

Department of Education and Skills Visiting Teacher Service



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Role of the VTOD

- The role of the visiting teacher of the deaf is to provide specialist information and guidance to support parents, teachers and children so that the deaf baby/child can develop and learn optimally, achieve in line with his/her cognitive ability and can achieve his/her linguistic, educational, social and personal potential
- Independent child/learner/adult
- The teacher of the deaf supports inclusion and access to the curriculum



Historical Overview

- Visiting Teacher Service established in 1970's
- Most VTs recruited from Schools for Deaf
- Most VTs qualified in Diploma from UCD. Some qualified from University of Birmingham or Manchester
- Small numbers initially, gradual expansion of Service over the years



Historical Overview: Inclusion

- Deaf pupils have been supported in mainstream by VTODs since the 1970's
- VTVIs began to support in mainstream later
- Trend towards inclusion means that, worldwide, this role constitutes the most predominant role amongst TODs.

(Richards 2000)



Historical Overview: Inclusion

- Parents
- DES/SERC
- 1998 Education Act
- Policy of inclusion
- NCSE
- EPSEN Act 2004 – functions of NCSE
- SENOs
- SESS

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Current Situation:

- Irish model of VTOD Service –has to meet needs of large rural country with small population, and give value for money
- 29 VTOD full time positions nationally supporting 2,300 children
- Referral system
- Many VTODs from Schools for Deaf, units, others from other Special Ed background, with relevant qualifications and additional specialist areas/experience



Current Service

- Service is part of provision for deaf children that includes units and schools for the deaf
- Service overall managed by Don Mahon, Assistant Chief Inspector, DES
- Local management by senior inspectors in four regional areas, together with VTVIs
- Continual professional development – biannual conference as a whole group plus attendance at national and international conferences (VTVIs)
- VISTA, BATOD and ISA



Visiting Teacher Service

- Offers support and guidance to parents/guardians of children with bi-lateral moderate, severe or profound hearing loss (audiogram)
- Mild/unilateral loss children
- Includes deaf children with additional disability
- Service is needs led within resources available
 - Service from diagnosis to end of education (diagnosis age varies)
- Pre school service (in home/creche/pre school)
- Primary school support and guidance
- Second level support and guidance
- Third level handover
- Liaise with other professionals
- Links with other agencies

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Service to Pre School Children

- Families and children vary and so their needs vary. Needs of child/family change at different times - support needs to reflect this
- Partnership with parents- support at time of diagnosis
- Home visits – needs based not frequency based
- Pre school visits
- Expectations
- Communication options*/informed choice
- Information and guidance re language development
- Modelling of strategies



Service to Pre School Children

- Parental support and empowerment
- Monitoring and assessment of progress
- Support parents in management of and maintenance of amplification
- Information and guidance on educational placement/options
- Monitoring of the holistic development of the child with focus on areas potentially impacted by deafness
- Record keeping



Service to Primary School Children

**“Deafness in itself is not a learning difficulty.
Learning difficulties arise when deaf children
cannot access communication (and the
curriculum) Yoshinago Itano 1998**

Aim of support is twofold:

1. Successful communication and language development
2. Successful access to curriculum

Language through the curriculum approach



Service to Primary School Children

- **Resource/Additional Support**

- A child with moderate hearing loss or greater (bilaterally) may be allocated up to 4 resource teaching hours weekly to support curriculum access, on the recommendation of the Visiting Teacher.
- Allocation is based on need (examples)

- **Equipment**

- The Visiting Teacher may recommend a personal FM system or a sound field system for use in the classroom, depending on the needs of the child



Service to Primary School Children

- Support and guidance for parents at time of diagnosis/ongoing parental support
- Preparation with teachers prior to enrolment and ongoing information and guidance
- Expectations
- Recommendation for equipment and resource hours, and, if needed SNA access
- SNA
- Advice on acoustic environment in school
- Amplification options and provision
- Class teacher support
- Advice re equipment maintenance support– hearing aids/cochlear implant



Service to Primary School Children

- Resource teacher support/advice/on going training and liaison
- Contribute to Individual Education Plans/learning Targets
 1. Help with curricular differentiation/Emphasis on pre teaching /post tutoring/Home school diary/Strategies for easier access to curriculum/learning (examples)
 2. Language and literacy
 3. Learner confidence and self esteem
 4. Source of information for principal, ct, rt (and sna)
- Regular visits
- Liaison with Audiology services, SENO, SLT etc
- Tuition
- Record keeping



Secondary Level Support

- Transfer of resource hours from primary if needed
- Full staff information session prior to enrolment
- Expectations
- Negotiation re subjects if necessary
- Ongoing advice to teachers
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Exemptions
- Advice re provision and maintenance of equipment
- Tuition and Record Keeping
- Learner confidence and self esteem



Third Level Transition

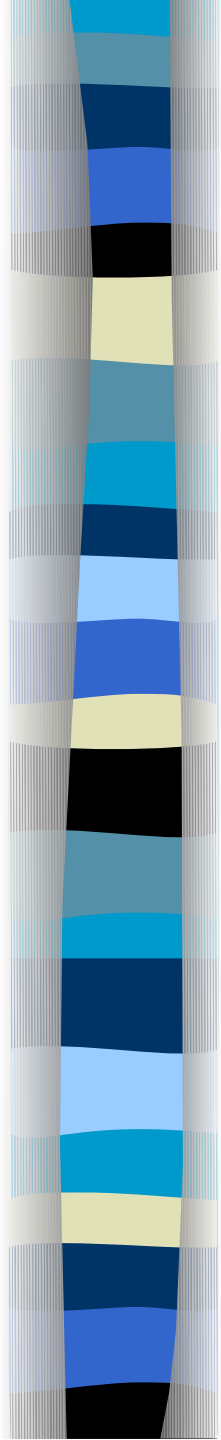
- Access Officers
- Equipment
- Exams
- Note takers
- Speed text
- Interpreters

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Useful Websites and contacts

- education.ie (D.E.S.)
- ncse.ie
- sound-advice.ie
- deafhear.ie
- ids.ie
- beaumonthospital.ie/cochlearimplant
- www.ndcs.org.uk
- www.delta.org.uk
- www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/EarlySupport/Page4/ES29



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