

## Team members

The specialist team comprised translators, linguists and health professionals

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- Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation, Trust, Deaf CAMHS, York, UK
- Hull York Medical School
- University of York
- University of Nottingham
- University of Leeds
- National Deaf Children's Society, London, UK
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*The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is now available in British Sign Language*

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Deaf children, young people and families who use BSL deserve to be able to access questionnaires in their own language - and professionals working with them need to be able to assess mental health issues accurately. The BSL version of the SDQ gives us a much clearer insight into the issues experienced by deaf children and helps us identify the most appropriate care and support.

**Dr Sophie Roberts**

## **Mental Health in the Deaf Community**

There are an estimated 125,000 deaf people in the UK who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their main form of communication.

Many parents believe that mental health services are not well equipped to support deaf children and young people.

For example, the mental health screening instruments, designed for hearing children, are not particularly helpful in assessing emotional and behavioural problems in deaf children.

It is important to have an accurate measure, accessible to deaf children, to identify these problems.

The *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* is a culturally and linguistically accurate measure to assess mental health problems. It is now available for deaf children in British Sign Language thanks to the work of a collaborative team of specialist researchers and practitioners.

### **How does the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* help?**

This screening tool is commonly used in the assessment of children's mental health problems.

It is usually completed by parents and teachers of 4 to 16-year-olds and 11 to 16-year olds and scoring the completed forms should be done by a professional.

Available in about 60 languages, it has now been translated into British Sign Language.

### **If you are a clinician**

Please check that the deaf child or parent you are seeing has access to appropriate communication support. This is essential for a good assessment.

Find out more about the British Sign Language version of the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* and how it could help deaf children you are working with: [www.york.ac.uk/sdq](http://www.york.ac.uk/sdq).

### **If you are a parent or carer**

The *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* is a clinical tool to identify possible emotional problems in a child who seems to be struggling socially or emotionally (for example, they are sad, angry, or spending a lot of time on their own). You can talk to teachers and mental health workers to see if the child needs help.

Our webpages provide more information about how the questionnaire works and how it could help your child or a child you are caring for. Find out more: [www.york.ac.uk/sdq](http://www.york.ac.uk/sdq).

### **If you are a teacher**

Deaf children frequently say they have no problems when, in fact, they face big challenges both inside and outside the classroom. The questionnaire could help to uncover or identify some of these issues.

Our webpages provide more information about how the questionnaire could help your pupils: [www.york.ac.uk/sdq](http://www.york.ac.uk/sdq).

### **How did we create the British Sign Language translation?**

We followed the gold standard for translating, which involves two separate forward- and back-translation teams:

- The forward team (three bilingual English and BSL translators) translated the English SDQ to BSL
- The back team (three independent translators) translated the BSL version back to English.
- An expert panel of linguists, translators, and health professionals checked if the two English versions matched.
- Five deaf young people and five deaf adults checked the BSL version for appropriateness of language, content, and accessibility.
- The final edited BSL version was checked with the original owners of the questionnaire.

### **Reference**

Roberts et al. BSL and validation of the SDQ, Health Services and Delivery Research 2015; Vol. 3: No. 2 DOI: 10.3310/hsdr03020