

# **An Educational Audiologist – Adding Value to services for deaf children**

## **BAEA's View**

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### **Summary**

An Educational Audiologist (Ed Aud) usually is an experienced Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) or qualified clinical Audiologist before they commence with the MSc/PGDiploma for Educational Audiology. An Educational Audiologist brings a combination of knowledge, skills, and experience that are unique within the field of deaf education (*e.g.*, language development, speech discrimination, auditory processing skills development, speech and room acoustics, assistive listening devices (ALDs), radio aids, soundfield systems, hearing aids and auditory implants).

An Ed Aud brings an understanding of the way amplification, acoustics, ALD and speech discrimination/APS interplay in the speech, language and communication development and access to learning for a deaf baby, child or young person (CYP) that no other professional can or does. An Ed Aud understands the relationships between listening to learn in various settings, cognition and expected levels of progress. An Ed Aud has skills, knowledge and experience of working routinely across the entire age range, currently from birth to 25 years, per the Educational and Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Although a ToD has the skills to assess and evaluate language development, an Ed Aud has the skills to identify whether functional use of hearing is optimal and how it is influencing language development. Many aspects of Ed Aud work may not be expected from a ToD.

The MSc/PGDiploma Educational Audiology significantly enhances skills and knowledge for working, assessing and evaluating the complete progress of the Children and Young People (CYP) who are deaf.

Many Local Authorities consider an Ed Aud as an essential but not a statutory post. The position of the BAEA is that all CYPs who are deaf, benefit from access to the enhanced skills of an Ed Aud and that as a **minimum** every service should have provision of an Ed Aud for all CYPs who have a severe or profound hearing loss. Our position is also that this provision should become statutory as BAEA have collected case studies which show that outcomes for the CYP who are deaf are enhanced through access they have received from an Ed Aud.

### **Early Years**

An Ed Aud is able to work in liaison with ToDs trained in early years, clinical paediatric audiologists, and other professionals supporting the child and their family. An Ed Aud assists in the process of understanding phonetic development and auditory sensory experience. An Ed Aud can fit and evaluate the efficacy of radio aids for language development and assisting a family's better interaction and communication with their CYP who is deaf. An Ed Aud has counselling skills when working with families of this age range; explaining the relationships between amplification, communication, functional hearing, cognition and language development. An Ed Aud is an important member of the Multi-Agency Team around the Child.

## **Primary Years**

An Ed Aud can evaluate functional use of hearing in quiet and noise and the implications for access to learning for a deaf child.

Enhancing access to learning through ALD technology and evaluating the functioning efficacy of the technological intervention in the classroom is a fundamental aspect of the work of the Ed Aud (*e.g.*, an Ed Aud can fit radio aids and soundfield systems and evaluate their efficacy in terms of access to learning). An Ed Aud has knowledge to relate functional use of hearing with levels of cognitive demand and access to learning.

An Ed Aud has knowledge to relate functional use of hearing to social and emotional development; and how enhanced technology can assist social and emotional development (*e.g.*, multi-talker network radio aid systems). An Ed Aud can analyse the access to phonemes in terms of an individual's frequency specific amplification needs to support Real Ear Measurement (REM) programming.

## **Secondary Years**

Many similarities exist with the Primary years section above. However, in addition the Ed Aud will work to facilitate independence, independent learning through control and manipulation of the deaf young person's amplification package. The Ed Aud has the skills to continue to evaluate the deaf young person's developing auditory skills as their auditory cortex develops to an adult level.

## **Acoustics**

An Ed Aud can administer an acoustic survey and thus inform on compliance of a classroom for the teaching of a CYP who is deaf; and should the classroom be noncompliant, give advice on acoustic treatment to attain compliance. If a school has a choice of classrooms for placement of a deaf child then an Ed Aud acoustic survey will assist the school in choosing the best classroom to meet the needs of the deaf child.

## **Report writing**

An Ed Aud is available to assist ToDs in their report writing with regards to the audiological component of their reports, an important consideration should a tribunal be called to adjudicate the placement of a deaf child in a setting.

## **Health**

The Ed Aud can relate professionally with medical paediatric audiologists from a basis of skills and knowledge pertaining to audiology and education. Some Ed Auds work collaboratively with their paediatric audiologist colleagues through joint health/education assessment clinics; thus enhancing liaison between health and education in supporting deaf children and communicating with their families.

## **SEN/EHCP (Special Educational Needs/ Education, Health and Care Plan) officers**

The Ed Aud can inform and assist SEN/EHCP officers from a basis of skills and knowledge of all matters pertaining to audiology and education and the consequent relationships with speech, language and communication development and access to learning.

### **External bodies**

The Ed Aud is skilled and knowledgeable about ALD and is therefore able to search out best value from manufacturers and suppliers for ALD technology, saving services significant costs in their duty to supply technology to CYP who are deaf. CHSWG (Children's Hearing Services Working Group) often include an Ed Aud as a valued professional member of service provision for deaf children.

### **Knowledge**

An Ed Aud is expected to remain updated on technological development with all matters 'amplification' for deaf children and the professional skills to disseminate that knowledge to their ToD teams thus raising skills and knowledge throughout a team. An Ed Aud has access to the regional BAEA meetings to network with other Ed Aud's as part of the process for keeping skills and knowledge updated.

### **Sign Language**

An Ed Aud has the skills to evaluate the speech discrimination skills, auditory processing skills and access to phonemes through specific frequency analysis to give informed data and produce empirical evidence over and above that a TOD can produce about the level of communicational need for sign language for a deaf child.

### **MSc/PGDip Educational Audiology course at Mary Hare**

The course is validated by the University of Hertfordshire and is accredited by BAA (British Academy of Audiology) on behalf of the RCCP (Registration Council for Clinical Audiologists) with whom Educational Audiologists have a voluntary professional registration.

The course is based on the BAEA Roles and Competencies found at

<http://www.educational-audiologists.org.uk/documents/roles.pdf>

Course details can be found at:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/apply/schools-of-study/education/partnerships-in-education/uk-education-partners>

<https://www.maryhare.org.uk/professional-courses/postgraduate-courses>