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hearing siblings
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swimming
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National
Deaf Children's
Society

Families

Settling in with sign language

“

Signing is the key for us to provide Anna with information about the situation in Ukraine and her new surroundings.





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My deafness didn't stop me...

...becoming a roller derby champion

By Beth Liburd



Bronwen was just 11 years old when she caught her first glimpse of roller derby.

"Me and my family saw a game on the seafront," she remembers. "My older sister took an interest and joined the local club. After a year of her convincing me, I finally joined the team!"

Over the years, she fell in love with the fast-paced nature of roller derby – a contact sport played on roller skates.

For Bronwen (18), who has a severe hearing loss and uses hearing aids, there were some difficulties in the beginning. Identifying the different pitch of the referee's whistle and hearing her teammates was a challenge, but with time and practice, she was able to focus in on specific sounds.

"As I progressed, I got used to the type of sounds I'd need to hear," Bronwen explains. "I've trained the part of my brain that processes sound in a noisy environment."

"When I play, I still wear my hearing aids and my helmet tends to provide just enough protection so that they don't get damaged as it sits on top of them."

Bronwen qualified to be part of Team GB for the 2020 Junior World Cup in Canada. Unfortunately, the competition was cancelled due to the pandemic, but Bronwen is still proud to have made the national team.

She now trains three days a week and has become a coach. Later this year, Bronwen plans to move to London, where she hopes to join one of the highest-ranked teams in the UK.

But while she has achieved a lot in roller derby, for Bronwen the most important thing is the community she has found. "Local teams know each other and play against each other a lot. This creates a close community that's very welcoming," she says.

"To other people who are thinking of joining a roller derby team, I'd say don't be afraid to give it a go! We don't know until we try."



For more information and advice on how to make team sports accessible, visit ndcs.org.uk/team-sports.

Bronwen



It's a close community that's very welcoming.



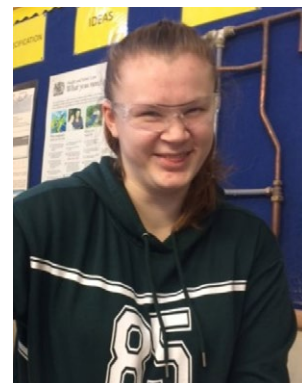
St John's
Catholic Specialist School

Come and visit us!

Join us for our open afternoon on **Thursday 9th March 2023** between **1pm-3pm** to find out more about St John's and what we can offer.



SUCCESS comes in many forms and at St John's Catholic Specialist School each achievement is always celebrated.



The school offers residential and day placements for children aged between 4 and 18 who are hearing impaired or have complex sensory or communication challenges.

Success and achievement at St John's is very individual. For some children, the simple act of coming to school after months or years of being a reluctant learner, or even a school refuser, is a success.

We see the potential in every child and we are incredibly ambitious for them. While academic achievement is important, we believe that can take many forms. Destinations are as important as results.

Our Sixth Form students have secured positive destinations and achieved great things, both academically and vocationally. Hollie has secured a fantastic job at Cumbria Police working in IT. Alex has a full-time job in joinery while Mqhele is following his drama dream and has begun a performing arts course at mainstream college.

Macauley has gone on to study Arboriculture, Kacey is studying Hospitality, Robert has achieved distinctions in Engineering and Julian is also pursuing joinery.

We're always incredibly proud of the children's achievements. They are a testament to their hard work to build a bright future.

The school is also celebrating a hat-trick of "outstanding" ratings from regulator Ofsted who found the school's residential service was, for the third time in a row, outstanding in all areas.

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Hello

You may notice some changes in this issue; we've taken on board your amazing feedback from last year's survey to make Families magazine even better for you.

One of the bigger changes is our new centrefold for deaf children and young people. You wanted more content specifically for your child, whatever their age. So, we've split our activity section into Super Scribblers for children aged 0 to 11 and The Buzz Bulletin for those aged 11+. Please feel free to rip it out and give it to your child. We'd love to know what they think!

You asked for more stories from those who don't use hearing technology, so I hope you'll enjoy Olivia's story on page 12. You also wanted more content on technology that's useful to deaf children and young people. I think you'll find our technology article very interesting. Smart home technology is everywhere and can be particularly useful for deaf children and young people. Turn to page 30 to find out more.

Can you spot some smaller changes too? We've used different colours to make it easier for you to recognise the different age groups our feature articles are about and tweaked our masthead to start with a capital F.

We hope you'll enjoy this new and improved Families. Please do email me any feedback or fill in our ongoing pulse point survey by scanning the QR code below.

Kerrina

Kerrina Gray, Editor
✉ 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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Olivia's story
how the family decided against technology



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Mojji's story
how he learnt to feel less self-conscious



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Daniel's story
why taking a new T-Level was the right choice



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Claudia's story
how she adapts office working to suit her

NEWS

Pushing for better support in the SEND review

Two parents of deaf children, Shikha and Juliet, have written an open letter calling for more Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) and better deaf awareness in schools to be included in the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) review in England.

The SEND review (announced in 2019) aims to improve SEND services and end the postcode lottery in accessing support across the country. However, we're concerned that the review doesn't go far enough to support deaf children. That's why we're supporting Shikha and Juliet. To sign the open letter, go to campaigns.ndcs.org.uk/sign-shikha-and-juliets-letter.

We're also trying to find out how much interest there is in a British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE. We want to show that lots of people – students, teachers and parents – think it's a good idea. You can show your support by answering a few quick questions at cypteam.typeform.com/to/dBlrgAQN.

New TV cooking competition starring deaf children

A brand new cookery series, featuring only deaf children and children of deaf adults (CODAs), has launched on BSL Zone.

In 'Food Fighters', the children are put through their paces to complete two tough cooking challenges to impress the judges and take home the trophy. Each episode has a different theme, from dishes of the world to food from books.

"We're really excited because it's the first competition series we've seen like this," says Camilla Arnold, who produced and directed 'Food Fighters'. "It was really special to see deaf children and CODAs come together for the series."

You can watch the show at any time on the BSL Zone app and website – all for free and in British Sign Language (BSL) with English subtitles. Just go to bslzone.co.uk.



Our spring superstar!

Byron (7), who's severely to moderately deaf and wears hearing aids, won his football team's Golden Boot and was also named their most-improved player last season. "I'm very impressed with myself because I started the season four months late," he says. Byron hopes to inspire other deaf children interested in football. "Don't be scared," he says. "Try being in goal first and then you'll get the confidence to be a striker."



We raised money for our baby sister!

Adorable sisters Olive (5) and Eden (4) took part in our 5K sponsored walk last December to raise money and awareness in honour of their baby sister, Clemie, who has a moderate hearing loss and wears a bone-anchored hearing aid.

“Clemie gives good cuddles and always makes me laugh,” says Olive. “I try to help by learning sign language so we can sign together when we play!”

“Clemie is fun,” adds Eden. “We like to go to the park together and colour together. I help her put her shoes on, and I read her stories. Sometimes she’s bossy, but I love her.”

The girls wanted to raise £350, but exceeded their target substantially and raised over £4,000! “We wanted to raise funds for a brilliant charity that has helped us continually since we found out about Clemie’s hearing loss,” explains mum Jodie.

Well done Olive and Eden!

Microsoft launches new sign language feature

Microsoft has launched a new sign language view in Microsoft Teams, their online video-calling platform. The new feature allows deaf users to prioritise interpreters or other signers so their video feeds are always visible and in a consistent location.

Molly (20), who is profoundly deaf and uses British Sign Language (BSL), has used Microsoft Teams in the past for college lectures. “It’d be great to try the new feature out for my university meetings,” she says. “It’s so important that platforms like this continue to add accessibility features, especially for deaf people who sign.”

Our new strategy

For all children the early years are a crucial time, but for deaf children this is even more true because of the impact deafness can have on language, communication and social development. The evidence is so compelling that it forms the basis of our exciting new 2023 to 2028 strategy, which launches next month. It’s clear that supporting deaf children during their early years is where we can make the biggest and most tangible difference.

We’ll be creating and offering services, information and advice to support deaf children as they start their journey. As we do this, we’ll be listening to you about what’s most important for you and your child.

Alongside this, for families new to childhood deafness, we’ve seen how vital it is for you to be able to reach out to a community of people in a similar situation to you. This allows you to share experiences and knowledge. So, we’ll be strengthening connections in local communities to make your life easier from the start – and you can continue to be a part of these communities as your child grows.

Supporting older deaf children and young people is also still hugely important to us. We’ll continue offering information and advice, not only as we have been doing, but in new and exciting digital ways too. We’ll do this based on what you tell us you need so you and your child can confidently navigate their journey through school and beyond.

With our new energised plan, we have a fantastic opportunity to reach and help even more deaf children. We want to put childhood deafness front and centre of everybody’s minds so we can influence people in positions of power to sit up and take action.

Susan

Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive



Did you know?

Earwax isn’t actually wax!
It’s made up of secretions, dead skin cells, sweat and dirt.

Sign of the season
Butterfly





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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.

Top tips...


Protecting your own mental health

Wherever you are on your parenting journey, it's important to look after your own wellbeing. To mark Mental Health Awareness Week in May, our experts share their top self-care tips.


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

- 1** When Lexie was identified as deaf, I joined a local coffee morning for families of deaf children. It was a safe space to ask questions and talk about anything we were concerned about.


Lindsey, mum to Lexie (10) who is profoundly deaf.


- 2** If your child has been identified as deaf, allow time to grieve if needed, then ask your Teacher of the Deaf to set you up with like-minded parents. Things seem easier when you can chat to others with similar challenges.


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


- 3** Often you can be so busy looking after your family that you forget to look after you. Write down one thing you can do to look after yourself daily, weekly and monthly, and make it happen.


Keri Tebbit, Family Course Development Manager.


- 4** Having a deaf child sometimes means filling out lots of forms, which can be overwhelming. I leave plenty of time before deadlines and fill out one or two pages each day.


Lindsey, mum to Lexie (10) who is profoundly deaf.


- 5** Don't pressure yourself to keep pace with other families. Enjoy walking your own parenting path and know that you're doing what's right for you and your family.

Josie, mum to Maia (17) who has Treacher Collins syndrome and moderate to severe hearing loss.


- 6** If you're looking for external support, visit parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk. The charity Place2Be offers mental health advice and resources for parents and carers through their Parenting Smart site.

Gavin Songer, Advice and Guidance Officer.


- 7** If you're a parent of a deaf young person, don't take full responsibility for addressing all the barriers they might encounter. Working together with your child to identify solutions will also help them become more independent.

Martin McLean, Senior Policy Advisor.


- 8** Accept services and offers of help, especially during tough times. You can always shelve them if it doesn't work out, but it can be harder to opt in later on.

Josie, mum to Maia (17) who has Treacher Collins syndrome and moderate to severe hearing loss.



➔ For more advice on taking care of your own mental health, visit our section on emotional wellbeing at ndcs.org.uk/parentmentalhealth.

Sara Says



Learning about Charlotte's deafness as a family



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

facebook.com/
DeafPrincessNI
@deafprincessni

Children are really resilient and, once armed with information, they're able to take ownership.

I usually write about Charlotte and her deafness, but as you all know, deaf children don't live in isolation, but within a family. In our house, Charlotte is the youngest of four children; all three of her older brothers are hearing, meaning we've had to make a few changes to make life run smoothly.

We use sign language and always believed that we needed to involve the whole family when learning it – I didn't want to be an interpreter between my own children. We were very lucky that we were able to access funding for Family Sign Language, so we had a few different deaf mentors come to our home to teach us sign language as a family. This was really important as I didn't have the time or enough knowledge to teach the kids what I was learning during my formal Level 1 classes at the local college.

We also made sure that we attended deaf events as a family. We went to a family fun day with Belfast Deaf United football team, Charlotte got to meet other deaf toddlers and the boys met deaf kids and other hearing kids who had deaf siblings. I was also able to meet deaf parents, getting lots of advice and support. Over the years we've also linked in to the deaf community by attending a lot of other family events and events with the National Deaf Children's Society.

Including the boys along the way has been really positive for their acceptance of Charlotte's deafness. They don't see it as an issue and I'm convinced that's because of all the events

we've attended and the connections we've made.

Over the years, each of the boys has delivered basic sign language lessons to their classes in primary school, which was totally their own choice. They taught their classmates the fingerspelling alphabet and some simple greetings. This meant there was increased deaf awareness within the school, benefiting their sister when she joined. I believe this increased awareness has also reduced the risk of bullying for all of my children. Yes, Charlotte is different, but we actively talk about this difference and emphasise the positive aspects of deafness, so the children don't think of it as a negative. So far, it has worked.

I definitely recommend talking openly about every aspect of diagnosis with the whole family. Let them ask questions, make their own networks and gain knowledge. Children are really resilient and, once armed with information, they're able to take ownership and feel empowered, just like the boys teaching the fingerspelling alphabet to their classmates. Involving everyone, since we got our own heads around Charlotte's diagnosis, means that we can learn together and build relationships that benefit us all.



For more information about supporting hearing siblings, go to ndcs.org.uk/siblings.

Ida's Ideas

Growing up with a foot in both the hearing and deaf communities



Ida (17) is our young person's columnist. She's moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

“ I still feel as though I'm caught somewhere between the deaf and hearing worlds today.

Growing up as the only deaf child in my family and at school has been difficult and rewarding in different ways. It's influenced my deaf identity and my changing relationship with my hearing loss.

I've always used speech to communicate and never had the opportunity to learn sign language. A big reason for this was that I started using hearing aids when I was just three years old, and used them while learning to talk and before starting school. I have two younger siblings, neither of whom are deaf, but they've grown up understanding and empathising with accessibility issues I've had, something which has been very important to me. Because we've always lived in rural Cornwall, access to sign language classes has been a geographical challenge for my family. It was logistically and financially easier to use speech as my primary form of communication.

My successful experience with my hearing aids meant that I attended mainstream nursery and primary school, as I found it easier to integrate into my classes and make hearing friends. Although this meant that I adjusted well to mainstream school, as I got older, I struggled with accepting my deaf identity.

Growing up with no other deaf friends was really hard. I still feel as though I'm caught somewhere between the deaf and hearing worlds today. Over the last three years, however, I've met so many other deaf young people through the National Deaf Children's Society's Young People's

Advisory Board, which has had a hugely positive impact on me. So much so, I felt confident enough to talk openly about my deafness with my hearing friends for the first time. When I move away from Cornwall for university next autumn, I've decided I want to take sign language classes to continue to explore my deaf identity. I want to embrace my deafness when I move out and am living in a city for the first time.

I've had lots of positive experiences growing up with a foot in both the hearing and deaf communities. Attending mainstream school was the right choice for me. Luckily, my teachers and classmates have always been supportive and understanding if I struggled to hear or understand anything.

Being the only deaf child in my family has meant that my deaf identity is very specific to me, and something that I've had to explore on my own. I'm now interested in disability politics, as a result of my experiences, and have applied to study Politics and Anthropology at university.

For other children who are the only deaf person in their own world, my advice would be to always look at the positives. Remember all the things you get to experience and understand from both the hearing and the deaf worlds – and create your own space.



For more information about helping your child find their deaf identity, visit [ndcs.org.uk/build-deaf-identity](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/build-deaf-identity).



Deciding against technology for Olivia

By Jenny Collen

When Olivia's parents found out she was born without cochleas, they did their own research to help them decide whether they wanted her to use technology or a sign-only approach.



Olivia's story

With no history of deafness in their family, Olivia's parents were shocked when they found out she was profoundly deaf. "We didn't know what we were dealing with. We'd never met a deaf person before and didn't know what a deaf person's world looked like," dad Scott remembers.

However, nothing could stop them from enjoying being new parents. "We hoped we'd have a lovely baby, and that's exactly what we got," says mum Yasmin. "She's the most amazing little girl."

Due to her level of deafness, one-year-old Olivia's audiologists recommended she be assessed for cochlear implants. "When she was eight weeks old, they started talking about cochlear implants and told us they would be her only chance of having a 'normal' life," says Yasmin. "It was all new to us, so we put our trust in the professionals."

While Yasmin and Scott waited for Olivia's cochlear implant assessment date, they decided to learn more about what it meant to be deaf. "Yasmin came across a deaf club nearby which has

people of all ages, some with hearing aids and cochlear implants and some with no technology at all," says Scott. "Getting to meet a vast range of deaf people in one place, we started to understand they embraced their deaf identities and didn't allow deafness to hold them back."

With a more positive outlook for Olivia's future, Yasmin and Scott were also inspired to start teaching her British Sign Language (BSL). "We started to do our own research, and we knew BSL would be a great language for her to have regardless of whether she'd have hearing technology," says Yasmin.

However, they were disappointed by the lack of information about BSL and the lack of financial support for learning it. "None of the professionals mentioned sign language during any of our appointments," says Yasmin. "We had to bring it up time and time again. They went down the 'we're going to fix this' route, treating Olivia's hearing loss as the problem, rather than the way we were communicating with her.

"We've had to fund our own sign



We asked ourselves, why are we trying to fix her? There's nothing wrong with her.

language classes without any support from the local authority, and that's been the biggest let-down. I think every parent of a child who's deaf, no matter how mild or profound, should have support for sign language from the second they're diagnosed."

When Olivia had her cochlear implant assessment at nearly a year old, an MRI scan revealed that she didn't have cochleas. This meant she couldn't have cochlear implants.

As a next step, Olivia's audiologists referred her for an auditory brainstem implant (ABI). An ABI works similarly to a cochlear implant but is surgically implanted directly onto the brainstem, bypassing the cochlea and auditory nerve.

"The day we found out Olivia wasn't a candidate for cochlear implants, they told us we had two options: the first was an ABI and the second was sign language," Yasmin says. "Even at that point, sign language was never presented as the first option."

Yasmin and Scott faced a big decision and they started by finding out more from other parents. "I joined a Facebook group called 'Children with Auditory Brainstem Implants' and got in contact with some parents with different experiences," explains Yasmin.

They also spoke with professionals. "They told us there was no guarantee the ABI would work for Olivia, and that while it might give her access to environmental sounds, anything above that would be a bonus," recalls Yasmin. "They were all supportive of cochlear implants, but they didn't want to comment on the ABI because it's such a specialist area."

Speaking to family and friends helped Yasmin and Scott work through their own feelings. "When you mention brain surgery to anybody, they squirm," Scott says. "Taking Olivia into hospital to

get the MRI scan was quite tough for us, so we could only imagine what an operation would be like. You're talking about touching the brain, which we found very scary. We asked ourselves, why are we trying to fix her? There's nothing wrong with her."

"You want to try and do the best for your child," adds Yasmin. "I completely understand any parent's decision to get an ABI, because it's heartbreaking to think she'll never be able to hear our voices, but we decided we're not willing to put her through invasive brain surgery."

"It's important to not go down the rabbit hole of the barriers she will face and instead focus on all of the amazing things she will do. She'll communicate using a rich and beautiful language, and she'll belong to a community of people who accept and support her."

Now that Yasmin and Scott have decided to use BSL as Olivia's main method of communication, they feel fortunate they started signing with her early. "I can't imagine how lost I'd have felt now if we'd waited to see if she'd have access to speech and spoken language," says Yasmin. "We're very lucky that we started signing to Olivia from when she was three months old, because now her communication is coming on really well. She's able to express herself and she's learning just the same as any other child."

Although they've made their decision, Yasmin and Scott still plan to find out more about the ABI. "We'll have the conversation with the doctors so that when Olivia's older, we can give her the full information if she wants it," says Yasmin.

"We do sometimes worry about decisions we've made, but no matter how big or small the decision, we always have Olivia's best interests at heart. For other parents facing big decisions, I'd say go and do your own research, and speak up if something doesn't suit you. Olivia's an extraordinary little girl who just happens to be deaf. Our expectations for her are as high as ever."



We have courses and events to help you learn sign language, visit ndcs.org.uk/familylevents to find out more. For advice on choosing a communication approach, go to ndcs.org.uk/choosing.

EARLY YEARS

Your spring checklist

✓ Ivy's communication options

When Ivy was diagnosed as profoundly deaf at nine months old, parents Marnie and Daniel knew little about the road ahead. But what they did know was that they needed to provide Ivy with access to communication, so they threw themselves headfirst into learning British Sign Language (BSL). ndcs.org.uk/ivy



✓ Leia's auditory brainstem implant (ABI)

Every family of a deaf child is different, and what doesn't work for one family, may work for another. Parents Alison and Bob tell us about their daughter Leia, her deafness, and why they made the decision for her to get an auditory brainstem implant (ABI). youtu.be/KtDc8bYxssw



✓ Family blogs

Finding out what works for other families of deaf children can help when making decisions for your own deaf child. This is why we've put together a group of amazing parents and family members of deaf children, who blog about their experiences and how their children's needs are changing as they grow. ndcs.org.uk/familyblogs





A new start for Anna

By Caity Dalby

When they made the decision to leave Ukraine after Russia invaded Kyiv, mum Olha and dad Viacheslav knew that they needed to resettle somewhere Anna would get the support she needed with her communication.



Anna's story

Mum Olha and dad Viacheslav dote on Anna (8), who is profoundly deaf and has auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder (ANS), a relatively rare form of deafness where sounds are received normally by the cochlea but become disrupted as they travel to the brain. “We found out Anna was deaf when she was about two years old because her reactions to speech and sounds weren’t like other kids,” Viacheslav explains. “We immediately contacted doctors and specialists, but Anna passed her otoacoustic emissions (OAE) test [a test to find out how well the inner ear or cochlea works], which showed that she has normal hearing. When they did other tests though, it showed she was profoundly deaf.”

“What she can hear depends on the situation,” says Olha. “Sometimes she can hear the doorbell or a dog barking, but sometimes she can’t. The problem was that we didn’t actually know what was going on because it was difficult to understand her diagnosis. It’s a new world for us, there’s no history of deafness in our family.”

“For me, it was difficult to come to terms with deafness being a part of my life and to not know what the future

would be like for our child. But it’s normal for us now.

“Anna wears hearing aids and we bought her first hearing aids ourselves when she was five years old. Ukraine has a different medical system to the UK. We have different institutions and doctors that help, but there was a big waiting list for the support. So, we decided to do it on our own.”

Because of her profound deafness, Anna finds it difficult to communicate using spoken language. “She has problems with speech,” explains Viacheslav. “Sometimes it’s difficult to understand what she’s talking about. She also has problems with understanding the meanings of words and with constructing sentences.”

“We started to develop her hearing and speech skills in Ukraine, but we had lots of questions because every



BSL is a bridge between us and Anna.

institution has their own approach to communication development for children. It was difficult for us to choose which approach would be more suitable, but Anna did attend a special kindergarten before the Russian invasion. She also regularly attended group and individual speech and language therapy sessions, which helped her progress too.”

When the family decided to leave Ukraine after Russia invaded Kyiv in February last year, finding support for Anna’s deafness was their top priority. “Supporting Anna was the main factor to consider when deciding where we could move,” explains Olha. “Before we arrived in the UK we emailed the National Deaf Children’s Society and got support from the organisation. Everyone understood the situation in our country and with deaf children.

“We made the decision that we should move to Scotland, because of the schools there and programmes like ‘Homes for Ukraine’, started by the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government was our sponsor and helped us move. It’s a beautiful country.”

Once the family had resettled in Scotland, they began attending our Family Sign Language (FSL) course to start learning some British Sign Language (BSL). “Anna didn’t fully understand what was happening in Ukraine,” remembers Viacheslav. “When we decided to move, it was a very difficult decision. Because of her delayed speech and language development, it was hard to explain to her what was happening. BSL is actually the key for us to be able to provide her with more information about the situation in Ukraine and her new surroundings.”

“The main issue for us was that there isn’t a good culture of sign language in Ukraine and we don’t have as much



support from the country there,” says Olha. “Of course there are a lot of volunteers, groups, some schools and private charities, where deaf people can communicate and use their skills and knowledge. But in the UK, BSL is now an official language and deaf people can ask for an interpreter if they need it to communicate in official institutions.”

Alongside their FSL lessons, the family enrolled Anna in school for the first time. “In Ukraine, children don’t start attending school until they turn seven,” explains Olha. “The Advice and Guidance Officers at the National Deaf Children’s Society sent us a list of different schools for deaf children in Scotland and we looked through to find Anna’s first school. Now, she attends a school for deaf children and she’s very happy. She enjoys her days at school and is very proud of the gold coins she gets for good behaviour and doing tasks well.”

“Combining the efforts of the school and us as parents is great for Anna and we’ve seen progress in her development, communication and social skills,” Viacheslav proudly says. “It’s easier for her to learn BSL and for us to use it with her now she’s learning it at school too. She tries to construct new sentences and is improving her vocabulary every day. We need to learn more signs to keep up with her!”

“A sentence of three words from Anna can contain an English word, a Ukrainian word and a sign, so it’s definitely a combination,” Olha agrees with a laugh. “But it’s great because BSL is a bridge between us and Anna.”



We have two ways for families to learn Family Sign Language (FSL) online, with Zoom courses and on-demand FSL videos on YouTube. Find out more at ndcs.org.uk/fsl.

PRIMARY YEARS

Your spring checklist

✓ Learning with English as an additional language

We know that 13% of deaf children use an additional spoken language in the home. There are so many benefits to speaking two or more languages. The Bell Foundation share their top tips for families supporting their child’s learning in an additional language.

ndcs.org.uk/home-learning-EAL



✓ Appealing primary school placements

Choosing the right primary school for your child is important and can be a long process, so it can be frustrating if you don’t get your first choice of school. Head to our page about choosing a deaf-friendly school for information on how to appeal a school placement in your nation.

ndcs.org.uk/choosingaschool



✓ Easter signs

Religion plays a part in many deaf children’s lives, so it’s important to make sure practising your religion and taking part in religious celebrations is accessible. With Easter on its way, watch our video to learn some Christian British Sign Language (BSL) signs.

ndcs.org.uk/easter-BSL





Moji's big move

By Abbi Brown

When Moji moved to secondary school, he started feeling self-conscious about his hearing aids and radio aid. With support from his family, friends and Teacher of the Deaf, Moji is now taking charge of his learning.



Moji's story

Starting secondary school is always a big change, but for Moji, moving school during the Covid-19 pandemic brought the additional challenge of face masks.

"We were wearing masks for the whole of Year 7," says Moji. "I rely a lot on lip-reading, and I couldn't see anyone's lips, which made things harder."

Now 13, Moji began losing his hearing when he was four. "He'd had an ear infection," remembers mum Tabassum. "We went away, and halfway through the holiday, Moji stopped listening to us. That's how it felt at the time."

"It took a few weeks to realise he wasn't just ignoring us. My mum suggested we should take him to a doctor to see if there was an underlying cause, and that's when we found out Moji was deaf." Moji was initially given a hearing aid in his left ear. Two years later, he started wearing one in his right ear, too.

When the time came to move to secondary school, Moji, who's now moderately to severely deaf, began to feel self-conscious about his hearing technology. "I went to a very small primary school, and my secondary school has 300 students in each year, so

it was a massive jump," explains Moji. "At first, I found it hard to make friends. I had to keep asking people to repeat things and they got frustrated with me."

"I was self-conscious about my hearing aids because everyone would ask, 'What are those things?' I was worried about people treating me differently."

When he was at primary school, Moji created a PowerPoint presentation to support his classmates to be deaf-friendly. "We talked about doing the same thing in the first year of secondary school, but Moji was pretty resistant to that," explains Tabassum. "At the time, he didn't want to be seen as different. He wanted to fit in."

Before he started at his new school, Moji's Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) suggested he try a Roger Pen radio aid instead of the one he'd used at primary school, as the Roger Pen is smaller and less noticeable. Although Moji has become more confident about his hearing aids, he's still reluctant to use the Roger Pen.

"I feel embarrassed because I think everyone's looking at it and asking about it," explains Moji. "My mum noticed I wasn't using it because when I got home, it still had a full charge."



Find out why your child isn't wearing their hearing technology. Once you understand why, you can work on solutions.

"It's been a struggle to get him to use it," agrees Tabassum. "It's a brilliant bit of kit and I think Moji really benefits when he uses it. But he's still worried about being seen as different.

"Moji's ToD said that lots of children feel self-conscious about hearing technology around this age, so it was important to find the right balance of reminding him to use it and trying to understand why he didn't want to.

"The key thing is to find out why your child isn't wearing their hearing technology, because there's always a reason. Once you understand what it is, you can work on solutions."

As well as encouraging Moji to use his hearing technology, Tabassum has also encouraged his school to educate their staff on deaf awareness.

"His teachers don't realise how important the radio aid is," explains Tabassum. "I asked our ToD for a one-page summary about deafness to share with Moji's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO).

"Moji's a bright kid and he's pretty self-sufficient. He gets on with things, sits at the front of the class and does his work, so his teachers might not notice his deafness. My concern is that he won't know if there's something he hasn't heard.

"My advice to other families would be to contact your child's form tutor and encourage them to work out a solution with your child that doesn't involve singling them out. You can also ask your child's ToD to provide deaf awareness training to the school."

"I don't want extra special treatment," agrees Moji. "Last year, I didn't want to sit at the front of the class, but now I'm coming up to GCSE stage, I realise that sitting at the front of the class makes it easier to learn. I get extra time in exams, which I didn't use before. For my last three science and maths tests, I've used the extra time and got a higher mark as a result."

Moji also has a set of red, yellow and green cards which he can use to show



his teachers whether he's heard them. "The green card means I've heard the teacher. If I can't hear them, I can put the red card down on my desk. When the teacher has finished speaking to the class, they'll come and explain the task to me. That helps because it doesn't draw as much attention as putting your hand up. I don't use the cards as much now, though. I feel more confident about saying, 'I'm deaf, I didn't hear you.'"

Now in Year 9, Moji has a good group of friends. "Over time, as I've told them about my deafness, they've become more understanding," explains Moji. "I feel more secure. If I don't hear something, I can ask my friends to repeat it. You should never feel self-conscious or embarrassed about your deafness. Be proud that you have hearing aids. It makes you unique.

"If you're struggling, tell your friends or your parents. They can help you work out what to do."



For advice on talking to your child about how they're feeling, visit ndcs.org.uk/talking-to-teens.

You can also share Jazzy's video on building confidence at school with your child, at buzz.org.uk/articles/building-confidence-in-your-deaf-identity.

SECONDARY YEARS

Your spring checklist

✔ Being bullied

Secondary school is a difficult period of transition for everyone, but it can be harder for deaf children. Bullying is never OK and it's important for your deaf child to remember it's not their fault. Deaf children and young people can visit the Buzz for advice on what they can do if they're being bullied.

buzz.org.uk/articles/being-bullied-because-youre-deaf-secondary



✔ Self-esteem

As your deaf child grows up, they may encounter negative attitudes or obstacles which can affect their self-esteem. To help build their confidence and resilience, there are some activities you can do together at home. The activities are quick and simple, such as answering questions about your child's gifts and talents and having a daily gratitude practice.

ndcs.org.uk/developing-self-esteem



✔ Parenting a deaf teenager

Parenting a deaf teenager brings a whole host of new experiences. We have information, advice and tips for parents on helping their deaf teenagers learn to drive, start dating, go to parties and travel independently. Find all of this and more on our website.

ndcs.org.uk/teenager





Daniel takes on T-Levels

By Beth Liburd

With his passion for science and working practically, Daniel knew taking a T-Level was the right choice for him.



Daniel's story

Ever since he was young, Daniel (18) has always enjoyed practical hobbies and working with his hands.

"I made this yesterday, it took me the best part of a day," he says as he proudly shows off his latest woodwork creation – an archery target crafted from scrap wood from his local DIY store.

For Daniel, who is mildly to moderately deaf and uses hearing aids and a ConnectClip streamer, his love of all things practical was sparked in secondary school, in his science and design technology (DT) classes.

"I liked those subjects because you got to use equipment that you'd never used before," he says. "Once I represented my school at the local Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Olympics. We went to another school and did loads of STEM activities, like code breaking and powering a boat with solar power."

Experiences like these helped Daniel realise he wanted to pursue a career that would let him use his problem-solving and practical skills.



I get to focus on what I want to do. It works out better in the long run for me.

But when it came to next steps after GCSEs, he wasn't initially sure what to do.

"At first, I was looking at a carpentry course at college," he explains. "But they didn't have any tutors for it. I also looked at a warehouse apprenticeship, but I thought it would be too loud with all the machinery and forklifts."

Chatting with a tutor at a college open day, Daniel learned all about T-Levels – a new vocational qualification with courses beginning in 2020. Taking a T-Level allows

students to study a practical subject in depth over two years, with a mix of college-based learning and industry work placements. Excited by the possibility of focusing on a subject he loved while getting real-world experience, Daniel became one of the first people in the UK to begin a T-Level in Laboratory Science.

“If I’d stayed in sixth form and done A-levels, I’d only really have wanted to do the science ones,” Daniel says. “But I wouldn’t have been able to do just that. One T-Level is equivalent to three A-levels so I get to focus on what I want to do. It works out better in the long run for me.”

Since starting college 18 months ago, Daniel has thrown himself into his course. As well as studying the theory of chemistry, biology and physics, he gets to perform practical experiments and learn how different scientific techniques are used in an industrial setting.

“We do practicals that you wouldn’t get to do at GCSE level,” he says. “We’ve done distillation of oils and blood smears – we got to actually prick our own blood and test it! We also learn about ethics, health and safety, and data handling.

“You get lots of transferable skills too, like using the Harvard system for referencing and IT skills such as making spreadsheets and presentations.”

Daniel has also really enjoyed seeing science used in the real world on his trips to places like a thermal power station, a DNA testing laboratory, and the laboratories at his local hospital.

As part of his course, he also gets the chance to do placements in working laboratories. His first-year placement was as a lab technician at a secondary school, setting up practical activities for the pupils and taking care of the colony of plants used for experiments on photosynthesis.

“It was a different experience because when you’re at school, you can’t go into the prep room,” says Daniel. “I didn’t realise what technicians do. It was good to see the school classroom from a different perspective.”

Daniel is now looking forward to his next placement – working in a hospital’s medical testing lab.

Although there have been many positives on his course, Daniel has also faced barriers caused by a lack of deaf awareness. This was particularly challenging at the start of his studies,



when a surge in Covid-19 cases led to more precautions in the classroom.

“We all had to wear masks, so I literally couldn’t hear anything,” he says. “In my old school, all the teachers that dealt with me were given clear masks, but at college they weren’t.

“We still have these clear screens that go down the middle of the benches and I can’t hear anyone on the other side of the screen.”

While things started to get better once Covid-19 measures eased, Daniel has still found some problems with deaf awareness. “I did email my tutors to ask if they can put captions on any videos,” he explains. “One always remembers but others sometimes forget.

“I didn’t know I could get a fire pager in college until about a month in. I found out about it in a leaflet. It’s a little thing that sits on your belt and alerts you if the fire alarm goes off, so it’s pretty important.

“On my placement, communication was a bit better because I only worked with one other person and we were sat right next to each other. But when I went out of the prep room and interacted with students and teachers, that was a bit harder.”

Despite these challenges, Daniel is excited to pursue a career in laboratory science. He’s still considering which branch to specialise in but is particularly interested in microbiology, incident response and forensics.

“I like the idea of being a forensic scientist because you use skills you wouldn’t use in any other science setting,” he explains. “You have to work under pressure and be really analytical and scrutinise everything.”



For more information about options for your child after finishing school, go to ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool.

YOUNG PEOPLE 16+

Your spring checklist

✔ Support in school and college

Deaf young people have the right to receive a full education. Schools and colleges have a responsibility to consider needs, reasonable adjustments and support. Deaf young people may also be entitled to additional support. Find out how this works in the country you live in on our webpage. ndcs.org.uk/school-college-support



✔ Positive deaf identity

There’s no right or wrong way to be deaf. How your child identifies as a deaf person is unique to them. Working out their deaf identity can help them feel proud of who they are and to take ownership of their preferred communication style. ndcs.org.uk/deaf-identity



✔ Moving to adult audiology

Between the ages of 16 and 21, deaf young people will be moved from paediatric to adult’s audiology services. The way things work in the adult clinic is different. Read about how adult audiology works and how your deaf child can prepare for the move. ndcs.org.uk/adult-audiology



Deaf works
in finance £



Claudia's canny career advice

By Kerrina Gray

Working at a large investment firm would have been an intimidating thought for Claudia once upon a time, but now she's adapted the job to make it work for her and is loving her new role.



Claudia's story

There are many different ways to get the job of your dreams, but Claudia didn't expect that writing a blog post about her deafness would be the key for her. "I wrote a blog on how I embrace my deafness on LinkedIn," she says. "The company I worked for at the time showed it to a client, they asked to interview me and that's how I'm here today."

Claudia, who has a severe hearing loss and uses hearing aids, works as Corporate Responsibility Adviser at investment firm, Schroders. "I think my parents never thought I'd work in finance," she says. "Maybe as a teacher or in a charity where it's less fast-paced. But nowadays, I think anyone with any disability can work anywhere."

Claudia attended the same small mainstream school with an attached special educational needs centre throughout her education. "I struggled at primary school because I take more time processing information than others," she says. "I had speech therapy sessions and I had a teaching assistant to help me. But something clicked in

secondary school. I think when you're deaf or have another disability, you often become very determined and resilient.

"It's only later though, that I've realised I did work really hard to do well at secondary school. I assumed everyone else was working as hard, but I was doing more hours to make up for information that I missed in lessons.

"I was lucky because I was at a small school and my social life was very confined, so I had a few good friends who I'm still friends with now. I just really focused on my work, my family and close friends.

"I love spending time with people, and having a close network of support is really important to me. Now I work hard to balance friends, family and my job to manage my tiredness."

Claudia went on to study anthropology at Durham University. "I didn't really know what I wanted to do so I just followed the subjects I loved the most – Spanish and history," she explains. "I had a notetaker at university. It was good because when I'm listening and lip-reading, I miss stuff



Deafness is an asset and not a liability.

if I take notes. I had a great social life at uni too, a small concrete group of friends. Having a smaller group helped me balance things as I did get very tired. I'd go out once a week and do something fun at the weekend."

After university, Claudia went on to do a few internships, which ranged from six months to a year long. "I got them through something I call weak ties," she explains. "That meant reaching out to people I knew of from various industries with my CV and saying: 'Look I'm really interested in culture, and I want to use my skills in marketing to understand that a bit better.' I worked in fashion marketing and then at a branding agency.

"I've always been very upfront about my deafness when applying for jobs. Companies now see it as in their interest to hire people with diverse abilities. Being deaf, you have a unique interpretation of the world. I'm resilient and determined because I've had to adapt to society, which has designed itself for those without a disability. This will come through when I'm working to a deadline or need to be extra focused. Because I lip-read, I have to fill in gaps which means I'm creative, more proactive and always thinking ahead. These are all really important skills for the world of work. Deafness is an asset and not a liability."

While working at the branding agency, Claudia wrote the blog that would change her career. "At Schrodgers now I run initiatives to help the organisation be purposeful. I embed volunteering within the firm. It's about engaging people in causes that they really care about. I also co-chair the inclusion group here; we have a forum where people can talk about their diverse abilities and share resources and accessible tools. This role fulfils my passions, but I didn't know it existed when I was younger!"

Adapting to work in a large company was initially a challenge for Claudia. "It was a huge jump from my first role – from a company of 10 to 3,000. My new role is about meeting and talking to

people, which I love, but then I have to make sure my evenings are quiet to rest.

"I definitely struggled in the first six months," she says. "I had my first proper boyfriend at the time too and I found it quite hard to juggle it all with the tiredness. I had an honest conversation with my manager, and she agreed I could come in early and leave early. The team have adapted for me, they do social lunches rather than dinner.

"In all parts of my life, I find it's about being transparent with what I need. I have quiet weekends every other weekend. I have a set routine, and I make myself a rule that I only do one sociable thing in the week and something with friends at the weekend. I had to explain that to work, and to my boyfriend and friends."



Claudia also finds technology has really helped her at work. "I have Bluetooth hearing aids, paid for through Access to Work. My mum and my audiologist helped me apply. I do hybrid working, which also helps with my tiredness, and I do all my meetings on my mobile phone using the hearing aids instead of headphones. I can hear much better."

Although she's achieved so much already, Claudia still has big ambitions. "I hope to continue on this trajectory. I want to help everyone from different backgrounds get here too."



If you're a deaf young person, you can read information and advice about work and careers by going to ndcs.org.uk/workandcareers.

Find out more about our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign at ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere.

YOUNG PEOPLE: CAREER JOURNEYS

Your spring checklist

✔ Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Many deaf people don't consider deafness to be a disability. However, even if you don't consider yourself or your deaf child to be disabled, applying for a disability benefit such as PIP is still an option. Find out more about PIP and if you or your deaf child are eligible. ndcs.org.uk/pip



✔ Moving away from home

Moving away from home can be an exciting but nerve-wracking time for a deaf young person. Whether they are moving to university, need their own space or are moving to a new city, we have tips for moving away from home. ndcs.org.uk/moving-away-from-home



✔ Mental health support

It's important for your child to look after their mental and physical health and to stay safe. Deaf-led charity, SignHealth, supports deaf people in leading independent, safe and healthy lives. Find out more about them on their website. signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/supporting-young-people



How do I...

help my hearing children to understand their sibling's deafness?

For young children, finding out their new baby brother or sister is deaf can be a difficult experience. We asked two mums how they help their hearing children to understand deafness, and seven children what they like best about their siblings.



Lucy, Hannah and Sophie

Rebecca is mum to Lucy (8) and Sophie (4) who are hearing, and Hannah (2) who's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

"Hannah was born during the Covid-19 pandemic, when we were spending lots of time at home as a family. Lucy and Sophie are really caring big sisters, and quickly understood that Hannah was deaf. Lucy's main concern was that Hannah couldn't hear her read. We used this to explain that Hannah would follow the story in a different way and that Lucy could still read to her. They were both very keen on learning sign language and Mr Tumble was helpful in engaging them with different ways to communicate.

In the early days, 'hunt the hearing aid' was our main game! Both girls would quickly realise if one 'ear' was off and come running with it. Sophie would get quite cross with us if Hannah didn't have her hearing aids on for any reason!

Lucy and Sophie love being big sisters and can often be found helping Hannah to get into mischief. When Hannah got home after having her cochlear implants switched on, she was delighted to hear her sisters' voices. I'm sure that's why we've been able to keep her wearing them for so many hours each day, as she loves being in the thick of the action! Now Hannah has started speaking more, she's learned to call their names when she wants their attention and is often leading them into trouble. Now we're more confident about her keeping her cochlear implants on all day, we've been to visit family by the coast so Hannah can run around with her sisters on the beach and explore."

Lucy says: "The best thing about having a deaf sister is learning sign language and teaching her new things like colours and words."

Sophie says: "Hannah is really funny."



Tegan, Connie-Mai and their mum Aimee

Tegan (12) is big sister to Connie-Mai (8), who is profoundly deaf.

"When I found out Connie-Mai was deaf, I was shocked. The best thing about having a deaf sister is learning to sign, meeting new people, and knowing that every day is going to be different with her. My advice to other children who find out their baby brother or sister is deaf is don't be scared! Having a deaf sibling is great because you learn new things every day, without even realising, and you get to socialise with loads more new people."

Connie-Mai says: "I love having a big sister who's hearing. She helps me when we're surrounded by hearing people, like when we go on holiday, she helps me pick my ice creams. We enjoy swimming and going to the park together.

Hearing and deaf children are all the same, we like to play games and do the same activities. If one of my friends found out their new baby brother or sister was deaf, I'd tell them it's not as bad as people think! I love being able to turn sound off if it gets too noisy. It's one of my magic powers."



I believe it's important for both children to have Deaf role models.



For advice about sibling relationships and to support hearing siblings to understand deafness, visit ndcs.org.uk/siblings.

Tanya is mum to Emily (3), who is profoundly deaf and uses British Sign Language (BSL), and Hugo (5), who is hearing.

“As a family, we use books to help Hugo understand deafness. Julia Donaldson’s ‘Freddie and the Fairy’ and ‘What the Jackdaw Saw’ are particularly good for deaf awareness. We also have most of Cath Smith’s ‘Let’s Sign’ books and flashcards, which help with learning BSL.

Before Hugo started school, I took both children to Happy Hands, a pre-school group run by Hull Deaf Club. It’s been an excellent way for Emily and Hugo to meet Deaf adults. I believe it’s important for both children to have Deaf role models. We also went to Hull Deaf Club’s Christmas party. Hugo loved turning on a light to ‘wake up’ Santa and asked if he can go back again this year! We’ve recently become part of Leeds Deaf Children’s Society, through which we attended a soft play

session. Hugo was thrilled to play with boys his own age who use BSL. He thoroughly enjoys using BSL.

In March 2022, I took both children to the BSL rally in Trafalgar Square. Hugo’s school allowed him the day off to come along. Hugo was brilliant, he signed all day and was very proud to be there with the Deaf community.

When we’re out and about, Hugo looks after Emily. He often tells people, “My sister is Deaf, so we need to sign,” and he’s promoted the use of BSL within his school. Hugo and Emily have a brilliant bond. Whenever Hugo’s friends have a party, they invite Emily along, too. All his friends have been so accepting of deafness and have learned basic signs to communicate with Emily too.”

Hugo says: “I like having a deaf sister because she signs. Mummy is teaching me signs, so when Emily signs something I know what she wants and can help her.”



Emily and Hugo

Tahlia (10) is big sister to Marcus (8), who is moderately to severely deaf and wears a bone conduction hearing implant (BCHI).

“Marcus is two years younger than me. We’re really close in age, so I don’t remember how my parents told me he was deaf. He used to wear a bone conduction hearing aid on a headband, and I remember asking why he wore it. Now he has BCHIs, sometimes I get into trouble if I accidentally knock them off! I don’t like it when people stare at his hearing aids because most people don’t know what they are. Marcus can’t wear

his hearing aids in the swimming pool which means he can’t hear, so going swimming is a bit tricky.

Marcus and I like playing ‘Just Dance’ and board games together. The best thing about having a deaf brother is going to National Deaf Children’s Society and Mousetrap deaf theatre events with him.”

Marcus says: “The best thing about having a sister who isn’t deaf is that she can help me when I can’t hear things. She explains and repeats things for me. We enjoy watching TV and playing games together.”



Tahlia and Marcus

Super scribblers

FOR
0 TO 5
YEAR
OLDS

Put a spring in your step with a sensory stroll

This activity is a great way to encourage your child's sensory development and help them learn all about the seasons. Take a walk in the park or countryside, or even just go out into your garden. Encourage your child to use their senses to find different signs of spring. Make sure you supervise your child carefully when out and about, especially near water.

Rip this page out and take it on your walk. When you find a sign of spring, your child can tick the box!

Can you see...

a fluffy cloud
in the sky



a baby
animal



a yellow
daffodil



blossom on
a tree



a bird flying
high in the sky?



What else
can you see?

Can you feel...

the soft petals
of a flower



rough bark
on a tree



a smooth
green leaf



a wet
puddle



the warm
sun?



What else
can you feel?

Can you smell...

freshly
cut grass



the earthy
soil



stinky animal
poo (yuck!)



a spring rain
shower



sweet-smelling
flowers?



What else
can you smell?

Did you find any other signs of spring?

Write or draw them here

THE BUZZ

BULLETIN

FOR
13 TO 18
YEAR
OLDS

ARE YOU READY TO GO TO THE DOCTOR BY YOURSELF?

QUESTION 1

You've got a problem you'd prefer not to tell your parents about but want to discuss with the doctor. What do you do?

- A** I force myself to tell my parents so they'll come with me to the doctor.
- B** I book an appointment with my doctor to talk about it. I don't have to tell my parents if I don't want to.
- C** There's no way I'm telling my parents about it! I ignore the problem and hope it'll go away.

QUESTION 2

You want to use sign language during your appointment. What do you do?

- A** I ask the doctor's surgery to arrange an interpreter for my appointment, or we agree to use a video translation service.
- B** I'm not sure how to book an interpreter so I struggle through the appointment without one.
- C** I take a family member or friend to interpret for me.
- D** I don't need to use sign language.

QUESTION 3

You've been in the waiting room for ages, but nobody has come to get you. You're worried you've missed your appointment. What do you do?

- A** I don't do anything. My parent sorts it all out.
- B** I feel too embarrassed to ask the receptionist if I've missed my turn. I carry on waiting.
- C** I go to the receptionist to find out what's going on. If the surgery doesn't have electronic screens, I check they've remembered to come and get me when it's my turn.

QUESTION 4

Your doctor turns away when they're talking to you. What do you do?

- A** I'm too embarrassed to ask them to repeat themselves, so I just nod and smile.
- B** I remind them to face me when they talk to me and ask them to repeat what they said.
- C** I apologise and ask them to repeat what they said.
- D** I use an interpreter, so I'm able to follow what they said.

QUESTION 5

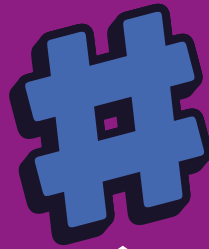
There's a question you really want to ask during your appointment. What do you do?

- A** I ask the question and hope I'll understand the answer. If not, I just nod and smile.
- B** I'm too nervous to ask any questions. I let Mum or Dad do the talking.
- C** I ask the question and make sure I understand the answer. If I don't understand, I ask the doctor to explain it again.

COUNT IF MOST OF YOUR ANSWERS ARE PINK, BLUE OR ORANGE, THEN TURN OVER TO FIND OUT IF YOU'RE READY...

THE BUZZ

BULLETIN



MOSTLY PINK...

At the moment you rely on your parents to arrange your doctor's appointments for you. That's OK! It might be a little while before you go to appointments on your own, but here are a few tips to help you get ready.

- Ask your parents how they book your appointments. Would you be able to book an appointment without their help in the future?
- Pay attention during your appointments. Don't just rely on your parents to tell you everything later.
- Prepare some questions with your parents before you go into your appointment, then ask the doctor the questions yourself. You could write the questions down to help you remember them.

MOSTLY ORANGE...

You still need your parents to help with some things, but you'd like to start taking more control of your own health appointments. Here are a few tips to help you take the next steps.

- Ask your doctor's surgery about the different ways you can book appointments. Explain that you want to start booking appointments yourself so they need to suggest a way that works for you – for example, using text or email.
- If you'd like to start using sign language interpreters during your appointments, then let your family know. This might be a tricky conversation, but it's an important step towards doing things on your own.
- Take the lead during your appointment. Explain what's wrong, ask questions and check you've understood everything. Be confident and ask your doctor to repeat things you've missed or not understood.

MOSTLY BLUE...

Great – you're already really confident about doing things on your own! Remember these top tips to make sure you get the support you need.

- Even if your doctor's surgery gives you good support, sometimes things can go wrong. Remember what your rights are and be confident to stand up for yourself.
- Remind your doctor's surgery what you need from them.
- Tell your doctor's surgery about your experience so they can continue doing things well or improve where they need to.



For more support on visiting the doctor independently, go to buzz.org.uk/articles/my-life-my-health.

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

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the Deaf Academy
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Education & learning

What is pragmatics?

By Emma Fraser (Teacher of the Deaf)

We use pragmatics every day in our interactions with others. It's the skill of using language socially and being able to adapt it to different situations. Pragmatic ability helps us to know what to say, when to say it and how much to tell. Having good pragmatic skills helps us to make friends and maintain relationships.

Babies

Babies are developing and practising their social communication skills, alongside their language skills, from birth. Making a sound or gesturing to get attention are early social communication skills. By three to four years old, children are usually good communicators. But for some children, their pragmatic ability doesn't develop as quickly as their language. This is especially true for deaf children, who may miss out on the everyday interactions and conversations that happen around them, delaying their development of this skill.

Children with poor pragmatic skills can have challenges with relationships and making friends, even into their teenage years. But there are lots of things you can do to support your baby's pragmatics development.

Here are some ways you can create opportunities for your child to be part of everyday social interactions and develop their social communication.

- **Use facial expressions.** Show your child how you're feeling or cue them into a joke or sad situation. Make sure they can see your face.
- **Bring conversations to your child.** Deaf children may struggle to overhear everyday interactions, so think about how you can bring your child into a conversation or explain what's being talked about.
- **Add in extra visual information.** Use gestures or simple signs, or point to or show what's being discussed.
- **Use play.** Make interactions and conversations engaging and fun. Follow your child's lead to find out about their interests.
- **Sing songs and action rhymes.** These help your child learn how actions and events follow a sequence.
- **Play simple turn-taking games.** This will develop their attention and help them to learn about taking turns when interacting or playing with friends.
- **Use books to talk about the characters' thoughts and feelings.** Talk about the characters' different ideas and reactions and what they might do next. It's also important to connect these ideas to your child's own experiences. For example, when talking about a character that looks sad because she lost her favourite toy, connect to a time when your child was sad because they lost something special.
- **Use language about thinking.** For example, "I wonder what will happen next?" or "I think he's going to get into trouble, what do you think?"
- **Be deaf aware in group situations.** Make sure you're communicating one at a time, signalling before talking, and repeating or rephrasing if your child has missed out on what's being said.



Toddlers and children

Once children begin to combine words together into short phrases, at around age two, there's a close relationship between them developing language and social and pragmatic skills. You can practise pragmatic skills with your child at this age in the following ways.



- **Asking for clarification.** Being able to ask for clarification often and with confidence, and being aware something may have been misheard or misunderstood, is a key communication skill. Demonstrate it to your child so they're aware of how to do it.
- **Developing conversation skills.** Having a conversation with friends, acquaintances and sometimes strangers is a pleasurable and rewarding experience that can build, maintain and deepen connections to others. Role-play is a great opportunity to practise these conversations.
- **Telling a story.** Understanding and being able to tell narratives and events clearly and in order supports children's interactions with family and friends. It also helps with understanding teachers' instructions and expectations in the classroom and is key to academic achievement. You can practise sequencing everyday events using pictures, role-play and toys to help your child remember the different steps. Use sequencing language, such as 'before' and 'next', and questions to help your child include the information that you need.
- **Understanding and using non-literal language.** Lots of the language we use every day has a meaning which is different to the actual meaning of the words we say. This is sometimes called non-literal language. For example, 'It's raining cats and dogs.' Take time to explain these expressions and also explain that how we say something can change its meaning.

Development of pragmatics continues into the teenage years and beyond with the use of negotiation strategies, non-literal language and slang becoming more sophisticated. If your child continues to find social situations difficult, they won't be the only one. Ask your child's school about social skills groups, which are safe places for children to practise their social communication and pragmatic skills in a variety of different social situations.

Supporting your child's education this spring

✔ Supporting achievement

Does your child use English as an additional language? They may face more challenges and barriers than others, but there's no reason they shouldn't achieve as much as their peers. Share our resource with your child's setting so they have everything they need to make sure your child gets a great education. ndcs.org.uk/eal



✔ Next steps

Deaf people work in a wide range of roles and the majority lead happy and independent lives. With the right support in place, many deaf young people will make successful transitions to adult life. Share our resource on post-16 transitions with your child's school to help them support your child in moving on from school or college. ndcs.org.uk/nextsteps



✔ Beat bullying

While a lot of children and young people will not face issues with bullying, sadly some will. As a parent you may have questions about what you can do to help, advise and support your child. Our webpage gives tips and advice. ndcs.org.uk/bullyingadvice



→ Our webpage on pragmatics has more information, go to ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics.

Parents and young people give their tips on making friends at ndcs.org.uk/make-friends.

Technology

Getting smart with technology

By Gavin Songer and Andy McMahon (Technology team)

Over just a couple of decades, smart technology has rapidly developed and grown in popularity. Did you know most of these smart devices are able to support deaf children and young people with a range of tasks?

Smart hearing devices

Hearing technology is becoming increasingly smart, with most new hearing aids, cochlear implants and bone conduction hearing devices having Bluetooth integration. This means deaf children and young people can connect them wirelessly to compatible smartphones, tablets and televisions, allowing them to hear the audio directly through their hearing devices.

Many hearing aids also have their own apps that you can connect to. These apps can help you to do things like stream phone calls, audiobooks and music, as well as check on the status of a hearing aid battery or even locate your lost hearing aids on a map. Allowing children access to the app is a great way to teach them independence in controlling and caring for their own hearing technology.



Rachel

“Aurora’s only five and she loves connecting the iPad to her Marvel hearing aids, which are Bluetooth enabled. We also use smart plugs for the TV, so if we need to get her attention when she’s watching, we can turn it off with our phone or Amazon Echo. This is great if she’s in her bedroom and wouldn’t hear us calling her to say that dinner is ready. Once she’s old enough we’ll connect the smart doorbell and post box to alert her phone or smartwatch when there’s somebody at the door.”

Rachel, mum of Aurora (5) who has a severe hearing loss.

Smart doorbells

Smart doorbells are very popular. They’re helpful for deaf people, as they can be alerted to visitors at the door by receiving a notification on their phone, tablet or smart screen, such as the Amazon Echo Show, so they don’t have to hear the doorbell or use a flashing one. It’s also possible to see who’s at the door via the app before answering (or ignoring it!). Options we’ve tested, and found to be useful, include Ring ([ring.com](https://www.ring.com)) and Blink ([amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)). When considering smart technology, check if the product requires an ongoing subscription to work beyond the initial free trial, as the costs can add up.

“The Ring doorbell means I get alerts directly to my phone or smartwatch when someone is at the door and I can see who it is. This means I don’t need to rely on anyone to tell me when someone is at the door, and I can choose if I want to answer the door or not!”

Pip, one of our Advice and Guidance Officers, who is deaf.



Pip



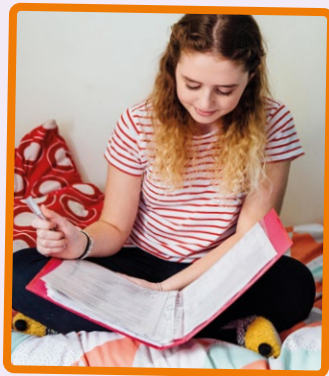
Smart light bulbs

Manually switching a light bulb on and off is an effective way of getting a deaf person’s attention, but nowadays smart light bulbs can support deaf people in various ways. Smart light bulbs usually come with an app so you can program the bulbs to help with a variety of different tasks, as listed below.

- **Waking up in the mornings.** A smart bulb can be set to gradually brighten in the morning to encourage a deaf child or young person to wake up, without the need for a vibrating alarm clock.
- **Sending children to sleep.** Smart bulbs can slowly dim in the evenings, simulating a sunset, to help soothe young children to sleep.
- **Using a countdown timer.** Bakers can programme their smart bulbs to flash or change colour when a timer reaches zero to avoid burning treats! You could also use this to time any tasks without needing to hear an alarm.
- **Alerting users to visitors.** Compatible smart doorbells can connect with smart bulbs to flash or change colour, informing deaf people that someone’s at the door.
- **Improving deaf awareness.** Many deaf people rely on good lighting to lip-read or see signing clearly. When required, individual bulbs can be brightened through the app.

Increasing independence

We suggested a Phillips Hue motion sensor and light bulb to a deaf student who’d just moved into university accommodation. It senses movement which triggers the bulb to flash or change colour. The aim was to make sure that she wasn’t isolated and was included in the halls. It’s also useful for providing notifications when others are moving around, giving her the same experience as other residents hearing the front door open or people moving around in the hallway.



An alerting system

The Bellman & Symfon mobile phone transceiver notifies users when someone is at the door, the phone is ringing or an alarm is going off via the Bellman Visit app. You can receive notifications through your smartphone, tablet or smartwatch using Bluetooth and the app. However, you have to buy and use the Bellman & Symfon transmitters, such as a push button for the door, telephone transmitter or smoke alarm, to complete the alerting system. For more information about this product, visit bellman.com.

Looking to the future

Oticon’s latest hearing aids and the app they use can communicate with internet-connected devices, such as smart kettles, washing machines and other appliances compatible with digital automation software IFTTT (ifttt.com/oticon). These smart devices can be programmed to send a customised message from the app to the hearing aid. The options are endless, such as announcing Google Calendar appointments, Twitter alerts and Amazon Alexa notifications. It can be linked to smoke alarms and safety devices too, but a reliable backup is essential in case an internet connection fails.



If you’d like further information about the smart technology featured in this article and want to find out how you can include it in your home, contact us at technology@ndcs.org.uk or visit ndcs.org.uk/technology.



We continue to support healthcare professionals and clients by offering online assessment or home visits. Call us now on **01978 820714**

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Ask the expert

Each issue, a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Marie, a performance interpreter, shares her thoughts.

.....

What does your job involve?

We provide British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters and deaf performers to the music and entertainment industry. This can include music concerts, festivals, theatre shows, the circus and talks. We work with the organisers to plan the BSL access, looking at the position of the interpreter and the lighting. When we interpret, we use a lot of performance skills, body language and non-manual features [movements that don't involve the hands, for example facial expressions] to portray the attitude and persona of the artist. People think it's about sound, but it's about the feeling you're left with at the end of a song.

How do you prepare for each show?

We take time learning the script of all the songs, translating them into BSL, and checking the translation matches the rhythm and meaning of the song.

How can deaf young people or parents of deaf children find out if the show they want to attend is interpreted?

Deaf and hearing parents should know that they can and should take their children to anything they want to see. You can contact us and we can help you to make contact with organisers for free. We would always recommend giving us 30 days' notice for a show. Reasonable adjustments also include captions so you can request those as well. You can also check the venue

website to see if an interpreter is already arranged; we're working with venues to ask them to have this information in BSL video too.

All of our performers are qualified BSL interpreters and have specialist performance training, led by deaf people. The entertainment industry is open to everyone.

What's your favourite thing about your job?

Seeing people smile and come together for the performance with family and friends is really special. Also, some of the artists I've worked with, Ed Sheeran and Adele in particular, both really acknowledge their deaf fans at their performances which I really appreciate.

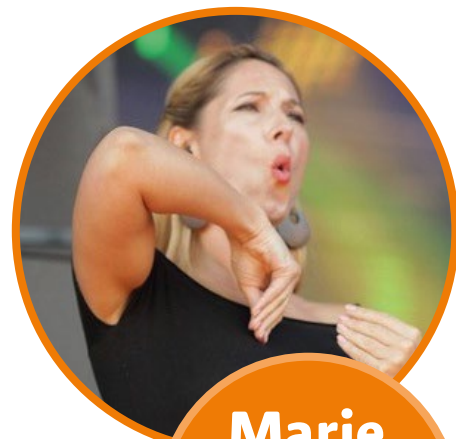
I also love working with other deaf performers. I'm deaf in my left ear and being able to provide a platform for deaf talent is amazing.

What's the most challenging thing?

We get the set list very last minute, so we have to do a lot of guess work and research. We could spend 50 to 100 hours preparing the songs and some of them might not even be performed!

Why do you think it's so important that shows are accessible?

There are so many barriers to fight as a deaf person, but I've realised how important it is to have access to entertainment for mental wellbeing. We see people cry, laugh and dance at the shows and it's beautiful to witness.



Marie
British Sign
Language (BSL)
Performance
Interpreter



The entertainment industry is open to everyone.



To get in touch with Marie and her colleagues, go to performanceinterpreting.co.uk.

Reviews

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

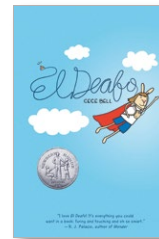


Lara

'El Deafo'

By Cece Bell
Available from bookshops
Price: £8.99 RRP

5 to 10



Sofia

Oticon EduMic

Available to buy from
connevans.co.uk.
Price: £310

0 to 4

5 to 10

11 to 14

15 to 18

19 to 25



The Oticon EduMic is compatible with Oticon Opn, Opn S, Opn Play, Xceed Play, Engage, More, Exceed and Siya hearing aids and with the Oticon Medical Ponto 4 and 5.

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



'Unravel'

By Amelia Loken
Available from Amazon
Price: £14.47

11 to 14

15 to 18

19 to 25



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



'El Deafo' is about a girl called Cece, who gets meningitis which then makes her deaf. Cece was named after the author, Cece Bell.

At the start of the book, Cece moves schools. At her old school everyone in her class was deaf, but when her family move house and she moves school, no one is deaf in her class, which makes Cece feel lonely. She gets a hearing aid called the phonic ear, where the teacher has a microphone which connects to it so Cece can hear. But Cece notices that she can hear the teacher anywhere,

even in the toilet! It's like she has her own superpower.

My favourite part was when Cece met Martha and they became friends. It made me feel happy for Cece because it's hard making friends, especially when you're deaf.

I really like 'El Deafo', but before I started to read it I wasn't that sure about reading a graphic novel, because I had never read one before. I enjoyed it loads though because the pictures help you understand what's going on.

I have read a book similar to 'El Deafo' called 'Harriet Versus the Galaxy'. It was

about a girl who was deaf, but with her hearing aid she could hear aliens talk!

I recommend this book to anyone, not just deaf children.

Lara (8) is profoundly deaf in one ear and wears a bone-anchored hearing aid on a softband.



I've really enjoyed having the EduMic, it's so much better than my old streamer. Being profoundly deaf in my right ear, it has helped me to hear more in lessons.

The best part about having the EduMic is that I no longer need to wear a streamer around my neck, since it uses Bluetooth technology and connects directly to my bone-anchored hearing aid (BAHA). The teacher wears it on a lanyard or clips it on to their top. This makes a big difference, especially in lessons like PE, when the streamer used to bounce around and sometimes I even had to take it off.

It's easy to use and pairs quickly. I pair it when I get to school, then mute it when moving from lesson to lesson, and give it to the teacher when I go into each classroom. I love the fact that I can connect it to my laptop or phone too, so I can listen to music directly through my BAHAs and no one else can hear what I'm listening to!

However, I'm still working on persuading my mum to get me an iPhone since that would connect directly to my BAHAs without using the EduMic at all! For now, with my Android phone, at least I can use the EduMic to connect the two devices.

The only disadvantage of the EduMic is with some teachers it clanks against anything else that they may be wearing. If they don't mute it, the clanking begins to get frustrating for me, and I get distracted by it.

The battery lasts well all day, but you do have to remember to charge it every night!

Sofia (11) is profoundly deaf in her right ear and uses a bone-anchored hearing implant (commonly known as a BAHAs) which sends sound to her left ear.

'Unravel' is a beautifully written book about a deaf princess named Marguerite who's secretly a witch. She lives with her loving father and grandfather, along with her loathsome uncle. Her uncle hates her because she's

the next heir to the throne and is deaf. Her uncle also despises witches and magic, leading the princess to hide the fact that she's a witch.

The story follows the journey of the deaf princess, who loves her people and tries to save them, while her uncle treats her brutally behind the castle doors. She meets new people as she faces obstacles. It's a story about love, secrecy, bravery, identity and discoveries. But most of all, when she faces an unexpected hurdle, it causes the princess heartache and forces her to make the most difficult,

heart-wrenching decision she has ever had to face. Will she be OK?

I would totally recommend 'Unravel' to any teen who wants to read a story featuring a deaf character, because I'm sure they will enjoy the story as I did. When I received the book, I was immensely thrilled to start reading. I was completely hooked and lost in the story after two pages. 'Unravel' is a very engaging and captivating story that I'm very glad to have finally read.

Pearl (16) is profoundly deaf and uses cochlear implants.



Resources

What's new?

Deaf children and tinnitus



What type of information is it?
A new webpage about tinnitus at ndcs.org.uk/tinnitus.

Who's it for?
Parents and carers of deaf children and young people who may be experiencing tinnitus.

What's it about?
Tinnitus is the name for hearing sounds that come from inside your body, rather than an outside source, and is often linked to deafness, hearing loss or other ear conditions.

You might also like:
This information is part of a section on our website about what deafness is and the causes of childhood deafness at ndcs.org.uk/childhooddeafness.



Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

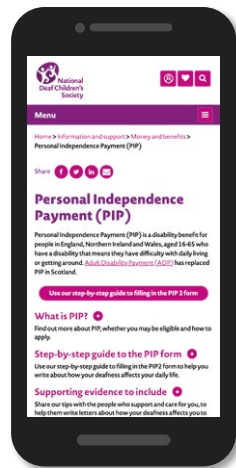


What type of information is it?
An updated webpage on the disability benefit PIP at ndcs.org.uk/pip.

Who's it for?
Deaf young people aged 16 or over, who can claim PIP, and their parents and carers.

What's it about?
This is updated information about PIP, including how to apply for it, what supporting evidence to include, and how to challenge a PIP decision.

You might also like:
This information is part of a newly updated section on our website about money, financial support and disability benefits, for both deaf young people and parents and carers of deaf children. Visit ndcs.org.uk/money-and-benefits.



'Deaf-friendly Early Education and Childcare'



What type of information is it?
A new printed and downloadable PDF guide, available at ndcs.org.uk/deaf-friendly-early-years.

Who's it for?
Anyone working with deaf children in an early years setting.

What's it about?
This guide helps early years practitioners understand childhood deafness and the needs of deaf children so they can make their setting and learning activities deaf-friendly.

You might also like:
This information is part of a suite of guides you can pass on to education professionals to help them support your child's learning, no matter what stage of education they are at. Find them at ndcs.org.uk/resourcesforteachers.



We have lots more information booklets and factsheets available to download on our website. Go to ndcs.org.uk/resources to find out more.

Helpline



📞 Freephone 0808 800 8880
✉️ helpline@ndcs.org.uk
💬 ndcs.org.uk/helpline



My daughter is moderately deaf and in Year 5 at a mainstream school. She's recently become quite withdrawn at home, not interacting with her younger siblings, and not interested in things that she used to like. Although there aren't any other deaf children at her school, she's always had lots of friends, but she doesn't mention them anymore.

We know that the transition to becoming a teenager brings with it huge physical, mental, social and emotional change. As they grow, many deaf children may become more self-conscious about their deafness and hearing technology, and some children may struggle to explain or express how they're feeling. We have tips to help you talk about emotions with your daughter, at ndcs.org.uk/talking-about-emotions.

It's important to remember that you're not alone in this. Regular opportunities to meet with other deaf children and deaf adult role models can help deaf children and young people to develop their self-esteem and build a positive deaf identity. We have information about deaf identity at ndcs.org.uk/building-deaf-identity.

Having friends your daughter can relate to is important and, although many deaf young people thrive in mainstream education and with hearing friends, it could be helpful for your daughter to get to know deaf people her own age outside of school. There are lots of ways for her to meet other deaf young people, like joining



a deaf sports team, going to a local group or signing up to our website for deaf children and young people at buzz.org.uk. The Buzz is an opportunity for your daughter to get the information she may need in a way that's accessible for her. She can read inspiring stories from other deaf young people, ask questions and even customise her own avatar.

Changes in behaviour can also be a sign that things might not be quite right and sometimes we need extra help from a professional. You and your daughter can talk to your GP about the professional support available in your area. Find out more at ndcs.org.uk/asking-for-support.

If you'd like to discuss things further, please contact our Helpline.



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 ndcs.org.uk/your-community and create a new account.



Great North Run

Sunday 10 September 2023



The countdown to the North East's biggest weekend of sport is on and you can be part of the action by signing up with #TeamNDCS!

Running the original city-to-sea route and finishing along the iconic South Shields front, take on the world's biggest half marathon on Sunday 10 September.

In true Geordie style, the route through the city includes high-energy entertainment, unbelievable crowd support, and local musicians providing the soundtrack to your run.

It's a party atmosphere from start to finish. Don't miss out, sign up today for £40* and help change the lives of deaf children.

Email ndcschallenges@ndcs.org.uk to find out how!

* With a pledge to raise £350.



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Local groups

Learning to swim with your local group



Trafford Deaf Children's Society is one of a number of local groups which offer their members deaf-friendly swimming lessons. Lynn, Chair and mum to Freya (12) who is profoundly deaf, explains why it has made such a big difference to her daughter's life.



Why did your local group set up their own swimming lessons?

Swimming is a life skill and all children should have access to lessons. It's not always easy for deaf children, as pools are noisy and visually distracting and coaches are often poolside, making communication hard.

I knew there was huge demand for deaf-friendly lessons. So, working with the National Deaf Children's Society, we managed to set up regular deaf-friendly swimming lessons at our local pool.

One of the main adaptations, which was a big commitment by the leisure centre, was that the pool was empty when the lessons happened. There were no other swimmers and no noise to distract the children. Also, as well as being trained very specifically in deaf awareness, the coaches were in the pool with the children.

How has this made a difference to Freya?

When Freya was nine years old, an ex-swimming coach who watched her swim told her, "You've really got something." It was then we realised swimming was more than just a life skill for her. She made it into her local squad and began to train in earnest. She also joined GB Deaf Swimming.

Freya's recently begun to use a WaterWear cover for her cochlear implant so she can keep one on while swimming.

This has helped her training but has also brought out the social side of the sport. She can have those little chats between lengths and build friendships. She's found her tribe.

Freya won three medals at the Para Swimming Championships for the North East region last autumn. She was so proud, she was bursting!

Any advice for other parents?

Don't underestimate the challenge of mainstream swimming classes for a deaf child. Having the right environment and support is essential for safety as well as success. It might not be possible to find the perfect swimming lessons right away but persevere and be patient. Contact your local group, as many of them organise deaf-friendly swimming for their members.

Other tips for deaf-friendly swimming lessons include small class sizes, no distractions in the pool, teachers learning specific British Sign Language (BSL) signs, and using visual demonstrations as much as possible.

Freya adds:

"Swimming is great fun, good exercise and you can make new and interesting friends. I love being able to swim with able-bodied, disabled and deaf swimmers, and every time I beat my personal best I'm really proud. It's hard work, but worth it."



You can find out more about deaf-friendly swimming lessons at ndcs.org.uk/making-swimming-deaf-friendly or gbdeafswimming.org. To find a local group in your area, check out our map at ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup.

Events



Genevieve, Clara and Santino

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.

- Understanding Childhood Deafness: My child's glue ear
- Understanding Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
- Sleep Issues
- Happy Futures: Supporting your deaf child's mental health and wellbeing
- Baby Sign: Special people



All of our events are free, with closed captioning online and British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. We can also organise other language interpreters if necessary. Places are limited, so booking is essential. For full details of our events and to book your place, visit ndcs.org.uk/events or call our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880.

Getting a good night's sleep

Genevieve, mum to Clara (1), who is moderately deaf, tells us how attending one of our recent events about sleep issues helped to reassure her she's doing all the right things to support her daughter.

“Clara's a content little girl who rarely complains. She loves her sleep, but there are nights when I feel she's unsettled, possibly due to her deafness. Sometimes these episodes also coincide with an ear infection or glue ear. I wanted to know more about how being deaf can affect sleep and what options are available to support sleep issues associated with deafness.

The event was online and started as a group seminar, with opportunities later on to chat in breakout groups. It was very interactive, so there were lots of parents and carers sharing their experiences. For me, that's the most useful thing about events like these. It's a supportive community and a great place to pick up useful tips and ideas, and chat with people who are in the same boat.

The hosts and speakers were very warm, friendly and welcoming. They were full of knowledge and experience too. From them, I learnt about balance changes when removing hearing tech at night. Balance changes can impact Clara, particularly without her hearing aids, but it hadn't occurred to me that the addition of a dark room could impact her balance further. I was also unaware that some deaf children can suffer with tinnitus, especially at night.

Attending the event, listening to the facilitators and hearing about the experiences of other parents confirmed that some of the techniques we already use to support Clara with sleep are effective and recommended. For example, Clara doesn't like to fall asleep in a pitch-black room, so we use a red glow night light.

The National Deaf Children's Society welcomes everyone and there's no pressure to be present visually or via audio if you don't want to. You can ask questions and give answers in the chat box throughout the session. I've found all of their events useful in some way. For any parents considering going to an event, I'd say go for it!”



I learnt about balance changes when removing hearing tech at night.



Ready for their future

We spoke to three deaf young people who took part in Get Ready for Your Future, a fun and informative day of workshops led by deaf role models, all about supporting young people to be more independent.

Emma (17) is severely to profoundly deaf and wears a cochlear implant and a hearing aid.

“This event helped me get ready to move to university and to gain more independence. I travelled on my own by train to the event in Birmingham, which was nerve-racking, but I made it by looking at the signs and trying to guess what was being said on the announcements.

During the day, we looked at various topics, ranging from payslips to different equipment that we as deaf young people can access. I enjoyed looking at the different technology because it’ll be useful to have in university halls or when I’m living independently.

It was a successful day – I felt more confident talking to people that I hadn’t met before, and I learnt lots.”

Abdur-Rahman (16) is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

“I applied for this event to find out more information about my cochlear implants. It was a fun and interactive way to learn, and the staff took care to make sure that everyone understood what was being said, verbally or through sign language.

I learned about my legal rights and how they could benefit me in the workplace. I also learned about

electronic devices I’d never encountered and could use on a regular basis, such as vibrating alarm clocks.

This event helped me be ready to face the world of work and new friendships. It also gave me confidence that I’m not alone, by socialising with other people who are in the same situation as me. This in turn sparked friendships I never knew I needed.”

Keira (16) is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

“I really enjoyed the day learning about our futures and how to live independently. I learned a lot that I hope will help in my future career. I think events like this will be helpful for everyone who’s deaf or has a disability.”



This event sparked friendships I never knew I needed.



Emma



Abdur-Rahman



Keira

Campaigns

The change you make

Campaigning doesn't just happen in Westminster. Most of the time, changing things for the better starts at home or in the local community and is being done by people like you!

In Northern Ireland, Patricia, mum to Conor (19), who is profoundly deaf, seized the moment to ask the Education Minister about support for deaf pupils.

"Last year, I met the Education Minister for Northern Ireland at Stormont with another parent and two deaf young students, one of them being my son Conor. The meeting was set up as a photo session, but we all seized the opportunity to campaign for some really important issues!

The boys told the Minister their own experiences of mainstream education and the challenges they faced being deaf. They talked about how important it is to have regular sessions with a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) to support them and their classroom assistants. They asked the Minister to make sure they're given every chance to be involved in decisions, rather than excluded because they're deaf.

I also explained how advice from a ToD helps mainstream teachers give the right support to deaf pupils and enhance learning for the whole class.

It was great to see the Minister really engage with the boys. I feel she learned a lot and I was proud to support the boys to make the most of this chance to influence the Department of Education's thinking."



Patricia and Conor

In Wales, Kristy, who is deaf and a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD), set up Hands 2 Hear, a digital platform to help people become deaf aware. She is mum to Ffion-Haf (13), who is profoundly deaf.

"Recently Ffion-Haf spent six weeks in hospital being treated for a very severe and rare inner ear infection, and one of her cochlear implants had to be removed.

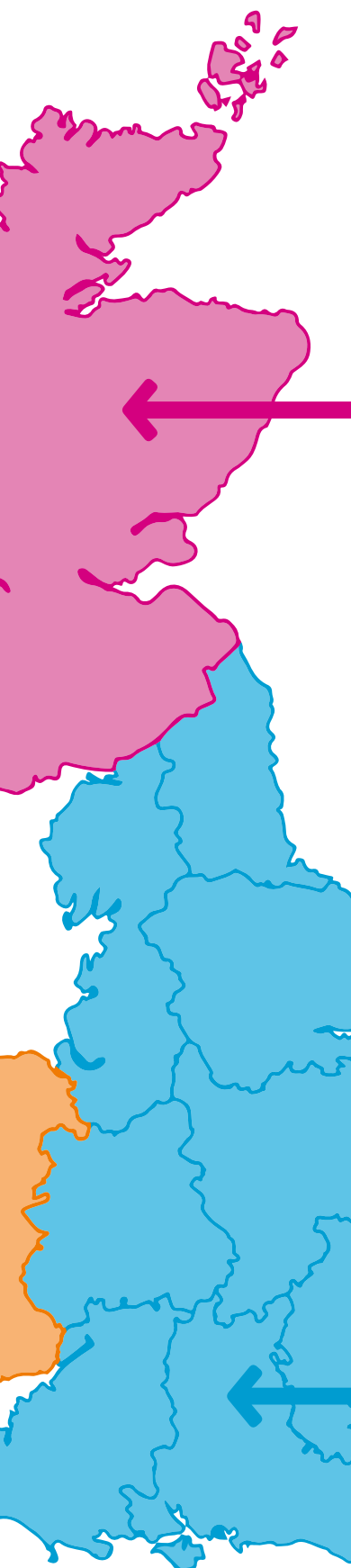
During her stay, nobody was able to communicate effectively with her and I found myself being a mum and an interpreter. It was exhausting. It was during this time I had the idea for Hands 2 Hear – a free platform on social media where we could provide practical tips, advice, resources and British Sign Language (BSL) videos for people to become deaf aware.

As a ToD, I knew it would be hugely beneficial for all the staff in the mainstream schools that I teach in.

My hopes for Hands 2 Hear are that it reaches as many people as possible, deaf and hearing, to raise the profile of deaf awareness and the importance of sign language. Deafness is an invisible disability, so deaf awareness is absolutely crucial."



Kristy and Ffion-Haf



In Scotland, Megan (13), who is moderately to severely deaf, talked about deaf awareness at the Scottish National Party (SNP) Conference.

“I joined a group of other deaf young people, called ChangeMakers, a while ago. Talking to them about some of my negative experiences in education made me feel validated and empowered to lobby for change.

The conference was nerve-wracking! All of us from the ChangeMaker group were wearing purple hoodies and I felt we looked like an army of deaf awareness fighters. The conference was very busy and buzzing with excited chatter from people coming together to make things better.

When it was time for me to ask my question and speak in front of everyone, I was so determined. I wanted to make sure I told my story and asked for things to change for deaf children.

Overall, the conference was an amazing experience. We got to speak with lots of important government members and councillors. They took a lot of time to chat with us, ask questions and make us feel important.

The best part was being with other deaf young people and not feeling alone in my experience. The whole experience has been life-changing.”



Megan

In England, Shikha took action to get her son Ayaan (5), who is profoundly deaf, into the right school.

“For the first 18 months after Ayaan was born, we lived in Berkshire and we had two Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs) who visited every week. The practical help we got from them was brilliant and so helpful.

Just before the pandemic began we moved to another area in England. For a while, visits from our ToD stopped completely, and when we did get a visit again, it was the only time that year we saw our ToD.

Things became even more difficult when we started the process to get an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and I asked for Ayaan to go to a specialist school. There was a lot of pushback from the local authority. I was even told that, “We don’t do it like that

in this area.” I ended up sending 32 emails to nine people, and I didn’t get a single response!

I had to persist in campaigning for Ayaan to make sure he got the support he needed. Eventually we did get support and Ayaan is now at a specialist school for deaf children. He’s doing well there but it shouldn’t have been so difficult to go through the process.

This experience spurred me on to do more campaigning at a national level, including even meeting the Minister in charge of special educational needs.”



Ayaan and Shikha



Trying to make your own change for deaf children? Check out our toolkit for tips and advice at [ndcs.org.uk/campaign-toolkit](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/campaign-toolkit).



HAMILTON LODGE SCHOOL & COLLEGE

EDUCATION & CARE FOR DEAF STUDENTS FROM PRIMARY TO F.E.

BRIGHTON

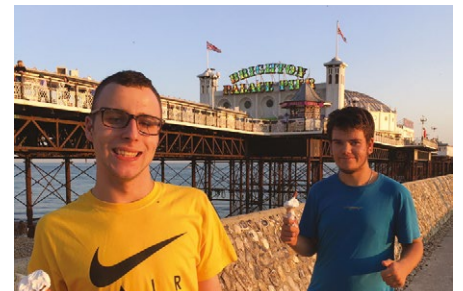
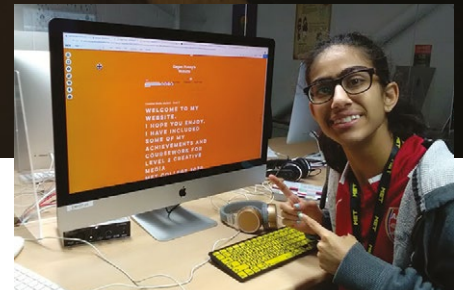
Situated in the heart of Brighton, our school has educated and cared for Deaf children for over 75 years.

Hamilton Lodge is a special residential school for learners from 5 to 19 years of age with significant expertise in meeting an identified primary need of Deafness (Mild, Moderate, Severe or Profound).

Our Specialist Team includes:

- Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and subject specialists
- Qualified Residential Care staff
- Health Care Assistant
- Audiologist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Emotional and Mental Health support (supervised by National Deaf CAMHS)
- Play Therapist

Please contact us for further information, to discuss a placement or to arrange a visit: admin@hamiltonlsc.co.uk
01273 682362



HAMILTON LODGE, WALPOLE ROAD, BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX BN2 0LS

Telephone: 01273 682362 Email: admin@hamiltonlsc.co.uk

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Registered charity in England: Hamilton Lodge (Brighton) no. 307066. Registered in England company no. 544254.

Fundraising

Fundraising on Facebook

Last year, we were excited to launch our new Facebook fundraising event, '310,000 steps in October'. This challenge saw people across the UK walking an average of 10,000 steps every single day throughout the month, raising an amazing £20,000 to support deaf children and their families. We're so proud of our fantastic fundraisers who went above and beyond, even in the colder and wetter months!

Now it's springtime, why not be inspired to take on our next Facebook fundraiser? Go to facebook.com/NDCS.UK to find out more!



Oscar, Emily, Reggie, Phoebe and Josh

Emily took on the challenge with her partner Josh. They live in Swansea with their children Oscar (8), Phoebe (2) and Reggie (4 months).

They were inspired to take part because of the support they received from the National Deaf Children's Society when Reggie was diagnosed with severe to profound hearing loss at 10 weeks old.

"The news initially flipped my entire world upside down, not knowing where to turn or what to expect," says Emily. "What did our little Reggie's life look like now as a deaf child?"

The National Deaf Children's Society was a lifeline for me, they had all the information, resources and support I needed. Now five weeks on, Reggie has received his first set of hearing aids and is doing amazingly. We also have an appointment at the cochlear implant centre next week."

Emily and Josh even completed the challenge early, reaching 310,000 steps two days before the end of the month by exploring their local area. Together they raised an incredible £805. Thank you so much Emily and Josh – you're both amazing!

Do you feel inspired by Emily and Josh?

Why not sign up to one of our Facebook challenges with your family?

- 1 Look out for our posts about upcoming challenges on our Facebook and Instagram pages.
- 2 Once you see one you fancy, tap through to join our private group.
- 3 Complete the short registration form and create your own fundraising page. Each challenge will come with a special gift for all that take part too!
- 4 Complete the challenge across the challenge period, usually a month.

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 chief accountant for a London borough because...

Although my work is largely office-based, I can see the impact of our work on the borough outside, for example, through new homes and a new train station.

I lead the corporate finance function of the Council and my responsibilities include drafting the annual accounts, working with external auditors and giving technical accounting advice. I qualified as a chartered accountant after joining a graduate scheme and was an external auditor for many years, working my way up. I'm profoundly deaf and use a British Sign Language interpreter to help me do my job, funded through Access to Work.

Along the way, there's always been the feeling that I should be grateful for where I am and shouldn't push myself further. This isn't true – if you've made it this far, there's no reason why you can't go further!

I can't stress how important it is to network widely and seek out deaf role models. They're always on hand to offer useful advice or may help review your applications and polish your interview technique. The stories I've exchanged to date have always been valuable and motivating.

Tom Mulloy



I'm an architect because...

I like seeing ideas come to fruition throughout the design process. It gives me satisfaction that the years of training and experience were worth it.

I design buildings of all different sizes, from small house extensions to airports. I'm contracted by clients to produce a design that meets their requirements and budget. We've also been doing some research into designing buildings which are deaf-specific.

I'm profoundly deaf from birth and communicate by lip-reading with the use of a cochlear implant. When I first qualified as an architect my boss said I couldn't manage a project because I was unable to use the phone. Since then, the internet and technology have vastly helped my progress, and I now run my own practice. Group meetings, seminars and presentations were difficult in the early stages of my career, but nowadays in video, face-to-face group meetings or large presentations I use a speech-to-text captioner via my iPad to help me to understand what's going on.

The key word I have for all deaf school leavers or graduates is perseverance. You'll get there even though it may take longer than you originally thought. See the positives from every setback and move forward.

Ben Stephens



I'm a supermarket assistant because...

I like seeing new and familiar faces every day, especially as you get to know regulars. Knowing that I'm able to make someone's day brighter keeps me going.

My job varies, but it's all about communicating with customers and making sure they leave the store happy. If I'm on customer service assistant duties, I'm responsible for approving age-restricted items, solving technical issues and operating the cash office at the end of trade. At the front desk, I deal with problems and handle internal communications from head office.

There have been many barriers as a deaf person in retail, especially during Covid-19 with people using masks! I've had good days and bad days. Despite this, my employer has been amazing.

I used to have profound sensorineural hearing loss in my left ear and mild to severe deafness in the right (depending on frequency). Now, I'm profoundly deaf in both ears. I'm learning to adjust and have been supported immensely by my partner and family.

During my master's degree, I wrote a thesis on disability in publishing to tackle the accessibility and inclusivity issues in the industry. I'm proud of my work and hope to start my publishing career soon.

Sophie Terry



Be inspired by other deaf people at work in our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign video at 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 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 or visit www.phonak.co.uk

Sky Marvel offers:



Clear, rich sound



Connects to smartphones, Roger™ mics and more



Rechargeable



Child-specific design



MARY HARE SCHOOL SECONDARY OPEN DAY

Monday 1 May 2023



Find out how Mary Hare School can support deaf children and young people.

If you are thinking about your child's options for Secondary School, or seeking an alternative to their current school, our Open Day is a great opportunity to see the school and some of the lessons in action, find out more about our curriculum and additional support, as well as the chance to explore the beautiful grounds, facilities and boarding houses.



Book your place online

Scan the QR code
or visit online

www.maryhare.org.uk/events/secondary-open-day-2023



Securing the future of deaf children and young people

www.maryhare.org.uk | [@maryharieschool](https://twitter.com/maryharieschool)

