

Exciting times: tough challenges

Have you come across deaf children who do not respond to your tried and tested strategies, 'defeat' the patience you're known for or even challenge your ability to turn up at all?

Let me introduce you to what I hope will be some light at the end of the tunnel! This comes in the form of a new post- that of the Burwood Park Consultant whose focus is deaf children with additional needs. This is an interesting part time (3 days per week) position created and funded by the Trustees of the Burwood Park Foundation for the Deaf, and directed and managed by Pauline Hughes of the Ewing Foundation and Lindsey Rousseau of the South East regional partnership.

The initial part of the role is to establish what is required in the way of support and training for those working with deaf children with additional learning needs, in London and the South East. This will involve me working with existing agencies, determining where areas of expertise and effective practice can be found, forging networks and exploring and establishing opportunities for practical training. Delivery of this training at first will be through customised support and regional courses. The range and extent of 'additional needs' to be served will be shaped in part by the response of those I am able to contact in the first instance and through those who approach me directly. Whilst it is acknowledged that this cohort is of small incidence statistically, there is recognition that many deaf children increasingly have additional, often complex, needs and that placement in some settings can bring huge challenges for both learner and staff. The purpose of this new and exciting initiative is to provide practical strategies and information to support the learning of this group of children and young people so fostering improved achievement and life experience. In so doing it is hoped that professionals at all levels and phases will also continue to develop their skills and understanding, thereby enhancing our profession.

If you think you have a particular expertise, work with a child or a group with a defined need or simply would like to find out more, please contact me via email burwood@ewing-foundation.org.uk or by telephone: 07803 616708

Joyce Sewell-Rutter

February 2008