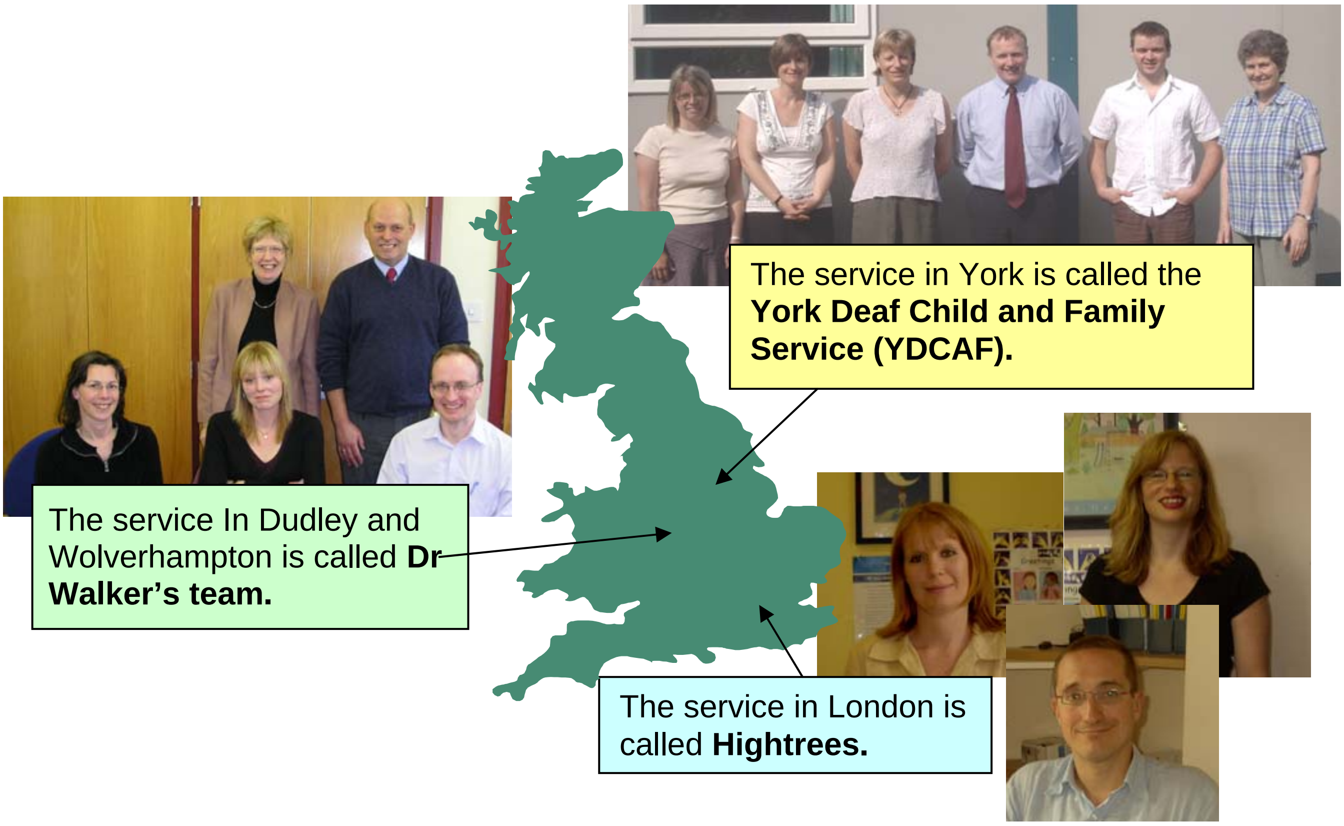
THE UNIVERSITY of York

spru Social Policy Research Unit

A PROJECT ABOUT SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR DEAF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

There are three specialist services in England which help and support deaf children and their families. Doctors, social workers, family support workers and nurses work for these specialist services. Some children go to the clinic for their appointments, others have their appointments at school.



The service in York is called the **York Deaf Child and Family Service (YDCAF).**

The service In Dudley and Wolverhampton is called **Dr Walker's team.**

The service in London is called **Hightrees.**

In 2006 the government asked a team of researchers at the University of York to see if these specialist services for deaf children were doing a good job. The government had four questions.

? How do the children and parents feel about the specialist service they go to?

? Do children and parents think the specialist service is helpful? Does it help children feel better?

? What do the teachers, doctors and other people who send children along to the specialist services think about the services?

? How can the specialist services get better at helping deaf children and their families?

The research project

Six researchers at the University of York worked on the project.

The researchers who met the children and young people were called Hilary and Veronica.

They visited the children and young people twice. Sometimes they visited them at home and sometimes at school.

The other researchers were Sue, Gloria, Lesley and Bryony. They interviewed parents and the people who work for the services. The researchers also asked all the teachers, doctors and other people who sent children along to the specialist services to fill in a questionnaire.

We have looked very carefully what everyone told us about these services. This report tells you about what we found out.

We can send you a longer report if you want to find out more. Please email us: bab3@york.ac.uk, or write to us: Bryony Beresford, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, York. YO10 5DD.

What children and young people told us about the specialist services

All the children and young people liked the person they saw at the service. They thought that person was helping them. Most children told us the specialist service had made them feel better.

They thought the interpreters at the specialist service were good.

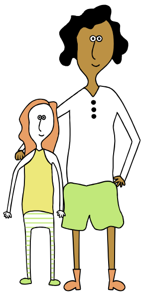
The children and young people liked it when the doctors and other people who worked for the service used British Sign Language (BSL). But they thought some of them needed to get better at BSL.

Some young people had used the ‘telelink’ to have their appointments with Sara in London. They liked Sara because she was deaf too and her BSL was very, very good. Sometimes the telelink stopped working. The young people did not like it when that happened.

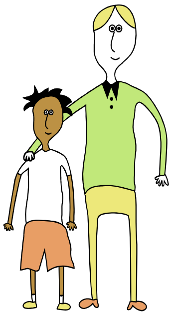
Some children and young people were worried that their teachers or parents would find out what they had told the person at the specialist service. They wanted to be sure that no-one would be able to find out.

We asked the people at the specialist services about this. They told us they do not tell parents or teachers about what children and young people tell them in appointments.

What parents told us

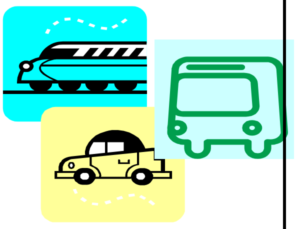


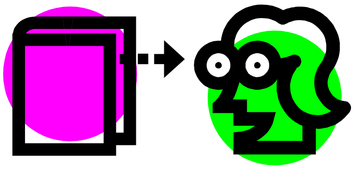
Parents thought the specialist services were good too. They were very pleased that people who worked for the service could use BSL. They also thought the interpreters were good.



Most parents believed the service had helped their child. Some parents told us the service had helped them too. For example, it helped them understand more about deafness.

Getting to appointments was sometimes a problem. It could be a long journey in the car or on trains and buses. Teachers and doctors were worried that families may find getting to appointments too difficult.





Parents also told us they wanted more information about the specialist services. They thought there should be leaflets and DVDs about them.

What makes the services good at their job?

Everyone told us the specialist services were good because the people who worked there were experts. They knew all about deafness, BSL and the best ways of helping and supporting deaf children and families.

Everyone said there should be more specialist services like Hightrees, YDCAF and Dr Walker's team. That would mean deaf children and families all over England could get help if they needed it.

Telling other people what we found out

We have sent a report to the people in government who are in charge of services for deaf people. We have sent the report to people who work with deaf children and young people. The report is on our website http://www.york.ac.uk/spru/ so anyone can read it. There is a summary in BSL there too.