio aid system in the setting by signing a loan form.
- Where the radio aid is used at home, families will agree to take responsibility for the safekeeping of the radio aid system.
- Where radio aids are used by the CYP at home and at school, a routine should be agreed to ensure effective safekeeping, charging and transporting of the radio aid.
- The Sensory Support Team will arrange for any repairs to Haringey radio aids systems.

- Enfield educational settings are expected to be responsible for the safekeeping and appropriate use of radio aid systems purchased by Enfield. Settings are responsible for liaising with the Enfield SEN team for losses and repairs, in consultation with the QTOD.
- Repairs/replacement for Enfield radio aids used solely by families will be funded by Enfield and organised by the QTOD.
- In line with the government's IEC safety guidance, deaf children under 5 years old will be given integrated receivers. This is also applicable to older deaf children with younger siblings where relevant.
- Radio aids are set up and balanced by the audiological technician from the Ewing Foundation. Checks are arranged at least annually by the QTOD.
- Equipment will be reviewed by the QTOD every 5 years or at key transition points, when replacement/upgrade will be considered.
- QTODs will develop and support the CYP's independence in their use of the radio aid and ability to report issues. The QTOD will advise the families/schools on appropriate strategies for progression of these skills.
- Staff in educational settings will attend any training offered about appropriate use of the radio aid system. QTODs will support and train families in the home environment.
- Written information about the radio aid system, its settings and appropriate use will be shared with the classroom teacher/teaching assistants and Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO).
- A designated member of staff in the setting will take responsibility for the daily management of the radio aid system.
- Daily equipment checks should be carried out at home or in the setting. The QTOD will also check equipment on home/school visits.
- The QTOD will liaise with audiology and cochlear implant clinics as appropriate.

Policy written June 2022  
Review date June 2024