



Advisors on Deaf Children (AoDC) Development Project (Practice Framework)

– a consultation document (DRAFT)

June, 2012

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Introduction

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is proposing changes to the way Advisors on Deaf Children (AoDC) work, following the *2010 Review of Special Education*, the release of the *Wilson Report – Review of the Role of the Advisor on Deaf Children, 2011* and the data, trends and research evidence emphasising the importance of early intervention.

The Ministry's proposed changes are set out in this draft consultation document.

This draft consultation document is part of a two-year project, called the AoDC Development Project (Practice Framework), which aims to:

- clarify and differentiate between the AoDC and Resource Teachers of the Deaf roles
- make the Ministry's deaf education services more consistent
- strengthen the Ministry's Early Years service provision
- clarify the Ministry's AoDC services for school-aged children
- develop a framework of services that seamlessly links the Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes, early identification and the Ministry's Early Years services.

Draft consultation document

Right now, the Ministry wants to gather feedback and ideas on this draft consultation document from representatives across the education sector at face-to-face stakeholder meetings set up in June.

In July, the draft consultation document will be finalised and circulated to stakeholders again to gather final feedback.

Contact us

Contact Ministry of Education Practice Leader AoDC Mark Douglas with any questions about this draft consultation document or the stakeholder meetings scheduled for June by email or phone:

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Section 1: Developing a new practice framework for AoDCs – the context

In this section, you will read about the services and support available to children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It briefly covers the identification and assessment process and reflects on the latest data, trends and research evidence relating to deaf education. It concludes with an overview of the government context for deaf education.

Background on deaf education

Children and young people

In New Zealand today the majority of children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing attend their local early childhood education services and schools.

A smaller group of children and young people are enrolled at the country's two Deaf Education Centres, van Ash Deaf Education Centre (in Christchurch) and Kelston Deaf Education Centre (in Auckland).

A wide range of services and support are available to children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing to help them be present at school, as well as participate and achieve.

Services and support

A range of people (throughout the education and health sectors) provide children and young people who are deaf and hard of hearing with services and support, including Resource Teachers of the Deaf, New Zealand Sign Language Tutors, Speech-Language Therapists, Habilitationalists, Audiologists and AoDCs (as well as others).

The Ministry's services and support are available to children and young people and their families / whānau from the time a child is identified as being deaf or hard of hearing through to when he or she leaves school or turns 21.

For example, a child verified to receive Ministry of Education services and support through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) may receive support from a Resource Teacher of the Deaf, a teacher's aide, an AoDC and other specialists from the time that child is five through to the age of 21 or when that child leaves school.

Others such as school-aged children aged five to 21 who are assessed as having significant learning needs but who are not verified to receive ORS may work with an AoDC and a Resource Teacher of the Deaf and may see fewer specialists.

Generally speaking, the level of service a child receives will vary depending on his or her diagnosis and his or her specific learning needs (a child or young person must be diagnosed with what is termed a significant, permanent hearing loss to receive Ministry services).

Identification and assessment

New Zealand has several programmes in place (across the health and education sectors) to identify the hearing needs of a child or young person.

The Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes (a joint education and health initiative), for example, screen the hearing status of new born babies. The Ministry of

Health's B4 School Checks assess the hearing status of four-year-olds before they start school, while Hearing and Vision Testers assess the hearing status of school-aged children in Year one if they have not been assessed through the B4 School Checks and again in Year seven.

In addition, children and young people – at any time of their lives – can have their hearing status identified and assessed by their local audiologist, family doctor and others.

Data, trends and research evidence

To date, the country's assessment and referral data shows the health and education sectors are becoming more and more proficient at identifying children who are deaf or hard of hearing early in life, particularly as the Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes start to bed down.

The data suggests the trend is likely to continue into the future, increasing the demand for education services and support aimed at new born babies and young children in their early years.

Such a trend aligns well with the research evidence showing that children who are deaf or hard of hearing who are identified and receive learning support early in life are more likely to gain the age-appropriate language knowledge and skills they need for educational achievement and success later in life.

It aligns well with the Ministry's Early Years service focus, which recognises the central role that family and whānau play in helping children gain good learning foundations and the age-appropriate language knowledge and skills they need to learn and develop alongside their peers.

And it aligns well with findings from the *2010 Review of Special Education*, which emphasise the importance of early intervention, as well as the research on early intervention underpinning *Success for All – Every School, Every Child*, the government's commitment to achieving a fully-inclusive education system by 2014.

The trend also reflects the Ministry of Education's new proposal to increase the availability of AoDC services to a younger cohort (0 to 8 years) of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, while meeting the service needs of school-aged children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Combined, these things (the data, trends, research evidence and the Ministry's new proposal for AoDCs) indicate an important new emphasis within deaf education – an emphasis on the Early Years and giving children access to a greater intensity and frequency of services at a younger age.

Government context

Wilson Report – Review of the Role of the Advisor on Deaf Children

In 2011, the deaf education community were invited to contribute their knowledge and experience of the AoDC role as part of an independent review of the AoDC role carried out by researcher Ross Wilson.

The review aimed to develop a clear view on the overall make-up of educational provision needed in the deaf education sector; identify changes to the AoDC role that would improve

services and assist in educational achievement; and recommend the best employment options for advisors.

It made a total of 12 recommendations, including a recommendation that AoDCs remain employed by the Ministry of Education, Special Education – a recommendation that was immediately adopted.

The report's other recommendations such as the recommendation to increase AoDC's work within the early intervention sector and to clarify roles using formal protocols have been considered as part of the AoDC Development Project (Practice Framework).

Success for All – Every School, Every Child

Success for All – Every School, Every Child (Success for All) was launched in October 2010 as the Government's commitment to achieve a fully-inclusive education system by 2014.

Success for All draws on the latest research evidence on inclusive education systems. Both *Success for All* and the research (on which it is based) emphasise the importance of early intervention and helping children who are deaf or hard of hearing gain the foundation knowledge and skills they need to be present, participate and achieve at school.

Success for All also aligns with the Ministry's Māori education strategy, *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success*, and the *Pasifika Education Plan*. Together the strategy and plan seek a shift in education system performance for and with Māori and Pasifika students, their families, whānau and iwi.

They also emphasise the importance of supporting Māori and Pasifika students who are deaf or hard of hearing to be present at school and to participate and achieve at school.

Section 2: Developing a new practice framework for AoDCs – the proposal

This section provides an overview of the AoDC role today and sets out the Ministry of Education's proposed new AoDC practice framework.

Current AoDC practice framework

Here is an overview of the current AoDC practice framework as it looks today.

Service description

Today's AoDC service is provided by approximately 38 AoDCs based in Ministry of Education, Special Education's district offices throughout New Zealand.

AoDCs work across the entire education sector – in homes, early childhood education services and schools – sharing their knowledge, skills and advice on deaf education.

Within the early childhood education sector, they work with:

- children who are deaf or hard of hearing under the age of five, identified as having a hearing loss by the Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes
- children who are deaf or hard of hearing under the age of five, identified as having a hearing loss through other assessment and referral services.

Within the mainstream schooling sector, they work with:

- children who are deaf or hard of hearing aged between five and eight years old, identified as having learning needs by the Ministry of Education, Special Education
- children who are deaf or hard of hearing aged nine and older, identified as having learning needs by the Ministry of Education, Special Education
- children who are deaf or hard of hearing aged five to 21 verified to receive ORS support and specialist intervention for hearing loss, where the Ministry of Education, Special Education is the child's fundholder.
- children five to twenty one verified to receive ORS support (verification **not** due to hearing loss, where specialist intervention for hearing loss may be required) where the Ministry of Education, Special Education is the child's fund holder.

Service referral

Children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing are typically referred to AoDC services by Audiologists, Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeons and others.

Practice framework

AoDCs often take on the role of lead worker within transdisciplinary teams set up to support a child or young person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

They work closely with a child's family and whānau to support the decisions and direction a child's family or whānau want to take with their child.

They also work closely with Resource Teachers of the Deaf, New Zealand Sign Language Tutors and staff, Cochlear Implant Habilitationalists, Speech-Language Therapists and others to implement the decisions and direction a child's family or whānau want to take with their child.

Their role is different to (but may overlap with) the role of Resource Teachers of the Deaf who are employed by the country's two Deaf Education Centres and who tend to work one-on-one with children and young people within a child's early childhood service or school.

Ensuring the AoDC service doesn't overlap or double-up with services provided by other specialists such as Resource Teachers of the Deaf, for example, is an ongoing challenge of the AoDC role.

Workforce development

AoDCs typically have a teaching degree or diploma, post-graduate qualifications in deaf education and teaching experience in deaf education. Some AoDCs also have a master's degree in special education (sensory).

AoDCs have a good knowledge of child development and deaf education. They are skilled in language and communication development and managing communication and audiological needs in a variety of settings.

They are knowledgeable about community and family support services and have excellent communication, teaching, research, planning and administration skills.

New AoDC practice framework

Here is an overview of the proposed new AoDC practice framework.

The proposed new practice framework reflects what the latest data, trends and research evidence suggests will be most effective. The framework will be developed further over time in response to stakeholder feedback.

Service description

In this new proposed framework, the AoDC service continues to be provided by a total of 38 AoDCs employed by the Ministry of Education who are located in Special Education district offices throughout New Zealand.

However, AoDCs now have an Early Years focus and increasingly work with babies and children aged up to eight years old. They continue to share their knowledge, skills and advice on deaf education.

Within the early childhood education sector, they work with:

- children who are deaf or hard of hearing under the age of five, identified as having a hearing loss by the Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes
- children who are deaf or hard of hearing under the age of five, identified as having a hearing loss through other assessment and referral services.

Within the mainstream schooling sector, they work with:

- children who are deaf or hard of hearing aged between five and eight years old, who are not verified to receive ORS, but who are identified as having learning needs by the Ministry of Education, Special Education.

Within the mainstream schooling sector, they provide:

- specialist services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing aged five to 21 verified by the Ministry of Education, Special Education to receive ORS support due to hearing loss, where the Ministry of Education, Special Education is the child's fundholder
- specialist services to children aged five to 21 verified by the Ministry of Education, Special Education to receive ORS support (verification **not** due to hearing loss, where specialist intervention for hearing loss may be required) where the Ministry of Education, Special Education is the child's fundholder.

In this proposed framework, the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing aged nine and older (who are not verified to receive ORS support) are now met by specialists employed by the country's two Deaf Education Centres. The level of service provided to these children and young people remains the same as it is today.

Service referral

Within the new framework, children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing continue to be referred to AoDC services by Audiologists, Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeons and others.

Practice framework

The success of the new practice framework relies heavily on the development of new protocols and formal memorandums of understanding defining the services and roles to be provided by the Ministry of Education, Special Education, the country's two Deaf Education Centres and other service providers.

Within the new framework, the protocols and formal memorandums of understanding are developed on a regional and district basis to reflect the specific needs of each region.

They are reviewed and updated annually, recognising the need to accommodate for changes brought about:

- as the new practice framework beds down
- the Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes continue to create demand for early intervention services
- as service needs change.

The protocols and formal memorandums of understanding also provide a clear understanding of the steps involved in making the transition from the existing practice framework to the new practice framework. For example, they:

- clarify how different service providers (and their staff) work together, differentiating between the AoDC and Resource Teachers of the Deaf roles
- determine service levels and support

- ensure consistency of deaf education services.

Within the new framework, AoDCs provide a more intensive and frequent service to babies and children up to the age of eight (as part of their new Early Years focus).

The country's two Deaf Education Centres are responsible for providing services to the following children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- children aged between three and five (who are enrolled in an early intervention centre), where a referral has been made by an AoDC (or another service provider) based on the learning needs of the child
- children aged five to eight (who are not verified to receive ORS), where a referral has been made by an AoDC (or another service provider) based on the learning needs of the child
- children aged nine and older (who are not verified to receive ORS)
- children aged five to 21 (who are verified by the Ministry of Education, Special Education to receive ORS support due to hearing loss, with support from an AoDC where needed).

Within the new framework, the services provided by New Zealand's two Cochlear Implant Programmes remain the same. However, the new framework creates protocols and formal memorandums of understanding between the Ministry of Education, Special Education and the two Cochlear Implant Programmes to ensure services are complementary, consistent and focus on bringing about the best educational outcomes for children, young people and their families and whānau.

Within the new framework, AoDCs take a lead role in transitioning children into early childhood education services and children aged between five and eight years into and between schools. They oversee the monitoring and management of assistive technology and equipment such as FM systems for children and young people up to the age of eight years old.

Deaf Education Centres, on the other hand, take a lead role in transitioning children aged nine and older into and between schools. They oversee the monitoring and management of assistive technology and equipment such as FM systems for children and young people who are nine and older.

Workforce development

AoDCs continue to have a teaching degree or diploma, post-graduate qualifications in deaf education, teaching experience in deaf education – and, again, may have a master's degree in special education (sensory).

They continue to have a good knowledge of child development and deaf education. They are skilled in language and communication development and managing communication and audiological needs in a variety of settings.

They are knowledgeable about community and family support services and have excellent communication, teaching, research, planning and administration skills.

In this new proposed framework, AoDCs have new opportunities to take part in professional development that reflects their new focus on the Early Years and aims to build their confidence working with babies and young children.

In summary

Here are the main features of the proposed new practice framework for AoDCs.

- AoDCs remain employed by the Ministry of Education, Special Education.
- AoDCs now have an Early Years focus and increasingly work with babies and children up to the age of eight.
- AoDCs continue to provide specialist services to children aged five to 21 verified to receive ORS support.
- Staff within the country's two Deaf Education Centres now meet the needs of children aged nine and older (who are not verified to receive ORS support).
- The level of AoDC support available to babies and children up to the age of eight increases in intensity and frequency.
- The way children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing are identified, assessed and referred for deaf education services stays the same as it is today.
- The role of lead workers responsible for issues such as transition and the monitoring and management of assistive technology and equipment is clarified and made consistent.
- The transition to the proposed new framework is carefully managed through the development of detailed protocols and memorandums of understanding.
- Roles, responsibilities and service levels are clarified through the development of detailed protocols and memorandums of understanding.
- AoDCs have new professional development and training opportunities focused on supporting babies and children in their early years.

Section 3: Feedback questions

This section features seven questions on the AoDC Development Project (Practice Framework). Please use these questions to guide the feedback you provide to Ministry of Education Lead Practitioner AoDC Mark Douglas at stakeholder meetings in June.

Question 1: What are the strengths of the proposed new practice framework in your view?

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Question 2: Can you identify any ways these strengths could be enhanced?

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Question 3: What are the weaknesses of the proposed new practice framework in your view?

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Question 4: Can you identify any ways these weaknesses could be overcome?

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Question 5: In your opinion, what support would you or your organisation need to make the proposed new framework work well?

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Question 6: In your opinion, what support would children and young people and their families and whānau need to make the proposed new practice framework work well?

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Question 7: Any other comments?

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Contact us

Contact Ministry of Education Practice Leader AoDC Mark Douglas with any queries about this draft consultation document or to provide your feedback on the questions listed in this section. Contact Mark at:

- mark.douglas@minedu.govt.nz
- 027-284 5526
- 09-265 3035.

Appendices

Glossary

Advisors on Deaf Children (AoDC)

Advisors employed by the Ministry of Education, Special Education to work with children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families and whānau.

AoDC Development Project (Practice Framework)

A two-year project run by the Ministry of Education, Special Education to develop a new practice framework for AoDC.

Assistive equipment and technology

The range of equipment and technology children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing need to attend, participate and achieve at an early childhood education service or school.

Audiologists

Specialists who assess children and young people for hearing loss and who prescribe and fit hearing aids.

B4 School Checks

Ministry of Health service that assesses the hearing of four-year-olds before they start school.

Cochlear Implant

An electronic device that can deliver sound for the significantly deaf.

Cochlear Implant Habilitationalists

Specialists who assess children and young people for cochlear implants and support the learning and development of children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Deaf Education Centres

National centres for deaf education, van Ash Deaf Education Centre and Kelston Deaf Education Centre.

Early Years

Ministry of Education, Special Education services provided to young children with special education needs.

Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeons

Health specialists who assess the hearing needs of children and young people and refer them on to AoDCs.

FM systems

Educational listening tools for children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Fundholder

Organisation that holds and spends special education funding on behalf of a cluster of schools.

Hearing and Vision Testers

Ministry of Health specialists who test children's hearing.

Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success

Ministry of Education's strategy for improving the education system's performance for and with Māori.

New Zealand Sign Language Tutors

Tutors trained to teach sign language to children and young people, families and whānau and educators.

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)

Ministry of Education, Special Education service provided to school-aged children and young people with the highest level of need.

Pasifika Education Plan

Ministry of Education plan for improving the education system's performance for Pasifika.

Practice framework

An effective, nationally-consistent, evidence-based way of working.

Speech-Language Therapists

Communication specialists employed by the Ministry of Education, Special Education.

Success for All – Every School, Every Child (Success for All)

Success for All is the Government's four-year commitment to achieve a fully-inclusive education system by 2014.

Teacher's aide

A paraprofessional.

Universal New Born Hearing Screening Programmes

A joint Ministry of Health and Education initiative set up to screen the hearing needs of babies.

Wilson Report

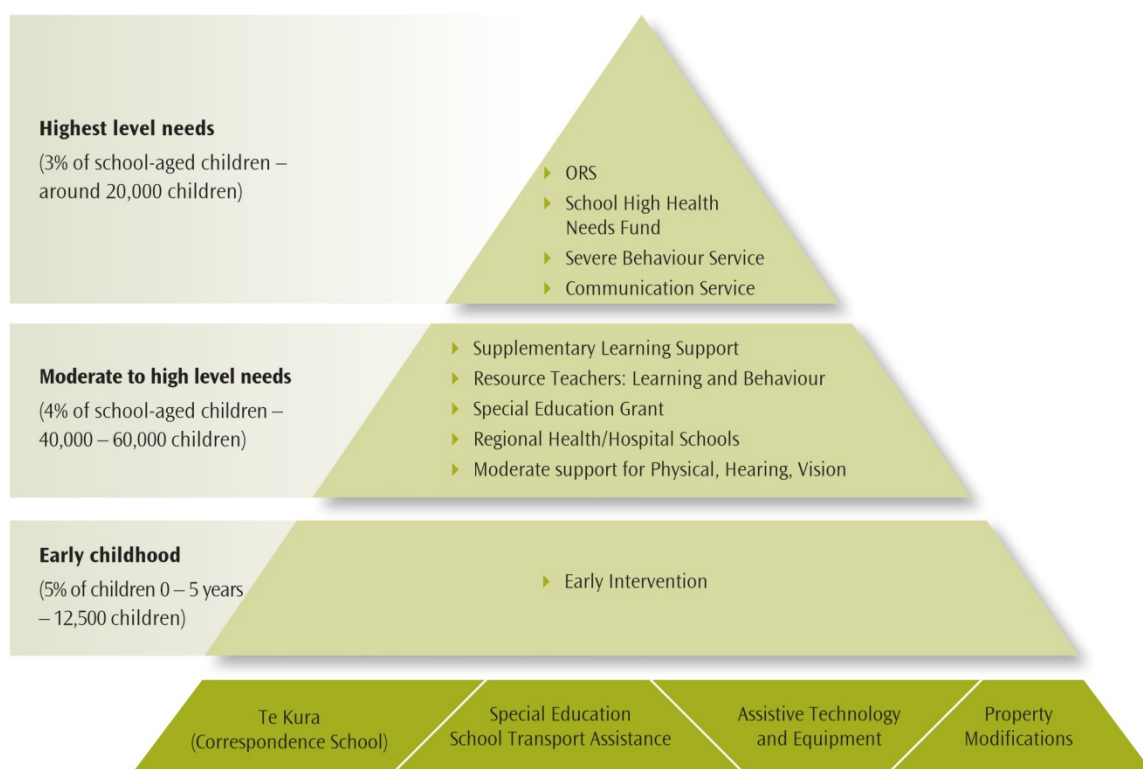
An independent review of the AoDC role carried out by researcher Ross Wilson in 2011.

Special education framework

The Ministry's special education framework lists the range of support available from the education system.

It also describes the students (eg, students with moderate to high level needs, representing 4% of school-aged children) each initiative, programme or fund intends to support.

For more information about the framework and the support listed in the triangle below, refer to the Ministry's website: www.minedu.govt.nz (click on the special education link).



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www.minedu.govt.nz

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