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Our deafness didn't stop us becoming sibling kickboxing champions



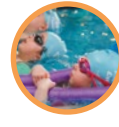
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Parent tips on travelling abroad with deaf children



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Staying safe in the water with hearing technology



National Deaf Children's Society

# families

## Santiago's swimming strategies

**“My advice to another deaf child would be to listen carefully, not with your ears but with your eyes!”**





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# My deafness didn't stop me...

## ...becoming a champion kickboxer

By Jenny Hamrick

**Fighting their way to the championships, sisters Limerick (10) and Lilly-Anne (9) have taken the kickboxing world by storm.**

In this year's Open English Championship, Limerick, who is moderately deaf, won the English champion title. Lilly-Anne, who is mildly to moderately deaf, won a silver medal. Both have qualified to represent England at the Unified World Championships in Italy.

When the girls first started kickboxing, mum Natalie met with their coaches, Kris and Liam, to discuss what support they would need. "Deafness in kickboxing was unheard of, or at least not widely publicised," she says. "We had to come up with our own plans as there was no one who could advise us."

Determined not to let anything stop the girls from enjoying kickboxing, the coaches made adjustments to support them. "In the beginning, I coached them visually by demonstrating the moves instead of vocally communicating with them at competitions," says Liam.

Both sisters use radio aids at school, and when their Teacher of the Deaf suggested using one for kickboxing, it made a big difference. At their next competition, both girls came home with medals for the first time, as having the radio aids made communicating with their coaches much easier.

However, other technology isn't always reliable. "If I get hit or kicked in the head, sometimes my hearing aids turn off," says Lilly-Anne. To compensate, their coaches switch back to visual coaching when needed.

Limerick and Lilly-Anne enjoy bringing more deaf awareness to kickboxing. "It's hard being deaf sometimes; people don't understand what it's like," says Limerick. "But I like showing people my colourful hearing aids and watching my mum and coaches explain to everyone how my radio aid works."

Both girls plan to continue kickboxing when they get older, and Limerick wants to compete in the Deaflympics. Their coaches are immensely proud of them. "Their hearing loss hasn't held them back in anything," says Kris. "They train hard and reap the rewards!"

➔ Find out more about making sports accessible for your deaf child at [www.ndcs.org.uk/hobbies](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/hobbies).

Interested in testing out a radio aid? Our Borrow to Buy scheme allows members to borrow a variety of Phonak products for up to 60 days. Apply at [www.ndcs.org.uk/b2b](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/b2b).

Limerick



Lilly-Anne



**Their hearing loss hasn't held them back in anything they've been involved with.**



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# Hello

Welcome to our summer issue! After two years of restrictions, it feels exciting to finally be able to experience the joys of the holidays this year.

One of those joys might be going swimming with your children, but there are some extra things to think about with a deaf child. You can read our cover story about Santiago on page 14 to find out the strategies his parents and teachers put in place to help him learn to swim. You can also read about how to protect your child's hearing technology in the pool on page 30. There are some very handy tips if anything is accidentally dropped in water too!

It might be the first year in a while that you're heading on a summer holiday. On page 22, three parents explain how they prepare for a trip abroad, including handy tips on getting through security with technology and taking part in activities away from home. I'm aware not everyone will be able to take a trip abroad this summer though, so one parent also adds her tips for making the most of holidaying at home.

Whatever you're getting up to this summer, let's all hope for some lovely sunshine and lots of fun with family and friends. If you want to get in touch or have any thoughts on this issue or future magazines, please feel free to email me at the address below.

*Kerrina*

Kerrina Gray, Editor  
✉ [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk)

The National Deaf Children's Society depends almost entirely on generous support from individuals and organisations. **The public is responsible for 95% of our income**, and without this we wouldn't be able to support families of deaf children and young people. See page 45 for more information on supporting our work.

## families

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**Jasmine's story**  
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**Elliot's story**  
how he's feeling proud to be the role model he didn't have growing up



**Lily's story**  
how she's used her deafness to become a photographer to the stars

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# NEWS

## Upcoming music workshops for babies and toddlers

We're excited to welcome families from all over the UK to our early years musical workshops taking place in person this summer.

Teaming up with Baby Beats, we'll discover how to use music to stimulate bonding, brain development, early communication and literacy skills, and listening skills. Come along, and your child can try out some musical instruments while you get ideas for how to use music at home.

You can also use the time to catch up with other families over a hot drink, and our advice and guidance officers will be on hand to answer any questions.

Sign up for an Early Years' Summer Music Workshop near you at [www.ndcs.org.uk/familyevents](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/familyevents).



## Bringing deaf students together

Lister Community School in Newham launched its Deaf Lounge Club earlier this year, which aims to help deaf students of all ages from the local area meet up.

At the first meeting, students bonded over bubbles, games and laughter while their families chatted over hot drinks and snacks. Lister's team of Teachers of the Deaf and educational communicators were on hand to liaise with families, alongside colleagues from Newham's Sensory Service and Paediatric Audiology. The club takes place five times a year during parents' evenings.

It's a great example of what can be achieved at a local level, and the school is looking forward to welcoming even more children, young people and their families to future club events. Well done all!

## Could your company help fundraise for us?

Our fantastic partnership with The Access Group has raised over £370,000 in two years, an incredible achievement that will set countless deaf children on the path to a positive future. It all started thanks to a staff nomination from one of our members.

Are you interested in supporting us through your company? We work with companies of all shapes and sizes to raise vital funds. From one-off activities like bake sales and skydives, to Charity of the Year partnerships, we're here to build a bespoke relationship with your organisation.

To learn more about the various ways we can work with your company, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/corporate-partnerships](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/corporate-partnerships) or send an email to [corporate.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:corporate.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk).



## Our summer superstar!

Dan (15) hasn't let his moderate to severe hearing loss hold him back from performing across the country as a star trombonist, and he's excited to play in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Brass Band's main concert this June. Dan prefers to take his hearing aid out when he plays and instead keeps an eye on his section leader for clues. "I'd like to see more children with hearing loss playing in a brass band," he says. "If you're really passionate about music, you need to find your own way."



## An update on transparent face masks

Three types of transparent face masks have now been approved for use in NHS health and social care settings across the UK. They can help deaf patients understand their doctors or other health professionals more easily and will be a game changer for many deaf children and young people. NHS trusts are now able to buy the masks, which can be used as an equivalent to the usual PPE masks.

Ask your audiologist, doctor or dentist to try wearing a transparent mask if you think it will help you or your child. Let us know how you get on by emailing [campaigns@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@ndcs.org.uk).

We also want to thank all the deaf young people, families, deaf professionals and other organisations who have worked hard to raise awareness on this important issue.

## Your voice is making a difference in Wales

Professionals in Wales are drawing up new quality standards for services that provide implantable devices, such as cochlear implants. If approved, these new standards will help make sure services are meeting key quality markers.

We want to say a big thank you to the families who took part in our survey for telling us what matters to you in accessing these services. You told us it was important for services to signpost you to ways you can connect with other families and to provide you with clear information.

Your feedback informed the discussions around the standards, and additions were made as a result. The draft standards are now being considered by the Welsh Government. We'll keep you posted.

## BSL on Newsround!

As part of the show's 50th birthday celebrations, CBBC's *Newsround* has started including British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation in their news bulletins each weekday. This started in April and is available to watch on the *Newsround* website.

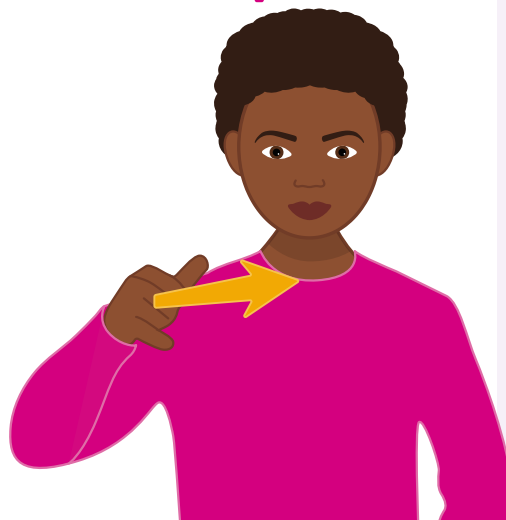


Two members of our Young People's Advisory Board (YAB), who've been campaigning for BSL on the show alongside 70 other deaf young people, went along to the 50th birthday party to celebrate the announcement.

"When it was announced that *Newsround* will be using BSL interpreters in their weekly bulletin, I was ecstatic," said Siena (16), who is profoundly deaf and uses BSL. "I felt like I'd actually served my purpose of being on the YAB, which is to make changes for all Deaf young people across the UK."

"This announcement means a lot to me, because now the younger Deaf generation will grow up having equal access to news to their hearing peers, and rightfully so. They have the right to know and understand information about the world around them. It's a major step in the right direction, and I hope more accessibility barriers will be broken to make sure future generations have an even better quality of life."

## Sign of the season Aeroplane



## Did you know?

Famous inventor Thomas Edison started losing his hearing when he was 12 and said it helped him avoid distractions and focus on work.

Words: Jenny Hamrick

## Let's talk

We've always made it our mission to listen to deaf young people and find out exactly what support they want from us. In 2022, when most things are available at the touch of a button or through a quick search on Google, we should have worked out that their number one request would be instant responses to the questions they ask.

Young people told us they wanted to be able to speak to an expert online – to ask about the technology and support they could get in their new Sixth Form, to find out where they could buy a clear face mask, and to ask for advice on how to give their teacher tips to make sure they look after their radio aid right.

So, earlier this year, we were pleased to launch our live chat service for deaf young people on our website the Buzz. It's completely free and allows young people to connect directly with our lovely Helpline team to ask anything they like. Please do encourage your child to visit [buzz.org.uk/live-chat](https://buzz.org.uk/live-chat) to get started.

Our live chat is really easy to use, and after each conversation your child will be emailed a copy so they can look back at the information or links provided. It's completely secure and confidential. I know I would have found this service very useful as a deaf young person. While friends and family were great in so many ways, they couldn't offer the specialist knowledge about deafness I really needed while navigating my teenage years.

Live chat is available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday (not including bank holidays). If we're offline, please remind young people that they can always contact Childline, which runs a 24-hour support service.

Happy chatting!

Susan

Susan Daniels OBE  
Chief Executive



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# Top tips...

## Getting a good night's sleep

Removing hearing technology can make it harder for deaf children and young people to fall asleep and stay asleep, and to wake up and not disturb others. Our experts suggest ways to make it easier.

**Key** ● Early years settings and primary school ● Secondary school ● Further education settings and university

**1** A snack before bed can help with sleep. Bananas or porridge are good as they're high in an enzyme called tryptophan which the brain converts into the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.

**Hannah, mum to Elodie (7) who's moderately deaf.**



**2** Light can disturb sleep, so we got blackout blinds. Try not to turn on the landing light, even if a bedroom door's closed. Our daughter uses a vibrating alarm clock, called Travel Tim, to wake herself up each day.

**Josie, mum to Maia (16) who has Treacher Collins syndrome and is moderately to severely deaf.**

**3** If your child struggles with a routine, use bedtime routine pictures – such as 'Bath', 'Story', 'Kiss', 'Bed' – on the bedroom wall. Gentle touches and increased light levels will help them wake without being startled.

**Keri Tebbit, sleep workshop manager.**



**4** A Groclock can help younger children who find it hard to judge when to get up. Free apps and software, available on Android (Sound Notifications) and iOS (Sound Recognition) can alert young people to noises at night.

**Gavin Songer, assistive technology officer.**

**5** If your child gets up at night and doesn't know their noise levels, leave visual reminders on the bedroom and bathroom door – a written note such as 'Shh! People sleeping!' or a picture showing something similar.

**Nicky, mum to Isabelle (4) and Jack (under 1). All are profoundly deaf.**

**6** Tell your child what you expect at night – not getting up until a certain time, or if they need the toilet, to do things gently (running water may be loud) – so they don't wake others.

**Nicola Corazzo, Raising a Deaf Child facilitator.**



**7** Using technology to wake you up, such as vibrating alarm clocks, smart watches and adapted fire alarms, can give you independence and peace of mind at night.

**Martin McLean, senior policy adviser.**



**8** At university, be open with your flatmates about your deafness. Explain you might not know if you're being too loud at night, and ask them to let you know. It helps keep everything friendly.

**Kirsty (19) who is moderately deaf.**



➔ For more information and tips, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep). To find out more about the technology mentioned in this article, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/technology](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/technology). If you're a young person living away from home for the first time, find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/independent-living](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/independent-living). We run events on sleep. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events) to find out more.

# Sara Says



## Talking about the future



Sara is mum to Sam (15), Matthew (12), Oliver (10) and Charlotte (8). Charlotte's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

📌 [www.facebook.com/DeafPrincessNI](https://www.facebook.com/DeafPrincessNI)  
🐦 @deafprincessni

“It's so important to me that she'll have a dream based on her likes, dislikes and skills, rather than her deafness.”

**Charlotte is only eight years old, so don't panic, I'm not planning her whole future right now!** However, she has started talking about it and it has made us start talking and thinking.

Like many of you, I watched Rose Ayling-Ellis on *Strictly Come Dancing* and felt so happy to see deafness and sign language on mainstream TV. I've found so many people have chatted with us about deafness since. Although Charlotte didn't want to watch all the shows, she wanted to know about Rose's results every week. When I told her that Rose was the winner, Charlotte simply said, "I knew she would win." It's wonderful to see this confidence from a young child, especially a young deaf child who's beginning to question why she's different and sometimes says she doesn't want to be deaf any more.

Over the last few years, Charlotte has aspired to several, quite varied jobs. Doctor, nurse, teacher and chef/restaurant owner are some examples, and yesterday she even added clown into the mix. I love that she doesn't see any barriers to the jobs she's aiming for. It's so important to me that she'll have a dream based on her likes, dislikes and skills, rather than her deafness. We're lucky to have lots of connections within the deaf community, both in person and through social media, which is really helpful for learning about adaptations and equipment that will assist Charlotte in breaking down any barriers.

Charlotte has also recently decided that she wants to learn more sign language so that she has the option of using an interpreter in the future if she

chooses. We're currently revisiting the regional British Sign Language (BSL) video clips on the National Deaf Children's Society's website to jog her memory.

The final dream that Charlotte has added recently is that she wants to get a hearing dog when she grows up so that it can tell her when her baby is crying. This followed a conversation between us about becoming a mummy. She's very excited for this at the moment as we're awaiting the arrival of a new cousin. When she was concerned that she wouldn't wake to her baby crying at night, I was able to tell her about a few different technological devices I knew of that might help her in that situation, and happened to mention hearing dogs too.

I've noticed that as Charlotte gets older, she's more determined to take control of her deafness, more interested in talking about her future, and more enthusiastic about outwardly showing her deafness and promoting her own communication needs. These are all things I'm so proud of.



For more information about careers for deaf children and young people, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/careers](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/careers).

Find out more about our campaign Deaf Works Everywhere at [www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere).

# Zahra's Zone

## The importance of inclusion



Some of my experiences have ranged from people shouting my name from different directions and laughing at my confusion as I try to decipher where the sound came from, to strangers rolling their eyes at me when I explain my deafness, as if I'm lying.

But here are some of the most common ones:

**"You speak well for a d/Deaf person."** What do you mean I speak well? Yes, I went through intensive speech therapy as a child, but why do you need to compliment me on it? We all speak differently and have different accents; it feels strange to comment on anyone's speech.

**"Wow! You don't look d/Deaf."** Someone may be trying to be well meaning here, but this is offensive. As 5% of our world's population has some form of hearing loss, how can deaf people have a 'different' look?

**"Why don't you wear your cochlear implant?"** Sometimes I like to opt out of the hearing world and not wear my implants. I would appreciate you respecting the choice I make and finding other ways to communicate with me. The onus is always on me to make the effort, which can be exhausting.

**"Do you really need the subtitles?"** Would someone who's reliant on glasses enjoy a movie without them? Captioning and subtitles make an enormous difference to my listening experience.

**"Why are you so loud/quiet?"** I sometimes physically can't gauge the sound of my voice, so when I'm told this, I feel awkward. Rather than

commenting on the volume of my voice, please just politely ask me to be a bit quieter/louder.

**"HAHAH you're SO off tune, how do you not know this song?"** I find music daunting; do you know what it takes for me to learn a single song? Firstly, I hear it being played and then have to ask someone to write down the name. Then I sit down at a later time, look up the lyrics and read through them several times in an attempt to memorise them.

**"Never mind, I'll tell you later."** This phrase is most d/Deaf people's pet peeve. It might not have been important, but saying this socially isolates a person. It only takes an extra few seconds to rephrase or repeat, which makes all the difference.

To all the D/deaf individuals reading this, you're probably nodding your head in agreement. I understand how tough it is to constantly remind your family, closest friends and peers of your communication needs – I'm tired of it too. But we need to work together with the hearing world to break down these unconscious biases surrounding disabilities.

Zahra (19) is our young person's columnist. She's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

If a person finds out I'm Deaf before they meet me, they tend to form their own preconceived ideas about how I communicate, how I sound and how I identify. I understand where they're coming from, I too have my own unconscious biases towards people with disabilities and try to continually check myself.



If you're a deaf young person who'd like advice on what to do when people say hurtful things, visit [buzz.org.uk/articles/wills-friendship-advice](https://www.buzz.org.uk/articles/wills-friendship-advice).



# Financial support for Holi

By Caity Dalby

**When Holi (3) was finally identified as profoundly deaf, after two and a half years of misdiagnosis, single mum Kate decided to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA).**



Holi's story

It was an uphill battle for Kate to get her daughter Holi diagnosed as profoundly deaf. "Until her diagnosis at two and a half, she wasn't doing well," Kate explains. "I'm a former nurse and mum to a hearing child, Mia (13), and I knew something was different and that Holi was deaf. She would do lots of high-pitched screaming and had no speech.

"It took until March 2021 for Holi to be referred to Great Ormond Street Hospital, where they diagnosed her and said she needed an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test. Once she was diagnosed, there was also a question regarding Holi's levels of hyperactivity and possible ADHD."

Armed with the diagnosis, Kate knew she'd need further support. "I hadn't given DLA a thought until Holi was diagnosed and I called the National Deaf Children's Society's Freephone Helpline. One of the first things we discussed was that I ought to claim DLA," Kate remembers. "I had already heard of the benefit, as my mum claimed it. I remember her finding the

forms a headache to complete."

DLA is a disability benefit which helps towards some of the extra costs of raising a child under 16 who's deaf or disabled. It's not means-tested, so it's not affected by how much you earn, the level of savings you have or any other benefits you receive.

"I applied because it's a non-means-tested disability benefit and I personally class deafness as a disability," explains Kate. "A lot of disabilities are hidden. When I read the form, I felt Holi fitted so many of the criteria."

There are two parts to a DLA award – Care and Mobility (getting around). It's possible for deaf children to get both parts even if they don't have any physical difficulties walking, but most deaf children will only be eligible for the mobility component after they turn five. "Even though she won't be able to get the mobility rate until she's five, one of the major issues with Holi is that she isn't danger-aware at all," says Kate. "It's a problem indoors and outdoors, due to her deafness and



## Financially, it's a lifeline for our family.

her potential ADHD, and means she needs closer supervision.”

When applying for DLA, you can download an application form from the Government's website, fill it in and post it back to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Alternatively you can contact the DWP to ask for a hard copy of the form to be sent to you in the post. If your application is successful then DLA will be paid from the date of the call.

“It was quite tedious filling in the form,” says Kate. “I did it bit by bit across four evenings so it wasn't as mind-boggling. It took 11 weeks for the decision to come back, which was fine as I'd applied by phoning and requesting a form so it was all backdated.”

When filling in the form, Kate made sure she collected evidence of Holi's needs. “I kept notes on what I do for Holi that I didn't do for Mia when she was little; I was amazed at the number of additional things I do.

“I was told that you can't assume the person that's picking up the form knows anything about deafness; it has to be spelled out for them. That was quite useful to know.”

Kate also included supporting evidence alongside the form. “I included two letters, one that had a clear diagnosis of deafness and the other with her audiograms,” she says. “It was proof of Holi's deafness and that they gave her hearing aids, and I'd mentioned in the form that she could easily open them and once managed to put a battery in her mouth. It showed I needed to keep a closer eye on her than on another child.

“I'd recommend putting the form aside for a few days when it's finished, then coming back to read it again to check you haven't made any mistakes or left anything out.

“It's quite a difficult process to go through. It focuses on all the negatives and paints such a bad picture of how your child's doing. But that's the sole purpose of it. You have to be honest about how bad or difficult it can sometimes be in order to get the support.”



Finally, the decision came through and Holi was awarded DLA. “I was so relieved, because a lot of people have to appeal and even appeal the appeal, and I was already dealing with fighting for Holi's Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. They're not reviewing her DLA award again until she's five.

“I was happy with what we got and, importantly, it has acknowledged her disability. Financially, it's a lifeline for our family as we're not well off at the moment. I'm a single parent, a student and I've not really got any other form of income.

“It's Holi's money, so it's helped to buy additional things she needs, to help close the gap her late diagnosis has left, that I might not otherwise have been able to afford as easily. I've bought her a peanut ball to help with her balance and coordination, and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) charts to help her communicate. Hopefully next year, it'll help pay for accommodation for the Elizabeth Foundation summer residential. The residential's a week-long programme for pre-school deaf children and their families.”



**For more information about DLA and to find out more about applying for the benefit for your deaf child, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/DLA](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/DLA).**

**We run information events on benefits. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events) to find out more. You might also want to visit the Elizabeth Foundation's website at [www.elizabeth-foundation.org](http://www.elizabeth-foundation.org); they provide education services for babies and pre-school children with all levels of deafness.**



**EARLY YEARS**

## Your summer checklist

### ✓ Preparing for primary school

Starting primary school can be an exciting but daunting step for families. If your child is starting school in September, there are things you can do to help prepare them now, such as starting a conversation with them about school and meeting the staff.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforprimary](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforprimary)



### ✓ Playtime tips and ideas

Children develop more during the first five years of their lives than at any other time. Making sure you provide one-to-one fun and stimulating activities for your child can really improve their emotional wellbeing and communication, and build bonds.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/playtime](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/playtime)



### ✓ Going on holiday

For many of us, our favourite childhood memories are from holidays. But holidays can pose their own challenges for deaf children, from preparing for airport security to packing your child's hearing technology. See page 22 for further tips too.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/holiday](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/holiday)





# Santiago's tips for swimming success

By Abbi Brown

**When Santiago (11) started learning to swim, mum Nathalie worked with his swimming teachers to come up with strategies to help him communicate in the pool.**



Santiago's story

As Santiago chats excitedly about the tropical fish and shiny shells he discovered on the family's last trip to Colombia, it's clear he's a natural in the water.

"He's like a fish!" laughs mum Nathalie. "He's always jumping off rocks and diving into caves. I think his deafness is a benefit. My husband can't dive too deep as it makes his ears hurt, whereas Santiago can keep going. He swims deeper than his dad!"

However, Nathalie and her husband, Cesar, haven't always felt so confident about letting Santiago in the water. "We learned Santiago was moderately deaf when he was four, and he started learning to swim soon afterwards," explains Nathalie. "I was worried about how he'd cope without his hearing aids in. Parents could only watch the swimming lessons from a designated area, so if anything happened, I wouldn't be able to jump in the pool and help. I had to trust the teachers to take care of him."

Santiago's older sister, Aisha, was already learning to swim at the same

leisure centre, so the family knew the staff who'd be teaching Santiago. "Having Aisha in the older group helped us feel more confident," explains Nathalie. "The teachers knew us from taking Aisha, and Santiago was used to seeing the different teachers, classes and pools."

"The staff were really friendly, and before Santiago started lessons, we had a meeting with them to discuss his needs. At the time, we didn't know whether Santiago's hearing loss might deteriorate, but the leisure centre said, 'We cater for everybody.'"

"One option was for Santiago to have one-to-one classes with a teacher who used British Sign Language (BSL), but they were expensive, and Santiago doesn't use sign language, so I wasn't sure that would help."

The family decided to put Santiago in mainstream group classes and worked with the teachers on strategies to help him communicate in the pool. "I asked the teachers to make sure Santiago could see their faces when they were talking, make eye contact



## We've taught him that his hearing loss makes him unique.

to get his attention, crouch down to his level, and use gestures as much as possible," explains Nathalie. "They also agreed to use exaggerated arm and leg movements to demonstrate different strokes. For example, if they were teaching front crawl, they'd exaggerate the movement, and use their fingers to show how many strokes to take.

"It worked really well. The teachers said that exaggerating their movements didn't just help Santiago, it also helped other children who had English as an additional language. During lessons, I'd often see the teachers give Santi a thumbs up to check he'd understood them, and he'd give one back. That helped me feel more comfortable."

Santiago took to swimming easily but found he struggled to swim in a straight line.

"Santiago's deafness also affects his balance," explains Nathalie. "The teacher told him to follow the tiles on the floor if he was swimming on his front, or the planks on the ceiling if he was swimming on his back."

But unfortunately, not all of Santiago's swimming teachers have been as helpful. "One week, Santiago's class had a substitute teacher," Nathalie says. "The teacher gave instructions to the group, but Santiago hadn't understood. When it was his turn, the teacher got cross that he didn't know what to do and shouted, 'Didn't you listen to me? Can't you hear me?'"

"I've raised Santiago to be proud of his hearing loss, but to have an adult shouting at him made him feel awful. I complained to the leisure centre and pointed out that lots of children have hidden disabilities which might not be obvious to the teacher. Luckily, the other teachers have been really friendly."

As Santiago got older, he began taking part in swimming competitions. "At competitions, the cheering confused me," remembers Santiago. "It was very loud. My sister was usually in the same competitions, and she'd tell me when it was my turn to race."

After Aisha stopped competing, Nathalie began printing out the competition timetable so that she could gesture to Santiago when it was his turn to race. With support from his family, Santiago has now won lots of competitions and proudly displays his first-place certificates in his bedroom.

"Hearing loss doesn't interfere with how your body works," explains Santiago. "Sometimes I think the hearing part of my brain has been put in the sports part instead!" In addition to swimming, Santiago is also a keen footballer, rugby player and table tennis player.

"We had a hard time a few years back when Santiago felt down about his hearing loss," remembers Nathalie. "He asked me why God had created him like this. Now that he's older, he's proud of his differences. We've taught him that his hearing loss makes him unique."

"We're Colombian, and when we go back to Colombia, he's treated as the 'cool kid' because he wears decorations on his hearing aids! In Colombia there's no NHS, so you have to pay for your equipment and appointments yourself. Santiago knows how lucky he is to have his hearing aids."

"My advice to a swimming teacher who's teaching a deaf child would be to exaggerate your arm movements and be patient," says Santiago. "My advice to another deaf child would be to listen carefully, not with your ears but with your eyes."

"And also have...?" prompts Nathalie. "Have... faith?" suggests Santiago. "I was going to say have fun!" laughs Nathalie. "But yes, you've got to have faith too. There's light at the end of the tunnel!"



For more advice about making swimming deaf-friendly, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/swimming](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/swimming).



PRIMARY YEARS

## Your summer checklist

### ✓ Going on days out

Going on a summer's day outing can be lots of fun for you and your child. Whether you're planning a day out as a special treat, to a wildlife park for example, or are staying closer to home and going out for a family lunch, read our tips and advice from other parents to help you and your deaf child prepare.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/days-out](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/days-out)



### ✓ Helping your child sleep

Sleeping problems are quite common in deaf children of all ages, but not knowing why your child is experiencing them can be frustrating. Don't worry, you're not alone. Read our round-up of possible explanations, tips on how to help your child and where to go for extra support.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep)



### ✓ The Quest for the Cockle Implant

Get involved with our book *The Quest for the Cockle Implant*. Join Coral and Angel on their journey; make your way through the maze, learn to fingerspell and pick up top tips for being deaf-friendly along the way!

[www.ndcs.org.uk/cockleimplant](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/cockleimplant)





# Jasmine's a singing sensation

By Kerrina Gray

**Jasmine (13) has always loved performing, but one bad exam experience very nearly put her off. Luckily, her supportive singing teacher helped turn things around.**



Jasmine's story

As a baby, Jasmine was constantly babbling and singing to her mum, Rebecca. "She had a really loud, powerful voice," Rebecca says. "As a toddler, she'd open the windows upstairs and sing out of the window. She didn't care what people thought and I loved that."

Rebecca, who is also deaf, explains that Jasmine failed her newborn hearing screening but the doctors weren't worried at the time. "She would turn and respond to the dog barking," she says. "It was when she was about six that they diagnosed her with mild hearing loss and gave her hearing aids."

Jasmine didn't have any problems at primary school, but things changed as she got older. "I found moving to secondary school quite difficult," Jasmine explains. "Primary school was very quiet and there were less kids, so I found it hard dealing with all the noise. Sometimes I had to leave lessons if it got too much."

"I also find it hard when I have my hair tied back and people stare at me or ask,

'What are those in your ears?'" Although Jasmine's school has generally been good at making adaptations for her, the family did have some issues with mask wearing during the pandemic. "There was one teacher who refused to remove her mask for me," Jasmine says. "She told me to ask my friends if I couldn't understand what she was saying."

"That wound me up," Rebecca adds. "The school also said if they saw students remove their masks they'd get in trouble. When I challenged that, they told me Jasmine was at school to learn and not to socialise, which I didn't agree with."

Things have been easier since the rules around face masks were relaxed, but Jasmine has always found her hobby of singing to be a way to unwind after a busy day at school. "I've liked singing since I was really little," says Jasmine. "The neighbours used to love that they could hear me making up my own songs!"

"In Year 7, I decided to start having singing lessons. I'd had piano lessons before, but I didn't enjoy them, so I was





# I believe music should be accessible to everyone.

quite nervous to start singing, but my teacher Jill is so nice. I can talk to her about anything. She gives me tips on singing and about life as well!”

When they first met, Jasmine explained to Jill that she had a mild hearing loss. “Jasmine doesn’t need many adaptations,” says Jill. “I just make sure the piano or track accompaniment is loud enough and angled towards her. When giving her instructions, I make sure we’re looking directly at each other.”

Jasmine was enjoying her singing lessons and Jill was impressed with her progress so decided she was ready to take an exam. “I was excited to take exams,” Jasmine says. “But I was really nervous too; I was scared I’d get my songs wrong. The first exam went well, it was pre-Covid-19 and I did it face-to-face.”

“She got a merit,” Jill adds. “The examiner was brilliant and made a lot of effort to make sure she could access the exam.”

It was during a virtual exam, Jasmine’s third, that things didn’t go to plan. “Jill submitted my songs on a video and also told the examiner that I was deaf,” explains Jasmine. “I felt reasonably confident because I’d heard them back and thought I did quite good. But I failed.”

“The feedback was generally unhelpful,” Jill adds. “I believe the comments made stemmed from a lack of appreciation that deaf people can sound a little bit different when they first start singing a song. It can take slightly longer for Jasmine to stabilise her internal pitch reference. Unfortunately, if a marker makes a swift judgement, I believe they’re at risk of missing much of the good in the performance. The feedback also concentrated on intonation, and I thought that was unduly harsh. I was angry as I believed she’d been discriminated against.”

Jill didn’t want to leave it there, so she wrote a letter of complaint to the examining board and got in touch with the National Deaf Children’s Society



to ask for advice. We explained that examiners should make reasonable adjustments to allow deaf students to access exams fairly. “With support from staff at the National Deaf Children’s Society, I’ve been in communication with the examining board, and I’ve been pleasantly surprised by them. They’ve been in touch with us to ask for advice and have begun a review of their disabled learner’s policy.

“I believe music should be accessible to everyone. By raising the issue, I was hoping to redress the balance for deaf candidates and educate examiners on how to assess them more fairly.”

Jasmine isn’t going to let one bad exam experience put her off singing. “I’m still doing singing lessons,” she says. “I hope in the future I can do theatre shows at school and maybe even be a professional singer.”

And with her mum and supportive singing teacher behind her, it’s likely Jasmine will go far.

“Deafness is a hidden disability,” Rebecca says. “One of the hardest challenges we’ve faced is having Jasmine’s needs taken seriously. She may look like she’s coping well but sometimes it can be a struggle. I’m grateful to Jill for highlighting this to the examining board.”

“I hope Jasmine continues to love singing and music,” Jill adds. “I hope that she and I can have confidence that in the future she’ll get a fair deal in all her assessments.”



**For more information and tips for accessing music, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/performing-arts](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/performing-arts). If you think your child has been discriminated against in a performing arts exam, please do contact our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880 or at [www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline).**

## SECONDARY YEARS



### Your summer checklist

#### ✓ Hobbies

With a few adaptations, deaf children can benefit from taking part in all sorts of different activities. Read our tips and advice from other parents about helping deaf young people enjoy hobbies, such as team sports, Scout groups, musical instruments and performing arts.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/hobbies](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/hobbies)



#### ✓ Preparing for the move to secondary school

Changing schools is a challenge for any child, but for deaf children, it can feel overwhelming. If your child is moving to a new school in September, there are lots of things you can do to help them to prepare, such as practising the journey to school. Turn to page 28 for more information.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforsecondary](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforsecondary)



#### ✓ Bullying

While a lot of children and young people won’t face issues with bullying, some will. Read our advice on what you can do to help and how you can support your child if they’re being bullied. You’ll also find tips on our webpage for working with their school.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingadvice](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingadvice)





# Proudly representing two communities

By Jenny Hamrick

**As a transgender man who's moderately to severely deaf, Elliot has faced many challenges. But he's proud to be the representation of diversity he didn't have when he was younger.**



Elliot's story

**Elliot (22) remembers the exact moment he became deaf.** "I was three," he recalls. "I was walking through a shopping centre with my dad when suddenly my hearing dropped. It was like being underwater – everything was muffled."

Unsure what was happening, Elliot didn't tell his family about his hearing loss at the time. He became such a good lip-reader that it wasn't until he was five, when his teachers mentioned he was struggling in class, that his parents took him in for testing and he was identified as deaf.

Elliot received hearing aids a year later but had difficulty with them initially. "They were too loud, especially in the playground, and I was too scared to take them out by myself," he says. "My parents said my whole personality changed. Instead of going out and playing, I would sit in the library. School could be quite isolating."

Elliot soon stopped wearing his hearing aids and instead relied on his lip-reading skills and residual hearing. However, when he went to

grammar school at 13, he struggled with concentration fatigue due to the increased workload. "My parents noticed I was coming home exhausted because I had to work so much harder to keep up," he says. Because Elliot was older, he tried hearing aids again and this time had more success. "Getting hearing aids made a massive difference, and I couldn't imagine life without them now," he adds.

It wasn't only in school that hearing aids made a difference. As a musician, who taught himself to play the piano when he was only 10, getting hearing aids was transformational. "Before I



**I'm excited to keep being the representation I didn't have when I was younger.**

got hearing aids, I was uncertain of my music,” he says. “I love trying to work out how to play a tune by ear, but I often needed someone to tell me if I was getting it right, or I relied on vibrations and just hoped it sounded OK. When I got hearing aids, that changed drastically for me because I could hear myself singing. I could hear the echo and vibrato of my guitar – sounds that I’d never known existed before.”

However, Elliot’s hearing aids caused problems for him again only a few years later when, at 17, he started his gender transition. “I never expected my deafness and my transition to intersect,” he says. “The first thing I noticed was that I had to get used to hearing my voice all over again. Lower frequencies have more vibration, so when my voice was dropping, I could feel my voice resonating in my chest and through tables and the back of chairs.

“The second thing I noticed is that when I went on testosterone, my face kept changing shape, and my hearing aid moulds were no longer fitting my ears. They started to whistle because too much air was getting in. It was very uncomfortable and unpleasant.”

Elliot stopped wearing his hearing aids while he waited for an appointment to get new moulds. Unfortunately, the whistling got bad only a month before the pandemic hit and the UK went into lockdown. He was stuck living alone for weeks, unable to play and hear his music. It took nine months for Elliot to finally be able to get an appointment to get his hearing aids fixed.

“It would be good for audiologists to know that trans people might need to get their moulds refitted more regularly so they can be more accommodating,” Elliot says. “It would have helped me prepare better if I’d known ahead of time that that could happen.”

Elliot’s experience with his hearing aids while on testosterone is only one example of why more representation of diversity is needed within both the LGBTQ+ and Deaf communities. “LGBTQ+ Pride events could be more accessible,” Elliot notes. “For example, is the Pride parade route wheelchair friendly? Are there British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters booked? And the same goes for the deaf community. How do you say what your pronouns are or what your gender identity is in BSL?”

As a content creator for both the GAY TIMES and the Buzz, our website for deaf young people, Elliot uses his experiences,



and those of others, to bring awareness to issues affecting both trans and deaf people. Recently, he collaborated with a deaf friend to create a series of TikTok videos showing how to explain your gender identity in BSL. “Social media has been great in allowing people to interlink and share stories and experiences,” he says. “Representation is important because it makes people more aware or helps them feel less alone. When I was growing up, I didn’t see representation of myself – in trans-related stuff, in deaf-related stuff, let alone the two mixed together. I’m excited to keep being the representation I didn’t have when I was younger.”

Elliot has advice for other deaf young people who are struggling with their gender identity too. “The first thing is that there’s absolutely no rush to work it all out right now,” he says. “You can do as much exploration as you need, and you can change your mind at any time.

“The second thing is that if you’re going through a tough time right now, it will get easier with time. The LGBTQ+ community is ready to welcome you with open arms, and there are people who very much love and accept you for who you are.”



**If you’re a young person, you can find advice and support on gender identity and coming out on the Buzz website at [buzz.org.uk](https://www.buzz.org.uk).**

**It’s Pride Month this June. You can visit Mermaids [www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](https://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk) and Stonewall [www.stonewall.org.uk](https://www.stonewall.org.uk) for more support for LGBTQ+ children, young people and their families.**



## Your summer checklist

### ✓ Deaf identity

There’s no right or wrong way to be deaf. How you identify as a deaf person is unique to you. For your child, working out their deaf identity can help them feel proud of who they are and take ownership of their preferred communication style.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-identity](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-identity)



### ✓ Deaf Rainbow UK

The journey to becoming who you are as a deaf transgender or non-binary person can be challenging and emotional. Deaf Rainbow UK provides information and resources for deaf LGBTIQ+ people. You can find advice and guidance on navigating the world in English and British Sign Language (BSL) on their website.

[www.deafrainbowuk.org.uk/trans](https://www.deafrainbowuk.org.uk/trans)



### ✓ Moving to adult audiology

If your child is preparing to move to adult audiology, they might feel unsure about what to expect. They should be offered an appointment with adult audiology services before paediatrics discharge them.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/adult-audiology](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/adult-audiology)



# Deaf works as a photographer

Photos by Eva K Salvi

## Lily's a photographer to the stars

By Abbi Brown

**From photographing for the National Portrait Gallery to photographing the legend that is Paul McCartney, Lily's learned to make her deafness her superpower.**



Lily's story

As she chats about her experience of photographing Paul McCartney, Lily's career as a photographer seems to be a star-studded success.

"I'm actually a Rolling Stones fan myself!" Lily laughs. "Paul was such a nice man; he shook hands with everyone on set and was really cool. That was definitely a career highlight!"

But behind the scenes, Lily's success hasn't always been easy. "I've always wanted to be a photographer," remembers Lily, who has Pendred syndrome, a genetic disorder which affects the thyroid gland and causes childhood deafness.

"My dad's an actor and my mum was a casting director, so I grew up in a creative household. From a young age, I realised that photography was a way of communicating with the world which didn't require sound. I'm a very visual person. I think my deafness is part of the reason why I love photography."

By the age of nine, Lily, who began losing her hearing as a baby, was profoundly deaf and was offered

cochlear implant surgery. "My family were very supportive," Lily says. "They didn't force me to have the surgery. They let me decide for myself."

After being fitted with a cochlear implant, Lily went to a performing arts secondary school. "My parents made sure that I had a really good education and belonged to all the after-school clubs. They wanted me to feel included. I did lots of sports, played piano and percussion, and had a notetaker and extra time in exams. I went on to study Photography at A-level and then at university."

However, after graduating from university, Lily struggled to find work. "Like many industries, the photography world is dominated by white men," she explains. "As a deaf woman of colour, I didn't fit the stereotype. I applied for lots of jobs but kept getting rejected, which affected my confidence. I felt uninspired and unmotivated."

"I was also self-conscious about my deafness. I only applied for jobs where I thought the environment would be quieter. I was always trying to fit in with



## Today, I celebrate who I am.

the crowd, wearing my hair down to hide my cochlear implant.

“One day, my mum said, ‘You’ve just got to get out there and take photos.’”

Lily arranged to take a portrait of the painter John Keane. The shoot marked a turning point in her career. “A couple of years later, the National Portrait Gallery contacted me to ask if they could buy the portrait for their permanent collection! From there, I got to meet other artists and took photos of them.”

Now an established photographer who’s worked with the likes of Damien Hirst, Rita Ora and Thandiwe Newton, Lily believes that her deafness is a benefit.

“I shoot with analogue cameras which are different to digital cameras because, with each shot, you have to take your time before you take the photograph. You look through the camera in a different way. You really observe the world.

“Because I lip-read, I’m very aware of people’s body language. My work involves meeting many different people. I have to get to know the person I’m photographing quickly to decide how to work with them. My deafness helps me to pick up visual cues about a person’s character and how to portray them on film. Lip-reading is my superpower!

“Now, I’m more vocal about my deafness. I wear my hair up on purpose so that people can see my cochlear implant. When I walk onto a shoot, I explain that I’m deaf straight away. That way, people know that if I seem to be ignoring them, I’m not being rude.”

On shoots, Lily works with assistants who can help with communication if needed. “They’re my ears!” Lily laughs. She has an agent who handles phone calls, and was recently fitted with a new cochlear implant which connects to her iPhone via Bluetooth. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Lily asked the people she worked with to wear clear face masks to help her lip-read.

“I’ve realised that the more open you are about yourself and your needs, the better people will understand



you,” she explains. “Before I had my Bluetooth setting, I’d ask clients to email information instead of calling me, because I couldn’t hear the phone. Lots of hearing people don’t like talking on the phone anyway!”

Now, Lily is proud of her identity. “Growing up, I was told I was half black and half white – not one or the other. I didn’t see many people like myself. Today, I celebrate who I am. I’m Lily!

“Over my career, I’ve learned not to take ‘no’ as a final answer. I’ve always wanted to prove people wrong. Now, I see being rejected as a positive thing. It makes me more determined to continue with my idea, but maybe try it from a different angle. The Black Lives Matter movement has also opened a lot of doors.

“I worked hard at school, but 10 years on, nobody asks what grades I got! If you don’t do well in exams or think you might have picked the wrong subjects, it’s not the end of the world. You can always try new things in the future.

“My advice to a deaf young person who wants to become a photographer is to just pick up a camera and start taking photos. You don’t have to go to art school or university; you can learn how to use a camera on YouTube. Just start taking pictures and see what happens.”



See Lily’s work at [www.lilybertrandwebb.com](http://www.lilybertrandwebb.com) or follow her on Instagram @lilybw.

To get deaf-specific careers advice and find out more about your rights in job-seeking and in the workplace, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/workandcareers](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/workandcareers). You can also join our campaign Deaf Works Everywhere at [www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere).



## YOUNG PEOPLE: CAREER JOURNEYS

### Your summer checklist

#### ✓ How do I find a job?

With the right support, deaf people can work almost anywhere they want, but looking for a job can be difficult. There’s lots of information and guidance, visit our webpage for our top tips.

[www.ndcs.org.uk/findajob](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/findajob)



#### ✓ Tips for travelling

Whether they’re going away for a week with friends during the holidays or taking a gap year, travelling is a fantastic way for a deaf young person to explore the world and increase their independence. Being deaf means you may face additional challenges, but it shouldn’t stop your adventures!

[www.ndcs.org.uk/travel](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/travel)



#### ✓ Extra support for job-hunting

If your child is aged 16 to 24 and claiming Universal Credit, they can get extra help to find a job through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Youth Offer which offers work-related training, work experience, apprenticeships and employability coaching.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/help-to-find-work-for-universal-credit-claimants-aged-18-to-24](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-to-find-work-for-universal-credit-claimants-aged-18-to-24)





## make travelling with my child easier?

As we approach holiday season, three parents explain how they prepare for a trip abroad and one gives her tips for spending the holidays at home.



Imogen

**Nicola is mum to Imogen (10) who's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

My mum lives in Dubai, so we go there about once a year. On the plane, Imogen takes her implants out because of the loud noises and changes in air pressure. In-flight entertainment isn't usually subtitled, so we take her iPad, colouring activities and books.

Last time we went away, Imogen's eardrum perforated on the way home which was painful. I explained this to the airline, and they were fantastic. The air hostess brought Imogen sweets to suck during landing. We were allowed off the plane first and taken through security quickly so that she could be seen by First Aid.

Wherever we go, I ring ahead to explain the support we'll need. It means I'm less anxious, which makes Imogen more relaxed. For example, I once took Imogen swimming with dolphins on holiday. I explained when I booked it that she was deaf. We arrived early so that I could watch the security video first, and then I could sign it for her.

My biggest fear when we're away is losing her while she has her implants out. She's got a bracelet that says, 'My name is Imogen and I'm deaf, please phone my mum,' with my number on. If I lose sight of her, I know she can ask for help.

Imogen adds: "It doesn't matter if you can't hear, you can still have fun, go swimming and do all the other things."



Ivy and her dad

**Marnie is mum to Ivy (7) who's profoundly deaf, wears a cochlear implant and uses British Sign Language.**

On a recent trip to Greece, Ivy enjoyed exploring the ferry and looking at the view. Ferries are noisy and windy, so we plugged Ivy's Roger Pen into her iPad to watch films and used it as a radio aid when we were exploring.

We're careful to tell Ivy our plans because she doesn't pick them up from overhearing our conversations. The first couple of times we went abroad we made visual, step-by-step guides of what was going to happen.

We also show her pictures of where we're going and explain what's going to be different. We're clear about which countries use different spoken and sign languages. We explain that if someone speaks to her in a different language, she shouldn't be worried if her normal strategies don't work – Mum and Dad don't understand, either!

Before going to Greece, we watched YouTube videos of phrases in Greek sign language and looked up the sign names of Greek gods and goddesses. I think it's a brilliant way of raising awareness that there are deaf people everywhere.



➔ For tips about independent travel, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/independenttravel](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/independenttravel).

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme provides people with invisible disabilities, such as deafness, with a sunflower-patterned lanyard to wear. This helps staff identify those who might need extra support. Sunflower lanyards are available from all major UK airports and most stations and supermarkets.

**Kate is mum to Xander (10) who's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

The Covid-19 pandemic has been hard for everyone. We're all weathering the same storm, albeit in different boats. Our boat contains two boys with different additional needs, a 'clinically extremely vulnerable' Mummy, Daddy and 20 pets! We've spent most of the past two years shielding at home.

The school holidays became a chasm of time. Last summer, we planned different activities for each week. For example, we had an Egyptian week where we wrote silly sentences in hieroglyphs! When it was sunny, we enjoyed walks, treasure hunts and playing in the garden. On rainy days, we

stayed inside and made murals, took part in online sensory theatre sessions and a Summer Reading Challenge, watched online tours of zoos and museums, learned to crochet, and did random acts of kindness like writing letters to care home residents.

We joined Oak Academy, Twinkl and our local toy and Lego libraries for cheap or free accessible resources and toys. We also learned to celebrate everything, like building a bee hotel on World Honeybee Day!

If you're shielding at home this summer, my advice is to be flexible. It's not easy and not every day is a success, but if you plan ahead, stay positive and be creative, it's possible to keep everyone happy at home – mostly!



**Xander, Kate and Rowan**

**Lynn is mum to Jamie (12) who is moderately to severely deaf and wears a bone conduction hearing implant (BCHI).**

When we go abroad, we usually travel by plane. Jamie has a small bag to carry his BCHI batteries, steroid cream and scissors, which we keep in our hand luggage – never put hearing aid batteries in the hold! At security, we're usually pulled aside for one thing or another. I have an Oticon card explaining that Jamie has abutments in his skull. If you're pulled aside, don't panic. Just remember, you're not in the

wrong and the airport staff are just doing their job.

We leave plenty of time to get through baggage and security. Rushing at the airport adds to the stress of going on holiday for both you and your child.

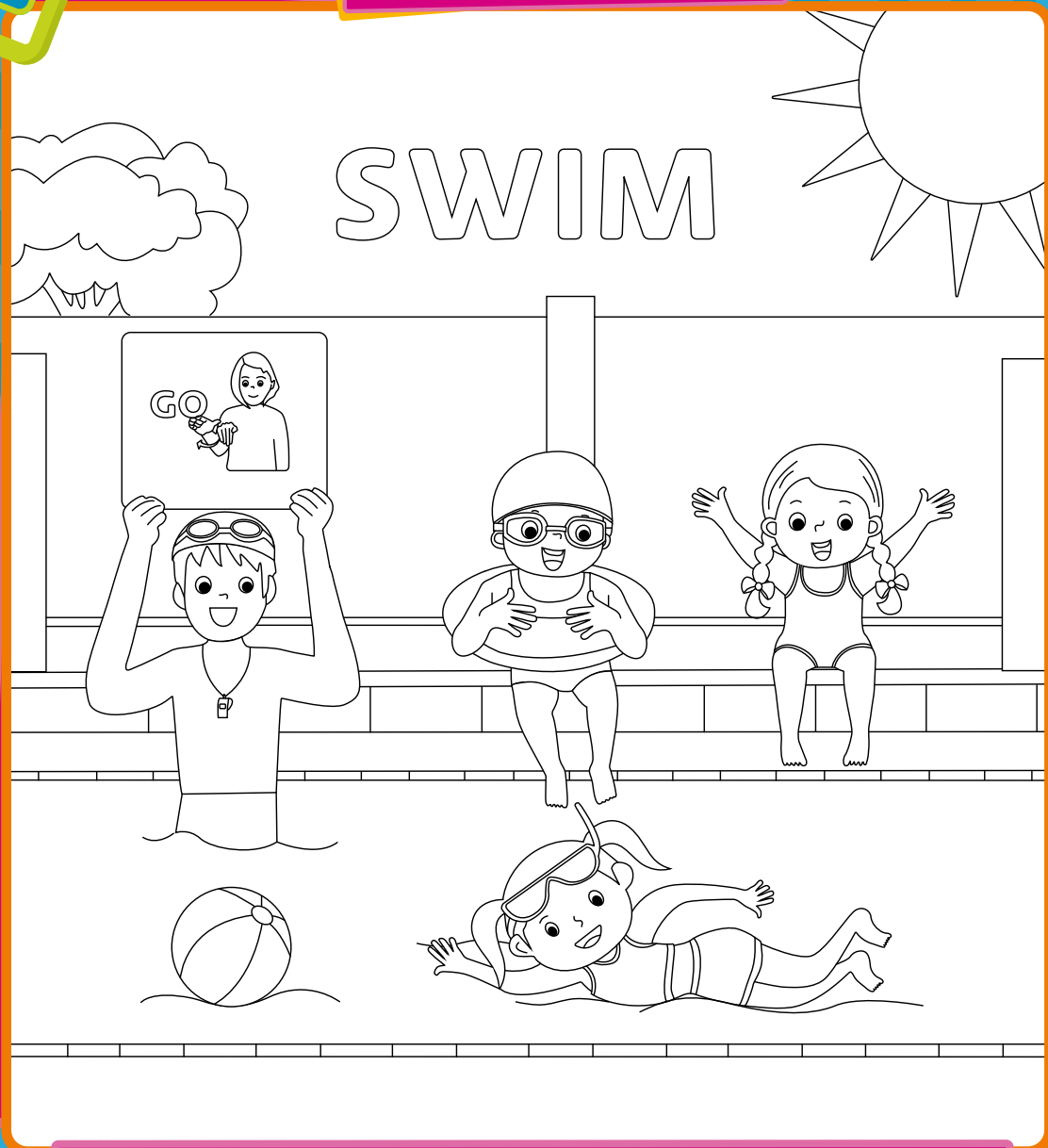
If Jamie gets lost, his back-up plan is to stand against the nearest wall, and I'll find him. We take a photo every morning, so I can always remember what he's wearing. I'm lucky; I've never had to worry about Jamie running off. His deafness means he's always looking for me to explain things, so he tries to stay within sight.



**Jamie**

Welcome to Scribble Club – our activity section for deaf children just like you.

## Colour in



These children are learning to swim in the summer sun. They've had to take their hearing aids out as they can't get wet, so they're using signs and words to communicate with each other. The boy in the rubber ring is signing 'ready' – he must be about to jump in! Do you like to swim too?





# Doncaster School for the Deaf

We are a small, friendly school for Deaf pupils aged 4 to 19 years based in Doncaster, South Yorkshire.

Our pupils are taught in small classes led by qualified Teachers of the Deaf and specialist teaching support staff, who have excellent signing skills. High quality teaching accelerates pupil progress and they thrive in this environment.

- Pupils achieve a range of qualifications, including GCSEs, and transition onto further education
- Our residence is consistently recognised by Ofsted as outstanding
- We teach the national curriculum, BSL and Deaf Studies
- We have an experienced team of Speech and Language Therapists, an Audiologist, Nurse and an Occupational Therapist



## Doncaster School for the Deaf

Established 1829

Leger Way, Doncaster DN2 6AY

[e secretary@ddt-deaf.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ddt-deaf.org.uk) | [w www.deaf-school.org.uk](http://www.deaf-school.org.uk) | [t 01302 386 733](tel:01302386733)



# CHOICES provided by CUED SPEECH UK

Registered charity number 279523

Scan the QR code to email  
[info@cuedspeech.co.uk](mailto:info@cuedspeech.co.uk)



**C**ommunication. We talk about language and communication and how this develops in the early years and what you can do to help your child.

**H**earing technology. We give you a chance to discuss the technology that is available and give a hands-on experience of basic 'care and repair'.

**O**pen discussions in a supportive environment. Ask all the questions that you don't have time to ask in appointments.

**I**nformation about all the different professionals you will meet and how they can help you.

**C**ued speech. We give you a taster of how Cued Speech works to support English and a pathway to learn the whole system and support to use it at home.

**E**mootional well being. We give you a safe space to talk about your feelings and concerns and find support among friends.

**S**igning. We give parents some basic signs that they can use straight away at home and provide a pathway for further training in BSL.



**A free six week programme for parents of deaf children aged between 0 and 4 years of age**

Designed to help parents navigate and explore the available communication and language choices. At the end of the course you will be better able to make an informed decision about how to best meet the individual needs of your child. The course is delivered in regions across the UK and online from October. We can reimburse your childcare costs.

**T** 01803 712853 **E** [info@cuedspeech.co.uk](mailto:info@cuedspeech.co.uk) **W** [cuedspeech.co.uk](http://cuedspeech.co.uk)

# Ask the expert

Each issue, a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Jon, a disability employment adviser, shares his thoughts.

## What does your job involve?

I work with people claiming different benefits, with employers and with training providers. The main part of my role is to help people with disabilities or health conditions to get all the support they need to move into training or employment.

Recently, I helped a deaf lady attend an Interview Skills and Confidence-Building course. I contacted the provider and discussed her needs with them, and they agreed to do one-to-one sessions with a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter to support.

## What are the most common questions you hear from deaf young people?

What support is there? How can I access this support? Will people know to face me when talking to me? Can I get a BSL interpreter to come with me to an interview? Or they might say, "I don't want to keep telling everyone I'm deaf all the time."

My advice would be – never be afraid to ask questions. We're always more than happy to listen, give advice and help find answers for you.

## What difficulties can some deaf young people face in getting jobs?

A lot of young deaf people I speak with aren't aware of all the support that's available to them when looking for work and once they're in work. If you speak openly and honestly to your work coach and to us, we'll do our best to help you

get this job and overcome any barriers.

## Deaf young people may have concerns that their employer won't be deaf aware. What is your advice on this?

We can help by giving information on Disability Confident employers who have made a commitment to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. Also, if you raise your concerns with us, then we can contact the potential employer.

## What are your top tips for deaf young people who are job hunting?

Research the Access to Work scheme, which can help with specialist equipment and support. Make sure your CV is individual to you and tailor it to the role. Research the company and practise interview skills with friends. Finally, have self-belief – remember your worth and that you can do this!

## What's the best and most challenging part of your job?

The best part of my job is helping people gain confidence and self-belief, and witnessing the change in them once they've achieved their goal. I would say the most challenging part of my role is meeting people who've lost all belief in themselves and their abilities. Thankfully, I'm able to help them and ultimately give them the confidence and support to transform their lives for the better.



Jon,  
disability  
employment  
adviser



**Have self-belief – remember your worth and that you can do this!**



The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a YouTube channel called DWPSign with more information on job hunting. For more advice, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool) and check out our campaign [www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere).

# Education & learning

## Embracing change

By Emma Fraser (Teacher of the Deaf)

**As we approach the summer holidays, you and your child might be starting to think about the next school year. Many deaf children can feel some anxiety about transitioning to the next stage of education but there are lots of things you can do to help make the change easier.**



Change is a normal part of life, creating new and exciting opportunities for children as they travel into the next stage. But education transitions can also be challenging – emotionally, socially and academically. Whatever stage your child is at, there are lots of things that parents and teachers can do to help deaf children prepare for and cope with transitions, building resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem.

### Why might my child find transitions difficult?

Transitions mean no longer doing things in a way that is familiar to you, instead taking on board new routines, language, relationships and communication environments. For deaf children, who are sometimes working hard just to keep on top of everyday life, any changes to routine can be a huge demand on their resources. Personality also plays a big role in how children meet the demands of a transition; some thrive on new experiences, but others will need to dig deep.

### Are some transitions more difficult than others?


Most parents find starting school, moving to secondary school and moving from education into work are the most difficult times for their child. But any transition, however small, can create anxiety for deaf children – even things

like moving class or having a new teacher. Sometimes this is because they are remembering another time when a transition didn't go well or wasn't properly planned for.

### What can I do?

You're central to supporting your child through times of transition. Here are some ideas of ways you can support your child.

- 1. Plan for transition:** Decide what you can do, what your child can do and what the school can do. We have school transition plans with information on how to plan for the next stage in our deaf-friendly resources for school and further education at [www.ndcs.org.uk/nextsteps](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/nextsteps).
- 2. Create opportunities for your child to link up with the new setting and meet key people:** Our Education and Learning pages will give you lots of ideas on what you and your child may want to find out more about before they start or move schools. Visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforprimary](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforprimary) for more information.
- 3. Ask about transition plan meetings:** If your child is 13 or 14 and they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, statement of additional support needs (ASN) or additional learning needs (ALN), their school or local authority may hold a transition plan meeting. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/transitions](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/transitions).

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4. **Check in and find out how your child is feeling:** Children and young people who recognise change as stressful and who then seek support often cope better. Deaf children may struggle to label their emotions or explain clearly what they're feeling, so it's good to help them express their thoughts. We have lots of information on supporting your child's emotional health and wellbeing at [www.ndcs.org.uk/childmentalhealth](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childmentalhealth).
  5. **Discuss the things your child is worried about:** This is a good opportunity for your child to practise problem-solving skills. For example, if your child is worried about how to tell someone new that they're deaf, practise having the conversation at home or with a trusted adult they know.
  6. **Record the things that your child is looking forward to as well:** Reminders of aspirations and goals will help your child focus on what they want to achieve. Personal passports are a great way of sharing information about goals and aspirations, as well as providing information about deafness or communication preferences. You can find a template for a personal passport at [www.ndcs.org.uk/passports](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/passports).
  7. **Develop 'school readiness' and life skills:** There are certain skills which will help your child to be successful at school, college or work. For little ones, it might be as simple as being able to tell someone if they can't hear. Older children may need to practise self-advocacy skills, such as talking about their communication preferences. The Buzz, our website for young people aged 8 to 18, is a great place to find information and support, and speak to other young people about their experiences. Go to [buzz.org.uk](http://buzz.org.uk) with your child to sign up for free.
  8. **Make time for hearing technology:** Planning for your child's hearing technology is important at all transition points. Check with your child's audiologist and Teacher of the Deaf that they have the hearing technology they need and that your child is happy with it and has the skills and support they need to manage it. We have lots more information on technology that can support your child at school or in the workplace at [www.ndcs.org.uk/technology](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/technology).
  9. **Promote independence:** Transitions provide your child with opportunities to become more independent. Encourage your child to complete jobs and activities at home, such as organising their school bag, buying something from a shop or planning a simple journey. This will help to build their independence. You can also signpost young people to information where they can find out about careers or Access to Work. We have lots of information on planning for the future at [www.ndcs.org.uk/yourchildsfuture](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/yourchildsfuture).
  10. **Support friendships:** Deaf children may find friendships take longer to establish and may miss their old friends more. Encourage your child to keep in touch with old friends or keep up with familiar activities, while supporting them to give new adventures a go. Good relationships during times of change can help deaf children navigate new challenges and experiences.

➔ **There's information available to support you and your child with transitions. Check out the Anna Freud website at [www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources](http://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources) and Place2Be at [www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers](http://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers).**

## Supporting your child's education this summer

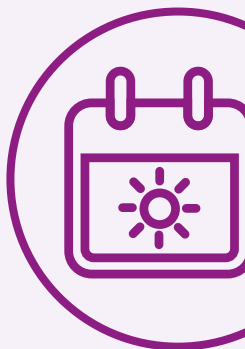
### ✓ Helping your child to learn

Parents are a child's first teacher. Our webpage has loads of ideas on how you can support your child's learning at home, including through language development, activities and hearing technology care. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/learningresources](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/learningresources) to find out more.



### ✓ Summer learning

All sorts of fun summer activities are learning opportunities. Find out how you can make a big difference to your child's learning journey at home during the summer holidays, through games, activities, routines and having fun! We have lots of tips and ideas at [www.ndcs.org.uk/homelearning](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/homelearning).



### ✓ Staying safe online

Over the summer break, your child may be spending more time online, gaming or communicating with others. Our webpage gives helpful tips on what you can do to protect your child and encourage them to make smart choices. Visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/esafety](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/esafety) for more information and tips.



# Technology

## A splash of technology

By Gavin Songer (assistive technology officer)

**Nowadays, most modern hearing aids and cochlear implants can handle a little everyday moisture, such as sweat and rain, but they may require additional protection to make them completely safe to use in water.**

When you're going swimming or visiting the beach this summer, you might remove your child's hearing technology to prevent it from getting wet. However, this can cause communication difficulties, as your child won't be able to hear you clearly.

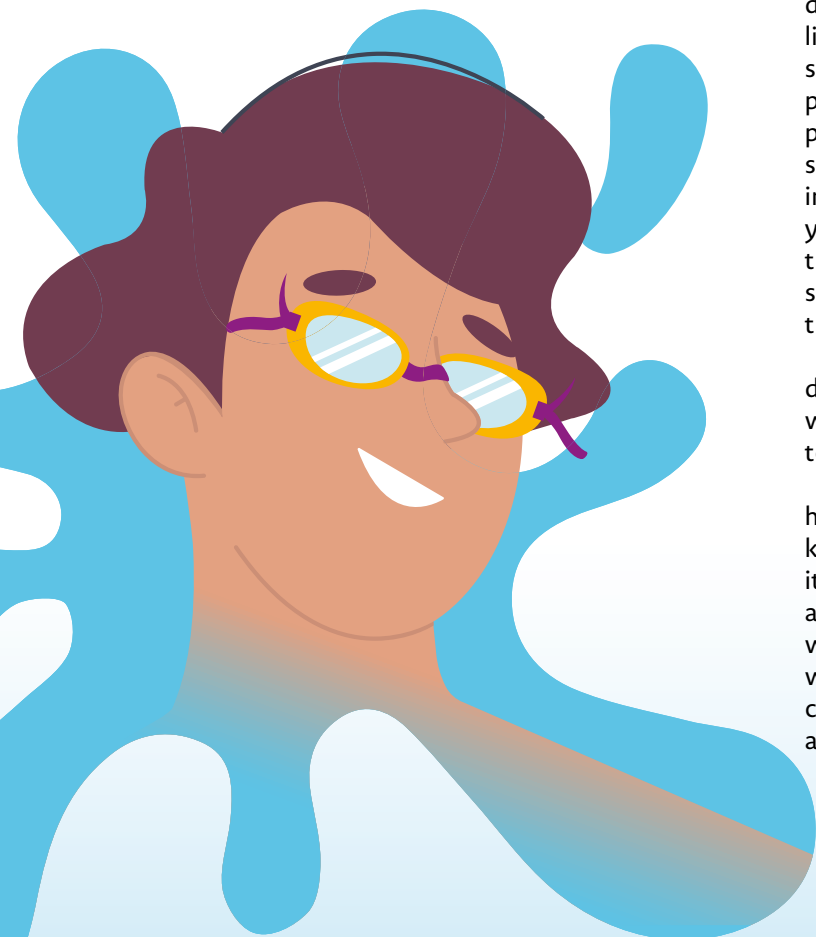
Swimming and water activities are a great way for children to keep cool in the summer and are great fun too! But it's important to be aware that most hearing devices are not waterproof without some extra protection.

### Hearing aids

While most hearing aids are water-resistant to a certain extent, they're not waterproof. Today, hearing aid manufacturers are confident that their devices will tolerate light water activities such as splashing while playing in a paddling pool, running through sprinklers and walking in light rain. However, your child must not wear their hearing aids in the shower or submerge them underwater in a pool or bath.

At present, there are no waterproof covers or accessories designed for hearing aids, as sealing the output speaker would block the amplified audio, so it wouldn't help anyone to hear.

In 2011, Siemens released the world's first waterproof hearing aid, Aquaris. This was designed to let sound in and keep the elements out. However, despite its initial success, it was discontinued a few years ago. Last summer, Phonak announced that their new Audéo Life hearing aids are waterproof. These have a high degree of protection against water and can be submerged up to half a metre. They're currently only available in the US but are due to become available in the UK this year.





## Cochlear implants

There are waterproof accessories available for most cochlear implants, which will allow your child to continue wearing them when swimming or playing in water.

Advanced Bionics manufactured the first waterproof cochlear implant, called Neptune. Users of other Advanced Bionics cochlear implants can use an AquaCase and AquaMic to protect their device from water. This reusable kit makes the cochlear implant fully protected against water.

MED-EL cochlear implant users can make their devices waterproof by using a WaterWear sleeve. This provides an airtight seal to make sure the processor and coil is kept dry in the water. WaterWear sleeves are available for Opus, Sonnet, Rondo and Samba audio processors and they can be reused up to 20 times.

Those who have Cochlear Nucleus cochlear implants can use Aqua+ sleeves with an Aqua+ coil to make their audio processors waterproof. There are also Aqua+ cases available for Kanso users. Depending on individual usage, the Aqua+ sleeves and cases can be reused up to 50 times.

**Isabelle (4), who is profoundly deaf and wears two cochlear implants, uses her Aqua+ kit when she goes swimming. Her mum Nicky, who is also deaf, said:**

“It was fantastic to see her face as she heard the sound of splashing water in the pool for the first time. We’ve stuck to just using one processor in the water at the moment. Our paranoia tells us that if it did get waterlogged and needed replacing, at least she wouldn’t be left without any hearing. While the sound is a little muffled through the cover, after a few minutes’ wear, she adjusts and can still hold a conversation and turn to her name.

It always takes a few extra minutes to get ready for swimming and it can sometimes be tricky with a wiggly and impatient little lady but it’s always worth it. We’re incredibly grateful that the technology enabling Isabelle to hear has gone one step further to give her sound in the water. What a lucky little water baby she is.”



## Bone conduction hearing devices

Bone conduction hearing devices, such as the Cochlear Baha range and the Oticon Ponto models, are not currently waterproof and don’t have any accessories to protect them against water. They should be removed before going swimming or participating in water activities.

## How water-resistant is my hearing technology?

To check the water-resistance of your child’s hearing technology, refer to the user manual and look for the IP (Ingress Protection) code or rating. The first number refers to protection against solid particles, such as dust and sand. The highest achievable level is 6, meaning that the device has complete protection. The second digit represents the device’s water resistance. Most modern hearing devices achieve number 8, meaning the equipment should survive an immersion of a depth of more than one metre, but this should only be for a short amount of time, such as when accidentally dropped in water.

If a hearing device becomes immersed in water, you must retrieve it as soon as possible. Follow the steps below.

- Gently shake the device to remove excess water and use a soft cloth to dry the exterior.
- Remove any batteries, the earmould and tubing.
- Store the device in a warm (but not hot) place, such as a drying box, or use drying capsules for 24 hours. These can be obtained from your audiologist or bought from online retailers such as Connevens.
- Alternatively, place the device in a container of uncooked rice to draw out any excess moisture; make sure you close the battery door to prevent rice getting inside.

If the hearing device still does not work after 48 hours, contact your audiology department. Do not place the hearing device in a microwave or oven, as this will cause irreversible damage.



➔ For further information and tips about swimming with deaf children, check out our webpage at [www.ndcs.org.uk/swimming](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/swimming).

# Reviews

## Books and products for deaf children – tell us what you think!



Max

### The Night the Moon Went Out

By Samantha Baines  
Available from bookstores  
Price: £6.99 RRP

5 to 10



Heidi

### Bright Ears dolls

Available from [www.brightears.co.uk](http://www.brightears.co.uk)  
Price: From £21.99

0 to 4

5 to 10



### Key

This resource is most suitable for the following ages:

0 to 4

5 to 10

11 to 14

15 to 18

19 to 25

Parents



Ella

### Deelight

By Frances Hardinge  
Available from bookstores  
Price: £7.99 RRP

11 to 14

15 to 18

19 to 25



We're always looking for more reviewers! Email [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk) if you'd like to join the team.





*The Night the Moon Went Out* is an adventure story where a girl is scared of the dark. It's a great book about a girl called Aneira and a night where the moon turned off and they have to fix it. She makes friends with an owl who helps her.

I loved this book because the character has hearing aids. She had to be brave because she flew up in the dark, which she didn't like, to fix the moon. It was a very exciting story.

I think it's a good book for people around the age of seven. There are a lot

of owls so it will be a good book if you like owls.

I read this book with my mummy over a few nights at bedtime. I wear cochlear implants and don't like the dark, like Aneira, so it was nice to read a story about this. I like the pictures but if they were colour pictures it would have been even better. I haven't read a book like this before. I would definitely recommend this book!

**Max (8) is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

The Buzz is launching a brand-new book club especially for deaf young people! All the books will include deaf characters or deafness in the story. If you'd like to take part in #BuzzBookClub, let us know by emailing [cyp@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:cyp@ndcs.org.uk) and we'll send you a book to review! Look out for #BuzzBookClub reviews on the Buzz: [buzz.org.uk](http://buzz.org.uk).

Mum Ceri says: "Over the years, Heidi's become more aware of her hearing loss and what it means for her in terms of socialising, education and her day-to-day activities. At school, she uses the Roger Focus hearing aid which helps her to hear her teachers and classmates more easily. This has made a difference to her learning and interaction with her friends, but she still felt different.

Heidi was researching books and other things that could help her understand about being deaf. She saw an American girl on YouTube get a doll with a hearing aid and asked for one for her birthday. I

researched where we could buy a doll like this in the UK and found Bright Ears."

Heidi says: "I wanted a doll with a hearing aid like me. My doll is called Heidi, because she is me! I now have two dolls. I named the other doll Summer. They help me if I feel lonely or left out and need a friend to talk to. They might not be real but saying my feelings to them can really help. Everyone is different and I like how the dolls celebrate this. Before I got my dolls, I hated wearing my hearing aid because people ask about it. Now I really don't mind as I know it helps me and it's OK to look different.

"The dolls are really fun to play with. I love dressing them up and playing 'families'. I would definitely recommend the dolls to other deaf children. I know I will keep them forever. They are very special to me and remind me of the struggles I've had. I want to raise awareness that deaf people – and anyone with disabilities – can do anything. Please don't judge people based on their disability."

**Heidi (9) has unilateral hearing loss and uses a Roger Focus hearing aid at school.**

*Deeplight* is a gorgeous tale about gods who just won't stay dead. Set on the islands of the Myriad, small-time criminal Hark finds himself tangled in myth and reality as he learns more than he'd like about the underwater gods who destroyed themselves many years ago. In the Myriad, there's a thriving economy born of 'godware' trades found on deep sea dives.

The elite divers are the 'sea-kissed', who have lost their hearing to the depths. One such sea-kissed smuggler is called Selphin. She's my favourite character. Selphin doesn't have time for foolishness, especially not the main character's creepy godware business. I love how blunt, stubborn and fiery she is. Besides

being a cool, complex character, she's also an authentic representation of deafness. She communicates through sign and speech, as do almost all the Myriddians. The sign for 'jellyfish' in their sign language is the same sign they use for an insult meaning 'spineless'.

*Deeplight* gets better and better every time I read it. The story is so exciting, and I love how the Deaf community are the elite warriors of the world.

I'd definitely recommend the book for slightly older readers, perhaps those aged 13 and over!

**Ella (17) is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants. Ella helped author Frances Hardinge write about deafness in *Deeplight*.**

"I would like to thank Ella, a young reader who contacted me to ask whether I would ever consider including a deaf character in one of my books, triggering a small avalanche in my brain that resulted in the invention of the sea-kissed, after which she generously became my expert consultant along with the other members of the previous Young People's Advisory Board."

**Frances Hardinge, author of *Deeplight*.**

# Resources

## What's new

### Fingerspelling postcards



#### What type of information is it?

An updated British fingerspelling alphabet postcard, now with left-handed signs, available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/left-right-handed-fingerspelling](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/left-right-handed-fingerspelling).

#### Who's it for?

This postcard is for anyone who would like to spread deaf awareness and share information about British Sign Language (BSL).

#### What's it about?

A handy fingerspelling postcard to carry with you that has the British fingerspelling alphabet for both left and right-handed signers. Share with others at fundraising events, deaf awareness events and exhibitions or with friends and family!

#### You might also like:

We have more information about sign language, including BSL, Sign Supported English (SSE), tactile signing, Irish Sign Language (ISL) and Family Sign Language (FSL). You can find this at [www.ndcs.org.uk/signlanguage](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/signlanguage).



### The Buzz: Microtia



#### What type of information is it?

A new section on the Buzz website on microtia at [buzz.org.uk/articles/what-is-microtia](http://buzz.org.uk/articles/what-is-microtia).

#### Who's it for?

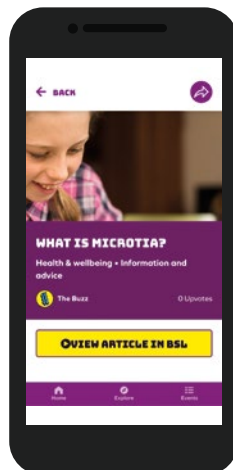
This information is for deaf young people with microtia, especially those who might be feeling a little self-conscious about it.

#### What's it about?

This section outlines what microtia is and the different options for a young person with microtia, including hearing implants and reconstructive surgery, and tips from other young people with microtia about feeling confident.

#### You might also like:

Families and carers of deaf children and young people with microtia can find information about microtia on our website at [www.ndcs.org.uk/microtia-deafness](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/microtia-deafness).



### Deaf-friendly Education: Northern Ireland



#### What type of information is it?

A digital booklet available to download and print from [www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-friendly-northern-ireland](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-friendly-northern-ireland).

#### Who's it for?

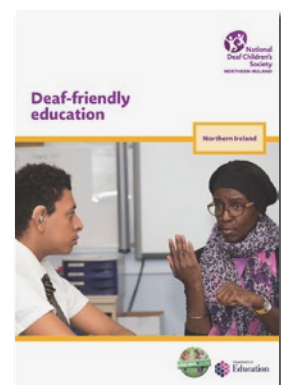
This information guide is for anyone who works with deaf children in education settings in Northern Ireland.

#### What's it about?

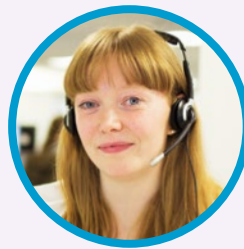
This guide will help professionals to improve outcomes and progress for deaf children by understanding deafness and how a lack of deaf awareness impacts a child's ability to access teaching and learning. You might want to share it with professionals who work in your child's school.

#### You might also like:

This guide is part of our information for professionals who work with deaf children and young people, whether in education, health or social care. You can find this at [www.ndcs.org.uk/professionals](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professionals).



# Helpline



📞 Freephone 0808 800 8880  
✉️ [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk)  
💻 [www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline)



**My little boy has recently been diagnosed as severely deaf and requires hearing aids. He's 12 weeks old and we're feeling quite overwhelmed by all the information we've been given by his audiologist, particularly in relation to the test results. I'd really like to know a bit more about what kind of help and support is out there for us.**

Please know that it's completely natural to find everything a bit overwhelming at first. There's lots of information out there and it can be difficult to know where to start, so it can be helpful to take things one step at a time.

We would recommend taking a look at our page [www.ndcs.org.uk/baby](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/baby). It contains lots of helpful information for parents and the wider family who have just been told that their child is deaf. We also have a booklet designed to offer support, information and guidance on what to expect and things to be aware of in the early stages of diagnosis at [www.ndcs.org.uk/baby-booklet](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/baby-booklet).

For more information about the types, levels and causes of deafness, read our booklet *Understanding Your Child's Hearing Tests* at [www.ndcs.org.uk/understand-hearingtests](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/understand-hearingtests). This also includes useful questions to ask at audiology appointments. Many audiology teams are happy to speak to parents following appointments and answer any questions you might have. We have more helpful questions

you can ask at [www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingtests](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingtests).

In addition to your son's audiologist, there are lots of other professionals who can support you during this time. We provide a list of the people you may meet at [www.ndcs.org.uk/people](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/people).

A key person for your son going forward will be a Teacher of the Deaf, who will make sure adjustments and support are in place for him along the way. You can learn more about their role at [www.ndcs.org.uk/educationservices](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/educationservices). Most audiology teams will make a referral and it's likely they've already done this, but do ask if this hasn't been mentioned to you.

It's also important to know that you're not alone, and many parents find that connecting with others going through similar experiences can be invaluable. Our online community provides a safe place to ask questions, share experiences and connect with other families of deaf children and young people at [www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community). We also have a



number of local deaf children's societies around the UK. You can find your nearest at [www.ndcs.org.uk/local](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/local). And please do check out our baby and toddler sessions for families at [www.ndcs.org.uk/baby-toddler-sessions](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/baby-toddler-sessions).

We wish you all the best on your journey. Please do contact the Helpline on 0808 800 8880 (voice and text) or go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline) if you'd like any further support.

## Join Your Community

We have a parents' forum where you can chat to other parents of deaf children about anything you like! To get started, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community) and create a new account.



We have lots more information booklets and factsheets available to download on our website. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/resources](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/resources) to find out more.

We continue to support healthcare professionals and clients offering remote real time video assessments and home visits. Call us now on 01978 820714



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**NEW**  
**Kinderkey**  
**Junior Care Bed**



Promoting safe sleep, our unique cots and beds can be made to any size your room will accommodate. With options of height adjustment, four part profiling and Trendelenburg tilt they meet the needs of children, adults and their carers. Ensuring a good night's sleep for everyone.

Our new Junior Care Bed complies with the new standards for children's medical beds. The mattress size is 1700mm x 700mm and it has profiling and height adjustment.



# Local groups

## Our life on Orkney

**Raising a child with hearing loss on a remote island can bring unique challenges, but luckily the local deaf children's society is there to help.**



**Gemma, mum to Sophie (6) who has moderate unilateral hearing loss and Rory (2) who is hearing, has lived on Orkney her whole life.**

“The best thing about living here is that it’s quiet and safe. I think being on an island makes it a little easier for a deaf child. Everyone knows Sophie, and people are very kind and helpful.”

Sophie loves it too. She has fun with her cousins and her three half-siblings who live nearby. “She loves riding her bike,” says Gemma. “We cycle around our home and stop to say hello to the alpacas, pigs and spotty sheep.”

But when Sophie was identified as having a hearing loss at the age of three, being on an island made the process a little more complex. There’s an audiologist at the island hospital, and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) staff visit Orkney every few months, but for anything else you have to travel. “Sophie and I had to go to Aberdeen for an MRI scan to find out more about her hearing loss,” explains Gemma. “It was an early flight, booked and paid for by the NHS. I was seven months pregnant, so I couldn’t go in the scan room with her. I waited next door, where I could see her through the glass. She



listened to *Frozen* during the scan, then got a certificate for being so brave. We got the last plane home that night.”

Wearing a hearing aid doesn’t stop Sophie doing the things she loves, and it was through her ballet class that she met a friend whose mum, Pat, is Chair of Orkney Deaf Children’s Society. “We felt so lucky to be invited along to the group,” Gemma says. “It helps Sophie to meet other deaf children, as she’s the only one in her school. I’ve learned so much from mingling with the parents.”

Gemma is proud of the way Sophie deals with her deafness. “It doesn’t faze her; it’s just part of life and who she is. The community on Orkney is great.”

**Pat, mum to Eloise (6), who is profoundly deaf, is the Chair of Orkney Deaf Children’s Society.**

“One of the challenges we face is that Orkney has a very small population; there isn’t an established deaf community. It’s very remote and rural so there aren’t many groups and clubs. That’s why some parents set up the Deaf Children’s Society in 2016, to bring emotional and social support to all local families with a deaf child.

We were blown away by the generosity of everyone who’s donated funds or given up their time to help. We’ve organised 16 events – including a Santa Christmas fun run – to help spread deaf awareness on the island.

And as a parent, it’s essential to be able to chat with other parents and be honest about how we feel. Professionals are great, but sometimes you need to talk to someone who has lived experience and understands your fears or frustrations. There is never any judgement.”



To find a group in your area, check out our map at [www.ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup).



Sign up at:

[british-sign.co.uk](http://british-sign.co.uk)

# BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE ONLINE COURSE



- ✓ Beginner course
- ✓ Study from home
- ✓ Staff training
- ✓ 20hrs CPD certified
- ✓ Learn at your own pace

~~£25~~

**£3**

**PAY IT FORWARD:** The usual fee for our course was £25 per person however during the Coronavirus pandemic we realised that this price was restrictive to some people. We are now running a "Pay it Forward" scheme with a minimum contribution of £3.

New membership offer!

# Does your child's **nursery, school or college** need more help to support their deaf students?

68% of mainstream teachers say they would benefit from extra tools and training to help deaf children reach their full potential.\*

That's why we've launched a new **Educational Membership** offer – to provide your child's setting with all the information, resources and support they'll need to help your child succeed.



## Did you know?



Over 40,000 deaf children are in mainstream education.

## From just £15 per academic year, your child's setting will benefit from:



A free teacher training session each year on deaf awareness and deaf-friendly teaching.



Discounts on additional training courses.



Devices and technology for your child's school to borrow free of charge.



A quarterly magazine, deaf-friendly teaching resource and regular e-newsletters.



Discounts on our children's storybooks, which improve awareness and inclusivity through deaf characters.

“ As a school we joined the membership as we want to further support our children with a hearing loss, and felt the resources and access to support and training would help us achieve this. ”

Kath O'Shea,  
Nene Infant School and Ramnoth Junior School

[www.ndcs.org.uk/educational-membership](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/educational-membership)

\*Source: NDCS Teacher Tapp press release Sep 2021.

The National Deaf Children's Society is a registered charity in England and Wales no.1016532 and in Scotland no. SC040779.

## Making a difference locally

**Do you know about parent carer forums in England? Maybe you've heard about them but aren't quite sure what they do? Many parents feel the same way. In this issue, we're shining a spotlight on the forums and how they can help create change for deaf children.**

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### What are parent carer forums?

They're a group of parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in your local area. The groups are a good way to meet other families with children with SEND where you live, and many forums organise regular events. But forums have another purpose – they work together with local councils to help shape and improve services for children with SEND.

### What impact can they have?

Being a member of your local forum can be a really good way of making sure the needs of deaf children are represented when your council is making decisions. They have a wider influence too. When Ofsted inspects services for children with SEND in your local area, they'll consult with the parent carer forum. Being on the forum can be a great opportunity to make sure that Ofsted hears about what's happening with services for deaf children where you live.

### Is it all about local change?

No, forums are grouped together into a national network for England and have the power to influence change on a national level too. For example, the Government launched a major review of services for children with SEND, and parent carer forums are being consulted as part of this.

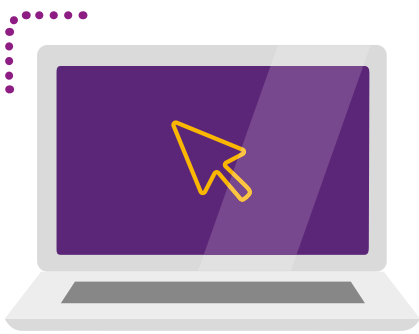


## Would they really want me in the group?

Of course! They want to reach as many parents in their local area as possible to be truly representative of all families of children with SEND. Some forums have built strong links with other local groups of parents, for example local deaf children's society groups or Children's Hearing Services Working Groups (CHSWGs). Perhaps you're a member of your local group or CHSWG already? Why not reach out to your local parent carer forum to see if you may be able to work together? Also, some forums will pay parents to be involved, or cover transport or childcare costs. But do check in with your local forum to ask if they do this.

## Are the forums deaf aware?

We'd like every parent carer forum to be a welcoming place for parents of deaf children. Every forum across the country has access to a brand-new deaf awareness session created by us. This includes deaf awareness top tips and information about the education support that deaf children need. We hope this will make it easier for you to join a forum and put support for deaf children on the agenda.



## I'm in! How do I join?

There's a parent carer forum in every local authority area in England. For more information, and to find your nearest forum, please visit [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk).

Have any questions or want to share your experience of being on a forum? Or do you live in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales and want to find out how to influence services there? Get in touch at [campaigns@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@ndcs.org.uk).

## Two parents tell us why they love being involved.



"Being involved in my parent carer forum has been invaluable in so many ways. The forum has given me training to understand how local systems work and how local decisions are made. It keeps me up to date on the council's plans and proposed policies that may affect deaf children. It provides me with an avenue to advocate for deaf children and highlight their needs when the council is making broader decisions about support for children with SEND. Otherwise, it's easy for low-incidence disabilities like deafness to be overlooked."

**Suzi is mum to Charlie (11) and Max (9) who are severely to profoundly deaf.**



"I was a member of my local parent carer forum when my daughter Ellie was at secondary school. The forum was very good at communicating with parents and provided a range of supportive activities and resources. To other parents of deaf children who are considering joining their local forum, I'd recommend finding out if they have links to other local groups, like the local CHSWG. You could also get in touch with the National Deaf Children's Society to see if there are other parents of deaf children in your area. My local forum had a strong link with our CHSWG and I feel this really helped to address issues that impacted deaf children."

**Graham is dad to Ellie (20) who is profoundly deaf.**



# Events



Zakariya

## Our events for parents, carers and families

All our events are interactive and offer information, support, and the opportunity to share experiences. Our events now take place online and in-person.

- Navigating Benefits
- Supporting Parents New to Hearing Loss
- Technology
- Early Years Technology
- Choosing the Right School for my Child
- Baby and Toddler Coffee Mornings
- Bounce Along to Baby Sign
- Building Your Child's Self-esteem
- Hearing Care
- Real-life Experiences – hear from our amazing volunteers
- Parenting – including sleep, behaviour and communication
- Family Sign Language: For families with deaf children aged 0 to 11
- Expert Parent Programme
- Parents as Partners
- An Introduction to Campaigns
- Families Leading the Way
- Mild and Unilateral Hearing Loss
- Making the Choice: Cochlear Implants

# Bringing communities closer together

**Nosheen, mum to Zakariya (4) who's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants, attended our first ever Muslim community events to share experiences with other Muslim parents and gain more confidence.**

“I recently saw the National Deaf Children's Society was running a series of three online events for the Muslim community – Deaf Identity, Play, and Stigma and Bullying. These were specific to my community, which I thought was great. I was also curious. Does being in this community make it easier or harder to have a Deaf identity?”

Like other events I've attended, speakers introduced themselves, there was a PowerPoint presentation, interpreters, a Q&A, and a chance for parents to chat.

The first event was led by a Muslim mum with a deaf child. It was brilliant as she spoke about her own experiences. In the second event, a dad talked about his twin sons. It was invaluable to hear his experiences with slightly older children. I also thought it was good to direct parents to deaf Muslim organisations. I knew of one, but there were four or five others mentioned too.

The word 'advocate' kept coming up. Zakariya comes along to everything with Mummy now, but when he gets older, it could be a challenge when he does things by himself. You've got to advocate for your children and develop their self-esteem and resilience, otherwise how will people be able to cater for them,

say at the masjid [mosque]? I need to make my community deaf aware and show Zakariya how to do that too.

I loved the fact that we were encouraged to be proud: proud of being deaf, our culture or heritage, and our religion, Islam. When Zakariya's feeling less confident, I help him show others how to communicate with him. He proudly tells them, 'I have super ears to help me hear.'

For some parents, particularly in our community, deafness can be overwhelming or isolating. It's important that we reach out and get support, from family and friends, and especially the National Deaf Children's Society. I've asked my own family to come to the next event with me. There are challenges in all communities that you might not think of, and you can work together to improve them.”

**I loved the fact that we were encouraged to be proud.**

# Ethan's amazing experiments

**Ethan (14), who's unilaterally deaf and wears a CROS hearing aid, came along to our Amazing Science Experiments workshop, which was designed based on suggestions from Ethan and other deaf young people.**

"Science is one of my favourite subjects at school. When I'm older, I might like to have a job that uses science and maths. I wanted the National Deaf Children's Society to run a science workshop so I could learn more, while spending time with other deaf young people.

Before the session, I got a box of equipment through the post. Inside were pins, elastic bands, wooden blocks and cardboard discs. I wondered what we were going to make.

When we joined the call, everyone introduced themselves and shared what they liked about science. Then we made a jumping bean using paper and a marble. It works using momentum; if you place it on your hand and slightly tilt it, the bean appears to move on its own!

Next, we learned about kinetic energy and made rollers using cardboard discs, pins, wooden blocks and elastic bands.

**The session was even better than I expected.**

We threaded an elastic band through each end of the roller and used a stick to wind it up. When we put it on the floor afterwards, it moved on its own.

The session leaders were approachable and knowledgeable. They helped us to think about what makes a fair test, and we talked about what needs to stay the same each time – otherwise an experiment can't be deemed fair.

The session was even better than I expected. I felt involved with everything, and I liked how hands-on it was. My favourite thing was how educational and fun the practical parts were. I also really enjoyed spending time with other deaf young people who have an interest in science.

If you're thinking about joining an online event, I'd say, 'Yes! Do it!'"

**Ethan's mum Claire told us what she thought of the event.**

"This was a great experience for Ethan and allowed him to learn new things. The online sessions are extremely inclusive and accessible. It's a great way to meet other deaf people in a safe environment. I would definitely recommend these workshops to other parents who are considering signing up their child for one."



Ethan

## Our events for children and young people

We have a range of fun events and activities for deaf children and young people to get involved with. They're a great way to meet other deaf children and young people, make friends, learn new skills and grow in confidence. Some of the events we're currently offering are listed below.

- Mini Bake Off in a Week
- Youth Quiz Night
- Book Club
- Get Informed: Deaf identity
- Amazing Science Experiments: Slime!
- Get Informed: Dealing with challenges at school

If you'd like to tell us your thoughts or have an idea for an event you'd like us to offer, please email [enable@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:enable@ndcs.org.uk).



All our online events are free, with closed captioning and British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. Places are limited, so booking is essential. For full details of all our events and to book your place, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events) or, if you don't have access to the internet, call our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880.



**PUPILS and staff at St John's Catholic Specialist School in Boston Spa, West Yorkshire, welcomed a very wide variety of special guests recently.**



**A**s part of a whole school event, professional visitors from Arla, the multi-national dairy company, spent time with students helping them hone their interview techniques in preparation for Sixth Form and moving on into the world of further education, training and work. As well as their human guests, the children were also invited to welcome

visitors from Animal Club and enjoyed meeting and handling a range of different animals and creatures.

St John's supports children and young people who are deaf, hearing impaired or have complex sensory or communication challenges in its day and residential school settings.

Head of Careers Kate Pirie said: **"The annual Arla Day is a great opportunity for our young people to learn more about the world of work and practice really important skills. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day!"**

# Looking for stories with deaf characters?

Our range of picture books can help children of all ages to understand deafness. Each book features a confident deaf character and communication tips.



Use discount code **SUMMER** for 10% off

**Books are £6.99 each**



➔ Order your books online at [www.ndcs.org.uk/childrens-books](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childrens-books).

# Fundraising

## Class 2 does something new



We're constantly blown away by our supporters finding creative ways to increase deaf awareness in their local communities and raise vital funds. And Miss Turvey's Year 2 class at Hunwick Primary School did exactly that, raising an incredible £917 with a signed song and day of silence.



Having started working with children with special educational needs at 16 years old, Miss Turvey's interest in deafness began when she worked with a boy with hearing loss during her first university placement. "It impacted my teaching," she explains. "It made me understand how important it is to be able to communicate with everyone, and that might not necessarily be through speech. I learnt to sign and now I have taken this into my classroom to teach the children of the next generation."

And her current Year 2 class has taken to it like ducks to water. "The children are very interested and have a new love of sign language," Miss Turvey says. "They use it with one another and with me during the school day. Some children have a more personal connection, having friends and family who sign, but others seem to genuinely enjoy learning a new skill, which they also understand has a large impact for lots of deaf children and adults."

The children in Year 2 decided they wanted to go further and use their love of sign language to also raise some money for the National Deaf Children's Society. They learnt to sign the song *True Colours* and put on a performance for the wider school community. Then they held a day of silence, where the class could only communicate through sign and lip-reading.

To raise money, they found sponsors and created posters and resources for the event. "Many of the children faced challenges and frustrations with being misunderstood during the day," Miss Turvey says. "It allowed them to empathise with children who are deaf and who have communication difficulties."

One of the children in Miss Turvey's class, Arthur (6), explained why it was an important day for him. "I was inspired, because my brother can't talk and we try to use sign language at home," he says. "It was really tricky not being able to talk in class, but it was good because now I know what it's like for my brother."

Class 2 has since taught other classes at the school to sign, and Miss Turvey is currently setting up a whole-school signed choir. Well done Year 2 and thank you so much for your support!



If you feel inspired to learn a signed song or perhaps have a sponsored day of silence at your school, get in touch with our Community Fundraising team by emailing [community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk) and we will support you every step of the way.

# When I'm a grown-up

**DEAF WORKS EVERYWHERE**

Do you ever wonder what your deaf child will do when they grow up?

## Deaf people share their experiences of the world of work, including how their employers and colleagues adapt to their needs.

### I'm a strategic planning officer because...

I like to problem-solve and improve organisational effectiveness and decision-making processes. I'm also passionate about improving equality, diversity and inclusion. I work for Loughborough University and, during the pandemic, I joined my university's Staff Inclusivity Network, which is for employees who are affected by any form of disability.

I have a BSc in Psychology and have worked for a 'Big Four' audit firm, in local government, and now the higher education sector.

I have severe deafness in my left ear and moderate deafness in my right. I rely on lip-reading and facial expression to interpret speech, so face masks were a struggle. Online meetings with captions, and people facing the camera and speaking clearly into

the microphone have made things easier.

As a teenager, I was embarrassed to be deaf; I wouldn't wear my hearing aids and missed out on a lot. The internet and social media have opened access to many fantastic deaf people who are positive role models and show deaf people they can achieve anything they put their minds to.

Take advantage of support provided by your education setting or workplace. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need. You spend a great deal of time at work; make sure it's something you enjoy and take pride in.

**Amanda Silverwood**



### I'm a filmmaker because...

I'm passionate about inspiring the deaf community with my films.

I studied Film and Animation at university and my first job was at a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting agency. Being profoundly deaf with BSL as my first language helped me engage with the deaf clients and the interpreters.

I revamped the agency's website and digital content, then went freelance, moving into TV and filmmaking. Mainstream media agencies often asked how I could edit videos if I couldn't hear, so it was easier to work with other deaf filmmakers.

One deaf filmmaker became a mentor to me. He taught me how to work with people who aren't deaf aware which was so helpful. I worked as a photographer on a project called Hear Art, founded by actress, screenwriter and activist Rachel Shenton, which showcased deaf filmmakers and actors. Now I work as a multimedia officer for a deaf charity.

At work, I sometimes have an interpreter to transcribe spoken English in videos into written English for me to use in subtitles.

Never think you can't do something. I just tried snowboarding and overcame my fear of heights! Remember, learning something new is hard for everyone at first.

**Phoebe Capewell**



### I'm a childminder because...

It's heartwarming to see children grow in their time with me, and I love that I'm my own boss! I look after other people's children in my own home and plan daily activities to support their learning through play. I also do assessments on the children's development, as required by Ofsted.

I did a BTEC course in Early Years and then an eight-week course to train as a childminder under my Local Authority (LA). As I'm profoundly deaf in both ears, my LA provided a BSL interpreter for all my course sessions.

I then registered with Ofsted, who provided me with an interpreter when they came to do their inspection and grading of my childminding service.

As well as childminding, I also run Little Hands – a deaf parent and children group, which I set up to help deaf parents access parenting topics in BSL.

At work, I use a Bellman Baby Monitor to alert me to any crying, and I make sure I can see what the children are doing at all times.

If you don't know whether you'll enjoy a job, volunteering is the best way to get experience. It helps narrow down the areas you enjoy working in.

**Amy Mortimore**



Be inspired by other deaf people at work in our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign video at [www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere).

What does your child want to be when they grow up? For more information on careers, check our section about life after leaving school at [www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool).



## Phonak Sky Marvel. Combining world's first technological innovations to bring love at first sound to children with hearing loss.

### Connects to smartphones, TVs, Roger and more

Sky Marvel is the world's first paediatric hearing aid that connects directly to most smartphone and Bluetooth™ enabled devices. In a world where modern devices can be a central part of a child's life, Sky Marvel enables intuitive access and quality streaming for speech, apps, music, e-books and much more!

### Full day of hearing

With a 3-hour charge time, Sky M-PR provides a full day of hearing including 10 hours of Roger or streaming media. Parents and children can enjoy peace of mind knowing the hearing aids will stay powered on from morning to bedtime.

### 24% better speech understanding in noise

Phonak Sky Marvel features Autosense Sky OS, designed to adapt throughout a child's day giving children clear, rich sound even in the noisiest of situations.

### Sky Marvel and Roger

The Phonak Sky Marvel seamlessly connects to Roger devices without the need to attach external receivers. Your child can now wear 42% smaller and 32% lighter hearing aids, making for a more comfortable experience at home and in school.

To find out more please email [sales@phonak.co.uk](mailto:sales@phonak.co.uk) or visit [www.phonak.co.uk](http://www.phonak.co.uk)

Sky Marvel offers:



Clear, rich sound



Connects to smartphones, Roger™ mics and more



Rechargeable



Child-specific design

# Happy children learn...

Mary Hare is a school where you'll find happy, confident deaf children enjoying life, their education and the friendships they make.

With small class sizes, the very latest classroom technologies and a team of highly skilled, specialist teachers, we are committed to giving hearing impaired children a high-quality education that supports them, challenges them and is adapted to recognise their learning needs.

We are proud to be a school where our students leave us as confident young individuals, ready and prepared to embrace their futures.

**Most of all, we know that children who are happy will enjoy school and learning.**

**BOOK  
YOUR  
VISIT**



*Securing the future of deaf children and young people*

See for yourself what makes Mary Hare School a great place for your child and get in touch with us to arrange a visit.

Call 01635 244233 | Email [admissions@maryhare.org.uk](mailto:admissions@maryhare.org.uk) | [www.maryhare.org.uk](http://www.maryhare.org.uk)