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National Deaf Children's Society

Winter 2017  
Issue 47

# families

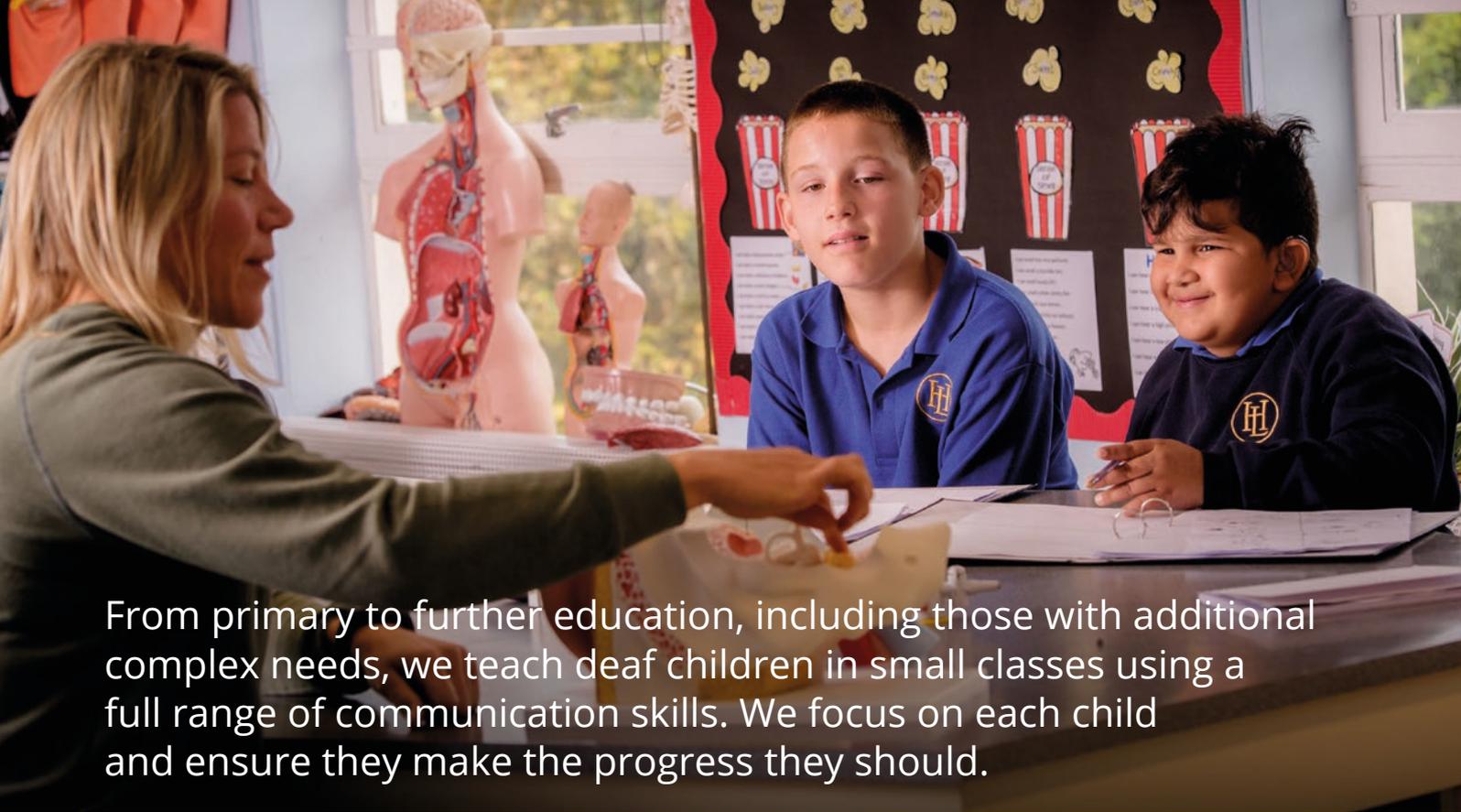


## Alex's GCSE success

"I want to go to university and become a History teacher."

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Buy our new children's book *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue* to the Rescue (page 35)





From primary to further education, including those with additional complex needs, we teach deaf children in small classes using a full range of communication skills. We focus on each child and ensure they make the progress they should.



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### OFSTED (2016) rated our education as GOOD and said:

*"Leaders rightly pay close attention to pupils' well-being and emotional and physical health. Some pupils arrive at the school, with a poor sense of self-worth and lack of confidence. Staff do all that they can to support pupils effectively and ensure that they get back on track to making progress in lessons and feeling more positive about themselves. It is notable that pupils make quick gains in their learning and self-esteem following their admission to the school. Pupils who stay on into the post-16 provision achieve good results in public examinations."*

# My deafness didn't stop me...

## ... becoming an award-winning actress



**Maisie**

**MAISIE (6), WHO IS PROFOUNDLY DEAF**, had the opportunity of a lifetime last year when she won the lead role in a short film.

"We saw a Facebook status asking for a five-year-old deaf girl who uses British Sign Language (BSL) to audition for a role in a film. Several friends tagged us saying Maisie would be perfect," explains her dad Gilson, who is also deaf. "We asked her and she wanted to do it."

The *Silent Child* centres on Maisie's character, Libby, who is profoundly deaf. Libby is living in a silent world until a caring social worker arrives and teaches her how to communicate.

"For Maisie the best bit about being in the film was being treated like a star. She was really well looked after by the crew," Gilson says. "She really enjoyed filming the swimming scenes

and the scenes with milkshakes and ice creams in too! It was sometimes frustrating for her to have to do the same scene over and over again but she took it in her stride."

**“ Maisie won Best Actress; she was so proud... ”**

The film has also given Maisie other exciting opportunities. "Maisie and myself were fortunate enough to go to Rhode Island International Film Festival in the USA," Gilson explains. "The *Silent Child* won the award for Best Live Action Short and also, incredibly, Maisie won Best Actress; she was so proud."

The film and Maisie are now even being considered for BAFTA and Oscar nominations. "Maisie's pretty cool about this," says Gilson. "It's all part of her personality. For us as parents, it's mind-blowing. We couldn't be happier or more proud of her and the message the film has." 

 To find performing arts classes near you, see [www.ndcs.org.uk/activities](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/activities).



**We could tell you how much  
our students enjoy learning**

---

**but we think Nevaeh's  
face says it all**



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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 pages 44–45 for more information on supporting our work.

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### Isla's story

how her parents handled her deafness and cleft lip and palate  
**p14**



### Adalaide's story

how a school Beavers group has increased her confidence  
**p16**



### Danny's story

how he found success as a social media and TV star  
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### Our apprentices

why they joined our apprenticeship scheme  
**p22**

# Hello



This year I've been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to author our second children's book *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue*. When parents first find out their child is deaf I know their main concerns can include them making friends and communicating effectively at school so combining these elements into an adventure story really appealed to me. The main character, Jake, is deaf, but this is only a small part of the story and he doesn't let it stand in the way of his success, proving anyone can be a superhero. Find out more on page 35 or to buy a copy go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine).

This issue also celebrates the inspirational achievements of deaf children in the arts with Maisie and her acting (page 3), our young stars from 2017's Raising the Bar event (page 13) and Danny's social media and TV success with deaf comedy (page 18).

Finally, the festive season is upon us and if you need any deaf awareness reminders for family members have a look at [www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips).

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year,

*Karen*

Karen Harlow, Editor

✉ [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk)

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# NEWS



## Calling all young deaf performers

What can deaf children and young people achieve in music, dance and drama? Amazing results! Our famous Raising the Bar event will be back for the fourth year running in May 2018. We're on the lookout for young deaf musicians, dancers and actors aged 8–18 to apply for a spot at our prestigious masterclasses with deaf arts professionals, and to take part in our final showcase performance where they can demonstrate their new skills on stage.

Applications will be open from 15 January until 25 February 2018 with the masterclasses and showcase taking place in Birmingham on 12–13 May 2018.

Read how the 2017 event went on page 13 or for more information, please see [www.ndcs.org.uk/raisingthebar](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/raisingthebar).



## Deaf awareness at Christmas

Does someone your child is spending Christmas with need a deaf awareness reminder? Show them our top tips at [www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips).



## Fluri's employment success

Fluri (25) lives in Mwangi in Tanzania and was born deaf. Last year he graduated from Ghona Vocational Training Centre for the Deaf where he learned carpentry. But with materials such as wood in short supply, lessons were mainly theory. Without practical experience, most students left the centre without enough skills to get a job.

But Fluri was one of 16 deaf students who joined our internship programme with Childreach Tanzania. He worked with three other young men at Longuo Construction Ltd for a month, learning practical skills on the job.

"We learnt so many things – for example, how to build beds, cupboards and windows using sandpaper and power tools," says Fluri. "It's expanded my knowledge, especially of how to make marketable goods. I've gained skills, confidence and experience in seeking jobs and how to work with hearing people."

We're pleased to report that Fluri has now been given a job at Longuo Construction Ltd – fantastic news!

Find out more about the work of our international arm, Deaf Child Worldwide, at [www.deafchildworldwide.org](http://www.deafchildworldwide.org).

## Does your child have Usher syndrome?

Usher Kids UK is a new organisation set up to support, inform, connect and advocate for children with Usher syndrome and their families.

The organisation was created by a mum whose daughter was diagnosed with profound hearing loss back in 2009 and then with Usher syndrome two years later. The family then found themselves with lots of new questions and concerns but without any dedicated support network to turn to.

Usher Kids UK aims to help newly diagnosed families build confidence in the path ahead for their child.

Find out more at [www.usherkidsuk.com](http://www.usherkidsuk.com).

## Our second children's book has been released!

When Jake, who is deaf and has a cochlear implant, returns to his superhero school after the summer he finds out that Tilly, the school's tortoise, has gone missing.

Jake teams up with Jasmine, a new girl in his class, and together they go on a quest to find the school's much loved pet and show that anyone can be a superhero!

An ideal Christmas present for children aged 4-7, you can buy copies of *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue* at [www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine) or read more on page 35. All money raised will help us create a world without barriers for deaf children.

## Three Wishes competition Northern Ireland

We've launched our 2018 Young Authors and Artists competition with the theme of Three Wishes.

We'd love all deaf children in Northern Ireland aged 4-18 to enter this exciting competition and share the life-changing ways they'd use three wishes through a piece of creative writing or visual art or both.

The closing date for entries is Friday 26 January 2018 and the prize day will be held in Belfast City Hall on Tuesday 13 March 2018.

For more information please call 028 98035 2011 or email [celine.heatley@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:celine.heatley@ndcs.org.uk).



## Specialist educational services

We've produced a short, easy-to-read note for local decision-makers in England on the vital importance of specialist educational services for deaf children. The guide is designed to:

- provide information and advice on these services and their importance in helping deaf children achieve their potential
- remind local decision-makers of the legal requirements when proposing any changes to these vital services
- correct some common misunderstandings about deafness.

Download *Specialist Education Support Services for Deaf Children: Advice for commissioners (England)* from our website at [www.ndcs.org.uk/specialist](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/specialist).

# Comment

## Working together to support deaf children

It's that time of year when thoughts turn to what we've achieved in the past 12 months, and here at the National Deaf Children's Society we're no exception. It's been an important year for us, having launched our new strategy and our new look and feel with the ambition to reach and support even more deaf children and young people than ever before.

Of course we couldn't do this without your support and there are a number of forthcoming events that will bring us as an organisation and you, our members and supporters, together in support of deaf children. One such event is the Association of Women Travel Executives' Christmas lunch. It's a personal cause for the association because one of the committee members' daughters, Ella (6), is deaf. Our celebrity ambassador Rachel Shenton will be speaking at the event, telling everyone about how we can help deaf children to overcome the barriers they face. Staff in our signed songs choir will also be attending, performing some Christmas songs and encouraging guests to bid generously in the fundraising auction.

It's also an exciting time of year for us as we've just launched our second children's book *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue*. Don't forget to have a look if you're buying a last minute present for a child aged 4-7. You can find out more on page 35.

Thanks for your support this year and I wish you all the best for the holiday season and a happy and healthy 2018,

Susan

Susan Daniels OBE  
Chief Executive





roger

## Helping your child hear more

As a parent, your child being able to hear you and everyone else is of paramount importance. Roger™ takes a child's hearing to a whole new level, letting them connect with the people and the world around them.

A child's hearing aid provides a listening range of up to 2 metres but anything after this and they may struggle to hear. Roger™ technology has been proven to help children hear better in noisy situations or over distance, whilst being simple and easy to use.

The technology helps a child to maximise speech learning & development, build confidence, feel safe and develop friendships. It also helps a child hear more clearly when playing outdoors or enjoying sports and hobbies, eating meals at home or in a noisy restaurant, watching TV or using their mobile phone.

Phonak is working with many partners to support parents with the above and offer them information needed to overcome these challenges. For more information, simply visit [www.fmhearingsystems.co.uk](http://www.fmhearingsystems.co.uk) or [www.connevans-phonak.co.uk](http://www.connevans-phonak.co.uk)

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life is on

# SUPERSTARS



**F**rankie has had hearing aids since he was 11 weeks old and has just been fitted with an advanced bionics implant. He's been so brave and is slowly making progress with his speech but it's onwards and upwards. He's always happy and, even though his speech is delayed, he and his sister Evie (who's hearing) always have the best time and communicate in their own special way.



– Chloe and Chris, parents to Frankie (2) who's severely to profoundly deaf.



**E**vie was born 13 weeks premature. She has many conditions, including severe hearing loss, but that never stops her

making progress in everything she does especially with her signing. She teaches our family things every day and we couldn't be more proud of our little superstar!

– Helen and Daniel parents to Evie (2) who is severely deaf.

➔ **Do you know a deaf child who's a superstar? Parents, extended family members and teachers or professionals can all nominate by emailing [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk). No matter what your child's level of hearing loss or however big or small the achievement, we think it's worth celebrating.**

Every day deaf children and young people prove that deafness shouldn't be a barrier to enjoying life. Read on for some of the amazing things your children have done to make you proud.

**J**amie has a severe to profound hearing loss and wears hearing aids. He's oral but has picked up sign language from his signed support in lessons at school. He wasn't keen to go to a formal British Sign Language (BSL) class, but he persevered and has recently passed his BSL Level 2!



– Lesley, mum to Jamie (13) who is severely to profoundly deaf.

**M**y granddaughter has a profound hearing loss due to meningitis as a baby. She has a twin sister Asha



and they were both nominated in the final three of our local area's Child of Courage Awards. We're immensely proud of what she's achieved despite her hearing difficulties, and it was lovely that

they were both recognised by our local paper.

– Julie, grandmother to Dehanna (10) who is profoundly deaf.

**O**ur son Tristan now has his first set of hearing aids. Like his older brother he is moderately deaf. He's our little superstar because he was also born with a floppy larynx and spent his first few weeks in hospital.



**M**y granddaughter Isla was born with a severe hearing loss. Now she is able to sign and attends a nursery school. Her speech is amazing for her level of hearing loss and she is doing so well. We're all so proud of our little superstar.



– Angie, grandmother to Isla (3) who is severely deaf.

# The battle with background noise



**I worry she won't be able to join in anything if she can't hear instructions.**

## Raising Nancy:

the ups and downs of parenting a deaf child



Jess and her husband Matt are parents to Alice (5) and twins Nancy and Connie (4). Nancy is profoundly deaf and was fitted with cochlear implants at 20 months.

### **"PARTY, MUMMY!" SHE SHOUTS, RIPPING OPEN THE ENVELOPE.**

Nancy has had a birthday invite popped into her drawer at nursery. My heart sinks because it's at the community hall... again! Echoey high ceilings and a clattery wooden floor will be difficult for her: 20 *Frozen* Elsas running around in plastic high heels sound like a screaming herd of elephants to Nancy. Should I pretend we can't go? At a previous party she threw off her processors, frustrated at being unable to hear what was going on. I accept the invitation with a heavy heart – I can't deny Nancy wearing her fairy dress and seeing her friends. When the dreaded day comes we enter a packed, noisy hall and Nancy looks up at me with a forlorn face, "Mummy, why did you bring me here?" She sits on my lap, watching blankly as the other kids chatter excitedly and pass the parcel. She joins in with the party tea at the end. Acoustics! It's always tricky with parties.

Last week we went to gymnastics to satisfy Nancy's bonkers craving for hurling herself around in half cartwheels. This time, the echo didn't bother her; she was delighted in her own world of mini balance beams. But then the children sat in a circle for 'Simon Says'. Here we go... as I predicted Nancy couldn't hear the teacher to follow the instructions so she curled up into a ball and cried. In fact, she rolled around screaming. She has awful tantrums when she can't understand what's being said. The staff were kind, asking, "Can we help?" but their words were lost up in the ceiling. A radio aid is what Nancy needs to hear a conversation clearly but our local authority doesn't provide

these for pre-school children – surely these are exactly what deaf kids need while they are young? What will happen when Nancy goes to school? I worry she won't be able to join in anything if she can't hear instructions.

But one disastrous birthday party and a woeful gym session won't dictate how Nancy will cope in the future. As she grows older, she's changing – always for the better. I mustn't forget our recent half-term holiday in a youth hostel with 25 other people; kids screeching and running along the corridors. I thought Nancy would hate it but she coped magnificently with the hubbub and totally thrived. Her speech even improved! Her vocabulary is also increasing and she's making friends at nursery, despite her battle with background noise.

And, of course, Christmas is coming. How will she understand conversations with those polite, well-meaning relatives we haven't seen all year? The ones who think Nancy hears normally now she has those clever cochlear implants? But Nancy will keep thriving and I'll keep challenging my own expectations as to what she can achieve, as long as nobody has a birthday party in that community hall ever again! 📞

➔ Find out more about deaf children and acoustics at [www.ndcs.org.uk/acoustics](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/acoustics). We also have information on how to have a deaf-friendly Christmas at [www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips).



**DEAFNESS IS A HIDDEN**

**DISABILITY** so people have no idea just how different Molly's daily life is; differences her hearing friends wouldn't even think of.

Molly can't hear an alarm so I wake her and a round of yelling through the house and not being heard starts. Molly's working memory problems mean she can't always remember what I've asked since she never fully heard it in the first place. So I'm getting frustrated and finally towering over her until her aids are in. It takes forever: puffing tubes, cleaning wax, changing batteries and fiddling with stickers. Then there's the dreaded radio aid. "Did you put it on to charge?!" we all accuse each other and then we still forget to pack it.

The school run is beset by the rumble of tyres on the road, the roar of an open window and the babble of local radio or people speaking while looking straight ahead. Molly is getting fried before she's even arrived.

At school she has to manage the radio aid (hearing the teacher wee is a downside, but hearing staff gossip is a definite plus). Large group events are often lost to her when the radio aid isn't used properly. The noise in corridors would be deafening, if she weren't deaf already. Sometimes she simply turns off her aids in order to cope.

Her social life is challenging. She feels different. She can't keep up with on-the-move games. She feels crushed when having said, "Pardon?" twice the other kid says, "Oh it doesn't matter!"

And then there's yet another missed school morning for a trip to audiology or ENT.

Molly misses things, or

misunderstands. Sometimes it's so funny but also so poignant. She struggles to listen all day and by home time she can be vitriolic about the other tapping, fidgeting, giggling kids.

After school her tiredness shows. When younger she'd literally collapse in tears as she walked towards me. Now we face the banging, echoing wooden floor in the Brownie hall, the swimming teacher shouting to come back and everyone laughing as she doggedly swims on, the dance teacher demonstrating so the radio aid goes all Rice Krispies – snap, crackle and pop.

If possible, Molly loves to spend time with her aids out. She says it's like a secret peaceful world. But at night she hears noises in her head. When she was little they scared her so much she had to wear one aid to sleep. In the dark, with no sight to depend on, she wonders why someone deaf can hear such strange sounds without aids.

To top it all, night waking is both hilarious and highly stressful as she just cannot whisper and thumps around obliviously.

It seems so much for her and for us as a family; all this extra stuff to deal with, all these differences. As if growing up and parenting aren't challenging enough. But then everyone has their challenges... don't they? **i**

**➔ For more information on radio aids see [www.ndcs.org.uk/radioaids](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/radioaids) and to test out products like this through our Technology Test Drive service go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/tech\\_drive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/tech_drive). To find out more about deaf children and sleeping go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep).**

# Deaf differences

Lara and her husband Henry are parents to Conrad (13), Molly (11) and Faye (7). Molly is moderately deaf and Faye has intermittent glue ear.



**Her social life is challenging. She feels different.**

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Text: 07624 808738

[admissions@exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk)





# Raising the Bar around the world

Our young stars show that deafness isn't a barrier to achieving in the arts at this year's outstanding showcase.

## What is Raising the Bar?

Our annual search to find talented young deaf performers in dance, drama, singing and music to show that deafness isn't a barrier to achieving in the arts. Our young stars attended a masterclass led by performing arts professionals and supported by some of our previous Raising the Bar attendees. At the end of the weekend they showcased their new skills by performing to an audience of 100.

Celebrating three years of our popular Raising the Bar event meant a trip around the world for the audience this year, as they were led on a colourful journey of music, song, dance and drama, inspired by the rich cultures of Scotland, India and Brazil.

The talented group of 29 young deaf performers reminded us why they'd landed a place on the masterclass weekend by performing to an incredible, professional standard in the showcase. This year's highlights included traditional Scottish, Bollywood-style and Brazilian carnival-style dancing, bagpipe playing, powerful storytelling and acting, a song from Scotland and India's national anthem.

## ANWYN (15), WHO IS SEVERELY DEAF, TOOK PART IN THE DRAMA GROUP

"The first thing I noticed was the friendliness of all the staff and children. Since I am passionate about acting I was in the drama workshop. It was led by two actors from Deafinitely Theatre who worked with us to create two short scenes for the grand performance. We also played many games and had lots of fun improvising together! I was amazed to see all the talent being showcased in the grand performance!"

## Parent of a Raising the Bar attendee

"I just wanted to thank you all so much for an amazing weekend for my daughter, which she truly needed to boost her confidence. I was so emotional watching the

performance – all the children were amazing."

We also asked some of last year's participants to come back and support the young people at this year's event as young assistants. This responsibility helped them to develop key skills and build their confidence as well as share their experiences with other young people and be positive role models.

## TINCEMON (15), WHO IS SEVERELY TO PROFOUNDLY DEAF, RETURNED AS A YOUNG ASSISTANT

"Thank you for inviting me to help at Raising the Bar. It was very interesting and enjoyable and I learnt so much and met many deaf musicians. I would recommend this for others who want to go as helpers because you get more confident and comfortable with teaching and helping other pupils."

## CIARAN (17), WHO IS PROFOUNDLY DEAF, ALSO RETURNED AS A YOUNG ASSISTANT

"In spite of being nervous about my own ability, I couldn't miss this opportunity and found the courage to say 'yes please!'. It was a big challenge for me, but I had to have a go. The worst part of it was facing my nerves, however it was an amazing experience, which I'll never forget."

A huge well done to all the young people involved for showing other deaf young people that they too can thrive in performing arts.

➔ Applications for Raising the Bar 2018 will be open from 15 January until 25 February 2018 with the masterclasses and showcase taking place in Birmingham on 12–13 May 2018. For more information see [www.ndcs.org.uk/raisingthebar](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/raisingthebar).





# Isla's band of pure gold

Isla (1) was born with a cleft lip and palate, which was also linked to her deafness. When it came to options to help her hear, parents Becky and Tim decided on a bone conduction hearing aid.



**Isla's story**  
how her parents handled her deafness and cleft lip and palate

**“We already knew she had a struggle ahead with speech because of her cleft; deafness would make this worse.”**

**THE SCREAMING FROM THE BACK SEAT** became shrill and frantic. Becky pulled the car over and twisted round so her baby girl Isla could see her face, and smiled to calm her. “Isla would panic because she couldn’t hear me and in the car couldn’t see me either,” says Becky. “With her health problems, we spent hours driving to hospital appointments and it was always stressful and upsetting.”

Becky and husband Tim found out during pregnancy scans that Isla had a cleft lip and palate. Doctors said she might have glue ear and be deaf because of it. “We were in shock about the cleft,” says Becky. “Isla, like our older daughter Isabelle, was conceived through fertility treatment and I refused an amniocentesis (a test for genetic conditions in an unborn baby).”

“The doctors said little about the deafness as there were more urgent issues such as feeding because she wouldn’t be able to suck, so I pushed it aside.”

Each scan seemed to reveal a new problem. Fighting her fears, Becky tried to prepare for the birth. “I read up on cleft lip and palate,” she says. “But I couldn’t look at photos. Once Isla was here though and we could see her it was fine, a relief.”

Isla had breathing problems and spent her first two weeks in special care. It was a worrying time for the couple but finally she stabilised and progressed well, being tube fed. When she failed her newborn hearing screening, she was

## “We’re very positive about Isla’s deafness, we’re managing it and she’s making good progress.”

referred for an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) hearing test at four months old and diagnosed as mild to moderately deaf in both ears.

“It was really upsetting,” says Becky. “I’d suspected she couldn’t hear much; she didn’t respond even when our dog barked at the doorbell. I began to worry what deafness might mean for her. We already knew she had a struggle ahead with speech because of her cleft; deafness would make this worse.”

Doctors suggested grommets to help the glue ear behind her deafness, bone conduction hearing aids (BCHA), or just waiting to see if the glue ear cleared up. “It’s hard to find accurate information but I found lots on the National Deaf Children’s Society website,” says Becky. “We decided against grommets – she’d already had surgery at four months on her cleft lip and would go through more to repair her palate. Doing nothing wasn’t an option. Speech would be challenging enough with her cleft so it was important she hear right away for early language development. The BCHA was non-invasive and immediate so we chose that.”

Last November Isla got her BCHA – and Becky and Tim couldn’t have been more thrilled.

“Her reaction was fantastic!” says Becky. “When we spoke, her little face lit up, and with each sound her eyebrows shot up higher!”

Before, Isla didn’t respond to anyone calling her but with the BCHA she turned to sound, and was aware of everything going on around her. “I feel it’s taught her to listen, to be aware of where sound is coming from – before she took no interest,” says Becky. “Isla’s happy for me to leave her on the floor with her toys now; it must’ve been such a lonely feeling for her before. And car journeys aren’t such a nightmare! She pulls her hearing aid out sometimes so I distract her with a toy or have a break and try again. I’ve also bought a fiddle necklace for me to wear which stops her playing with her hearing aid and feeding tube.”

Isla had surgery to repair her palate at eight months and now at one year old she’s starting to babble. “She enjoys babbling. When Isabelle takes a toy off her she shouts babble at her!” says Becky.

In the future Becky says they’ll reconsider grommets, though with another operation looming to repair Isla’s gum, the couple are reluctant. “We’ll see,” says Becky. “Isla’s very sociable and responds really well to people, though often people don’t realise her band is a hearing aid, they think it’s a thick Alice band I’ve put on her.

“She’s started crawling so that’ll be another challenge, getting her attention. At some point things will settle but Isabelle also has health issues related to the same genetic condition Isla has, so between them we’re forever at hospital appointments. But this is their normal! I try to make it as fun as possible. We’re very positive about Isla’s deafness, we’re managing it and she’s making good progress. The BCHA has made a huge difference.

“It’s a big decision, a balancing act – and even then you’re uncertain you’ve made the right decision. Would grommets have cleared the glue ear? But then with a cleft the Eustachian tubes are usually not formed properly so the glue ear might not clear up anyway. You just have to get the information, decide and go with it.”

➔ **You can read about Isla on Becky’s blog\* <https://incredibleislablog.wordpress.com>.**

**To find out more about glue ear see [www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear) and for more on BCHA’s go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingaids](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingaids).**

**\*Please note we promote blogs that we think might be of interest to our readers but the opinions expressed in them are not necessarily our own.**

## Your new winter checklist for the early years



### ✓ Everyday communication skills

Pragmatics is the skill of using language socially and being able to adapt it to different situations. It’s key to being able to take part in conversations and interactions in socially acceptable ways. Our new web content explains why deaf children can struggle to develop pragmatics in their early years, and how you can help your child develop these skills. [www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics)

### ✓ Getting a good night’s sleep

We all know sleep is important but changes to routine like school holidays or staying in someone else’s house can make it a challenge. We have tips and advice on helping your child get a good night’s sleep at [www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/sleep).

### ✓ Make the most of play time

Our factsheet, *Toys and Play for Deaf Young Children*, is full of advice and ideas on how to have fun while encouraging your child to develop their language, listening and social skills. [www.ndcs.org.uk/toysandplay](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/toysandplay)

### ✓ Baby Sign and Learn app

The Baby Sign and Learn app uses animations and flashcards to help you teach your baby early signs. It features interactive quizzes and a favourites section where you can save the signs you use most. The app is available on iOS and Android. The lite edition is free and the full version costs less than £2. Find out more at [www.babysignandlearn.co.uk](http://www.babysignandlearn.co.uk).



Alison and Adalaide

# Adalaide's scouting joy

Adalaide (5) was born profoundly deaf but she and parents Alison and David are determined not to let that get in the way of her taking part in any activity.

**AS ADALAIDE BEAMED DOWN FROM THE TOP OF THE ROCK CLIMBING WALL**, an activity she was doing with her school Beavers group, her mum Alison couldn't believe how far she'd come. "This is the sort of thing I worried Adalaide might have missed out on," Alison says. "We might have thought 'She can't climb rocks; it's too dangerous being deaf.' Things like this show me Adalaide can do anything she wants. Climb up a load of rocks? She can do it. If she wants to go canoeing, she can go ahead."

But Alison and her husband David didn't always feel this confident in Adalaide's future. Initially it came as a shock when she failed two newborn hearing screening tests and they worried about her struggling at school and becoming isolated. Although she admits that at first she felt 'absolutely heartbroken' when Adalaide was diagnosed as profoundly deaf, Alison remembers feeling supported from the very beginning. "At seven weeks, when we got the diagnosis, straight away they said that Adalaide's a perfect candidate for cochlear implants," she explains. "And the same day our Teacher of the Deaf, Heather, rang us up so we were really, really well looked after."

Now both Adalaide, who has bilateral cochlear implants, and Alison are learning British Sign Language and passing it on to the rest of their family, including Adalaide's sister Maddison (10) and brother Saul (2), both of whom are hearing.

While she was thriving at home, when it came to deciding which school to send their daughter to last year, Alison and David had a tough decision to make. "After her first year at a mainstream nursery it became obvious that Adalaide's communication and playing capability with other children was very limited," says Alison. "At that point I thought that she needed to be with other deaf children to fulfil her potential. We needed her to understand that she's not the



## Adalaide's story

how a school Beavers group has increased her confidence



Things like this show me Adalaide can do anything she wants.



## “ She loves Beavers; it’s improving her confidence and her independence.

only one that has these processors stuck to her head. Her deaf-specialist school is about an hour’s drive from where we live and when she was due to start I was so nervous because I would be sending her on the bus on her own. But she got up, put her uniform on and said ‘Bye mum!’”

With a child so full of energy and enthusiasm, Alison quickly enrolled Adalaide in swimming and gymnastics classes too. “She’s a very confident, outgoing little girl,” Alison explains. “With gymnastics, she’s got a talent and she’s eager to do it. In the future, she hopes to do competitions.”

But Alison was worried their sociable daughter might not be able to join in with all activities. “With gymnastics it’s all very physical and I can sit there and watch and intervene if there’s a problem. And swimming is one-to-one because I wasn’t confident about her learning in a group,” explains Alison. “I knew I wanted her to have another hobby but I’d never have considered Beavers or anything like that because I thought her language barrier would get in the way of that kind of group.”

Luckily, recognising that many parents might feel the same, Adalaide’s school Head Teacher, Beverley Hennefer, took matters into her own hands and started her own deaf Scouts group at Royal Cross Primary School, including Beavers for Adalaide’s age group, last January.

“I was so happy to hear about it because it was something I wouldn’t have found on my own,” Alison says. “It’s brilliant because the whole school can do Beavers and Cubs together every Friday afternoon and the teachers have been enrolled into the deaf Scouts group as leaders as well. The children all go with their jumpers, woggles and neck scarves on and they’ve got loads of badges now. Adalaide was dead impressed,

especially when she got enrolled and was able to sign her promise. All the parents were invited and it was lovely.”

Since enrolling Adalaide hasn’t looked back and now has a large collection of scout badges that her nanna sews on to her Beavers jumper for her every week. “One of the badges they got was an Animal Care badge. They all had a trip to a pet shop and got to stroke and play with the animals; she was absolutely made up with that one,” Alison smiles. “She’s also got an Outdoor Goal badge and a Space badge; she really enjoyed drawing the constellations for that one.”

And the deaf Scouts group has allowed the rest of the family to come together and meet Adalaide’s school friends too, as they run special family sessions some weekends. “They have activity days every couple of months on a Saturday where they make campfire food, do knot-making, biscuit baking, and the whole family can go over and do that,” Alison explains. “I think it’s really important that Maddison, Saul and David get to interact with everybody and see how everything is for Adalaide at school too. She loves Beavers; it’s improving her confidence and her independence.”

If you’re worried about your child taking part in extracurricular activities, Alison recommends that you contact your own local group. “I’d maybe stay with your child for a couple of meetings and when they are happy, step back and let the child excel. That was my biggest challenge as a parent, having to step back and allow Adalaide to do things by herself but I’ve learnt she can do it.” 

 **To find out more about accessible activities see [www.ndcs.org.uk/activities](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/activities).**

## Your new winter checklist for the primary years



### **Lottie doll with cochlear implant**

Children love seeing themselves reflected in their toys, and toy company Lottie has introduced a new doll called Mia. Mia is a wildlife photographer who also wears a cochlear implant. Find out more and buy from <https://uk.lottie.com/products/wildlife-photographer-mia>.

### **Communicating in the car**

Communicating during car journeys can be difficult for deaf children, especially if they’re trying to communicate with someone in the front seat and so can’t see that person’s face, lip patterns, gestures or signs. We have tips for improving communication in the car and lots of suggestions for technology such as loop systems, radio aids and streamers that could help. [www.ndcs.org.uk/communicatingincar](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/communicatingincar)

### **Make Christmas deaf friendly**

We’ve put together some top tips to help deaf children and young people feel included at Christmas time. Share with family, friends, teachers, youth club workers and anyone else who will be spending time with your child at this time of year. [www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips)

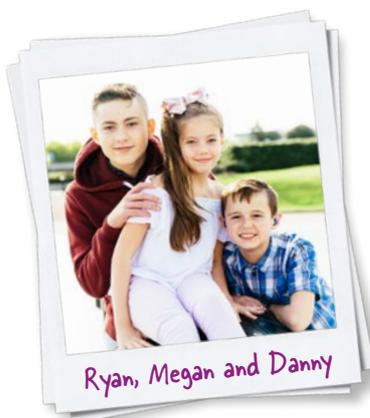
### **Decorating hearing technology**

If your child would like to decorate their hearing technology to celebrate the festive season, we have lots of ideas on how to do this without damaging the equipment. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/decorating](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/decorating).



# Rising star

Kelly and Charles knew their son Danny was outgoing and confident, but they couldn't have predicted that his lively personality would lead to social media and TV success at the young age of 13.



Ryan, Megan and Danny



**Danny's story**  
how he found success as a social media and TV star

**ON HOLIDAY IN TURKEY**, mum Kelly watched her toddler Danny run on to the entertainment stage and join in with other holidaymakers. "He would always ignore me, watching everybody else and wanting to join in," she remembers fondly. "He was always mixing with other children – deaf, hearing, he didn't mind. He was very confident."

Danny, who is severely deaf and wears two hearing aids, has a strong Deaf identity and his first language is British Sign Language (BSL). Both of his parents are deaf, as are many of his other family members, although his brother Ryan (16) and sister Megan (10) are hearing. He now attends a deaf school, Mary Hare, which he loves. "My first school was mainstream," Danny explains. "I quite liked it as they used some sign language, but the middle school I went to was really confusing. They didn't use much sign at all and I didn't really like it, but now I go to a deaf boarding school and it's much better. At my first and middle schools if I was outside in the playground everyone was just talking and there was nothing for me to do. But at my school now everyone signs and it's easy to communicate." Kelly explains, "The pace of lessons is also better for him. Mainstream went a bit too fast sometimes, because everybody else was hearing. But school now is much better."

**The second video I put up got lots of views.**

## “I’m proud of him every day.”

Two years ago, Danny decided to start making skit (comedy sketch) videos about Deaf culture. “I was watching things on Facebook,” says Danny. “And I wondered if I could do that for myself, so I asked Mum and Dad if I could have a go at creating something.” Kelly adds, “At first we didn’t allow him to put them online because of his own safety and awareness.” But last August Kelly and Charles felt that he was aware enough to start uploading his videos. “The second video I put up got lots of views, so I started to put more up,” remembers Danny. Charles and Kelly were a little worried about privacy settings and the fact that he was starting to get messages and comments about the videos. However, although they checked settings and told him to be careful, they also trusted that he knew what he was doing. “When he was in mainstream school, they were always saying that he was top of his class for using computers,” says Kelly.

Danny makes his videos primarily for deaf children to show the differences between the deaf and hearing worlds in a comedic way, but he also wants to inspire deaf children to make videos. He may not have set out to be a role model, but that’s certainly what he’s become. He was even recognised by a boy when the family were on the plane going on holiday. “It was a hearing boy,” remembers Kelly, “He was signing, saying ‘I recognise you from your videos’.”

Not only has Danny had success on social media but he has also been involved in TV work, first for a Christmas special of *See Hear*, a magazine programme for deaf people, and more recently, as a presenter on a CITV programme called *Mission Employable* about the jobs children want to do when they grow up. The show sees Danny and another presenter of the *Mission Employable* Agency take on missions to become a train driver, farmer, zookeeper, footballer and firefighter. Danny then discusses his experiences of doing the jobs in BSL. “After the views

went up on my Facebook videos CITV contacted me and asked me to go for an audition,” says Danny. “I didn’t even have to apply; that was really surprising and good.” Danny has had lots of fun working on *Mission Employable* and even got to travel to Europe for filming.

Danny recognises that a lot of confidence is needed to do what he has done, but he says that if deaf children want to do filming, they should apply. He also thinks that having a strong Deaf identity is important for confidence. “If I met someone who wasn’t very confident about being deaf,” says Danny, thoughtfully, “I’d find out if they have much deaf knowledge, have met many deaf people and what their sign language is like.”

Despite being deaf themselves, Kelly and Charles found the process of finding out Danny was deaf quite stressful. “We had to wait for ages,” remembers Kelly. “And the doctor’s attitude when he was diagnosed was quite negative. We’re deaf as well – that’s fine; it doesn’t mean there’s a problem. I think if we’d been hearing it might have been different but I felt they weren’t deaf aware; they really need to change how they do these things.” Charles agrees, saying “I’m proud to be deaf. I’m fourth generation, Danny’s fifth generation deaf, so it doesn’t matter to me. Really it was very emotional.”

But seeing Danny grow up and start making a name for himself with his videos and TV work has been wonderful for his parents. “He has really worked hard at it. I’m proud of him every day,” says Charles. “I think he really can be successful in the future,” says Kelly, proudly. “The TV work will hopefully carry on and it will be good for his future.”

➔ **To watch Danny’s skit videos go to [www.facebook.com/12dann](https://www.facebook.com/12dann) or search for ‘Danny skits videos’ on [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com). For more information about helping your child stay safe online go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/esafety](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/esafety).**



## Your new winter checklist for the secondary years



### ✓ Events

Did you know we run free events for deaf children and young people aged 8–16? Events take place around the UK and are great opportunities for your child to get involved in sports, creative and outdoor activities while making new friends and learning new skills. See what’s on in your area at [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/events).

### ✓ Home schooling deaf children

Are you thinking of home schooling your child? There’s a Facebook group for parents who are home educating their deaf child or thinking of doing so. The group is closed, so you’ll need to join before you can see any posted content. Search for ‘home educating deaf children’ on Facebook.

### ✓ Waking up independently

The iLuv Smartshaker2 is a vibrating pad that goes under your child’s pillow and wakes them up using vibrations rather than sound. The pad is wireless and links to your child’s iPhone or Android smartphone using Bluetooth. Your child can use the app to set the alarm time, choose the vibration level and check when the device needs recharging. It’s portable and doesn’t need plugging in which makes it perfect for travelling or sleepovers. Find out more by visiting [www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive).





# Passing with flying colours

Thanks to a combination of hard work, the right support at school and exam access arrangements, Alex (16), who is profoundly deaf, is celebrating big GCSE success.

**HOLDING THEIR BREATH,** Michelle and Chris watched their son Alex open the envelope and scan the contents. Delight spread across his face as he read out his exam results, “A\* in Maths, B in Maths Numeracy, B in English literature, C in English Language, A in History, B in Science (A in Physics, B in Biology and C in Chemistry) C in Art, and a B in Welsh Baccalaureate!” he beamed proudly.

Alex, who is now in the sixth form at the mainstream school where he took his GCSEs, has lots of support from the hearing-impaired base. “I have a teaching assistant (TA) in every lesson to take notes, so if I don’t understand something I can ask – there are about 10 TAs and they can sign,” he says. “They all have their speciality,” adds Michelle. “It’s really good because they’re highly qualified and all trained in teaching deaf children.” The notes they take are emailed to Alex within 24 hours, something he and Michelle both find useful. “If he’s falling behind, or had to take a day off for an appointment, he can fill in the gaps,” says Michelle. “It also gives me an idea of what he’s doing so we can chat about his homework.”

“Alex attends 90% mainstream lessons but also has base lessons. If he’s behind or hasn’t understood something, he comes into the base in a free lesson for some extra tutoring with the Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). He dropped some subjects to free up time. He also has lessons about how to be safe in the community and sessions on socialising.”

Alex also benefits from good listening conditions at school. “It’s carpeted throughout so there’s no echoing in the corridors and every room is soundproofed,” Michelle



**Alex’s story**  
how he aced his GCSEs

**I had 25% extra time in every exam.**

## I want to go on to university and become a History teacher.

explains. "I also use a radio aid in all lessons which really helps," Alex adds.

Born at just 26 weeks, Alex was in hospital for his first four months. An initial test showed he had hearing but a second revealed a problem and he was eventually diagnosed as deaf at five months old. "I was always very positive about him being deaf because he'd been so ill – I didn't care as long as he was here," remembers Michelle. "My biggest concern wasn't him being deaf, it was how he was going to cope with communicating."

Wanting to offer him every communication option, Michelle and Chris chose a cochlear implant for Alex which he had just before his second birthday, and he chose to have a second one when he was 15 – which he doesn't find as effective as his first. "They didn't do bilateral implants in Wales when I was younger," he says. "I would have liked to have had the second one sooner but there was a long waiting list." Alex also learnt British Sign Language and is now equally comfortable using speech or sign.

Before sitting his GCSEs, Alex had exam access arrangements put in place for him by his school to make sure his deafness didn't put him at a disadvantage. "I had 25% extra time in every exam. I was in a room by myself with the invigilator and I was allowed rest breaks," says Alex. "I was going to take Additional Maths but with the extra time the exam would have been four hours. That felt a bit too much, so I decided against it."

Although Alex's school is an hour and a half return bus journey away from their home, the family feel it was the right choice for him. "I was offered a scholarship to a deaf specialist school, but it was a long way away and I didn't think I'd get to connect with hearing people there, so I turned it down," says Alex. "We also considered our local comprehensive school, but it didn't have a deaf unit," remembers Michelle. "Luckily it was no problem to get a place at our chosen school. We've been very lucky; we've had total support right from the start.

Our sensory impairment team have been marvellous. Alex also has a statement of special educational needs which has come in handy."

School has still presented Alex with some challenges though. "Mixing with other people can be difficult," he says. "There are nine other deaf children at my school but only two are the same age as me." Michelle adds, "The social side of things is different, but he has a few friends locally who've known him for years and so know how to communicate with him."

Alex has lots of hobbies including collecting records, painting, history and skiing. He's also a loving brother, keen babysitter and role model for younger sister Charlotte (4) who is also profoundly deaf. Now taking History, English Literature, Maths and Biology AS levels with the same support in place at school, he has big plans for his future. "I want to go on to university and become a History teacher," he smiles. "We just want him to be happy and never disappointed that he hasn't been able to do something," says Michelle. "I've always just thought, 'He's here, he's wonderful, he's just got broken ears and that's that'." 

 **Exam access arrangements like Alex's are granted on an individual basis based on evidence. For example, for a student to be allowed extra time in an exam, their school would need to prove to the exam board that they normally needed more time in classes or tests to process what they are reading. Not all schools will organise exam access arrangements automatically. Find out more about how and when to get the right arrangements in place for your child at [www.ndcs.org.uk/exams](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/exams).**

**For more information on choosing a school have a look at [www.ndcs.org.uk/choosingaschool](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/choosingaschool).**

## Your new winter checklist for deaf young people aged 15-18



### **Communicating while out and about**

When your child's in public places such as shops and cafés do they struggle to communicate due to background noise? Would they like to know how technology can make theatres, cinemas and museums as accessible as possible? We have information on technology and services that can help your child communicate while they're out and about. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/communicatinginnoisyplaces](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/communicatinginnoisyplaces).

### **Deaf awareness at Christmas**

Tiger Mother's blog about deaf awareness at Christmas explains why this time of year can be challenging for her daughter, Hayley, who is deaf. Christmas can mean busy, noisy households filled with guests who may not know how to be deaf-friendly, but Tiger Mother signposts to deaf awareness tips that can help. Read it at [www.ndcsuk.wordpress.com/2014/12/17/deaf-awareness-at-christmas](http://www.ndcsuk.wordpress.com/2014/12/17/deaf-awareness-at-christmas).

### **My life, my health**

Starting to go to healthcare appointments on their own is an important part of young people becoming more independent and taking responsibility for their health. Our My Life, My Health resources can help them do just that and also include a booklet for parents to help you support your child to manage their healthcare appointments. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/mylifemyhealth](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/mylifemyhealth).



# Ready for work

This summer the National Deaf Children's Society took on four deaf apprentices, we meet them to find out how they're getting on...

Apprenticeships are a great way to learn on the job and pick up skills and qualifications to take with you into the future. The National Deaf Children's Society began our 15-month apprenticeship scheme this summer. Our four apprentices will be studying for their Youth Work or Business Administration apprenticeship qualifications alongside their work supporting many different teams in our organisation.



**EMILY (18) IS A YOUTH WORK APPRENTICE.**

"I went to college to study Art and Design but I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after school. Looking around on the National Deaf Children's Society website, I was really surprised to see they did an apprenticeship. I thought about applying but it was a big step for me and I was very nervous about the whole thing because it would mean moving city and my whole life changing. Birmingham, where the apprenticeship is based, is a big city compared to Cardiff where I was living before. I didn't believe my application was good enough for them even to ask me to interview. But when I found out I got the job, I cried happily!

"It's been challenging as this job is out of my comfort zone and it's my first professional job. But everyone in the office is so friendly and welcoming. We do sign a lot and the other staff get involved to learn too. I'm starting my level three youth work course soon as it's part of this apprenticeship and I can't wait. I think an apprenticeship is a great option to learn and earn at the same time."



**DEEPAK (19) IS A YOUTH WORK APPRENTICE.**

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do when I left school. My dad loves construction and he wanted me to do carpentry so I listened to him but it just wasn't for me. I signed up to the Buzz, the National Deaf Children's Society's website for



**I felt excited on my first day but a little nervous and overwhelmed at how much I had to learn.**

young people, when I was 14 and got regular emails from them; that's how I found out about the apprenticeship. The title youth worker really appealed to me; I've always been passionate about working with deaf young people. I applied in a heartbeat.

"On my first day I was very excited and nervous at the same time, but I was really looking forward to seeing everyone and being part of a wonderful team. Since starting, I've been to London to do inductions, I've been getting lots of training and have helped our swimming development officer. My highlight was going to Scotland on a Roadshow visit. I loved being able to see the Scottish kids; it was my first opportunity to engage with the children.

"Out of this apprenticeship, I hope to get the qualifications. Then I'd like to go to university and carry on with my studies there and go on to teaching at school as a sports teacher."



**FRANCESCA (18)  
IS ALSO A  
YOUTH WORK  
APPRENTICE.**

"I always wanted to work with deaf children or with

animals but I had no clue where to start, only to try to find a job and get as much work experience as I could. I went to a mainstream college where I had interpreters, note takers and so much support but there were very few deaf people and I didn't have any deaf friends. I struggled a lot in my second year so I quit. I had an awful lot of worries about leaving college.

"One day I was looking through LinkedIn for jobs as usual and there was the apprenticeship. I thought the youth work qualification would be really useful for me in my aim to work with children and I just knew I'd feel really comfortable and happy working in this role.

"It's hard to pick out my favourite part of the apprenticeship so far,

probably going to Scotland to help out with the Roadshow and the people here in my office as they're really friendly. Also just the thought that I'm going to achieve the first part of my life goals – I'm finally doing the first part of what I want to do."



**JOSHUA (25)  
IS AN  
APPRENTICE  
BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATOR.**

"I studied Ancient History and Archaeology at university then worked in a mixture of research, recruiting and admin. I already knew about the National Deaf Children's Society because I had worked for a bit as a volunteer. As a deaf organisation I knew that they'd be able to understand my point of view, my experience and the support I'd need in the office.

"I felt excited on my first day but a little nervous and overwhelmed at how much I had to learn. Since then I've been expanding my admin skills and getting more familiar with the databases and computer systems used here. Each day is different and something new happens; it's made me feel optimistic about my future again. I'd tell any other deaf young person to consider an apprenticeship; I've found it to be a rewarding experience that allows you to learn about the workplace and gives you a sense of maturity and purpose.

"In the future I'd like to stay on with the National Deaf Children's Society or perhaps go back to university or go travelling in Asia for a year. I had to have a major leg operation during my gap year so I didn't get to do the travelling that I wanted to do. I'd love to go backpacking." 

**➔ For more information on apprenticeships, traineeships or supported internship schemes, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/apprenticeship](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/apprenticeship).**

**Your new winter checklist for deaf young people aged 19-25**



**✔ Bone conduction headphones**

Aftershokz Trekz Titanium Mini are bone conduction headphones that turn sound into small vibrations which are sent through the cheekbones into the inner ear. The headphones connect to a music device via Bluetooth and can be used while wearing hearing aids or with an ear infection. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive).

**✔ Challenges for next year**

Is your child looking for a challenge to take on next year? NDCS Challenges offers lots of fantastic opportunities to take on challenges such as swimming, cycling, skydiving and running to raise money for us while meeting new people. Find out more at [www.ndcschallenges.org.uk](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk).

**✔ Communication support at university**

Has your child recently finished their first term at university? Did they feel they had enough support to help them fully access their course? Find out more about the support they could be entitled to at [www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation).

**✔ Good Vibrations app**

This free app for Android phones (available from Google Play Store) allows you to set a custom vibration pattern meaning that users know which notification they've received, and who from, from the vibration pattern they feel.



Tear out these pages, give them to your friends!

**W**elcome to  
Scribble Club,  
our activity  
section for deaf children  
just like you.



Jake, who is deaf, and his new friend  
Jasmine go to a school for superheroes!  
Colour in this picture of them in their  
superhero school uniforms.



Superheroes Jake and Jasmine go on  
an adventure to find their school's  
missing pet tortoise in our new book.  
[www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine)

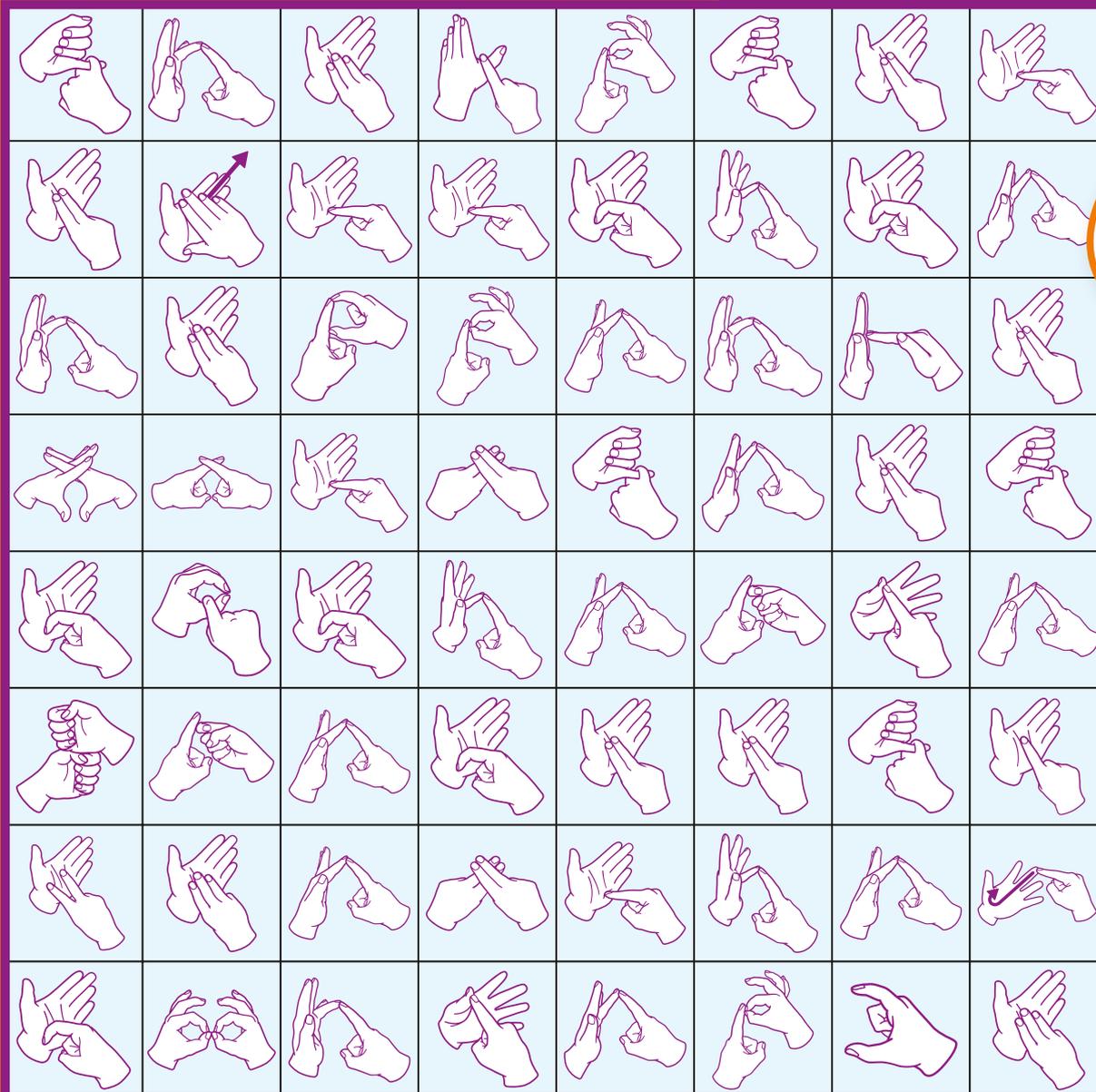




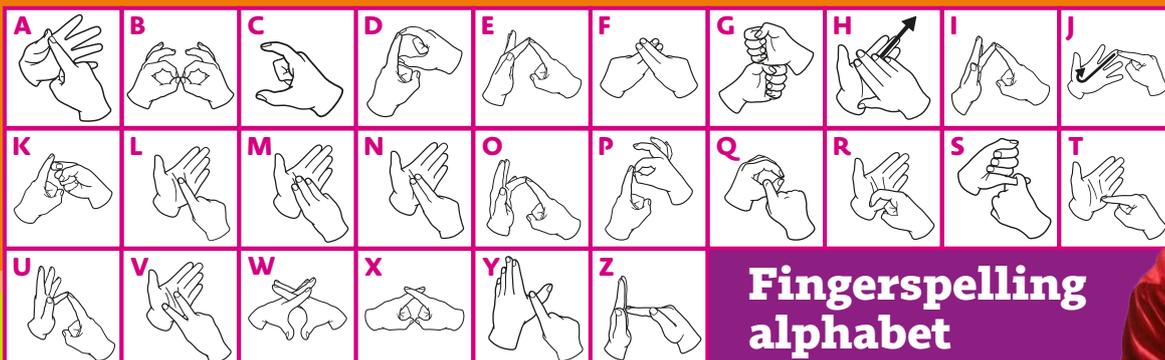
ur child and let their **creativity** run wild!

# Test your fingerspelling alphabet

How many of the Christmas words  
below can you find hidden in the  
fingerspelling grid?



Santa  
Tree  
Present  
Tinsel  
Snow



## Fingerspelling alphabet





# How do I...

## ...deal with people staring at my child?

It can be frustrating when you spot people staring at your child and their hearing aids and implants when you're out and about. We've asked parents to give their advice on how they handle this situation and how they encourage their child to react.



**I tend to be very factual and give a straight answer.**

### → JOIN OUR FAMILY PANEL

Next time in *Families* magazine: How do I... help my child's club or activity be deaf aware?

If you have any tips, advice or suggestions to share, get in touch at [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk).

### Hayley is mum to Charlotte (2), who is profoundly deaf.

We used to get lots of comments when Charlotte had hearing aids, but now she has body-worn bilateral implants we get less as I think people don't always know what they are. I find you get all kinds of reactions, people ask in the way they feel comfortable but most of the time they are just curious. The way we describe Charlotte's implants to older children is that they are her magic ears. She can't hear without them. Some people wear glasses because they can't see, Charlotte has her implants or magic ears because she can't hear.

The most common question I get is 'Will she grow out of it?' or 'Will she always have them?' I tend to be very factual and give a straight answer; it all helps

give broader awareness and education. We tell them that yes she will always have them, but they might not always look how they do now as technology will change over time, but she will always need help to hear.

We find making it honest but relatable has really worked with her older friends and cousins. All of the children we've talked to have been immediately accepting, and I've even heard some teaching their friends about Charlotte's magic ears and what they are for.



**Louise is mum to Jack (7), who is profoundly deaf and wears bilateral cochlear implants.**

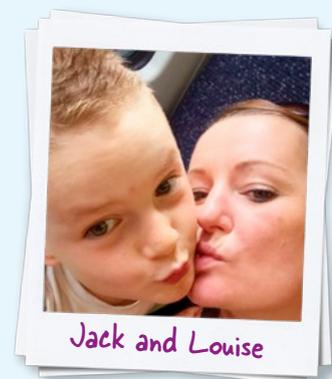
Staring isn't something that Jack notices a lot but I do. The first time he did it broke my heart as he asked "Why does everyone stare at me?" I always explain everything I can to anyone who asks or looks, as for me, it's about educating society. I always say, "Please ask questions as I love to answer them." If I explain it to one person a week, that person will always tell someone else. Almost everyone is amazed at the technology and keen to ask more questions.

When explaining about his implants we've always included Jack in our conversations with

people we know and strangers alike. I think by keeping him as involved as possible his confidence will naturally grow as his language develops. He is beginning to be aware that he is different from others but also realises other people are different too (some wear glasses, some are in wheelchairs, for example). We encourage him to engage in conversation with someone who questions and also to accept that people will stare as, unfortunately, not everyone is aware just how important his implants are.

I think if another parent found the staring difficult, which I do from time to time, it's something we just have to accept. I'm sure

any other parent feels the same about their child with a disability. Yes it's upsetting but without his implants he can't hear a thing so that always puts it into perspective for me.



Jack and Louise

**Sean is dad to Megan (7), who has bilateral mild to moderate sensorineural hearing loss.**

We just take life as normal. Megan has been a hearing aid user for two years. She has a radio aid in school which helps her a lot as she also has glue ear which means her hearing fluctuates. Her speech and reading skills are fantastic. The children at school had questions so the teacher did a lesson devoted to Megan's hearing aids for the children to understand. It just seems to be the adults that have a fear of a 'different' child. We've made Megan proud of her 'super' ears and she lets people know that with her aids she can hear. She's very confident and if asked in the street by others, she knows to just tell the truth and let other people know that they're needed to help her hear, just like many other aids (glasses, for example) help other people in their different ways. So people can look and stare all they want. Megan wouldn't be Megan without her hearing aids.



Megan

**Charlotte is mum to Lucas (5), who is moderately deaf.**

At the moment our son is a very confident five-year-old. He also wears glasses and tells other children his hearing aids are like glasses for his ears. I know that children (and adults) can be mean but I think on the whole attitudes to disability are changing. I hope Lucas will be confident enough to ignore the negative comments and explain to those who are genuinely interested that his hearing aids help him hear more clearly, just like glasses make him see more clearly.

I usually call people out if they are staring and break the ice by saying something like, "Have you noticed his hearing aids? They are so funky nowadays, aren't

they? He loves them." I would advise other parents to do this too. If I get unhelpful comments such as 'Have you tried...' or 'Why don't you...', I used to go into a long explanation and end up feeling like I had to defend my decisions. Now I thank them for their concern and explain that we, together with the audiologist, consultant and Teacher of the Deaf, are doing the best thing for him.



Lucas



→ Find out about decorating and customising your child's aids or implants at [www.ndcs.org.uk/decorating](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/decorating).

  
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Provider



# An Outstanding School with a bilingual philosophy...

Where our children Learn, Grow and Flourish

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Fax: 020 7391 7048  
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Facetime: [facetime@fbarnes.camden.sch.uk](mailto:facetime@fbarnes.camden.sch.uk)  
Skype: [frankbarnes2003](https://www.skype.com/people/frankbarnes2003)



**Frank Barnes**  
School for Deaf Children



Mark

# ask the expert

“Using the services of an interpreter can be very empowering...”

Each issue a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Mark Hetherington, an interpreter who works with deaf young people, shares his insights.

## What does an interpreter do?

The main function of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter is to support effective communication between deaf and hearing people. Because BSL is part of Deaf culture, there are also other cultural differences which must be communicated correctly.

## Who might benefit from an interpreter?

Everyone and anyone, circumstances permitting. When you're a deaf young person I think using the services of an interpreter can be very empowering, as it allows you the independence you should rightfully have. Sourcing an appropriate and qualified interpreter means the deaf young person no longer has to rely on family or friends to communicate for them – they can take charge of their own communication.

## How do deaf children and their families get access to an interpreter?

For deaf children and their families, accessing an interpreter can be confusing. I would encourage families to approach a registered interpreter with the National Register of Communications Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind people. This means that they work under a code of ethics around confidentiality and hold appropriate insurance.

## What made you decide to follow this career path?

My exposure to sign language and subsequently my career as an interpreter was very happenstance. I was born and grew up in Northern Ireland and when I was 15 I began learning Irish Sign Language. My intrigue to learn was a result of a school friend's parents being deaf. I completed my level one in BSL when I was 17 and I knew I wanted to continue learning the language. As a result, I progressed on to university where I began my journey to become a qualified interpreter.

## In what ways have you worked with deaf children and young people?

I've been fortunate enough to interpret for residential trips all over England and in Scotland where deaf young people come together to socialise, learn about their identity and develop new skills. In my regular work I've interpreted for weekly deaf youth groups and clubs and in schools, colleges, universities and during their apprenticeships.



## Can you pick out a highlight of your job?

Being an interpreter has opened up so many doors for me and has provided me with some wonderful experiences. I've travelled to places I never thought I'd go, I've interpreted for some of my closest friends during their wedding and I've had insight into a whole other world with its own language, community and culture. There are so many highlights making it impossible to pick just one.

## What are your top tips for communicating with deaf children and young people?

Encourage them to take control of their own communication. Give them the tools they actually need, rather than what you think they need, to effectively communicate. Allowing deaf children and young people to choose their own communication preference can be incredibly empowering for them.

→ To see videos of other professionals who may support your child, go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/whowillhelp](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/whowillhelp).

# Helping your deaf child with maths



Deaf children can sometimes find maths particularly challenging, but there are lots of simple things you can do as a parent to help your child improve their early maths skills.

Maths can be tricky for many children and deafness can also make it harder for them to pick up the language and concepts used in maths.

There are different maths skills that children are expected to develop as they get older, including:

- numbers, including counting and simple addition and subtraction problems
- identification of different shapes, including 3D shapes (such as cones, cylinders and cubes)
- understanding the concepts of space, volume and weight – for example, that some things are larger and heavier than others
- problem-solving.

You don't have to become a maths teacher to help your deaf child develop good maths. Just being able to talk about numbers, shapes, space and so on in play and everyday life can really help. Here are some ideas for how to do this.

- Ask your child to help set the table for dinner. You could ask them how many knives and forks they will need.
- Use open questions (questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no) as much as possible. For example, instead of asking, "Have we got enough water?" you could ask, "How much water do we need to fill everyone's glasses?"
- Cooking can be a fun way to explore weights and measurement together. How much flour will you need to make a cake?
- Use a weekly planner to help your child understand the concept of time. You can show on the planner the different times of the day and the different activities that will be happening during the day. As your child gets older, you can start to talk about time on a clock and ask them how long it will be until dinner.

- Go shopping together. You can ask your child to pick three apples or which types of vegetables are heavier than others. You can also introduce the concept of money with older children – how many sweets can we buy with 50p?
- Look at numbers around the house and ask what they mean – for example, numbers on the remote control, on the front door, on the clock and page numbers in books.
- Incorporate problem-solving into stories. You can tell your child that a magic fairy has five cakes to give to two princesses – how many cakes will each princess get? Ask your child to explain how they came up with their answer.
- When wrapping presents ask your child how much wrapping paper will be needed.
- There are lots of rhymes, songs and stories – such as *Ten Green Bottles* or *Three Little Pigs* – that involve maths language that younger children will particularly enjoy. It's not unusual for children to need to see or hear a nursery rhyme several times before they learn it by heart.
- Playing games together. Using toy bricks, for example, can be a good way of helping your child develop their understanding of addition and subtraction in a very visual way. You can show your child what happens when you add four bricks to five. Similarly, for multiplication tasks you can put three groups of four bricks together and ask your child to count how many bricks there are. As your child gets older there are a range of board games you can play together such as *Snakes and Ladders*, *Battleships* and *Monopoly* that will help them develop their maths skills.





## Supporting your child's education and learning this winter



### Things to watch out for

If your child is struggling it's understandable that you may want to tell them the answer. However this won't help them develop their understanding so they can answer questions when you're not around. Instead, you can use some gentle prompts to encourage your child to work it out for themselves – for example, you could ask, "What should we do next?" or, "How have we solved problems like this before?"

There are lots of educational apps that your child can play with. It's important to check these are age-appropriate and that they don't involve any sounds your child may be unable to hear. Your child's audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf should be able to advise on how they can make best use of any hearing technology when playing games and apps.

Don't forget to keep it fun, recognise what your child does well and praise them for their efforts.



### ✓ Preparing for exams

If your child is taking exams this year there's lots you can do to help them prepare, and their school or college can make special arrangements for them. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/exams](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/exams).

### ✓ Transition meetings

In some areas, as your child gets older they may have meetings to help them prepare for adulthood. These are often held in early spring so now is a good time to start discussing with your child their options for the future. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/transitionmeetings](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/transitionmeetings).

### ✓ Glue ear

During the winter months all children, including those with a permanent hearing loss, may be more likely to develop glue ear. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear).



➔ **More information and advice on how you can support your deaf child's maths skills can be found in our booklets** *Helping Your Child to Develop Early Maths Skills: For parents with a 3–4 year old* and *Helping Your Child to Develop Maths Skills: For parents with a 5–11 year old*.

**If your child is at school, you can also ask their teacher for information on what your child is learning and for other ideas for how you can support this at home.**

**Find out more about apps that can support your child's education at [www.ndcs.org.uk/educationapps](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/educationapps).**

**To order our free weekly planner for deaf children see [www.ndcs.org.uk/weeklyplanner](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/weeklyplanner).**



# Enjoying TV as a family

**Christmas is often a time of family gatherings and watching classic Christmas films together, but this can be difficult if your child can't hear the TV as well as everyone else. Here we discuss some tips and tricks that may be useful for enjoying TV as a family.**

There are various solutions that can help your deaf child to hear the TV better without everyone else having to listen with the volume turned up high. But some of these solutions may not be practical or suitable for family TV time.

For example, at home you may have a room loop which is a fixed and popular solution if your child has a hearing aid or implant with the T setting. But a room loop isn't easy to install quickly when your child celebrates Christmas at their grandparents' house. Or your child may watch TV using wired headphones – but wires on the living room floor during large family gatherings may create a trip hazard. Or perhaps your child likes watching films on a tablet, but connecting a product that helps them hear better may mean the sound is cut off for others, which hinders watching together.

Families told us they struggle with these issues, so here are some solutions to help the whole family watch films in a comfortable way.

**Amplified headphones with Bluetooth connectivity** work with any audio device that has Bluetooth, such as laptops, tablets or smartphones. Even some modern TVs have Bluetooth connectivity. The big advantage of Bluetooth headphones is that they are 100% cordless. This means your child can move around freely and sit where they want and there's less risk of family members tripping over wires.

“We borrowed Bluetooth headphones from the National Deaf Children's Society Technology Test Drive Service. They are easy to carry around and fold flat. We've since bought a pair and my son loves them. As part of his daily routine he spends dedicated time watching his iPad and the headphones have helped with his speech and learning new words. He likes watching *Arthur Christmas* and the BBC's Christmas animation of *Stick Man* and this has helped him when we read the story as he knows most of it.”

– Suzanne, who borrowed the Geemarc CL7400BT headphones for her son Jack (4) who is moderately deaf.



The downside is that pairing Bluetooth headphones with an audio device often means the sound through the normal speakers is cut off for everyone else. A **Bluetooth splitter** may provide a solution. It can send sound to multiple Bluetooth receivers such as Bluetooth headphones or Bluetooth speakers. We tried the Kokkia iSplitter and watched programmes on a tablet using a Bluetooth neckloop and Bluetooth headphones at the same time: perfect for deaf and hearing family members to enjoy TV together!



If you like the idea of headphones but your TV doesn't have Bluetooth, you may like **amplified wireless headphones with a transmitter**. The transmitter unit plugs into the TV or other audio source and sends sound wirelessly to the headphones. Similarly to the Bluetooth headphones, your child will have complete freedom of movement. Multiple headsets can be connected to the same transmitter so you can listen to films together.

"We attended the National Deaf Children's Society Roadshow and wanted to try some of the products we saw at home. We borrowed headphones with a TV transmitter. They're loud and clear, and easy to set up and use. My daughter loved this product and we have now purchased it."

– Leanne, who borrowed the Geemarc CL7400 cordless headphones for her daughter Eva (9) who is profoundly deaf.



Eva

**TV listeners** are another portable solution that work via a transmitter unit that plugs into the TV. The transmitter sends sound to a receiver your child can wear around their neck or place in front of them. If the TV listener is connected to the TV's SCART socket, it shouldn't cut off the TV's speaker sound so the rest of the family can hear it too. TV listeners can also be connected to other audio devices such as laptops and tablets.



**Streamers** can easily be carried around. They wirelessly link a child's hearing aids or cochlear implants to a range of audio devices, including smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Because they send sound directly to your child's hearing devices you have to use a streamer from the same manufacturer. Accessories such as TV adapters are available for most streamers. TV adapters are small boxes which can be plugged into the TV with a SCART cable, which again means your child can wirelessly listen to the TV at the same time as the rest of the family.

"We borrowed a streamer to alleviate the problem of our son missing bits of films when watching as a family. It was very easy to install, made the TV louder and clearer for him. It helped him pick up everything that was going on in the film and helped us watch as a family without friction! It was something that made an immediate and practical difference to everyday life."

– Heidi, who borrowed the Oticon Streamer Pro 1.3A for her son Charlie (10) who is moderately deaf.



Charlie



And if wireless solutions don't suit you, there are several wired headphones available. Headphone splitters only cost a couple of pounds and can be bought at most electronics stores. They allow two or more headphones or speakers to be used at the same time. Just don't trip over the wires!

➔ To find out more about all of these products go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/technology](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/technology) or to borrow one from our loan service see [www.ndcs.org.uk/tech\\_drive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/tech_drive).

# Reviews

Would you or your child like to write a review for Families magazine? Email magazine @ndcs.org.uk.

## Books and products for deaf children... Tell us what you think!



### → Key

This resource could be most suitable for the following ages:

0-4

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25

### Proud to be Deaf

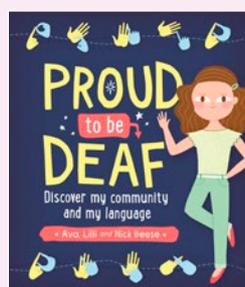
By: Ava, Lilli and Nick Beese

Available from **Amazon**

£8.99 Kindle edition

£12.99 hardcover

5-10



I was interested in the book *Proud to be Deaf* because I thought my daughter Hannah and I could enjoy it together. The

book tells Ava's story, explaining what it's like to be a deaf seven-year-old and living with deaf parents. Ava attends a mainstream school but it isn't clear whether she has speech or not. I think her hearing aids only provide her with the ability to hear loud sounds but not to access speech; I might be wrong.

I enjoyed reading it and learnt some interesting facts but there were not enough pictures to keep Hannah's attention and there was too much text for her. The book is broken down into easy-to-read snippets of information, but I would say it's aimed more at children over eight.

The book has a very positive and happy vibe to it, and at the back it teaches you some simple but useful British Sign Language (BSL). I would recommend this book because I enjoyed reading it and I think Hannah will enjoy it when she's older.

– Elizabeth, mum to Hannah (6) who is profoundly deaf



Hannah

### WakeMeHere Lite App

By: Levire UG (haftungsbeschränkt) & Co. KG

Free on iOS

15-18

19-25



Sleeping on a train isn't without its risks. It's possible I could end up in Brighton instead of London, snore or fall asleep on the person next to me as they read the *Evening Standard*.

Cue WakeMeHere Lite. Using GPS, the app wakes you up when you enter a certain radius. So, as your train approaches your destination, you get a discreet vibration in your pocket alerting you. Sounds promising, right?

Yet I was a bit disappointed when I tried it out on my way to work recently. A simplistic design meant setting up an alarm was somewhat straightforward, but as this is the free version of the WakeMeHere Lite app it comes with adverts, long videos for mobile games that reminded me why I deleted Candy Crush from my iPhone. Changing an alarm meant deactivating it and watching yet another advert afterwards.

The search function doesn't recognise station names so you need to take care in typing in the exact address, or choosing it on the map, and setting a wide enough radius. If you just enter a street name, but no exact address, the app may not go off, which is quite alarming – pun intended.

– Liam (20) who is mildly deaf.



Liam

“ I thought the story was very funny and loved how Jake could change shape with his superpower.

### Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue

Written by Karen Harlow and  
illustrated by Sandra Aguilar  
National Deaf Children's Society, 2017

We think it's important for deaf children to see themselves reflected in the books they read and know they can do anything their hearing friends can do, so we're excited to have published our second children's book.

When Jake, who is deaf and has a cochlear implant, returns to his superhero school after the summer he finds out that Tilly, the school's tortoise, has gone missing. Jake teams up with Jasmine, a new girl in his class, and together they go on a quest to find the school's much-loved pet and show that anyone can be a superhero!

Available from [www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine)  
**£6.99**

0-4

5-10

We read this book to both our children and they were completely engaged and keen to see what was going to happen next. They thought it was fun and interesting, especially when the superheroes used their superpowers.

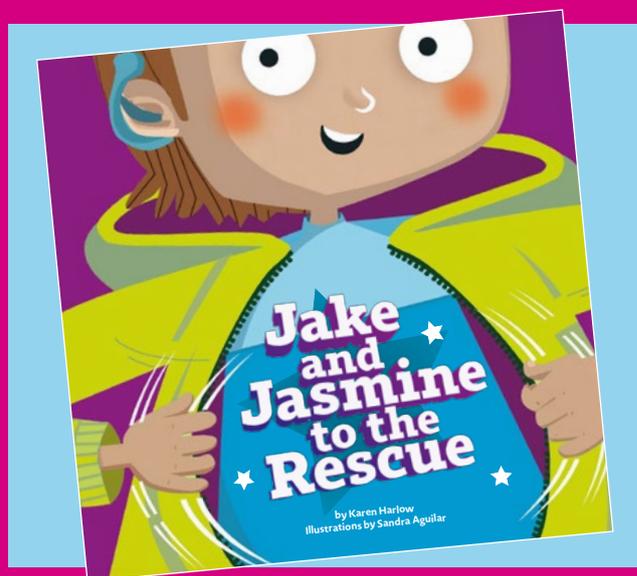
It was great that a couple of signs were added to the book, both our children pointed this out and did the signs while reading. They talked about what was happening and their favourite parts. The fact that Jake has a belt to hold everything for his cochlear implant was a great addition.

We would recommend this book and both children said they would read it again. It's great to have a deaf role model that they can relate to and who comes to the rescue and does something amazing. Superheroes are cool!

– Lisa, mum to Chloe (6) and Jack (5), both of whom are profoundly deaf and have bilateral cochlear implants.



Chloe and Jack



Lauren really enjoyed the story of Jake's first day back at superhero school after the summer holidays. It's very encouraging and positive to see that Jake likes to wear his cochlear implant and puts it on in the morning by himself as part of his getting dressed routine.

The book also shows how Jake uses different communication techniques with some basic sign language. The way it explains how Jake needs the correct environment to be able to hear well is done simply and easily for the reader to understand.

The book is very colourful and visual and, with help, Lauren could read most of the book by herself. It's great to be able to read books with characters who wear hearing aids and cochlear implants as on a day-to-day basis Lauren doesn't see other children wearing them.

Lauren says: "I thought the story was very funny and loved how Jake could change shape with his superpower. I also liked that he made a new friend and was kind."  
– Charlotte is mum to Lauren (7) who has a severe bilateral hearing loss.



Lauren

# Cued Speech

0-3 - Providing Extra Support for babies and toddlers



## Free extra help for your baby and toddler

Our new, free, 0-3 programme for the families of deaf babies and toddlers will provide:

- 1 to 1 advice and guidance on parenting a deaf baby
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- early language development without delay - before and after an implant.

### Cued Speech:

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Royal School  
for the Deaf Derby



# Doncaster School for the Deaf

Established 1829



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[www.deaf-trust.co.uk/school](http://www.deaf-trust.co.uk/school)

Meet our Speech Therapists,  
Teachers of the Deaf,  
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Amazing Pupils  
4-19 Years .....



## Doncaster Deaf Trust

A National Centre of Excellence

Doncaster School for the Deaf is owned and operated by Doncaster Deaf Trust.

Visitors Welcome

# What's new from us?

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

# Helpline

**Q** My daughter is moderately deaf and has been refused a place at the primary school we applied for. Her brother already goes there and we live in the catchment area but the school says they're oversubscribed – what can I do?



We can understand your surprise and disappointment at this decision but you have the right to appeal. The appeal process varies depending on where in the UK you live and whether or not your daughter has a special educational needs (SEN) statement, Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or coordinated support plan (CSP).

We have more information on appealing a school placement decision on our website [www.ndcs.org.uk/schoolplacementappeal](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/schoolplacementappeal) along with links to other sources of information and support.

When appealing, think about:

- the main reasons you want your daughter to attend the school
- the aspects of the school that mean it suits your daughter's needs
- what your daughter would bring to the school
- why you feel your daughter being at the school won't disadvantage other pupils.

If you decide against appealing and instead want to look at an alternative school there's information on our website at

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

## ➔ JOIN SOUND OUT AND HELP MAKE OUR INFORMATION EVEN BETTER

Join Sound Out, the new name for our network of people affected by childhood deafness who want to improve outcomes for deaf children. There are loads of ways you can get involved and help us improve our information, services and publications. We need reviewers, people to take part in surveys and focus groups and families to share their stories or simply tell us what else they need. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/soundout](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/soundout) for more information.

## i My Baby Has a Hearing Loss: Support for parents of children aged 0-2

### What type of information is it?

A handy information booklet that's available to download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/baby](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/baby) or order from our Freephone Helpline.

**Who's it for?** Parents who have just found out their baby has a hearing loss and who are new to deafness and the National Deaf Children's Society.

**What's it about?** This booklet tells parents who we are and how we can help them at every stage of their journey with their deaf child. It talks about the key concerns parents have, and the questions they ask, when their child is first diagnosed with a hearing loss. It also signposts to further information and support.



## 📄 School Transport

**What type of information is it?** An updated factsheet for parents that's available to download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/schooltransport](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/schooltransport).

**Who's it for?** All parents with a deaf child of school age.

**What's it about?** This factsheet explains the support deaf children may be entitled to with school transport.

Local  
groups

In  
your  
area

# Parents

**Hannah is Co-chair of Bristol Deaf Children's Society. She tells us how she set up the group last year and why it's different from other services in her area.**

"My partner and I have two daughters, Olivia (6) and Elodie (3). We first found out Elodie was deaf through the newborn hearing screening programme. Because we already had a daughter we thought we knew what to expect the second time around so finding out Elodie needed hearing aids was quite a shock. My initial reaction was to find out as much information as I could but navigating through it and deciding what was best for our family felt overwhelming at times.

Our Teacher of the Deaf told us about Acorns, a weekly group they run for deaf babies and preschoolers. We started going when Elodie was two months old and the support from talking to other parents with children of a similar

age was immense. I'd been part of baby groups before but with a deaf child comes very different concerns – so it was great to be surrounded by parents who were going through the same thing. A parent of a hearing child doesn't necessarily understand the daily struggles of repeatedly putting hearing aids back in or constantly stopping your baby putting them in their mouth.

We attended a National Deaf Children's Society Newly Identified weekend when Elodie was one and a half. It was mentioned that there wasn't a local deaf children's society in Bristol, which meant there was funding from the National Deaf Children's Society which wasn't being accessed. We're



→ Find out more about local groups in your area and how to set one up at [www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups).

# upport

IN YOUR AREA



lucky enough to have other local provisions for deaf children but none of these had a direct link to the National Deaf Children's Society. Additionally, because Acorns is on a weekday I was conscious that working parents couldn't go to it and that Elodie and her friends would outgrow it. Following on from the weekend, myself and a couple of other parents decided to find out more about setting up a local deaf children's society so we contacted the National Deaf Children's Society Local Groups team and asked them to meet with us.

After the meeting we decided who'd like to join the committee and who'd be responsible for what, then we signed the Constitution and Affiliation agreement. The whole process of setting up the group was fairly straightforward as the National Deaf Children's Society have lots of templates and support, but it did take us some time to decide on the format we

wanted our group to take. We also wanted to build relationships with other local organisations to ensure we didn't replicate what they were already doing. It took a year from starting out to organising our first event. Our launch event was held at a local forest school who organised activities appropriate for all ages. It went even better than we'd hoped – 75 children and their families came. The little ones played in a mud kitchen and made dens while the older kids learnt bush craft skills. Everyone came together at the end for fire-baked pizza and toasted marshmallows.

While we'll organise family events in the future, at the moment our main focus is recognising the importance of peer support for parents, especially when their child has just been diagnosed. We set up a closed Facebook group so we can celebrate our children's successes, talk about concerns and share tips in a private space – and also organise

informal get-togethers at the pub. Elodie is like any other child her age – a gorgeous, happy and cheeky three-year-old, but the journey from diagnosis to this point hasn't always been easy to navigate and it's wonderful to be part of a network where parents can lean on each other for emotional support.

If there isn't a local deaf children's society in your area I'd encourage you to get in touch with the Local Groups team to find out about setting one up. You don't have to be a big group that organises weekly events or does anything too structured; it can be whatever you have time for and whatever suits your area. Speak with other parents to find out what they need and build relationships with other local organisations to ensure you'll benefit one another. Setting up a group is easier than you think, so go for it!"

## Our Roadshow is coming to your area!

Our friendly Roadshow team, some of whom are deaf themselves, bring our big purple bus to your child's school or local community place. The bus contains lots of information, showcasing the latest resources that can support deaf children, their families, professionals and their hearing friends.

### What happens on a Roadshow bus visit?

The Roadshow team provide a range of workshops, from Emotional Health to My Future and Online Safety. Our Look Smile Chat workshops are aimed at your child's hearing friends, to raise awareness and improve communication and inclusion at school and we now offer

this as a whole-school assembly.

The team also demonstrate the latest technology and give deaf children and young people the opportunity to try out equipment and see how it can help them to become more independent as they grow up.

### Why request a Roadshow visit?

The Roadshow brings deaf awareness and understanding to your child's local community which can make a huge difference to their everyday life. Much of the Roadshow's work is with primary schools, but increasing numbers of visits are being requested by secondary schools, sixth form colleges and audiology clinics.



### How do I book a visit?

All Roadshow bus visits are free and to book a visit for your school, college or event please contact our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880, email [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk) or see [www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow).



## Events

# In your area

We have lots of fantastic free events coming up. Here's a taster of just a few.

### Weekend programme for 8–18 year olds

At our weekend events young people get involved in many sports, creative and outdoor activities. Events are age-specific and targeted at a broad range of young people, with the chance to learn new skills and make new friends while having lots of fun.

- **Multi Activity Weekend, 9–11 February**  
Greater London (north), England (age 11–15)
- **NEW! Winter Weekend, 9–11 February**  
Scotland (age 8–15)
- **NEW! Water Sports Weekend, 9–11 March**  
South West England (age 11–15)
- **NEW! Get Creative Technology Weekend, 16–18 March**  
Midlands, England (age 14–18)

# What's on?

\* Event funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund.



LOTTERY FUNDED

### National Deaf Youth Football Tournament

2018 sees the return of the National Deaf Youth Football Tournament. Deaf football teams from all over the country will battle once again to be champions.

- **24 March 2018**  
Manchester, England

### → INTERESTED IN ONE OF OUR EVENTS?

We have an applications process for all our events for deaf children and young people, so it's best to send your forms in as soon as you can. We'll then get in touch to talk it over, before letting you know if your child has a place about eight weeks before the event. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events) for more information on the process, specific deadlines (typically 11 weeks before the event) and to download application forms.



## Starting School: Education Rights and Responsibilities

A one-day event for families with deaf children aged 2–4 who are looking at or thinking about school options for your child. Learn more about supporting your deaf child at school and how to enforce your and your children's rights.

- **10 February\***  
Bristol, England
- **17 March**  
London, England

## Starting School: Communication, Technology and Play

A one-day event for families with deaf children aged 2–4. Learn about technology, communicating and the importance of learning through play.

- **27 January**  
Birmingham, England
- **11 February\***  
Bristol, England

Go to our website for more information.

→ **We hold free events all over the UK for deaf children, young people and their families. Download our events calendar from [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events).**



# The business of learning

**Student Bradley took part in our Business Day event at Doncaster School for the Deaf where he learnt about leadership and was inspired to think about starting his own business in the future.**



Our *Dragon's Den* and *The Apprentice* inspired Business Day events give deaf children and young people the opportunity to learn about business and management while meeting professional deaf role models from the world of work.

The events are delivered in schools and are aimed at young people aged 14–18. Participants take part in a number of activities throughout the day, including a boardroom debate encouraging young people to discuss business principles such as strategy, health and safety, culture and finance. The day ends with the groups presenting a new business idea to a panel of 'Dragons' who pick a winning idea to be developed with support from the school.

"Firstly, I'd like to say thank you to the National Deaf Children's Society for organising the Business Day with our school and college. I really enjoyed the day because I learnt a lot of stuff about business and what it means to start a business.

The day started in our school hall. The charity sent three business owners who all introduced themselves. Then they gave us 10 paper sheets with words linked to business and we talked about what was most important when starting a business. I learnt that leadership is one of the most important aspects of starting a business because it's important to help support employees. I hadn't thought of it like that before.

Then all the students were split into six groups and we each had to think of an idea for a new business. There were two prizes – one for the best college group and one for the best school group. The prize was £150 from our headteacher to use to make and promote our own business.

I was the leader of my group. The other five people in my group helped me. We shared ideas and I delegated the different jobs. I had to present our ideas at the end of the day to a panel of judges.

The experience has made me want to be more responsible and more motivated to start my own business in the future."

→ **If you'd like us to run one of these events at your child's school then please get in touch with Mark Bolton at [events@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:events@ndcs.org.uk).**

# Get involved



**Campaign**  
for BSL in  
Scotland

## Promoting British Sign Language in Scotland

We've been helping the Scottish Government\* find out how deaf children, young people and their parents think they should promote British Sign Language (BSL).

### AFTER THE BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT

was passed back in 2015, we were invited to join the Deaf Sector Partnership, a group of deaf organisations tasked with supporting the roll out of the legislation.

The new laws mean the Scottish Government must produce plans on how they will promote and raise awareness of BSL across Scotland. They held a public consultation earlier in the year to find out what people thought should be in their first draft National Plan.

Part of our role was to collect the views of deaf children, young people and their parents to make sure they were fed back to the Scottish Government. We did this by holding events across the country through schools, our local groups meetings and Family Sign Language workshops.

### What parents thought

Parents largely welcomed the draft plan but had strong concerns around how it would be financed.

They said:

- "The plan looks beautiful, but without funding you're fighting a losing battle."
- "More opportunities to learn BSL and opportunities to learn made cheaper."
- "Everybody with a deaf child should have access to free BSL classes."

- "Grandparents rarely afforded the opportunity to learn BSL. Sign language funding should be available for the whole family after identification of a hearing loss."
- "BSL being taught in schools would have numerous positive impacts. Helping deaf young people in employment later in life as well as a greater supply of interpreters."

### What deaf young people thought

We engaged with 90 deaf secondary school pupils by holding three regional Deaf Learners Conferences. We also created videos, presented by deaf young people for deaf young people, which explained the main goals of the draft plan. The majority of the young people we spoke to were enthusiastic about the new BSL plan even if they weren't BSL users themselves.

They said:

- "Sign bilingualism is good for hearing children too."
- "BSL is a language and we should be able to study it properly at school."

- "My parents would have liked more access to BSL when I was younger."
- "Nurseries should be aware of BSL and be deaf aware."
- "It's not fair if you can't go to the cinema or take part in fun things just because you use BSL."
- "We need more support teachers."
- "We need more teachers who are deaf because they know about being deaf."

### The National Plan

The final plan has recently been published by the Scottish Government and we'll continue to work with the Deaf Sector Partnership and deaf children, young people and their families to make sure it's implemented. Local BSL plans must also be created within the next year so we'll be empowering deaf children and young people and their families to share their views on these. We'll keep you updated on how it's going and how you can get involved.

➔ **Have a look at our videos for young people at [www.facebook.com/ndcsscotland](http://www.facebook.com/ndcsscotland). For more information contact [campaigns.scotland@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:campaigns.scotland@ndcs.org.uk).**

\*Our work on this project is funded by the Scottish Government





# Hold the phone

## Campaign update: stopping mobile phone interference with hearing equipment

**IN 2016**, Ofcom, the body that regulates mobile phone communications, announced a multi-billion pound sale of 4G radio frequencies to be used by mobile phones. You might remember at the time we were concerned that the selling of these frequencies could cause problems for children's hearing aids, cochlear implants and classroom equipment like radio aids. As most hearing equipment works in the frequencies close to those being sold, interference from mobile phones was a real worry.

We were clear that if there was a chance this auction might cause problems for deaf children's hearing technology, it needed to be stopped. Ofcom had already carried out some tests looking at interference with hearing equipment, but we didn't agree with their view of the results. We thought they needed to test more equipment and use more realistic scenarios to get a better idea of whether interference was likely.

We went to the media to highlight our concerns and a number of national newspapers, such as the *Daily Mirror* and *The Daily Telegraph*, ran stories on

the possibility of interference. As a result Ofcom agreed to meet with us to discuss our concerns. After this meeting Ofcom agreed to pause the whole process and do more testing before continuing the auction. A real result!

But we needed to see concrete actions behind the promises so, until the tests had been carried out and we were happy with the results, we continued to campaign. We met with the minister responsible for the auction and shared our concerns with MPs, asking them to speak about the problem and ask questions in Parliament.

Working with a group of experts on hearing equipment for deaf children, we helped Ofcom to redesign their tests so we could be confident in the results. They tested many more pieces of hearing equipment than before and used more realistic scenarios to judge whether interference might be a problem. The tests went on for a month and we were invited to the Ofcom radio monitoring station in Baldock to see the tests in action.

The results of the tests showed that it is highly unlikely these new

frequencies will affect deaf children's hearing equipment. Of course, no one can be 100% sure that interference won't happen, so when the auction takes place we'll be publishing guidance to help parents, and anyone working with deaf children or young people, to spot and report any interference they think could be caused by mobile phones. If we think interference is a problem once the new mobile phone frequencies are being used, we'll push Ofcom to find a solution.

**The auction of new mobile phone frequencies is due to happen by the end of 2017 – but we're not sure when yet. Once the frequencies are sold, we'll publish a factsheet about what to do if your child experiences problems with interference.**

➔ **Join our campaigns network and help us amplify the voices of deaf children and young people. [www.ndcs.org.uk/campaignsnetwork](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/campaignsnetwork)**

# Get involved



Rudi, Darren and Eva

# Make 2018 a year to remember

Every year hundreds of people just like you join us and do something amazing for deaf children. Get 2018 off to a great start and join #TeamNDCS.



**DARREN IS ONE OF OUR SUPERSTAR FUNDRAISERS OF 2017.** He took part in Prudential RideLondon – Surrey 100 for us after we supported his family when his son Rudi (1) was born with Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder (ANSD) and has severe hearing loss.

## What made you sign up for RideLondon?

After attending a National Deaf Children's Society family weekend event and seeing first-hand the support they offer to deaf children and their families, I was blown away by how hard they work and the lengths they go to to help deaf children achieve their potential. I left the weekend feeling more informed and more confident about my family's situation and decided to do something to help raise money for the cause. I wasn't sure what I could do but then my girlfriend Eva saw RideLondon charity places were available on the website and signed me up. Being able to take part and raise money for a charity that was actively supporting our family was the icing on the cake.

## What was the event like? What kept you going?

The ride was a fantastic experience! The hardest part (aside from the hills) was the last 20 miles, but being cheered on by the National Deaf Children's Society and my

family at the 90 mile mark gave me an extra boost for the home stretch. The generosity of our friends and family who sponsored me really kept me going. My family had a great day watching the ride; Rudi was on top form and from what I heard was the head cheerleader. They really felt welcomed by the National Deaf Children's Society family.

## What would you say to anyone else thinking of taking part in a challenge event for the National Deaf Children's Society?

Please do it. Out of the 20,000 riders taking part in this event only a handful were riding on behalf of #TeamNDCS. There could and should be more of us. If cycling isn't your thing then do something that is and get sponsored to do it. The more people supporting the cause, the wider we can reach to help those who may need it in the future. I can honestly say I had loads of fun and I feel so proud to have taken part on behalf of #TeamNDCS and my family!

➔ **Interested in taking part in Prudential RideLondon – Surrey 100 on 29 July 2018? Register today for one of our limited charity places and we'll support you every step of the way. [www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/ridelondon](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/ridelondon)**

# How will you make your mark?



Are you the ultimate competitor, a cake-baking genius or an adrenaline junkie? Maybe 2018 is the year for a once-in-a-lifetime event? With the help of fundraisers like you we can be there for every deaf child who needs us. So whether it's running, walking, cycling or baking, kick start the year by signing up to an event. Here's some inspiration, including some of our favourite events in the calendar.

## The Big Cake Bake: any time of the year

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

Your bake sale can be as big or small as you like. Whether it's at home, your local club or work it's all about having fun with friends, family and colleagues while raising money for deaf children and young people.

## Great North Run: 9 September 2018

[www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/greatnorthrun](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/greatnorthrun)

Now the UK's biggest and most famous half marathon, the route takes you from Newcastle, over the iconic Tyne Bridge and on to the finish in the picturesque coastal town of South Shields.

## Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon: 14 October 2018

[www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/royalparkshalfmarathon](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/royalparkshalfmarathon)

This scenic run is great for first time runners and follows a 13.1 mile route through Central London's picturesque Royal Parks – Hyde Park, Green Park and St. James's Park.

## Skydiving: any time of year

[www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/skydive](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/skydive)

Take on the challenge of a lifetime and experience an adrenaline rush you'll never forget as you freefall 12,000ft for #TeamNDCS! With jump sites across the UK, you just need to choose your preferred date and location.



To find out more or sign up for an event email [ndcschallenges@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:ndcschallenges@ndcs.org.uk) or go to [www.ndcschallenges.org.uk](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk).





When I'm a

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

# grown-up

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



## I'm a film-maker and photographer because...

I love that I get to be creative in my work. I like to use my imagination but also get hands on with cameras and technology. I started off studying acting which led me into the film-making industry. There aren't many roles for deaf actors, so I took

on production assistant jobs and gradually worked my way up from there.

The only barriers I've faced so far are with telephones or radio equipment but you find ways to work around that. I'm severely deaf and wear hearing aids so it can be tricky when working on the soundtrack for a film but I've found that good headphones (especially T loop ones) can help a lot.

I've written and directed two short films, both of which I was awarded funding for. My most recent film has been screened at film festivals around the world and it also won a Best Film of the Year award.

– Teresa Garratty

## I support arts organisations to become accessible because...

I'm passionate about making a change for the better for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing visitors.

I support museums, galleries and literary festivals to use live subtitles. This involves a lot of negotiation, persuasion and technical problem-solving.

I initially applied for a different post which wasn't suitable as it involved answering phones a lot. However an alternative short-term role led to other opportunities such as being a creative consultant for museum projects.

I'm Deaf and use British Sign Language (BSL). I don't wear hearing aids because it triggers my vertigo. I have colleagues with basic sign language skills who I can communicate with one-to-one. All new staff receive mandatory deaf awareness training from me. For meetings with new clients I book a BSL interpreter and for phone calls I use a video relay service.

Back in 2012, I performed at the Paralympics opening ceremony and I've been involved in many short films as well as acting on stage.

– Deepa Shastri



## I'm a freelance model because...

Having a 55% hearing loss, my job is a great opportunity to enhance my self-confidence, meet wonderful people from all walks of life and tell stories visually – in a way that's accessible to most people. I never expected to enter this industry and only did when a photographer suggested it during a family photoshoot. I'm a freelance model which means I organise and manage my own work without the help of an agency.

There are times when it's difficult to hear direction from photographers: for example, lip-reading is hard with large cameras or reflectors in the way. However, issues are easily resolved by open and honest discussion before a photoshoot and use of my radio aid when needed.

My biggest achievement is progressing with my education alongside my commitments and difficulties. I'm currently applying to Cambridge University and look forward to seeing where this adventure takes me!

– Safia Rofidi



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

# St John's

## Catholic School for the Deaf



For residential and day pupils aged 3 - 19 years

"Staff have very high expectations of what every pupil can achieve and this message is at heart of the school's ethos. As a result, pupils in all groups make good progress academically, socially and emotionally."

Ofsted, 2015



"My daughter is so much happier since she came to St John's. She has achieved more than I thought possible. She has become the person she was meant to be." **Parent**

"Don't worry about your shyness - you will gain confidence and achieve." **Pupil**

**For more information or to arrange a visit please contact:**

Mandy Dowson, Parental Support Manager, St John's School for the Deaf,  
Church Street, Boston Spa, West Yorkshire, LS23 6DF

**T:** 01937 842144 **F:** 01937 541471 **E:** [info@stjohns.org.uk](mailto:info@stjohns.org.uk) **W:** [www.stjohns.org.uk](http://www.stjohns.org.uk)

**Where every voice is heard and celebrated**



# After more than 70 years we have never lost sight of...



## ...the importance of building lifelong friendships.

For over 70 years Mary Hare has continued to develop ground breaking programmes using the latest technology to ensure the highest possible standards of educating deaf children.

If you feature in the archive image we would love to hear from you.

For more information or to arrange an individual visit, please contact  
**Debbie Benson:** ([d.benson@maryhare.org.uk](mailto:d.benson@maryhare.org.uk) or **01635 244215**)  
or visit our website [www.maryharschool.org.uk](http://www.maryharschool.org.uk)

*Securing the future of deaf children and young people*

