

# Social care services are failing deaf children, says report

February 25 2010

---

(PhysOrg.com) -- University of Manchester research has revealed that the majority of social care services are failing deaf children and their families - despite the fact that deaf children are more than twice as likely to experience abuse and many face significant challenges to personal and social development.

The study, commissioned by the National [Deaf Children's](#) Society (NDCS) and published today in *Every Child Journal*, showed that two thirds of local authorities in England do not regard deaf children as 'children in need' even though the law defines them as such. Half of authorities are unable to accurately assess the needs of deaf children and their families, the report found.

Brian Gale, Director of Policy and Campaigns at NDCS, said the findings raise serious concerns about the protection of deaf children: "This research shows widespread lack of awareness among social care services of deaf children's needs. In addition to the increased risk of abuse, 40% of deaf children will experience mental health problems.

He added: "It is vital that Local Safeguarding Children Boards take heed of this research and improve their child protection arrangements for deaf children before it is too late. The Government urgently needs to hold Local Safeguarding Children Boards to account in the implementation of its recommendations for the protection of deaf children."

In 2005, the Department of Health recognised the vulnerability of deaf

children to abuse and recommended that all Local Safeguarding Children Boards review their child protection arrangements for deaf children. This latest research shows that the statutory duty of local authorities to promote the wellbeing of deaf children is being significantly compromised and that inadequate arrangements are still in place.

Alys Young, lead study author and Professor of Social Work Education and Research at The University of Manchester, said Children's Services need to work together to promote the wellbeing of deaf children and their families.

She said: "This research is the largest of its kind ever undertaken in the UK and highlights that children's social care, education and health services are not working together effectively and therefore the statutory duty of local authorities to promote the wellbeing of deaf children is being significantly compromised."

Findings from the study also revealed that nearly half of authorities in England have no social workers who are qualified to work with deaf children and, in many authorities, children's social care had no contact with the majority of deaf children in their area.

There are over 45,000 deaf children in the UK. Deaf children are more vulnerable to abuse and mental health problems due to a number of factors such as the perceived inability of deaf children to communicate, and a lack of understanding and inclusion in the community.

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: Social care services are failing deaf children, says report (2010, February 25) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-02-social-deaf-children.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.