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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 December 2025 13:36
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED]

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Hi [REDACTED]

Please find my response as requested, we had previously written to say NDCS would be best placed to respond, however please see information below to support the language deprivation statement.

Language deprivation occurs when a child does not receive enough exposure to a fully accessible language during the critical early years of life—the period when the brain is most ready to learn. For deaf children, if spoken language is not fully accessible and sign language is not introduced early, they risk missing this vital window for language development.

Around 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents who often have little knowledge of sign language or Deaf culture. Families typically follow medical advice and may choose hearing aids or cochlear implants, hoping these will provide sufficient access to spoken language. However, technology does not guarantee complete access to speech. If sign language is delayed or excluded, a child may go years without a complete language, which can have lasting consequences.

Language is more than speech—it is the foundation for thinking, learning, and connecting with others. Without early access to a full language, children can face challenges in:

- **Education:** Reading and writing are harder without a strong language base.
- **Social and emotional development:** Communication is essential for friendships and expressing feelings.
- **Mental health:** Research shows higher risks of anxiety and depression when language access is delayed.

Parents deserve clear, unbiased information about all options. This includes understanding that introducing sign language early—alongside spoken language if desired—can prevent language deprivation. This bilingual approach gives children the best chance to thrive in both worlds. Early sign language exposure ensures a strong foundation for learning, thinking, and social connection.

Language deprivation is not about hearing loss—it is about missing the opportunity to acquire language when it matters most. Every child deserves full access to language. For many deaf children, that means sign language from birth, even if they also use spoken language later.

The goal is choice and empowerment: Parents should be supported to make informed decisions, with medical specialists presenting all options—including early sign language—so families can give their child every possible tool for success. The CRIDE Annual Survey (NDCS & BATOD) highlights that while over 77% of profoundly deaf children in the UK have cochlear implants, many still lack early

access to British Sign Language (BSL).

[CRIDE UK-wide summary PDF \[bda.org.uk\], \[cms.ndcs.org.uk\] \[cms.ndcs.org.uk\]](#)

Sources:

RAND Europe – The Value of British Sign Language

An economic study commissioned by BDA demonstrating that every £1 invested in early BSL yields over £2 in societal benefits, including preventing language deprivation and improving lifelong outcomes.

[Access the report \[rand.org\], \[bda.org.uk\] \[rand.org\]](#)

University of Manchester & UCL DCAL – Benefits of Early Sign Language

Protocol outlines a systematic review of evidence supporting early signed language for cognitive, social, and educational development.

[Protocol document \[research.m...ster.ac.uk\]](#)

UCL Deafness, Cognition and Language Centre (DCAL)

Their research, cited by BDA and BATOD, includes findings that late sign language acquisition impairs language proficiency, underlying the need for early access.

[UCL DCAL info \[ucl.ac.uk\], \[bda.org.uk\] \[ucl.ac.uk\]](#)

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require further information

Kind Regards

[Redacted signature]

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Contact RNID

If you (or someone close to you) are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus and need free confidential and impartial information and support, contact RNID. We are open 8:30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can

- Chat to us on the RNID website at www.rnid.org.uk
- Call: 0808 808 0123
- Email: contact@rnid.org.uk
- Book a BSL video call [via our partners at Sign Live](#): create an account at [the SignLive website](http://theSignLive.com) or download the [SignLive app for Android](#) or [the SignLive app for iOS](#)