

Hearing Impairment Network for Children and Young People (HINCYP)

Annual Report 2023/24

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Introduction

The Hearing Impairment Network for Children & Young People (HINCYP) was established in 2019. Its aim is to support services and families to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Scotland with bilateral severe, or profound hearing loss, through better access to high quality specialist care and support.

HINCYP aims to work through a partnership of patients from 0 to 18 years, their families and friends, health and social care professionals.

Current Position

An Independent Review of Audiology was announced in January 2022 following the publication of an Independent Review into the Paediatric Audiology Service in NHS Lothian. This was carried out by the British Academy of Audiology (BAA) in response to a complaint upheld by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

In March 2022 the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care appointed Professor Jacqueline Taylor to the role of an Independent Chair to provide leadership to the National Audiology Review (NAR) Group. The purpose of the Review Group was to establish the current level of assurance within existing audiology services, to review this within scope of the Review and to make recommendations to improve the assurance of audiology services within NHS Scotland.

Members of HINCYP provided subject matter expertise and leadership to the NAR, including Angela Bonomy as chair of the Reference Group and Adrian Carragher who were appointed as the chairperson for the Reference Group, Structural Leadership and Governance subgroups, respectively. Jane Gallacher also supported the Quality Assurance and Reference groups. The resource from HINCYP members during this time impacted the programme of activity that HINCYP could progress.

In February 2024, Scottish Government accepted in principle the recommendations from the Independent Review of Audiology Services in Scotland, published in August 2023.

Since then, the Scottish Government have established a National Implementation Delivery Group in February 2024. Members of HINCYP have been engaging with Scottish Government implementation delivery group to help define the role that HINCYP has within this framework.

Due to the NAR and the reduced capacity of HINCYP members while they supported the NAR, HINCYP's workplan objective for 2023/24 reflected this.

The network achieved 2/2 (100%) of its service delivery objectives in 2023/24.

Highlights

Despite the on-going NAR, HINCYP has continued to identify and engage with stakeholders through the steering group and the establishment of four new subgroups: - Communication and

engagement, education, service deliver quality improvement and data. All subgroups have a mix of professional roles and geographic spread with terms of reference agreed.

The main focus of network members throughout 2023/24 has been to supporting Scottish Government to develop the audiology recommendations. Since these were published, the network has submitted a proposal to outline how HINCYP could support Scottish Government and health boards to implement the audiology recommendations. These were shared with the implementation group and we currently await agreement on the next steps.

Another key focus for the network was to improve the quality of data collated that informs the Local Record of Deaf Children (LRDC) report. The lack of data and accuracy of this data has been a significant concern over recent years, however, with the various challenges within the audiology community, this hasn't been collated.

Through engagement with health board colleagues, HINCYP have developed a detailed standard operating procedure (SOP) to aid board staff to extract information from their existing patient management system. NSS Information Management Services (IMS) staff have supported these discussions to ensure that individual board data can be analysed to provide aggregated national data.

Health boards have been advised of this new process via the Audiology Heads of Service Group, starting 1 April 2024. The first quarterly output from this process is expected to be available August 2024. The network will review this data via the data subgroup and support colleagues with any issues. An evaluation exercise will be completed as part of the 2024/25 workplan to determine the benefits from this streamline process.

The Network continued to make use of technology and remote communications to progress work this year. This has continued to be effective, saving time on travel and promoting economic and climate friendly practices.

Stakeholder survey

Results from the networks stakeholder survey issued in March 2024, reflect what is being reported to HINCYP on a regular basis. Overall, there is a lot of positive support for the network, including multi-agency collaboration and having a network of professional stakeholders who all have a common goal of supporting children and young people (CYP) with hearing loss.

There was an acknowledgement of the limitations of the network due to the independent national audiology review and the delay in publishing their recommendations. The results also identify the resource constraints within health boards that will impact their future involvement in the network.

The areas identified for improvement again reflect the findings of the steering group and subgroups. Gaining access to data to identify the number of children with hearing impairment and the severity has been a significant area of concern for the network and indeed for Scottish Government. HINCYP have already taken steps to streamline the process to collect LRDC data,

that will allow more meaningful interpretation that will support future quality improvements across Scotland by identifying any areas of concern.

The survey was also an opportunity for stakeholders to share feedback on network strengths, network challenges, areas for improvement and the priorities for the next few years. The responses are summarised below:

Strengths	Areas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency collaboration • Platform to advocate for children and young people (CYP) with deafness. • Sharing information & "networking". • Active engagement via subgroups providing subject matter expertise • Focussing on priorities • Working across various policy areas • Achieving potential for children, young people and their families (Currently attainment was not great and is diminishing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better data analysing and acting upon the results • Involving more clinicians • Support the recommendations from the National Audiology Review
Suggested Future Priorities (3-5 years)	Network Challenges/Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration / Bilingual approach/creating safe places for children & families to benefit from joined up services. • Training to support equity of care across Scotland • Transition resources for 0-3 early years, 0-5 years preparation for primary school • Resolving workforce concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty about the impact of the National Audiology Review (NAR) • Government resource & support lacking • Loss of the purpose of the network, due to several groups since the NAR • Many: resources based (big lack of).

The feedback received will be considered by the HINCYP Steering Group and an action plan to support areas for improvement will be developed.

Looking forward – 2024/25

The network's priority for 2024/25 will be to support the NAR Implementation group through provision of subject matter expertise (SME). This will include providing paediatric subject matter expertise and clinical leadership.

In addition to supporting the above and being adaptable to requests from the national review implementation and/or task and finish groups, HINCYP have agreed to undertake the following projects during 2024/25:

- contribute to the implementation of the national audiology review recommendations through provision of subject matter expertise and clinical leadership to implementation group
- respond to the needs of the national review implementation where appropriate
- develop and deliver an education programme to build clinical capacity for Deaf children and young people's services, through CPD
- provide information and expertise to inform future workforce planning
- agree with Scottish Government and Heads of Service a process to develop a pathway for children with severe to profound hearing loss
- collate national local record of deaf children (LRDC) information and highlight any gaps that may compromise clinical and other outcomes.
- The network will develop a strategic workplan to outline priority areas for development for 2024-2028

Finance

The network did not spend any of its allocated £5,000 budget during the reporting period.

Risks & Issues

There is a risk that members of HINCYP will become disengaged due to conflicting resource pressures and the need to avoid duplication of effort while the NAR Implementation Group is agreeing future priorities.

HINCYP have presented an outline of how HINCYP can support the recommendations to the NAR Programme Team, however, members of HINCYP are still not clear on the future remit and role of the network.