Centre for Deafblindness and Hearing Loss
– A national, comprehensive service for children, young people and adults with deafblindness or hearing loss
Communication with Nelly.

Nelly’s parents appreciate their consultations with CDH’s consultant who counsels them regarding their housing facilities for people with congenital deafblindness.

There is room for developing interests at the activity and socialisation facilities for residents at CDH’s education department offers schooling for children, young and adults with congenital deafblindness.

At CDH, all employees are stars, says Birte Helmer, mother of 32-year-old Sara who lives at Kloden.

Attentiveness and recognisability are keywords at CDH’s housing facilities that include a home for children, one for young people and two types of accommodation for adults.

At CDH, all employees are stars, says Birte Helmer, mother of 32-year-old Sara who lives at Kloden.

20-year-old Niklas lives at Planethuset’s housing facilities together with three other, young sign language users while being trained for adulthood.

CDH’s educational department offers schooling for children, young and adults with congenital deafblindness.

Each resident is something special

At CDH, all employees are stars, says Birte Helmer, mother of 32-year-old Sara who lives at Kloden.

There is room for developing interests at the activity and socialisation facilities for residents at CDH’s housing facilities for people with congenital deafblindness.

CDH’s specialist counselling service for children with a hearing loss counsel parents and key professionals in the child’s immediate environment.

The pupils’ communication method and functional level are basis for all teaching of children with a hearing loss.

The sign language environment at CDH’s school is amazing for our son, says Lars Haakonsen, father of nine-year-old Valdemar.

Young people are offered an STU education (specially organised education) at CDH while adults with a hearing loss get the possibility of adult education.

Pupils with a hearing loss are offered respite care at Planethuset that also has housing facilities for young people with a hearing loss.

20-year-old Niklas lives at Planethuset’s housing facilities together with three other, young sign language users while being trained for adulthood.

Interdisciplinary co-operation is an important part of the work at CDH’s treatment and counselling department.

A small publishing house at CDH publishes visual and auditive materials for special needs education.

Lisa Aalbæk greatly benefits from CDH’s sign-supported speech materials when practising language with her son, Kasper.

Systematic competence and knowledge development is crucial for CDH’s position as a unique service.

Dorte Lindberg Jensen obtained new perspectives on her job as a social educator through her diploma degree in special needs education.

Facts about the services at CDH
A leading role

Many years of experience and continuous prioritisation of competence development of the well over 330 employees has provided the Centre for Deafblindness and Hearing Loss, CDH, much expertise within the professional areas of deafblindness and hearing loss. Our guiding star is our desire to lead the way regarding the services within our two areas of specialisation. We will at any time use all of our resources and knowledge to ensure that children, young people and adults associated with CDH will have the best possible conditions to manage their own lives with the preconditions that they have.

As a national, comprehensive service for children, young people and adults with congenital deafblindness, CDH has built up much expertise through the years within the small and very special group with a double loss of senses. We offer children, young people and adults education, housing facilities, activity and socialisation facilities and treatment. Add to that national specialised counselling and extensive courses which also include children with acquired deafblindness.

Within the area of hearing loss, this expertise resulted in CDH - in a consortium with Centre for Hearing Loss (CFH) - being given the national responsibility within special counselling, guidance and courses for children with a hearing loss. At the same time, the centre continues to have the national responsibility within teaching, educations and housing facilities for children and adults with a hearing loss, including children and adults with a hearing loss and other disabilities.

Materialecentret at CDH is also national with the ensuing obligation to offer children and adults with a need for visual communication and their relatives and specialised professionals all forms of information, guidance and teaching materials.

We are very much aware of the fact that obligations come from being a leading service. We must constantly be able to act up to the demands and expectations that are naturally linked to being a national organisation. We must think innovatively and extend our knowledge about methods and approaches to our work with our target groups. Our organisation should be characterized by our continuously developing our professional capability and interdisciplinarity so that we will become even better at meeting those people who have a special need for communication, social education and special needs education.

We will describe the services of the centre on the following pages. I hope that the descriptions will make clear that we at CDH go to great lengths to live up to our mission, vision and values.

Yours sincerely,

Lars Søbye, Principal
Lifelong counselling for people with congenital deafblindness

CDH’s consultants for deaf-blind people counsel people with congenital deafblindness in all ages across the country on their current needs. The counselling also includes children and young people with acquired deafblindness.

Deafblindness is a loss of a senses and requires lifelong counselling based on the current life situation of each deaf-blind person. New housing, new staff, changed health, new technological possibilities etc. are just some of the many challenges that meet deaf-blind people in a changeable world and which necessitate ongoing guidance based on current needs.

CDH’s consultants for deaf-blind people have many years of experience within assessing deafblindness and consulting children and adults with congenital deafblindness across the country. The centre also manages national assessment and guidance of children and young people with acquired deafblindness up until the age of 18. All in all, the consultancy involves approx. 95 children and 135 adults including the approx. 60 children and adults with congenital deafblindness who live at CDH’s housing facilities.

Staff and relatives
14 consultants service day care centres, schools, 24-hour care centres, accommodations and activity centres etc. with guidance of staff who work with deaf-blind people. Our services also include individual guidance of deaf-blind people and their relatives just as we arrange courses and teaching for parents and specialists who work with deaf-blind people.

An important element in the advising is to establish and point out specific needs of a deaf-blind citizen so that the municipalities will be qualified in their decisions regarding for example schooling, accommodation and interior layout.

Highly specialised assessment
People with deafblindness face many problems, and a large part of them have additional disabilities. For many of them, the double loss of senses makes it difficult to use ordinary services for deaf or blind people. In round figures, 20 per cent of all people with congenital deafblindness are deaf and blind. Others have a limited hearing and/or eyesight. It is important to have precise knowledge of the individual’s functions in order to be able to guide them the best way possible concerning communication and interaction. When there is a suspicion of a double loss of senses for a child, the consultants typically use up to six months on regular observations with focus on the child’s use of his or her eyesight and hearing and on the preconditions for development of interaction and communication.

The assessment is on close co-operation with parents, social educators in the child’s home environment and any medical specialists involved. The consultants i.a. work on video analyses where they, the parents and social educators discuss the child’s expressions and the possibilities of assisting communication. The consultants can also use various hearing and eyesight materials as part of their assessment.

Observations at CDH
The consultants often suggest that a child is observed at CDH for a few days so that the centre’s eyesight and hearing specialists can do eye examinations and audiological tests whenever the child is the most awake. The child’s parents and a social educator from the child’s home environment always attend the observations. If there is a need, CDH’s psychologists, social workers, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists etc. can also be involved.

If it is assessed that a child falls within CDH’s target group, the consultants will visit regularly and observe the child’s development. During those visits, experience is exchanged with the parents and staff just as initiatives that will contribute to developing the communicative and functional skills are discussed.

The special counselling of deaf-blind people under 18 is financed by VISO/KaS, and parents and staff can contact CDH concerning counselling. When people with congenital or acquired deafblindness turn 18, all inquiries should be through VISO (see www.socialstyrelsen.dk/viso).
Asking the right questions

It is sensible to have external experts and supervisors to take a look at your practice. It furthers your self-perception and gives new ideas to your work. Even though most of us have worked with people with deafblindness for several years, we always get a lot out of CDH’s guidance. The consultants know more deaf-blind people than we do, and they see our pupils from a different perspective, says Birgitte Arild Nielsen, department manager of Track 3 at the Capital Region of Denmark’s special school, Geelsgaardskolen in Virum.

Geelsgaardskolen is a comprehensive service for pupils with various disabilities. Pupils with deafblindness or serious visual and hearing losses are enrolled on Track 3 which is a service with schooling and leisure activities, STU, activities for young people, housing facilities and respite care. The department has drawn on CDH’s expertise for many years and has had many teachers and social educators at CDH’s basic education within deafblindness. In the daily work at Track 3, sparring with CDH’s consultants for deaf-blind people has become an integrated part of the work with the current seven deaf-blind pupils.

Common project days

- We co-operate with the consultants in many ways. Each year, for example, we have a planning meeting where we balance the overall, mutual expectations for the guidance.

- In recent years, we have benefited much from common project days for the staff. The consultants from CDH observe our communication and interaction with the seven pupils, in our teaching as well as in the spare time, on excursions to the forest etc.

- It is rewarding that CDH’s consultants offer counselling based on observations of the staff’s interaction and communication with the pupils. They offer counselling along the way so that their guidance works as facilitation of our processes. They also make video recordings which they review together with us. It works really well with the mutual feedback, says Birgitte Arild Nielsen.

CDH’s consultants also assist Track 3 with individual guidance where they follow a pupil through that pupil’s scheduled activities and consult teachers and social educators on an ongoing basis.

- Even though a pupil has attended our school for several years, there will always be development opportunities that the consultants can help us become aware of. They know how to ask the right questions about our practice and always have ideas for new initiatives, says Birgitte Arild Nielsen.

- The consultants also manage the assessment regarding whether or not a pupil falls within the deaf-blind group. They observe, make video recordings and have interviews with parents and staff. The consultants also attend the yearly observations of the pupils done by the department and contribute with reflections in relation to the targets and methods that the staff work with in everyday life and that are described in the individual plans for the pupils, says Birgitte Arild Nielsen.

Lifelong teaching and learning

CDH’s education of people with congenital deafblindness is in close co-operation with the providers of leisure activities and housing. The interdisciplinary co-operation increases the possibilities of supporting the pupils in their learning.

Extensive knowledge of the interaction with deaf-blind people forms the foundation of the activities in CDH’s education department that offers schooling for children, young people and adults. The education department employs an experienced staff of teachers, social educators and assistants who co-operate closely with the providers of leisure activities and housing at CDH.

The interdisciplinary co-operation entails that the employees at the various places share signs and behaviours and that they are continuously able to exchange knowledge of each deaf-blind person’s communication method and daily life. That increases the possibilities of planning the teaching so that it will support the pupils in their learning in the best possible way.

Primary school in safe surroundings

Safety, structure and recognisability are keywords in primary school with one-on-one teaching as well as teaching in small groups which are put together based on educational considerations. Some pupils communicate with various forms of signs, gestures and sounds, others communicate with body signals. Based on the knowledge of each student, the teachers focus on planning their teaching so that it will meet the pupil’s communication method and cognitive ability as much as possible. Work is focused on tactile signs and objects-of-reference, and many pupils benefit from symbols, photos and drawings. If the visual impairment is not too severe, some pupils can also learn the significant signs in basic sign language.

Using all sensory channels

The olfactory sense and the tactile sense are important to communication. The heat from an animal and the flower may provide experiences to build on. Even though the pupils have poor eyesight, they may benefit greatly from folders with sights taken on excursions. The experiences may form the basis for dialogue which may include elements from e.g. biology, history or mathematics.

Co-operation with their homes and Bøgehuset, the housing facilities for children at CDH, is assigned a high priority. Therefore, all pupils have pupil folders which prepare the ground for parents and employees at Bøgehuset to discuss school
Oliver has had much progress

- CDH goes to great lengths for Oliver. When he demonstrated inappropriate behaviour after a period with illness, they immediately allocated resources to work more with him, both in school as well as at Bøgehuset. He’s now doing fine again, and we can tell that he’s progressing enormously, says Bettina Nielsen.

Bettina Nielsen is the mother of 12-year-old Oliver who has lived at Bøgehuset, CDH’s housing facilities for deaf-blind children, since he was four years old. Oliver is severely brain-damaged and in need of much care, so his parents had to give up having him at home when he was two years old. The first couple of years, he lived at a children’s home for children with special needs near their home in Himmerland, but his communication problems were so serious that his parents chose to move him to Bøgehuset.

- At CDH, the employees are trained to work with many communication methods. They are very good at interpreting Oliver’s body language and getting him to open up. At school, they work a lot one-on-one. Oliver cannot speak or use sign language, so they work with sign-supported speech and with objects-of-reference and pictures.

- His communication has come a long way during the past few years. His understanding has improved. He has become better at listening and doing what he is told. He has also become better at using his body language to show what he wants. He can e.g. crawl over to get something. He can also take our hands to show us something. It has become easier to read him.

- At school and at Bøgehuset, they sometimes make video recordings of his everyday life in co-operation with the consultant from CDH who has followed him since he was one. They will then meet in joint meetings to discuss what they can see from his reactions and how they can continue working on strengthening his communication. I often attend the meetings. It is a huge advantage that we all work in the same direction with Oliver, says Bettina Nielsen.

Even though it was very hard for Bettina Nielsen and her husband to let go of Oliver when he was little, they never regretted their decision.

- We do not at all have the educational tools and the surplus of resources that they do at CDH. But we do have the resources to follow his development and to have a good time with him. If he lived at home, it would all end up in practical problems. We would not at all have the strength to be there for him and his two younger sisters the way they need us to. It is very likely that he would have been more withdrawn, says Bettina Nielsen.
Housing facilities for people in all ages

Attentiveness, recognisability and surplus of resources are keywords at CDH’s housing facilities that meet the special challenges and needs of people with congenital deafblindness.

CDH’s expertise within deafblindness leads to many parents of deaf-blind children wanting their children to go to Aalborg and to live their adult life in Aalborg. Another reason to attend CDH is the fact that it is basically impossible for deaf-blind people to get together with other deaf-blind people anywhere else in the country.

Through the years, CDH has developed its accommodations so that they match the demand of current requirements for housing standards. Approx. 60 deaf-blind people currently live in CDH’s housing facilities that comprise Bøgehuset for children, Ungdomshjemmet for young people and Danalien and Kloden for adults.

Attentiveness, recognisability and surplus of resources are keywords at the housing facilities that meet the special disabilities of the deaf-blind residents and the fact that many people with deafblindness have additional disabilities. It is characteristic for the homes that they i.a. have tactile guidance paths in the floors, tactile points of orientation on the walls, differentiated selections of materials and the use of contrasting colours and indication stripes that offer the residents optimum conditions for being on their own.

A safe childhood at Bøgehuset
It is hard for parents to a disabled child to come to the decision that they cannot keep their child at home. For parents of children with congenital deafblindness, it might be even harder because they often live far away from Aalborg and therefore might not be able to see their child very often. It is therefore crucial to CDH that the children are ensured a good and safe childhood in close cooperation with their parents.

At Bøgehuset, the children live in homelike surroundings with staff that are specially trained to meet the children with the best possible care and development. The children have their own rooms but are often together in the communal rooms. After school hours, they attend leisure activities such as swimming lessons. They play, take walks, join the staff when they go shopping etc. Weekends might offer visits to farms, sailing on the Limfjord, visits to animal parks and excursions to the forest or the beach, and the employees gladly accompany the children on the trip home to see their parents.

Youth at Ungdomshjemmet
CDH’s school and housing facilities are located near each other. The employees have good possibilities of co-operating in relation to children across the facilities, and there are generally no problems when the children move from Bøgehuset to Ungdomshjemmet. Where everyday life at Bøgehuset is very familiar, Ungdomshjemmet emphasises the importance of allowing the young people to find out what adult life has to offer. They need influence on their own lives and the possibility of developing their own interests in their rooms. Community is also emphasised, and socialisation is strengthened i.a. through joint activities such as cooking, parties and excursions.

In their everyday life, the young people participate in practical tasks to the extent that they can manage so that they will become as self-reliant as possible. Some of them attend CDH’s STU education, others go to the activity and socialisation facilities. All young people have a weekly, socio-educational day when they will train and develop communicative skills, pursue their interests and do practical tasks based on their own wants.

Their own, modern flats
When the young people move to the adult facilities, the advantage of the cohesion between CDH’s facilities is clearly proven. The young people get to live with residents that they know and meet staff who know their personalities and know how to communicate with them.

At Danalien and Kloden, the residents live in modern, personally decorated flats with access to good, communal facilities. The employees often arrange excursions, evenings with pleasant socialisation and other activities which give shared experiences and new input to communication.

Each resident is something quite special
I always say that I got my life back when Sara went to CDH. Experiencing the employees’ involvement and competences is a gift. The group of residents at Kloden are very differentiated. They all have special needs. I use to say that CDH is an expert in taking care of originality. The residents get to be the people they are with the resources they each have, says Birte Helmer, mother of 32-year-old Sara who lives at Kloden.

Sara is severely brain-damaged due to a virus infection that Birte Helmer was exposed to during her pregnancy. She is almost deaf, she cannot process visual impressions, she suffers from epilepsy and several organic diseases and is in a wheelchair. She lived at home with a little respite care until she was 10. After that, she lived at two different institutions in eastern Denmark all weekdays.

- I didn’t feel that those places worked well for Sara. When she turned 18 and needed a place for adults, a counsellor suggested that Sara went to CDH’s Ungdomshjemmet. It is a huge step to send your daughter to Aalborg when you live in Gilleleje, but the visits from your mum is not what is supposed to make a good life. A well-functioning life is supposed to do that. And Sara got that at Ungdomshjemmet, says Birte Helmer.
Good at interpreting body language
When Sara moved out of Ungdomshjemmet to CDH’s Kloden for adults, some of the employees from Ungdomshjemmet followed along. That meant that the detailed knowledge to Sara also came along - much to Birte Helmer’s delight.
It is very difficult to communicate with Sara who especially profits from the olfactory sense and the tactile sense. But the staff also work with speech, signs and objects-of-reference in their communication with Sara. They are good at interpreting her body language and sharing knowledge about new initiatives regardless of the success rate.
- I use to say to the staff that there are no extras at Kloden. They are all stars. I always feel welcome when I visit Sara and spend the night in her flat. It is amazing to experience everything they do for her. She has a walking trolley that she uses to walk around at Kloden, and there is a handi-sling in her flat where the employees can place her so that she can move around the area indoors.
- At the activity facilities, Sara very much appreciates sensory-motoric experiences. She loves water. She’s like a fish when she’s in the water, she enjoys a foot bath and really likes fresh air - also when it is raining. When I visit her, the tranquility at Kloden always strikes me. The work is demanding, and many unforeseen things happen, but the employees manage to create a calm life for the residents.
- I don’t constantly talk to the staff because I know that Sara is doing well. We send text messages or emails if there is something to discuss. This summer, I received a text message with some wonderful photos of Sara walking around in the sunshine with her walking trolley. Stuff like that makes you happy, says Birte Helmer.

Many possibilities for activities and socialisation
There is room for developing many interests at CDH’s activity and socialisation facilities for residents at the centre’s housing facilities for people with congenital deafblindness.
The possibilities of meeting each user’s needs and abilities are good at CDH’s activity and socialisation facilities for young and adult residents at the housing facilities of the centre. The activity and socialisation facilities have the beautifully situated Skovhuset at their disposal, situated in Hammer Bakker north of Aalborg, and the big activity house, Aktivitetshuset, that is situated by the housing facilities, Danalien, in Aalborg, as well as C-huset, at Kollegievej 1, very close to the rest of CDH’s departments.
Room for living out your special interests
The approx. 50 users of the activity and socialisation facilities are at widely different stages of their development, and the age distribution is big. It is therefore important for the staff to identify which interests each resident has so that they will all have room to live out their interests. At the same time, the residents are presented to new possibilities which might turn out giving them good experiences.
Even though Heidi is blind, she can make amazing wall figures.

Many residents enjoy romping in the swimming pool in Aktivitetshuset.

It is nice to relax while being massaged.

Much firewood is produced at Skovhuset.

It requires concentration to produce beautiful bird houses.

Most of the adult users use the activity and socialisation facilities four days a week and have a weekly, socio-educational day at their housing facilities while the young pupils attending the STU education complete their practical training at the activity and socialisation facilities.

The users are divided into groups that are affiliated with a fixed team of 8-9 employees. The group distribution allows the users to always be surrounded by employees who know their interests and are used to communicating with them.

The joy of nature
Skovhuset is situated in the middle of Hammer Bakker with plenty of possibilities of outdoor activities as well as physical activities. They tend to the greenhouses, build shelters, chop wood, felt in the yard, relax in the hammock and enjoy time together around the bonfire. CDH also has a piece of forest at its disposal where the users can cut down trees and enjoy nature. Inside Skovhuset, there are a wood workshop and a creativity room, but it is also possible to e.g. help in the kitchen or relax in the spa bath.

Body and creativity
Aktivitetshuset lays in the middle of town, close to the stores and Søhngårdsprekken which is a popular destination for walks. The garden has places for bonfires and swings that are popular on warm days, and the indoors offer fine possibilities of tending to body and creativity. The house also has i.a. a large hot-water pool with good changing rooms.

Showing consideration for present conditions
The interaction and communication with the users are crucial for the planning of activities that meet the individual’s needs. The staff at the activity and socialisation facilities therefore are in close co-operation with the staff at the housing facilities. Each morning, the employees of the activity and socialisation activities show up at the housing facilities and help the residents get dressed and have breakfast. They also accompany the residents home in the afternoon.

The close dialogue with the employees at the housing facilities increases the insight into the users’ present conditions and makes it possible to plan daily activities while showing maximum consideration to each resident. The employees at the activity and socialisation facilities are also in co-operation with CDH’s treatment and counselling department in order for the work with each individual to be coordinated to the maximum.

For festive seasons, there are often events where the teachers, social educators, therapists and residents participate across the facilities. There are also excursions where several resident and staff groups participate. A big event is the annual summer party where residents from other institutions for disabled people are invited to a party with grilled food, live music, amusing activities etc. at Skovhuset.

For the users at Aktivitetshuset, it is important to have activities that correspond to their interests and needs. The house is situated in the middle of town, close to stores and Søhngårdsparken which is a popular destination for walks.

The garden has places for bonfires and swings that are popular on warm days, and the indoors offer fine possibilities of tending to body and creativity. The house also has i.a. a large hot-water pool with good changing rooms. There is also a sauna that has been designed for people with disabilities, a spa bath and good possibilities for massage and other wellness, as well as a Snoezelen room. There are also activities such as sewing, potteries and cooking for the creative mind.

Outdoor and physical activities
CDH is situated at Kollegiewej very close to CDH’s other departments. Here the focus is on physical activities for the young and the young at heart. The centre’s many outdoor facilities are right outside the door as well as the large park Søhngardsholmsparken. Both Aktivitetshuset with all its possibilities mentioned above and CDH’s gym are within reach, too.

The users are divided into groups that are affiliated with a fixed team of 8-9 employees. The group distribution allows the users to always be surrounded by employees who know their interests and are used to communicating with them.
Specialist counselling services for children with a hearing loss

CDH’s specialist counselling service for children with a hearing loss counsels parents, daycare providers, social educators, teachers and other key professionals in the child’s immediate environment.

Since 2014, CDH’s specialist counselling service for children with a hearing loss has been a highly specialised institution under the VISO/KAoS organisation of the directorate of social affairs. Hence, CDH is in charge of providing national special consultancy services for children with a hearing loss in the age 0-18 to the degree that the services of the municipalities are not adequate. The specialist consultancy services contribute to supporting and qualifying municipal work with the child. The consultancy services comprise free counselling on preschool children to parents, day-care providers, social educators and other key professionals in the child’s immediate environment and consulting of teachers, social educators etc. at schools that admit pupils with a hearing loss. Add to that extensive courses with general courses as well as individually planned courses for parents, other relatives and key specialists who work with the children.

Specialist counselling for preschool children

An inquiry to the specialist counselors typically comes from PPR (pedagogical and psychological counselling) in the child’s home municipality but might also come from parents, day care centres, schools or other professional bodies. The work is usually commenced with consultants observing the child in its immediate environment. Based on observations, the continued work is planned, and there is an individually planned consultancy period. CDH co-operates closely with PPR, parents, social educators and other professionals in that period so that the child is supported as optimum as possible in its auditory, linguistic and communicative development.

Children with a hearing loss are a small and non-homogeneous group for which audiological treatment varies according to the type and degree of the hearing loss. The children often need to catch up with a lot compared to children with normal hearing. Their pace of development and their prerequisites are different, and it is therefore important that work is initiated as early as possible after the hearing loss is determined.

As part of the consultancy, special assessment and observation programmes can be planned in which the consultants observe and offer advice on small children with a hearing loss.

School consultants consult and inform the classes about the hearing loss.

CDH’s team of speech and hearing therapists, audiological staff, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, the music therapist etc. examine the child and prepare interdisciplinary assessments that will form the basis of the planning of further work.

Many AVT programmes

CDH is in charge of many AVT programmes (Auditory Verbal Therapy) for children with a hearing loss. The aim of the AVT method is to develop the child’s hearing and spoken language through teaching of parents and consulting of the staff at the child’s daycare institution. The AVT method has proven very effective to train hearing and spoken language for the majority of children with a hearing loss.

For children with difficult prerequisites of developing speech and hearing, there is the possibility of working with visually based training methods.

The consultants guide the parents and daycare centre in listening and linguistic stimulation just as they observe how the child manages social interaction with other children. Based on the observations, the parents and qualified staff are offered guidance in the best way to help the child be part of activities with other children.

CDH regularly gathers small groups of children to “Listen, play and learn” programmes at the centre. The purpose with these programmes is to strengthen the children’s hearing, language and communication and to give them good experiences together with other children with hearing aids or CI. Parents, daycare providers and social educators from the children’s daycare institutions participate in parts of the programme so that all parties will acquire new knowledge of the possibilities for auditory and linguistic stimulation of the children.

Specialist counselling in class

When the children are to start school, PPR has the possibility of involving CDH’s specialist school counselling in the work towards ensuring proper inclusion. The specialist school counselling involves educational, technical, physical as well as psychological aspects that are all connected to having a pupil with a hearing loss in the class. The counselling team is therefore composed of teachers, speech and hearing therapists and technicians who are experts within their individual areas.

The consultants offer advice on noise reduction and often recommend acoustic measuring. They look at the lighting conditions and the layout of the classroom as it is important that the child is placed correctly in relation to the teacher and classmates. They teach the classmates in what is like having a hearing loss and let them “try a hearing loss” through the use of earmuffs etc.

The consultants also assist the schools with testing and assessing hearing aids, including i.a. microphones for the teacher and microphones for the pupils. The consultants assess whether the pupil will benefit from the technology and offer instructions in the use of the equipment and the planning of the teaching. The counselling also includes the class culture as inclusive ways of being together are crucial to the pupil’s learning and well-being.

The specialist counselling is provided by a national consortium with Centre for Deafblindness and Hearing Loss and Centre for Hearing Loss in Fredericia. Applications can be made to both centres.
The pupils’ individual communication methods and functional levels are basis for all teaching of children with a hearing loss at CDH.

It requires multi-faceted knowledge to teach at CDH’s school for pupils with a hearing loss. The teachers must possess much expertise within visual communication, but they also need to have insight into many forms of disabilities and be capable of planning their teaching based on the individual’s functional level.

The school is specialised in teaching pupils who have a need for visual communication to a greater or lesser extent. That involves work with Danish, sign language, sign-supported speech and supportive signs.

In addition to the hearing loss, many pupils have additional disabilities such as e.g. visual impairment, autism, ADHD, brain damage, various syndromes or general development difficulties. The heterogeneous pupil basis makes great demands on the competences of the staff.

All teachers and social educators have a diploma in special needs education, and their professional competences are continuously strengthened through supplementary training as it is crucial to CDH that the competences of the staff always correspond to the needs of the current group of pupils.

Basis in the competences
The teaching in school is based on the primary and lower secondary school’s subjects and on each pupil’s competences and communicative methods.

Jill Hermansen (to the left) receives much advice when Lilian Borregaard observes her training with Nelly.

Jill Hermansen
receives much advice when Lilian Borregaard observes her training with Nelly.

Nelly benefits greatly from Lilian’s plans

When five-year-old Nelly was three months old, she got hearing aids due to a congenital hearing loss. Few months later, she lost her hearing entirely. When she was 11 months old, she was CI-operated in both ears at Aarhus University Hospital, and for the next six months, her parents, Jill Hermansen and Dennis Nielsen from Brovst, followed an AVT programme at the university hospital. After that, educational consultant Lilian Borregaard from CDH’s specialised counselling service for preschool children became involved.

- It is of incredible value that we receive counselling from Lilian. In the beginning, she visited us once a week. She also visited Nelly’s daycare once a week. She now visits us and the daycare centre approx. once a month. We always receive some good plans to base our work on, and we can always call her if we need some good advice, says Jill Hermansen.

Offers advice on communication
Lilian Borregaard works based on the AVT method when consulting Nelly’s parents and social educators in the daycare centre. She tests Nelly’s ability to hear, understand and speak and instructs the parents and social educators in their communication with Nelly based on the areas of focus where she assesses that there is a current need for training.

- It is e.g. difficult for Nelly to understand concepts such as in front, behind, to the side etc. Lilian therefore brought a game where we can train the concepts through playing with Nelly. The training now focuses a lot on Nelly’s memory, so Lilian i.a. gave us ideas to how we can remember and draw three or four things that Teddy wants for his birthday.

- When we are out shopping, we also train her memory. I’ll e.g. say that we need milk, butter, bread and yoghurt, and then I’ll ask Nelly if she can remember what we need, says Jill Hermansen.

A couple of times a year, Nelly’s parents and social educators at the daycare centre meet with Lilian Borregaard to discuss Nelly’s development and to agree how to work on stimulating Nelly’s language and understanding in the best possible way in the future.

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Communication method. Some pupils are entirely deaf and communicate solely through sign language. Others communicate to a varying degree through speech and supportive signs. Cognitively speaking, the pupils are at different levels, and they might also suffer from concentration difficulties or visual impairment.

Teachers emphasise the importance of identifying the individual’s linguistic code and ability to understand what he or she is hearing or reading. Detailed plans for the pupils are prepared that describe each pupil’s competences and development opportunities and also action plans that should make it possible to reach the goals in the teaching.

The plans for the pupils are partly used as a tool to ensure structure in the work with the learning targets, partly as documentation for the pupils and their learning ability.

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Optimum conditions
CDH’s high expertise within hearing loss is emphasised through the physical environment where conditions are optimum. The lighting and acoustics are adapted according to the pupils’ special challenges, and there are staff resources for a high degree of individual teaching and teaching in small groups.

If there are problems with the technical equipment, e.g. a hearing aid, the audiological staff of the centre step in immediately, and it is of great value to many of the pupils that the school can offer speech and hearing training in addition to the teaching. The speech and hearing training supports the pupils’ possibility of using their hearing in an optimal way and to practice pronunciation of words and sentences.

When there is a need, the pupils are also offered training with a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist just as they can participate in music therapy and riding therapy. In the efforts to create optimum conditions for each pupil’s learning, the school also offers psychological assessments and examinations with the medical specialists who are associated with the centre.

Nine-year-old Valdemar Haakonsen has 60 kilometres of transportation from his home in Bjergby to CDH’s school for pupils with a hearing loss. However, his parents never had a doubt that CDH was the right place for their son.

Valdemar was born with a hearing loss, and cognitively speaking, he is not age-appropriate. He can hear and understand spoken language when he is wearing his hearing aids, but he communicates through sign language as he has no verbal language. That is the exact reason that there are no local institutions that match Valdemar’s needs.

The sign language environment is amazing for Valdemar. He has become extremely good at communicating. His biggest problem is that his mother and I find it hard to keep up with him although we regularly attend sign language courses. He is developing enormously. We feel very grateful that there are teachers and social educators like the ones at CDH. They are very competent and enthusiastic about their work, says Valdemar’s father, Lars Haakonsen, who is the chairman of the school board at CDH.

Respite care at Planethuset
Lars Haakonsen emphasises the fact that there is frequent one-on-one teaching at the school. The employees have thorough knowledge of the pupils and are good at sensing when a pupil needs a break or has a need to be alone for a while.

- The school also works with Valdemar’s articulation and verbal abilities. He is now saying more words that we understand. However, it is not only the school that goes to great lengths to develop his communication. The social educators at Planethuset do that as well, says Lars Haakonsen.

Valdemar is connected with CDH’s respite care and housing facilities where he spends the night three times a week and also some weekends and holiday weeks. In the beginning, it was hard on the parents to let go of him, but they knew that it would be good for Valdemar to get more experiences in the sign language environment.

- Valdemar has no friends in the local area with whom he can communicate and play. His social life is in school and at Planethuset. That is where his friends are and where he can be in a social context with peers.

- We see it as a great resource that CDH is a comprehensive service. The treatment department is also of great value. For outsiders, it might be difficult to understand how safe it can make a person feel to know that your hearing aid can be quickly repaired if it doesn’t work. However, fact is that we have a boy who is not capable of communicating with the world around him if his hearing aid breaks down, states Lars Haakonsen.

The very best place for Valdemar

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Educations for young people and adults with a hearing loss

CDH is also for young people with a hearing loss through the specially organised education (STU) while adults with a need for visual communication acquire new knowledge through attending adult education.

CDH’s expertise within visual communication means that many people apply for the centre’s programme within adult education. In addition to the special STU education for young people, the centre also offers preparatory adult education, education for dyslexics and class teaching and individual teaching under the law on compensatory special teaching. All teaching is planned based on individual curricula that are based on each pupil’s communication method and academic level.

Mastering your own life
Mastering your own life is the headline of the three-year STU education that is adjusted to pupils with a hearing loss and other disabilities. The aim of the education is to equip the young people personally, academically and socially to meet the challenges of adult life based on each person’s needs and challenges.

Most of the STU pupils have attended school at CDH, but pupils from the entire country are admitted at the education that varies between compulsory education in Danish, arithmetic and economy, common exercise, necessary skills to cope with everyday life and trainee periods. Add to that topics and subjects that the individual pupil wants and that have been written in the young person’s training plan.

During the trainee periods, it is important for the young person to try several options so that there will be a clear idea of their interests and abilities in relation to future employment opportunities. Training in necessary skills to live alone is often transferred to the young people’s homes where they are trained in cooking, cleaning, planning of purchases, the layout of homes, contact to neighbours etc. There are also practical lessons where the pupils e.g. produce furniture and lamp shades.

An important element in the education is that the pupils acquire knowledge of the municipal activity and support programmes. Therefore, they are informed of i.a. the possibilities of the use of interpreters, deafness consultants and support persons just as they are being introduced to the programmes at Døves Kulturcenter (cultural centre for deaf people) so that they get to know new people and build up a social network.

Educational programmes for adults

Many adults with a need for visual communication attend CDH’s FVU (preparatory adult education) in reading, writing and spelling.

FVU is a free educational programme for adults who have a need to improve their basic skills. The only difference between FVU at CDH and other adult educational institutions is that teaching is done in sign language. In addition, the centre works with groups of only 8-10 participants, so there is time to explain and guide individually.

Based on tests of their reading proficiency, CDH also offers free teaching for dyslexics for all citizens with a need for visual communication. The teachers at the centre are specially trained to teach dyslexics, and their teaching is focused on IT tools and compensatory learning strategies.

Compensatory adult education

The aim of the education activities under the law on compensatory special education is to improve adult sign language users’ possibility of participating actively in society. The education is either in small classes or individual teaching.

A large part of the education focuses on the use of computers, tablets and mobile phones as the digital society with digital mailboxes, electronic time reservations, electronic communication with authorities etc. contains many possibilities - and many new challenges - in everyday life.

According to the pupils’ wishes, there is also e.g. speech and hearing training, communication training, training in English, sign language, fictional reading, written wording and numeracy just as there is coaching for pupils who study at other educational institutions. It is also possible to receive private tuition if that meets the need the best just as the teachers are part of any mentor tasks that can be applied for as needed.
Having a mentor is great

Peter Aage Jensen has previously had various practical training programmes, but now he is determined to get an education that can qualify him to get a permanent job. His big dream is to become a lorry driver, and he has therefore started the driver’s education at AMU Nordjylland.

- Driving a lorry is not a problem although you are deaf. And I know that there are many jobs available, says Peter Aage Jensen who is a sign language user. Years back, he attended CDH’s school programme for pupils with a hearing loss, and after that, he attended i.a. FVU in Danish and mathematics at CDH.

- It was a requirement to pass FVU step 4 in Danish in order to get admitted to AMU Nordjylland, explains Peter Aage Jensen who has the assistance of an interpreter in all lessons at AMU Nordjylland. He is happy to attend the AMU centre but acknowledges that it is sometimes hard. There are many tests to pass and many written assignments to hand in. It is therefore important to him that he has been granted coaching through PPR in the form of mentor hours with a teacher from CDH.

Explains the content
- Being alone with a teacher is very good so that the content of the materials can be explained. It makes it a lot easier to understand the things that I have to read and learn. I can also get help to the written subjects. The teacher is very good, and I am the one who decides to what I need help. During the time leading up to the examinations, I always need my mentor a lot, says Peter Aage Jensen who typically has his mentor hours placed right after school hours so that he can drive directly from the AMU centre to CDH’s adult education classrooms at Deves Kulturcenter.

- Some weeks I meet with my mentor Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Afterwards, I go to Deves Kulturcenter to talk to my friends. If I’m not too busy, I spend time at Deves Kulturcenter almost every day. I like coming there, and I like receiving tuition alone.

- I’m allowed to spend one year on my driver’s education, but I hope that I can do it faster than that. I would like a driving licence for lorry and trailer. I would also like to learn to operate a crane so that I can work with many different things. The companies need to know that deaf people can do exactly the same as people who can hear. There simply has to be good communication about e.g. assistive materials and the assistance of an interpreter, says Peter Aage Jensen.

Mentor hours are great, says Peter Aage Jensen who is taking the driver’s education.

Respite care and housing facilities

In one end of Planethuset, there is respite care for CDH’s pupils with a hearing loss. In the other end of the house, four young sign language users enjoy a small housing facility.

At Planethuset, pupils with a hearing loss and other disabilities can spend time with their friends after school hours, participate in leisure activities and develop their social competences in an environment where the social educators use Danish, sign language, Danish with supportive signs and other forms of visual communication.

According to their parents’ wishes, the children can stay one to four days a week at Planethuset that is situated close to the school. There is also the possibility of eight weekends during the year and one week in the school holidays.

Cultivate their interests
When Planethuset’s social educators have picked up the pupils at school, the pupils relax in their rooms. Then there is common afternoon coffee before the leisure activities of the day. Several of the pupils attend disability sports. Some take swimming lessons, a girl goes to “Strictly Come Dancing,” and a group of boys want to play football in the gym.

Sometimes there are girls’ days where the girls do their hair and nails, go to the cinema etc. or a boys’ outing to an AaB soccer game at the stadium. The children also help cook supper, make lunches and clean up according to their wants and ages as it is important that they feel at home at Planethuset.

Housing facilities for young people
In one end of Planethuset, CDH opened a small, independent housing facility in 2014 with room for four young people over 18 with a hearing loss and other disabilities. Currently, three of the young per-
Many parents make use of the possibility of letting their children stay at Planethuset one or more days a week. The young people enjoy youth in the housing facilities while they are being trained in living alone.

Sons previously went to CDH’s school and were in respite care at Planethuset, but young people from the entire country are admitted. The housing facilities resemble a temporary 24-hour care centre where the young people enjoy youth while their needs for future support and accommodation are clarified. It is a prerequisite that the young person is enrolled at a youth education or is at a daily activity programme.

At Planethuset, the young people have separate rooms but share the bathroom and kitchen with their fellow residents. An important goal with their stay is to train the young persons in the tasks of everyday life such as doing laundry, cleaning, doing the dishes and cooking so that they, based on each person’s preconditions, build up the highest degree possible of independence and influence on their own lives.

In their spare time, they enjoy spending time in their rooms, in the common kitchen or in the garden with each of their interests. As Planethuset is situated close to Døves Kulturcenter, it is easy for them to make use of the possibilities of participating in the activities at the centre and to spend time with the other young sign language users.

The perfect choice for Niklas

When Niklas Eriksen was nine, his family moved from Sjælland to Aalborg because their son was not doing well in school. Niklas Eriksen is a sign language user and has several additional disabilities, and his parents believed that CDH’s school would be best for their son.

Niklas is now 20, and time has proven that his parents made the right decision when they pulled up stakes. Niklas quickly felt at home at CDH’s school and later in the respite care facilities where he spent the nights a couple of days a week for several years. When he finished school, he started CDH’s STU education (specially organised education), and almost two years ago, he moved into Planethuset at CDH’s housing facilities for young people with a hearing loss. He lives there together with three young girls who also go to STU.

- I also went to school with two of the girls. We have a great time together. We each have our own room and eat together in the kitchen. We help each other clean and cook. We have a vegetable garden where we grow carrots, lettuce, spinach, peas and flowers. We also have a terrace where we spend time together.

- In my spare time, I enjoy bicycling or watching a film on my computer. We also swim or go to the fitness centre or to Døves Kulturcenter. The girls also enjoy playing cards, says Niklas.

A good intermediate station

To Niklas’ parents, Planethuset was the perfect intermediate station on their son’s way into adulthood. At Planethuset, he experiences a freedom that he has not previously had while learning what it means to live on your own. He is being trained in the requirements and obligations that are part of adulthood. The years in the housing facilities and at STU are also a clarification process to define his possibilities and need for support in relation to a future home.

When Niklas finishes STU, he hopes to be employed at the sheltered workshop Ålykke in Aalborg. There are several forms of work at Ålykke, and he did not quite make up his mind yet what he would like to apply for. He finds work at the cafeteria a tempting possibility.

- At STU, I did practical training as a janitor at a care home and in a kitchen. Work in the kitchen is probably what I enjoy the most. I enjoy cooking, and I’m also very good at it. I also like to do the dishes, clean up, wipe the tables and put the tableware away, says Niklas.
Strong co-operation in areas of specialisation

Interdisciplinary co-operation is an important part of the work at CDH’s treatment and counselling department that aims at children, young people and adults at CDH as well as users of the specialist counselling across the country.

Much professional knowledge on hearing losses and deafblindness forms the basis in the services of CDH’s treatment and counselling department that employs sight and hearing consultants, audiological staff, physiotherapists, psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses, a social worker, a music therapist and a mobility instructor. Furthermore, paediatricians and other medical specialists are permanently associated with the department.

To the employees at the treatment and counselling department, the interdisciplinary co-operation with social educators, teachers, relatives, psychologists, doctors, prosthetists, social workers etc. constitutes a large part of their task. It is important to share experience and knowledge with all relevant interested parties around each person so that the best possible work can be done.

Experts in eyesight and hearing
The treatment and counselling department has more than 50 years of expertise regarding visual and hearing losses. The department partly supports pupils and residents at CDH, partly the many children and adults with CI and hearing aids outside CDH who are a part of the centre’s services within the areas of deafblindness and hearing loss.

As the need may be, the target groups regularly have their vision and/or hearing checked just as their hearing aids and CI equipment are checked and adjusted. The visual and hearing consultants also attend lighting and noise-level measurements and testing and assessment of hearing aids at accommodations, classrooms etc. Another important task is to offer advice and to teach relatives and professional staff at CDH as well as across the country.

Regular or occasional therapy
Many pupils and residents at CDH receive regular physiotherapy once or twice a week. Others are trained in various periods of time. The physiotherapists also step in when there is an urgent need for treatment in case of illness or injuries. Treatment takes place at the housing facilities, in the activity and socialisation facilities and at school and is always carried out in close co-operation with the staff.

The occupational therapists often work with courses e.g. within eating training, writing and the strengthening of motor skills just as they i.a. offer advice regarding assistive technology. The music therapist works with i.a. vocal training, hearing training, rhythmics, singing, interaction, communication and awareness training.

The nurses form the link between doctors, therapists, parents, accommodation and school.

The nurses attend to the residents and plan and participate in all internal health examinations and in external examinations as needed. Concurrently, they train the employees at the centre in i.a. handling of medicine and solve other health promoting tasks and tasks within disease prevention.

Mobility inside and outside
The treatment and counselling department also has a mobility instructor who is to ensure that the deafblind pupils and residents walk safely on their own. There is much quality of life associated with being self-reliant and e.g. being able to walk from room to room or to participate in cooking and other daily tasks.

The mobility instructor counsels the pupils, residents and staff about mobility and assesses whether changes in e.g. layout, the selection of colours, lighting or acoustics would improve everyday life for one or more residents. New resources are being thought out in co-operation with i.a. the occupational therapists, and outdoors, work is done with railings, markings along the pathways, plants and other points of orientation that can improve the deaf-blind persons’ possibility of orientating themselves and walk freely.
National Materialecenter

A publishing house at CDH produces cost-free teaching and guidance materials for persons with a hearing loss or deafblindness, sign-supported speech users and professionals who work within the specialist fields.

Only very few publishing houses print materials in print runs of a few hundred copies. However, Materialecentret at CDH sometimes does.

As a national centre for visual and auditory special needs teaching materials, it is Materialecentret’s task to publish teaching, guidance and information materials to persons with a hearing loss, deaf people, deaf-blind people, sign-supported speech users and professionals within these fields. Therefore, materials are also being published for and about very small target groups - for example children’s books with signs in Arabic.

Materialecentret is financed through KaS under VISO. It follows that the centre offers free advice on - and delivers - guidance materials, books, games, films, CDs etc. to schools and other institutions that teach deaf-blind pupils, persons with a hearing loss and sign-supported speech users in accordance with the Danish Act on primary and lower secondary education and other teaching laws and statutory orders.

Day care centres, nurseries and day care providers with children with a hearing loss, deafblindness or sign-supported communication are other target groups for the materials. PPR consultants, counsellors and relatives are also considered while other interested parties can buy the materials which e.g. bilingual children and children with late, linguistic development might also benefit from.

Must match current needs

Materialecentret publishes more and more materials that are targeted at teachers and social educators in ordinary primary and lower secondary schools. Where children with severe hearing losses previously received special needs education, they are now CI-operated so that they are able to be in ordinary classes at the primary and lower secondary schools. At the same time, still more children with disabilities are being included in the primary and lower secondary school.

That development increased the need for information materials to the schools. It also increased the need for Materialecentret to retain and communicate knowledge within the areas of specialisation so that the target groups are being met in the best possible way in their hearing, speech and linguistic development, irrespective of whether they have been CI-operated, are sign language users or communicate through sign-supported speech.

In its efforts to match current needs, Materialecentret co-operates with professionals and parent representatives on the development of new materials just as the employees at the centre always are responsive when they receive inquiries and suggestions for new publications. The 11 employees cover all work facets from the development of ideas to layout and printing, and interest in the publications is big.

While Materialecentret distributed approx. 20,000 materials in 2011, approx. 57,000 were distributed in 2016 on the basis of conversations with the users regarding wishes and needs.

Much success with Tegnapp (sign app)

Materialecentret’s website, matcen.dk, has more than 450 printed and digital publications that can be ordered through the centre’s web shop. There are also various apps.

The possibilities of meeting the target groups with digital offers continue to increase. About five years ago, the centre e.g. launched Tegnapp that has become a great success. Tegnapp is a dictionary based on sign language where professionals and relatives can search signs and have them shown in small video clips.

Tegnapp contains approx. 16,000 video sequences, and the users themselves can add individual signs that they use when communicating with a sign language user. Tegnapp, which can be downloaded for free on smart phones and tablets, currently has approx. 37,000 user profiles.
Indispensable materials

As a frequent user of Materialecentret’s publications, Lisa Aalbæk from Byenkov belongs to the steadily growing group of relatives and professionals who demand the materials for sign-supported communication. Lisa Aalbæk is the mother of eight-year-old Kasper who was born with a rare chromosome disorder.

Kasper’s development is late, and he has cognitive, linguistic and communicative challenges. He has a great need for hearing as well as seeing and feeling linguistic concepts. If he hadn’t had the books and games with signs from Materialecentret, I don’t know what we would have done, says Lisa Aalbæk who has trained language with Kasper since he was an infant.

Much good from Tegnapp
Not only the printed materials have had - and continue to have - much impact on Kasper’s language training.

Tegnapp is entirely indispensable. I print out signs and put them in the children’s books that we read. Now that he started attending a remedial class, I also print out signs in his school books. There are three pupils in Kasper’s class who also use sign-supported speech. If our children are to be included, it’s important that the school and parents help each other and that there is a place where you can get resources such as at Materialecentret, says Lisa Aalbæk.

Co-author on books
Lisa Aalbæk trains with Kasper based on the Swedish Karlstad model where linguistic development is i.a. based on sign-supported speech in combination with pictures and writing. Through the years, Kasper and Lisa Aalbæk train word classes and grammatical rules etc. with reference to children with acquired deafblindness.

- It is amazing that you can approach Materialecentret with a new idea, and they are very responsive and ready to put it into practice. Together with another parent and two speech therapists, I wrote a series of Emma books where all words are supported by signs. We have now supplemented with books with word cards with signs. All words from the books are written on cards that are categorised so that each word class has its own colour. That makes it possible to talk about nouns, verbs, sentence structure, grammatical rules etc.

- I recently approached Materialecentret with a new idea. Our school children have a large need for help during their education, so it is the Alpha and Omega that Materialecentret can still help us have our new sign-supported speech ideas realised, says Lisa Aalbæk.

Kasper and Lisa Aalbæk train word classes and grammar with the new word cards that are a part of the Emma books.

Quality assurance of competences

Systematic competence development, knowledge development and knowledge sharing are crucial to CDH’s position as a leading organisation within the professional areas of deafblindness and hearing losses.

Through the years, CDH has built up a unique expertise within the professional areas of deafblindness and hearing loss. The competence development and knowledge sharing have always had high priority, and the centre has now implemented a process with even more focus on the development of knowledge and quality assurance of its services.

The background for the process work is i.a. that the centre now has new, national obligations. For many years, CDH has had the status of a national, comprehensive service to people with congenital deafblindness with extensive, special consultancy services and courses that are also targeted at children with acquired deafblindness.

Since 2014, the national obligations have increased as CDH has become a supplier to VISO that is a part of the directorate of social affairs. Among other things, it follows that CDH also offers national counselling and manages courses and educations with reference to children with a hearing loss. At the same time, the centre is national when it comes to education and housing facilities within the area of hearing loss.

Materialecentret at CDH is also national with obligations within the development and production of visual and audible special needs teaching materials for the two target groups.

Documentation of the effect
An important goal with the process work is to build up procedures for systematic knowledge acquisition so that the effect of the services can be documented to a higher degree. It is crucial to CDH to act up to the increasing requirements from the surroundings in relation to quality assurance and documentation, but it is also crucial that the continued competence development, internally as well as externally, is based on knowledge about the effect of the work.

Central course department
The course department at CDH is central in their efforts to strengthen knowledge development and to ensure the position of the centre as a leading service within the specialist areas of hearing loss and deafblindness. The consultants plan continuous courses and educations for newly hired employees and experienced employees based on each person’s professional level and current wishes for competence development.

The educational activities for the well over 300 employees may be internal as well as in the form of further education of teachers, social educators, social workers, nurses and other staff at university colleges, universities and other educational institutions.

Knowledge sharing across the many departments at the centre are assigned a high priority as interdisciplinarity is decisive to the effect of the efforts towards the target groups.

Courses across the country
Externally, CDH’s educational activities comprise a wide range of courses and educations across the country for educators, social educators, teachers and others who work with persons with deafblindness or hearing losses.

Among other things, CDH is the only provider of the basic education, the national elementary training and various further educations for staff at institutions for people with deafblindness. Parents and relatives are another big target group within the area of hearing loss as well as deafblindness.

Through the years, CDH has co-operated with the University of Copenhagen just as knowledge is exchanged and acquired through national co-operation with i.a. hearing clinics, international co-operation and participation in international conferences within the areas of specialisation.
PD project about partner competences

- It is characteristic for CDH that there is much focus on competences. Some of us are always at courses or in supplementary training, says Dorte Lindberg Jensen, social educator at Kloden and with 16 years of experience within the area of deafblindness - and now also with a diploma in special needs education (PD).

It was the course department at CDH that encouraged Dorte Lindberg Jensen to sign up for the diploma degree. Dorte Lindberg Jensen has taught internally at CDH for several years, i.a. in video analysis, and she has always been interested in the interaction between the social educator and the person with congenital deafblindness.

The desire to dive into that field and acquire new knowledge during the diploma programme was big, and her manager supported the idea. In that way, everything was ready for her to sign up for the education that is a part-time study with a weekly study day for two years.

Equal partners
The education gave Dorte Lindberg Jensen many new angles to her job, and the master project with the title “Ethics, partner competences and congenital deafblindness” emphasises where her focus is during her work at Kloden.

- Ethics and partner competence form the cornerstone at our work. When you have a double loss of senses, it can be very difficult to express and explain what it is that you want. That means that we might easily end up making decisions on account of the person with congenital deafblindness. The Norwegian psychologist, Per Lorentzen, says that in the work with people with deafblindness, we have to try to adjust the situation so that things will succeed for the other. I find that to be a good starting point.

- I consider my role as a social educator as being a partner in an equal partnership. The person with congenital deafblindness is a professional within deafblindness, so I also have to learn. We have to be equals. Historically speaking, there has been much focus on behavioural education in the work with persons with congenital deafblindness. We are now much more aware of relations. It is always possible to establish some form of dialogue by creating interaction. The dialogic perspective is a pillar in our work, says Dorte Lindberg Jensen.

Since Dorte Lindberg Jensen finished her PD, she has had presentation, i.a. for her colleagues at Kloden. Among other things, they have discussed how the can create a set of rules that is based on mutual understanding of ethics and values in their individual interaction with each person with congenital deafblindness. She also wrote an article that has been translated into English and sent to international periodicals and the plan is for her to communicate problem areas and conclusions of her PD project at a future, national conference on deafblindness.

CDH’s mission, vision and values

MISSION
CDH’s mission is to make sure that children, young persons and adults associated with CDH receive the best possible conditions to master their own lives with the preconditions that they have.

VISION
CDH wish to live up to and to be known for and recognised for having a leading role within the professional areas of deafblindness and hearing loss in Denmark. CDH will set the agenda regarding development of these two areas of specialisation.

VALUES
How do we want to do it?

- and also through protecting the users’ and employees’ well-being as a fundamental value of a good place of work in order to reach the best possible professional gain.

PROFESSIONALISM
- Always focus on the task

RESPEKT
- All the way

CREDIBILITY
- We do as we say

CDH wish to live up to and to be known for and recognised for having a leading role within the professional areas of deafblindness and hearing loss in Denmark. CDH will set the agenda regarding development of these two areas of specialisation.

Social educators and persons with congenital deafblindness are equal partners. We, the social educators, also have to learn, says Dorte Lindberg Jensen.
Facts on the services at CDH

Counselling - deafblindness
The consultants for people with deafblindness offer national, free special consultancy services (under the auspices of VISO/KaS) to approx. 95 children and young persons with congenital or acquired deafblindness. The consultants also offer consultancy services to approx. 135 adults with congenital deafblindness.

Education - congenital deafblindness
CDH’s education department offers individually adjusted education for pupils with deafblindness from the preschool class until 10th grade. Young people with congenital deafblindness can attend an STU education (specially organised education). Adult residents at CDH are offered education under the law of compensatory special education.

Accommodation - congenital deafblindness
CDH’s housing facilities for people with congenital deafblindness include Bøgehuset that is rated for 8 children, Ungdomshjemmet (11 places) and the facilities for adults, Danalien (14 homes) and Kloden (24 homes). The homes are situated close to the school and the activity and socialisation facilities so that a whole is achieved in everyday life.

Activity and socialisation - deaf-blind residents
CDH’s activity and socialisation facilities for young and adult residents have Skovhuset in Hammer Bakker at its disposal and also Aktivitetshuset that is situated by Danalien in Aalborg as well as C-huset by CDH’s buildings at Kollegievej in Aalborg.

Preschool counselling and school counselling - hearing loss
As a highly specialised service under VISO/KaS, CDH offers national, free preschool counselling and school counselling for relatives and professionals in the child’s immediate environment. The special consultancy service currently comprises approx. 40 small children and 135 school children.

Education - hearing loss
CDH’s education department manages individually adjusted education for pupils with a hearing loss from the preschool class until 10th grade. Young people with a need for visual communication are offered an STU education (specially organised education) while adults can participate in preparatory adult education, education for dyslexics and individually planned courses under the law on special needs education.

Respite care and housing facilities - hearing loss
CDH offers pupils with hearing losses respite care at Planethuset for one or more days a week and a few weekends and holiday weeks. CDH also has housing facilities (4 places) for young people over 18 with a hearing loss and further disabilities.

Treatment option
The treatment option at CDH includes examinations and treatment of children, young people and adults with a hearing loss or congenital deafblindness. The services of the department are managed by nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, visual therapists, hearing consultants, various technicians, a social worker, music therapist and mobility instructor. Add to that several medical specialists on a consultancy basis.

Materials
The national Materialecentret at CDH is financed through VISO/KaS and develops, produces and publishes digital and printed teaching, information and guidance materials. The materials are targeted at people with a hearing loss, deaf-blind people, sign-supported speech users and professionals within these areas.

Educations and courses
CDH’s course department implements a wide range of courses and educations across the country for educators, social educators, teachers and others who work with persons with deafblindness or hearing losses. Parents and relatives constitute another large target group. Internally, the department plans continuous educational activities for all employee groups.

Find more information about each service, triage, financing etc. at www.cdh.rn.dk

In addition to the already mentioned services and functions, CDH also has a service department and an administration. There is a total of 330 employees at CDH (2016).