

# Chime's urgent issues for inclusion in the Programme for Government

Chime is requesting relevant parties to consider two important matters for consideration in the new Programme for Government. Both concern equity in education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) students, involve minimal public funds, but require a change in policy and approach by the Department of Education.

## 1. Publish STen outcomes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

(Sten tests are standardised tests completed in primary schools).

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) say that D/HH children should achieve educational outcomes on a par with their hearing peers – but neither the Department nor the NCSE collate any data to demonstrate this.

Chime raised this issue with the Minister for Special Education in late 2022.

Chime is concerned that D/HH children are not reaching their potential, and data is needed to identify the actions needed.

The Minister agreed that data was needed, but nothing has been done to make this happen.

There is an easy solution: a simple addition to the Department's Esinet portal would gather the information needed.

**This matter is VERY URGENT as Department changes to the Special Education Teaching resources model has REDUCED support for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in schools.**

## 2. Allow Deaf students to do a Leaving Cert exam in Irish Sign Language.

Two Deaf students have applied to the State Examinations Commission to complete an Irish Sign Language exam in their Leaving Certificate in 2025.

The students have applied under the SEC's Non-curricular EU languages policy, which the students qualify for. Under this policy the SEC provide examinations in a wide range of EU recognized languages.

The Department of Education have refused the students' request on the basis that it takes several years to 'develop a curriculum'.

However, the Centre for Deaf Studies in Trinity College has already developed (and administered) an equivalent ISL Leaving Certificate Higher Level examination to a number of Deaf undergraduates!

To our knowledge, the Department has not contacted the Centre for Deaf Studies, despite being provided with contact details, to learn how they could easily facilitate the student's request.

**Unless the Department or the Minister change their approach, this matter is likely to end up in the courts as the Deaf students are clearly being discriminated against because of their disability.**

To support these calls, please contact:

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