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services



National
Deaf Children's
Society

families

Elliot's glue ear journey



We knew something
wasn't right but we
had no idea what.



School for Deaf Children 5-16 years

Hamilton Lodge offers a full curriculum to deaf children aged 5-16 years in our school.

We take a "child-centred communication" approach at Hamilton Lodge and we support the development of both English and British Sign Language.

We focus our curriculum development on courses and accreditations that match the needs of individual pupils. We offer a range of GCSE, Entry Level, Functional Skills, Pathways, Unit Award courses and Signature sign language qualifications.

We have a well-established Work Experience Programme and Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, both of which focus on individuals being able to build their independence skills, confidence and self-esteem.



Further Education for Deaf Young People 16 -19 years

Hamilton Lodge College provides the right stepping stone into an independent and successful adult life. Based in the heart of a vibrant city, our college students are supported to make the most of the city's facilities.

We provide FE places in partnership with City College Brighton & Hove, Plumpton College, and St John's College.

Students attend lectures at their chosen colleges with the support of Student Support Workers provided by Hamilton Lodge.

Students receive direct teaching from Teachers of the Deaf from Hamilton Lodge to support their chosen courses as well as support with life skills, driving theory courses and English & maths.

New Specialist Provision for Deaf Children with Complex Needs

In 2016, Hamilton Lodge opened this provision to ensure that deaf pupils with more complex needs could access our education.

With support some pupils are able to transition to our core provision but some require a different curriculum and care package to meet their needs.

Our new specialist provision is tailored to meet the needs of those pupils. It is now fully open with a specially adapted residential house and a specialist team to ensure that these pupils have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum at Hamilton Lodge as well as a comprehensive care package.

The provision is based within the school and pupils are well integrated into our school family.



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

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My deafness didn't stop me...

travelling the world



Tony

INSPIRED BY HIS DAD'S ADVENTURES IN THE MERCHANT NAVY,

Tony (40), who is severely deaf and blind, has set himself the challenge of visiting every country in the world.

"As a teenager I learnt about the geography and history of the world and this made me curious," Tony explains. "After having a successful kidney transplant in December 2008, I decided I wanted to travel for the remainder of my life and visit every world country. Travelling makes me happy."

Tony is currently up to country 115 on the United Nations list of 193 countries. "New Zealand is my favourite because of the nature and friendly people," Tony said. "Plus the fact you can do almost any crazy sport imaginable there. I've tried them all – more than once!

"One of my most memorable experiences is hiking to Angel Falls in

Venezuela. It was a real challenge, my toes hit every stone and I constantly tripped over logs and tree roots. Nevertheless, with the help of my guide, I managed to reach the falls."

Tony's hearing and sight loss can make it harder for him to communicate with others during his travels. "My lack of hearing affects how I'm able to interact with people and my blindness prevents me from lipreading or signing," Tony, who wears hearing aids and uses speech, explains. "But I overcome these challenging situations by having a belief that most people want to help. For example if I want to use a cash machine in a foreign country, I try to find another traveller I feel I can trust or ask a staff member at my accommodation to accompany me. I also undertake research of a country before visiting and attempt to learn some local words.

"My favourite thing about travelling is being constantly on the go and meeting different people. I don't allow my blindness and deafness to stop me from living a full and active life." 



To find out more about Tony's adventures, visit his blog* at www.tonythetraveller.com.

For more tips on travelling, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/travel.

*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.

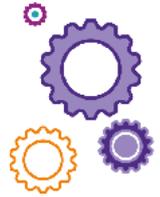
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The National Deaf Children's Society depends almost entirely on generous support from individuals and organisations. **The public is responsible for 95% of our income**, and without this we wouldn't be able to support families of deaf children and young people. See pages 44–45 for more information on supporting our work.
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why his
parents chose a
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Jovita's story
how she led
a successful
museum tour
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Lily and Jessie's story
how they've
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mainstream
school
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Emily's story
how she
moved out of
home to live
independently
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Hello



Now the winter is really upon us glue ear can become more common, so you might find it useful to read Karen's experiences with son Elliot's glue ear on page 14. Also in this issue, parents Rachel and Luke explain why they chose a childminder as the best option for their son when Rachel returned to work (page 12).

If you have an older child who's thinking ahead to moving out of home then have a read of Emily's story on page 20 where she explains how technology keeps her safe at home, and how she became independent enough to manage her household. For tips from parents on keeping younger children safe when they may not be able to hear danger around them, see our article on page 22.

Finally, don't forget we have tips that you can share with your family and friends on how to make Christmas deaf friendly at www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Karen

Karen Harlow, Editor
✉ magazine@ndcs.org.uk

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NEWS



Tanzanian trailblazers

In October, 29 students celebrated completing Tanzania's first accredited sign language course. Our international arm, Deaf Child Worldwide, supported the creation of this course with the University of Dar es Salaam and the Tanzania Deaf Association (CHAVITA).

This is a fantastic achievement in Tanzania where deaf people face huge stigma and discrimination and most deaf children don't go to school at all.

An accredited course at the country's most prestigious university will raise the profile of sign language and is a significant step in breaking down the barriers for deaf people in Tanzania.

We hope that the success of this course will lead to a further qualification for interpreters.

Technology Test Drive now open to 16–25 year olds

Technology Test Drive (TTD) is a free technology loan service for our members. It gives families the chance to try out technology before buying it themselves.

Young people have shared that as they get older they want to be more independent and borrow things from the TTD without the help of a parent. That's why our loan service is now open to deaf young people aged 16–25, and we've added lots of new products just for this age group, like flashing doorbells, vibrating alarm clocks and products to listen to music.

If your son or daughter wants to borrow something from the TTD, tell them to email technology@ndcs.org.uk with their request for their chosen product and we'll get in touch.



Access to Work launches new Tech Fund

The Minister for Disabled People has announced a new Tech Fund as part of Access to Work (a grant scheme that funds practical support in the workplace for those with a disability or health condition).

The Fund will cover all the costs of assistive technology, instead of medium and large employers having to pay a minimum contribution.

Find out more at www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-tech-fund-to-support-disabled-people-and-their-employers.

New guidance for education inspectors in Wales

The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru has been working with Estyn, the education and training inspectorate in Wales, to create new guidance for inspectors.

The guidance has specific questions for Estyn inspectors to consider when inspecting a school with deaf pupils. It aims to help make sure deaf children are being appropriately supported and included in all aspects of school life.

We're delighted to have worked with Estyn to create this guidance, which is available to view at www.estyn.gov.wales/document/supplementary-guidance-hearing-impairment.





Parents set the standard in Northern Ireland

At the moment, Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK without quality standards for children's audiology. But it looks like our campaign is paying off. Standards are on their way!

As well as advising the health service from the very beginning, we made sure that parents had their say on the new standards. We involved Local Deaf Children's Societies and held a focus group so that parents could look at the proposals at the earliest possible stage and give feedback on what they needed.

We're expecting the new standards to be in place by April 2019. There is a formal consultation about to start, so if you're interested in audiology services for children and you haven't had your say yet, now is the time. Email nioffice@ndcs.org.uk to find out more.



Deaf young people question the First Minister

Three of our Young Campaigners in Scotland took part in the first-ever televised *First Minister's Question Time: Next Generation*. One hundred children and young people aged 8-18 from across Scotland were invited to be in the audience, posing questions to the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon.

Young people asked questions on topics such as mental health, politics in school and additional support needs. Young Campaigner Erin even got the chance to ask about British Sign Language accessibility in the Scottish Parliament in case she becomes a politician in the future.

Well done to Erin, Rhys and Mollie for being fantastic representatives on the day!

For more information on the Young Campaigners email anne-marie@ndcs.org.uk.

Could you be a technology volunteer?

Are you interested in technology for deaf children and young people? We're looking for families of deaf children and young people, deaf adults and professionals who would be interested in volunteering to talk about and demonstrate technology at our events for families.

You don't need to be an expert as we'll provide training, but it would be useful if you already have a good understanding and experience of technology (equipment and apps) that supports deaf children and young people.

We're looking for volunteers across the UK, and volunteering would take place at weekends. All expenses for training and volunteering will be covered. For more information email volunteer@ndcs.org.uk.



Comment

Fighting for deaf children

Fighting for deaf children is at the core of what we do. Fighting for them to be heard. Fighting for their rights. Fighting for support. All to give deaf children a fighting chance when they grow up: to succeed, thrive and be exactly who they want to be.

In the last 12 months, we've continued that fight. We've had a fantastic breakthrough in our Right to Sign campaign and the Government are no longer blocking the development of a GCSE in British Sign Language.

All over the country we've been fighting against cuts to deaf children's services. Our research found that a third of councils were planning to cut deaf children's services. In every council where we're worried about cut-backs, we're challenging the council and putting pressure on them to reverse their decisions.

We've taken the fight to Government too. Whether it's battling to make every children's audiology service exemplary or to get more money invested in deaf children's services – our work hasn't stopped. We've been making the case on national TV and local radio, we've been in every major newspaper and we've even got debates in parliament about the issues we all care about.

With a new year just around the corner, my promise to you is that all of us at the National Deaf Children's Society, from our campaigners to our children and families' support officers, will never stop fighting until deaf children get the support they need.



Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive



**British
Sign
Language**

Pupils make strong progress from their starting points (OFSTED 2018)

Having a child with medical needs and a feeding routine can be a struggle, but school are fantastic at it all (Parent)

**Small
Classes**

My child is developing into a happy, confident and intelligent little boy (Parent)

**Speech
and
Language
Therapy**

Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary (OFSTED 2018)

**Teachers
of the
Deaf**

**Residential
and Day
Places
Available**

Pupils thrive at your school (OFSTED 2018)

**Outstanding
Children's
Home**



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SUPERSTARS



My daughter Emily has successfully transitioned to high school. She's coped well with having different teachers, making friends and getting to grips with a new Roger pen. To top it off she's been selected to play in the u12 first team for hockey and invited to the county's hockey academy.



Andrew, dad to Emily (11) who is mild to moderately deaf.

Our Teacher of the Deaf, Fionnuala McCreanor, has been with us since Sophie was born. She's gone above and beyond in every area of Sophie's care. She fights for us and makes sure Sophie has the best possible education. She has become a great friend to our family and we owe her a lot.



Fiona, mum to Sophie (7) who has microtia and a moderate hearing loss.

Every day deaf children achieve amazing things and their friends, family members and professionals go the extra mile to make sure deafness isn't a barrier to them enjoying life. Read on to find out about some of these superstars.

Both my sons had a successful summer competing at agricultural shows. They enjoy the experience but sometimes find it hard to hear commands or questions. Judges Bill Harper and Abi Marshall took time to understand how to use hand signals and to make sure their faces and lip patterns were visible. This helped to build the boys' confidence. Thank you!



David, dad to Jack (8) and Fred (7) who are both severely deaf.

I'd like to say a big thank you to all my granddaughter's teachers in the Department of Deaf Education within St. Roch's Secondary School in Glasgow. They do an amazing job and are so supportive with both academic and social issues. With their support Taylor-Ann passed her National 4 and sat two National 5 exams.



Tricia, grandmother to Taylor-Ann (16) who is profoundly deaf.

I'm really proud of my children Elizabeth and Matthew, who supported each other through their GCSEs. Elizabeth recently achieved 10 GCSEs including a distinction in Performing Arts, and Matthew passed 11 GCSEs including an A in Product Design. Matthew wants to study Engineering and Elizabeth would like to become an occupational therapist.



Anne, mum to Elizabeth (16) who is severely/profoundly deaf and Matthew (16).

Carina had a fabulous year at her pre-school and is much more confident. She was a little star at her theatre group performance and it was a joy to see her have so much fun. We would never have made it so far without the support of our Teachers of the Deaf, Jenny and Judy – they are superstars too!



Camilla, mum to Carina (4) who has moderate hearing loss.



NEXT ISSUE: Is your deaf child or someone in their lives a superstar? Has your child reached a milestone or achieved something special? Or has their friend or teacher gone above and beyond to support them? Nominate someone you'd like to celebrate by emailing magazine@ndcs.org.uk.

Childcare choices



Raising Nancy

The ups and downs of parenting a deaf child

“Nursery was another big decision. Would it be too loud with her new implants?”



Jess and her husband Matt are parents to Alice (7) and twins Nancy and Connie (5). Nancy is profoundly deaf and was fitted with cochlear implants at 20 months.

NOW THAT NANCY HAS STARTED SCHOOL, I look back at all the decisions we've had to make about her childcare. It's been hard because having a deaf child is so different to parenting our eldest – we've had to take things as they've come! But Nancy's now a happy little five-year-old and I hope we've made the right choices.

Choosing who would look after her when I went back to work after maternity leave was tough. Childminder or nursery? Her older sister Alice had gone straight to nursery, but she was hearing. I was worried Nancy would be overwhelmed by the noise, even though at that point we didn't know how much she could hear through her tiny hearing aids (little did we know she could hear no sound at all).

Anne, the childminder, was great; she'd never met a deaf child before but embraced every minute, so I knew she was right for Nancy. I'll never forget her words that looking after Nancy and Connie was actually like looking after three children! Having a child with a special need meant she was having to do so much more for her. Wow – what words of wisdom. Suddenly I felt I could justify my struggles as a mum of three – or three and a half: taking Nancy's hearing aids out for her naps, putting them back in, remembering to turn off the radio, finding an activity that wasn't too loud, remembering to talk to her at floor level so she could lipread and trying to learn and use sign.

This made me think about my sanity; so, after eight months back at work and when Nancy was about to have her cochlear implant operation

and would hear for the first time, I stopped work. I got Carer's Allowance, because Nancy gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA), which gave me a payment each week. I felt really guilty not working but remembered Nancy's Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) once telling me, "Parents are the first educators of their children." So I thought, well, this can be my job instead.

Nursery was another big decision. Would it be too loud with her new implants? She was only two years old and, although I was looking after her, I wanted her to be with more kids to help her communicate, so we moved her and Connie to Alice's nursery – and it helped her more than I ever imagined! Being with her peers helped her learn to listen, speak, socialise and, above all, have fun. Nancy's ToD taught her key worker how to be deaf aware, who then taught the kids how to communicate with Nancy. The nursery got top-up funding from the council so that Nancy could have some one-to-one time. I'm sad she left when she did because I think another six months would have benefited her. But it was time to move on. The journey to school has been a challenge so I'm going to enjoy every minute of taking her in the mornings and hope she'll continue to thrive. Watch this space! 



We have information on childcare options at www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare.

To find out more about DLA visit www.ndcs.org.uk/DLA.

Weathering the storm

OH MY GOODNESS! My girl has been bullied and suffered discrimination and her hearing loss has been an integral part of it. What a shock to realise how bad things had got at school. She'd been complaining about problems with friendships and seemed very tired and, frankly, we thought she was hormonal. We were distracted by one of our other kids who was struggling more loudly, while things were getting worse for Molly. It had gone so far that we realised that we had no option but to withdraw her from the school.

Molly's behaviour wasn't explained to her peers. The school was shocking in its lack of inclusion and deaf awareness training. The other kids thought she was odd, aloof and sometimes stared at or ignored them. They didn't realise she was lipreading or trying to follow what was going on. The kids didn't like the way she'd leave a game suddenly or try to change how it was played. She was constantly questioned, put down and excluded from games and conversations.

Before we pulled her out she'd started to refuse to use her radio aid, adamant she could manage without it. It turned out her main teacher couldn't, or wouldn't, mute the microphone when she wasn't talking to the whole class and Molly was being driven mad by the constant noise.

Molly broke down. After a rest she's now at a new school where there's another deaf pupil and a teaching assistant who signs, and the staff are radio aid friendly. The Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) is by our side and the school staff couldn't be more helpful and kind.

Someone from the local Deaf Association visits Molly and her sister and involves them in deaf community events. Our friends from British Sign Language class have supported us and Molly has been invited to volunteer at a local stable to spend wonderful healing time caring for horses.

Things are improving, but how did this happen? Molly was at an alternative school. Not a super-expensive private school but a small school which we did pay some fees for, meaning we lost the support of the ToD unless we paid for her privately. The school wasn't keen to have her input and she only visited once in four years. Had she been more involved, this might not have happened.

Now we have some decisions to make. Do we make a complaint? I called the National Deaf Children's Society Helpline for advice. They said we didn't have enough evidence for court, but they were very supportive and it was great to know someone cared. Of course Molly just wants good friends and to feel happy and safe at school. We hope things will be better for her now. 



We know most deaf children and young people don't have problems with bullying but if you have concerns, have a look at our information at www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingguides.

To find out about your rights in education see www.ndcs.org.uk/educationcomplaint.

Raising Molly

Navigating between the deaf and hearing worlds

The school was shocking in its lack of inclusion and deaf awareness training.



Lara and her husband Henry are parents to Conrad (14), Molly (12) and Faye (8). Molly is moderately deaf and Faye has intermittent glue ear.



William's personalised care

Rachel and Luke looked into various childcare options for their son William (now 3) when Rachel returned to work. They opted for a childminder and couldn't be happier with their decision.



William's story
why his parents chose a childminder for childcare

PLACING HER BAGS DOWN IN THE HALL, RACHEL WATCHED WILLIAM (3) KICK OFF HIS WELLIES AND RUN TO HIS TOYS. "Tractor, Mummy!" he called, looking round, signing 'blue' and 'big'. Rachel found his favourite tractor, helped set up his farm, then pulled the childminder's diary from her bag and scanned the notes.

Childminder Camilla had recorded details of William's day: food, naps and activities, including a park outing and learning letters of the alphabet. She'd written extra notes about his hearing aids – 'changed battery on left hearing aid.' "We're a long way from when he started at 12 months old and pulled out his hearing aids five times a day!" says Rachel.

William was diagnosed with severe to profound bilateral hearing loss at eight weeks old and had hearing aids at 12 weeks. Rachel and husband Luke faced the sudden uphill and emotional struggle of parents with no experience of

deafness, getting to grips with all the issues around it and meeting William's needs. They decided signing would help his communication while developing speech and give options when he can't rely on hearing aids, such as in bed or the bath.

In preparation for Rachel returning to work three days a week – planned for when William was a year old – they started looking into childcare. Rachel's parents and Luke could do alternate Mondays, so they needed two days of professional childcare. "I had a deep down bias towards a childminder rather than a nursery but we visited two nurseries," says Rachel. "One Luke hated, the other was a nice set-up but felt institutionalised, with double security to get in and out, like a prison."

...it gave us confidence that she was patient and had the desire to learn William's needs.

Luke adds, "We wanted someone who understood about William's hearing loss and was prepared to put in his hearing aids again and again when he pulled them out – personalised care."

"With the ratio of staff to children, would nursery staff notice if he threw his hearing aids across the room?" says Rachel. "Would they bother putting them back in? There were big noisy rooms, three or four staff in each – we'd have to teach all of them deaf awareness, how to look after William's hearing aids and basic signs. Staff turnover would



“ We wanted someone who understood about William’s hearing loss and was prepared to put in his hearing aids again and again when he pulled them out.

mean doing it all over again. And it would be stressful being on time for pick-up, getting caught in a meeting or traffic then fined for lateness.”

The couple decided on the home-from-home setting a childminder could offer, with mixed ages and daily outings, like school runs and playgroup. They felt the quieter, calmer and acoustically softer setting would suit William better.

Locally there were childminders with special educational needs experience but none who were experienced with deafness. Then a friend recommended Camilla. “It was a very homely, relaxed setting. There were lots of animals, just like at home,” says Rachel. “Camilla didn’t have experience of deafness but she’d looked after a boy with diabetes – it gave us confidence that she was patient and had the desire to learn William’s needs.”

During several settling-in sessions, Rachel gave Camilla National Deaf Children’s Society leaflets and showed her how to fit William’s hearing aids and change the batteries, how to use his radio aid and some simple signs. “She was really keen!” says Rachel. “Her words to us were ‘Welcome to the family.’ She was a bubbly, kind person; it gave us confidence in her.”

William’s Teacher of the Deaf visited to brief Camilla on deaf awareness, then visited every two weeks to work with Camilla and William. Camilla worked hard on William’s speech and learnt basic signs so she could understand him as his speech was developing.

Two years on, as they prepare to welcome their second child into the world, Rachel and Luke couldn’t be happier with their choice. William’s speech is on a par with children his age and his signing is good enough to keep up with Luke who’s learning British Sign Language Level 2.

“He’s very interested in everything and he’s a strong character. He’s got

two languages to make his needs known and boss us around!” says Luke. “Camilla wears the radio aid when they’re out so he can hear clear speech, particularly in noisy playgroup settings or the car. She’s working through the alphabet with him, developing a scrapbook of words.”

The couple feel the only stumbling blocks would have been the same whatever setting William had been in. “He’s had repeat ear infections but Camilla’s meticulous about giving him prescribed medications. She charges by the hour and accepts late cancellations or reductions in William’s hours when he needs to go to hearing tests or appointments. Camilla’s very flexible; if I’m 15 minutes late she doesn’t bat an eyelid,” says Rachel.

Camilla takes her charges to playgroup regularly and at first during story time, when they all sat in a circle, William would panic and cling to Camilla. “He’s shy in some settings. He wants to fully understand what’s happening as he feels unsure otherwise,” says Rachel. “But Camilla sat with him and let him hold her hand or sit on her lap for reassurance – then taught him the songs at home. He suddenly started singing all the nursery rhymes to us; it was lovely.”

“He’s very happy there, relaxed and confident,” says Luke. “He’ll stay until he starts reception at four. We’ve ended up with a complicated patchwork quilt of childcare options, and we’re very happy with it!” 



For more information on different childcare options see www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare.

To find out more about learning sign language see www.ndcs.org.uk/signlanguage.

Your winter checklist

Delaying school for a year

Is your child’s birthday between 1 April and 31 August? If so, and you live in England, they may be able to start school a year later than other children if you think that would be best for them. A delay in starting school can give your child the chance to develop the language, communication and social skills they’ll need to make the most of the opportunities school offers. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/summerborn.

Quality standards for early years services

We’ve produced some quality standards to set out what we expect all good services to be doing to support deaf children in the early years. The guidance includes education, health, speech and language therapy, childcare providers, and social care and other family support services. You have the right to expect all these services to work together to meet the needs of your child. www.ndcs.org.uk/EYQualityStandards

Supporting your baby’s communication

Most parents of deaf children are hearing and don’t have much experience of hearing loss, so it’s understandable that you might feel unsure about how to engage with your child. But there are lots of simple things you can do to create an environment that’s full of communication and interaction. We’ve produced a guide *Helping Your Deaf Child to Develop Communication and Language (0–2)* which you can download from www.ndcs.org.uk/developcommunication.





Elliot's glue ear journey

After Elliot (6) experienced a difficult start to school, his parents soon realised something was behind his out-of-character behaviour.



Elliot's story
how his family managed his glue ear



SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE KAREN AND ANDREW WERE SHOCKED AND DELIGHTED TO SEE THEIR SON ELLIOT UP ON STAGE dancing and singing in the Nativity play. Just the year before he'd been sat on the sidelines refusing to go on stage and looking unhappy. Now he was joining in with his classmates.

Elliot seemed to first start having problems with his hearing when he joined primary school at four years old. "Elliot had started school and wasn't particularly enjoying it," Karen explains. "He hadn't had any problems at pre-school and met all his developmental milestones. We knew something wasn't right but we had no idea what.

"His teacher was saying he was 'odd' and naughty, that

he couldn't count or read. But at home, where it's quiet and calm, he could do it. The behaviour issues baffled me because he could play well with friends and his sister Annie at home and in the park with other children. If you looked at his report on leaving pre-school alongside his first assessment at school, they looked like they were about two different children."

It was when Elliot had a routine hearing test at school that the nurse suggested there might be a problem. "It was a bit of a lightbulb moment; it suddenly made sense," Karen says. "We went to the audiology clinic for further tests and that's where they confirmed the diagnosis of glue ear."

The glue ear diagnosis was a lightbulb moment.

The audiologist told Karen that Elliot had a mild hearing loss caused by glue ear and advised the family to try watchful waiting, a period of monitoring his hearing and having regular check-ups to see if the glue ear improved without needing treatment.

"Initially we thought 'fair enough', we'll review in three months and now we know what it is we can have a sensible, rational discussion with his teacher and put things in place to support Elliot," Karen says. "The audiologist explained how previously people had gone down the road of grommets but locally that wasn't something they offered anymore."

Karen approached Elliot's teacher with the diagnosis and discussed ways he could be supported, suggesting he was acting up because he was finding it difficult to hear the class and not because he couldn't do it. However unfortunately things didn't improve at school. "We weren't impressed with how the school handled his behaviour at this time, seemingly ignoring all the evidence we were providing that highlighted

The effects of hearing loss can be very misunderstood.

that Elliot's behaviour was out of character and because of the glue ear.

"We were surprised by the teacher's lack of understanding and the impact this can have on learning," Karen adds. "The effects of hearing loss can be very misunderstood."

Karen and Andrew began to worry about Elliot falling behind so they helped him practise numbers and phonics at home. "Elliot never really liked the academic side of things," Karen explains. "So we got Star Wars writing and number books to make it more fun and did treasure hunts to help him follow numbers in the right order."



It was soon time for Elliot to move up to Year 1. "We started Year 1 afresh and with a different teacher who had a completely different attitude," Karen says. "She wanted to work with us, listened and established the best ways to support and reassure Elliot."

"I found the National Deaf Children's Society through a Google search and gathered together lots of information from their resources. I took them into school and we said 'snap!' because the teacher had done the same."

"One thing that's really helped is the personal passport. I made one about Elliot and his needs and his teacher shared it with staff at the school, with tips like talking face-to-face, not covering your mouth, those sorts of things. That was a ground-breaking moment really when the school started taking it more seriously."

Elliot's Year 1 teacher spent that first half term gaining Elliot's trust

and helping to transform his school life. "She asked Elliot's class to put their hands on their ears when she was talking so they could experience not being able to fully hear like him," Karen says. "We also bought books about deaf children like *Daisy & Ted's Awesome Adventures* and she read them with the class. She paid attention to where Elliot is located in the classroom as well, making a point of speaking to him directly and thinking about acoustics."

But while things were improving at school, Elliot's hearing wasn't getting any better. "Mild hearing loss doesn't sound bad but actually it had a significant impact," Karen explains.

"After a year of appointments I'd had enough of watchful waiting. I mentioned hearing aids to the doctor and he agreed we could go down that route."

Elliot was fitted with hearing aids quickly and the family noticed an immediate difference. "It wasn't until then that we truly appreciated what Elliot had been missing out on: things like hearing his fish splash in the tank, the 'snap, crackle and pop' of his cereal, cars outside the window and even his wee when he went to the toilet!"

"He's come a long way in the last year; it's helped finding an amazing teacher and getting his hearing aids, but he's still got some catching up to do," Karen says. "I'd say to any other parent, if you think something isn't right or you disagree with what somebody is describing, you know your child best so stick up for them." 



To find out more about glue ear, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear.

For more information about personal passports, tips on how to write one and a template you can use, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/passports.



Your winter checklist

✓ Our children's books

Are you looking for the perfect Christmas present for your deaf child? We've produced two storybooks – *Daisy & Ted's Awesome Adventures* and *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue* – for children aged 4–7 which feature deaf characters doing incredible things! All money raised through book sales helps us to support deaf children and their families too. Find our books at www.ndcs.org.uk/awesomeadventures.

✓ Communicating with deaf children flyer

Over the holidays your deaf child may come into contact with adults who don't have lots of experience of communicating with deaf children, whether it's at a Christmas party or over the Christmas dinner table. We have a handy flyer which includes some simple tips which you can share with family and friends to help everyone join in the conversations. You can download or order it from www.ndcs.org.uk/communicationflyer.

✓ Making school plays deaf friendly

We've put together some top tips to help deaf children feel included in school plays and make sure they have a fun experience. The ideas can be shared with teachers, youth or drama club workers, church/religious leaders and anyone else who may be supporting your child with arts performances. We have tips for giving direction, managing cues, costumes and how technology can help. www.ndcs.org.uk/plays





Guiding light

Jovita (14) who is severely to profoundly Deaf has become a teen tour guide for the Wallace Collection in London.



Jovita's story
how she led a successful museum tour



I'd also like to become the first Deaf judge.

WHEN HER MUM SAW A POSTER asking for young people aged 14–18 to be trained to deliver a tour of the Wallace Collection, an art museum in London, she asked Jovita if she was interested. “I said, ‘Why not?’” says Jovita. “I applied, and they asked me if I wanted an interpreter, which was amazing – it was the first time someone had asked that! I was the first Deaf young person to be presenting.”

Although Jovita was born Deaf, parents Karen and Johan, who are both Deaf themselves, had to battle for almost five years to get a diagnosis for their daughter, which was the start of a long struggle to get her the support she needed. “People think a Deaf parent with a Deaf child will be absolutely fine because the Deaf parent can sort it out and know what’s best. Actually they don’t think about the additional barriers we have as parents and the accessibility we need to get support and advice,” says Johan.

Jovita put in a lot of work to prepare for her tour. “I practised for an hour a weekend over five weeks. The first weekend was introducing all the items and narrowing down the ones I wanted to talk about,” she explains. “I was then trained on delivering a tour. Most of the young people trained were 16 or 17 and hearing. I was the youngest. I practised and practised about my objects and did more research, gathering information and talking to people to find out more. Then I did a bit of a fake run-through in the training room and then out into the actual gallery to practise.”

Jovita delivered her tour in British Sign Language (BSL), which is her first language, but she also speaks and lipreads well. “I rely heavily on lipreading but that’s quite tiring so my preference is for Sign Supported English and BSL in school as well as BSL with my family,” she explains.

On the day of the tour, Jovita arrived three hours early to have a full final run through. “I was very nervous. My legs were



“ I had such a feeling of accomplishment and was constantly smiling.

actually trembling!” she remembers. She conducted the tour with an interpreter providing a voiceover for hearing guests. It lasted half an hour, attracted 15 people and was a resounding success, leaving Jovita feeling very proud of herself. “I was amazed – genuinely surprised I’d actually done it. I had such a feeling of accomplishment and was constantly smiling. I felt really giddy!” she beams. “Afterwards I got feedback – it was quite positive but there were obviously some areas I needed to improve. But it was only my first time delivering the tour so I expected that. Hopefully, over time, I’ll practise more and get it down to a tee.”

Jovita is also a member of our Young People’s Advisory Board (YAB) which she’s really enjoying. “I’ve definitely

made some friends,” she smiles. “It’s great fun and I’ve really enjoyed everyone’s company. We wind each other up massively, especially those of us who use BSL! It’s kind of like a mini, new family I suppose.”

It was with fellow members of the YAB that Jovita went to the Houses of Parliament to campaign for a GCSE in BSL. “We’ve been trying to get various schools and education institutes involved to try to improve opportunities for deaf young people,” she says. “We met the Minister for Education and had a discussion with him which was fantastic – really interesting.”

Jovita has never let her deafness hold her back and her long list of other achievements includes teaching BSL at school, playing a young Dot Miles (a famous deaf poet) in BSL Zone’s programme Dot and training to be a trampoline coach. “I love trampolining. My trampolining group are used to communicating with me but I was thinking about other deaf

people trying to access the group. When people are jumping up and down you can’t lipread them so how are they supposed to communicate? You have to wait until they jump back down to sign, but a hearing person can just listen to instructions or conversation and that’s fine,” explains Jovita. “I talked to my mum about it and she encouraged me to become a trampoline coach so maybe one day I could teach deaf children.”

Jovita delivered a second tour of the Wallace Collection in November and hopes to develop her tour-guiding in the future. “I’d love to do tours of universities or perhaps in museums but my topic will always be history because I really love history,” she says.



But she also has bigger ambitions. “There are two things I’d like

to do. I want to work in law to help deaf children in mainstream schools to make sure they have the right support and know their rights. I’d also like to become the first Deaf judge,” Jovita says. Johan agrees, “I hope she realises that ambition and has an impact on the government in terms of better provision and access for deaf children.”

“It’s very ambitious,” adds Jovita. “But I don’t see why not; I’m allowed to dream!”

Good luck Jovita! 🍀

➔ For more information about your child’s rights in education and the Equality Act see www.ndcs.org.uk/educationrights.

To find out more about the Wallace Collection visit www.wallacecollection.org.

Your winter checklist

✔ Buying a mobile phone

At some point during secondary school, you may consider buying your child a mobile phone. There are different types of mobiles that have features that are suitable for deaf children and young people. Some have amplified volume and are hearing-aid compatible, and smartphones let you access the internet and use apps. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/mobilephones.

✔ Is your child always tired after school?

After a busy day at school, it’s quite common for deaf children to experience tiredness and fatigue. Deaf children have to pay much more attention than children with typical hearing levels, either through listening, lipreading or following signed conversations, and this will leave them with less energy for other things. We have more information about tiredness at www.ndcs.org.uk/tired.

✔ Keeping safe online

The internet is fantastic and can help children and young people learn and communicate with others. However, it’s important your child is safe and supported when they go online. Our website has tips on what you can do to protect your child and how to encourage them to make smart choices in their online life. For more information, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/esafety.





Lily (left) and Jessie

Sisters Jessie (17) and Lily (16), both profoundly deaf, have excelled at school and enjoy an active social life. Mum Pam explains how gathering as much information as possible helped her make choices that felt right for their family.



Lily and Jessie's story how they've thrived in mainstream school

“Their dad and I were always saying it was incredible that we never had to hassle them to study.”

Armed with information

LISTENING TO JESSIE AND LILY JOKE ABOUT STEALING EACH OTHER'S CLOTHES AND STATIONERY, Pam knows the bond between her daughters couldn't be stronger. And although the girls aren't phased by their deafness, Pam sees how much of a support they have been for each other over the years. "You'll come to realise it when you're older," she tells them.

With both girls receiving exceptional GCSE results, and Lily even making the news this year for her sweep of top grades, Pam has everything to be proud of. "They worked really hard," she says. "Their dad and I were always saying it was incredible that we never had to hassle them to study." But alongside the girls' hard work has been Pam and dad Andy's thorough research which has meant they were given the opportunities and environments which worked best for them.

Jessie's deafness wasn't diagnosed at birth, although Pam had her suspicions. "Our childminder and I were convinced Jessie couldn't hear and we were on a waiting list to see the audiologist," remembers Pam. "When Lily was born, newborn hearing screening had come in, so her hearing loss was picked up. When I said I had another child who I didn't think could hear, Jessie was fast-tracked and diagnosed."

Having two profoundly deaf daughters and little previous experience of deafness was challenging, but Pam armed herself with information. "I stopped working for quite a long time and just learned – like so many mums I've met who've had deaf children – tons of stuff that I would never have otherwise learned," says Pam.



I felt safe that there would be no bullying and there was a genuine interest in accepting difference.

“The information that made a difference to the big decisions, we had to find out on our own through searching online and in parent groups.”

Both girls had their first cochlear implant fitted when they were two, and second implants when Jessie was eight and Lily was seven. British Sign Language (BSL) wasn't a route the family decided to go down – for them, Auditory Verbal Therapy was what really helped in getting the girls' delayed speech to develop.

When it came to schooling arrangements, Pam and Andy were quite clear on what they wanted for the girls. They both attended a small, mainstream primary and received support from teaching assistants. “The deafness was a big factor in deciding where we wanted them to go,” Pam explains. “We wanted somewhere where the impact of their deafness would be minimised, and in a class of 13, they were just one of the kids in the class. It was a really nurturing little school.”

The girls now attend the sixth form of their secondary school and have excelled there, with both of them taking up new activities. Lily is involved in an entrepreneur group and history society and Jessie has taken up public speaking and is a member of the school council. “They both enjoyed studying so we wanted a school that would stretch them,” says Pam. “After visiting the school, we found out they make kindness a central ethos. I felt safe that there would be no bullying and there was a genuine interest in accepting difference.” Jessie adds, “Our school is very welcoming; they talk a lot about disabilities and overcoming challenges.”

Both girls have a teaching assistant in some of their lessons and occasional visits from their Teacher of the Deaf. “It's quite good actually,” says Lily. “If I tell the Teacher of the Deaf about any issues I have, they tell that teacher what the issue is.”

The social side of school is also important and both girls enjoy school life and have good friends. They are the only deaf students at their school but Jessie explains that this isn't an issue. “It doesn't really affect me, to be honest,” she says. “I don't think of myself as different from other people because I'm deaf.” However, communication can occasionally be tricky. “There are areas where you socialise – they can be quite loud and try to avoid them,” says Lily. “Or I just talk to the person next to me.”

The girls are sociable outside of school too and their house is always open to friends and family. “As we've got older, we've got quite a bit closer because we've got quite a similar friendship group outside school,” Jessie says. Pam adds, “I think they've got a lovely relationship. They give each other lots of space, but they're also really good friends and always played really well together when they were little. In fact, I hear Jessie laugh the most when she's hanging out with Lily!”

Jessie and Lily are a real success story of how being profoundly deaf should be no barrier to having a successful school career, plenty of hobbies and a busy social life. But Pam by no means thinks that the route they took regarding their daughters' communication, hearing technology and schooling would be the right approach for every deaf child. “What we chose was absolutely right for us, but it may be totally wrong for somebody else,” advises Pam. “It's about informing yourself as broadly as you can and not ruling things out because of people's prejudices.” 



For more information about choosing a school, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/choosingschool.

To find out more about Auditory Verbal Therapy see www.avuk.org.

Your winter checklist

Part-time jobs

If your child is looking to earn some extra money in the run up to Christmas they may consider taking on a part-time job after school, at weekends or during the holidays. As well as earning money, it's a great way to gain confidence and something useful to add to their CV. However, extra support may be needed to make sure deaf young people feel confident in the workplace, so it's important to understand your child's rights to support. There's more information at www.ndcs.org.uk/rightspostschool.

Going to the theatre

Attending the theatre is becoming more accessible for deaf children and young people, with more captioned, interpreted and integrated shows than ever. There are lots of useful websites which can help you find these performances all over the UK. Visit our webpage for more information at www.ndcs.org.uk/theatre.

Who am I? Videos for families with deaf teenagers

We've put together a series of videos interviewing different families with deaf teenagers. In each video a different family offers their top tips including: don't allow anyone to label your child, give your child time, be patient and communicate, never give up, and be confident to get the information you need. To find these videos, go to www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam and search 'Who am I'.





Making the move

Emily (19) moved out of her parents' home and to a brand new city.



Emily's story
how she moved out of home to live independently

• **UNPACKING BOXES ALONGSIDE HER HOUSEMATE FRANCESCA, EMILY WAS EXCITED TO FINALLY BE IN HER NEW HOUSE.** She couldn't wait to be independent, explore her new home town and have a moving-in party. But, after saying goodbye to her emotional mum Diana, she also felt a bit anxious about not having any older adults in the house and having to rely completely on herself for the first time.

• It had been a long journey for Emily, who is profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids, to get to this point. Born into a hearing family, she communicated through speech until she was 13 but now mainly uses British Sign Language (BSL). "I learned BSL through friends," Emily says. "Once I learned to sign, that was the best thing ever. I became part of a community and finally didn't feel left out."

• Emily attended mainstream schools until the end of Year 8 but didn't feel she fitted in. "I didn't make a lot of friends and had no confidence in myself or my future," Emily explains. "I decided in Year 8 to move to a deaf-specialist school; that school made me who I am today."

• After school, Emily went to college to study art and design, then found a youth work apprenticeship with the National Deaf Children's Society. "I never thought I'd get the job so I was really shocked when I did," Emily says. "I was excited to start my new chapter as I wanted to become more independent."

• The new job meant a big change for Emily: her apprenticeship was based in Birmingham so she had to move from her family home in Cardiff to a whole new city. "I had so many different feelings about moving out of home," Emily says. "I was nervous, excited, overwhelmed and sad. My family were very worried and they didn't really want me to go. When I went to college, I got a bit lazy and



Technology helped us a lot.

I had so many different feelings about moving out of home.

became a bit of a rebel. They were worried if I wasn't under their eye, I'd do even worse!"

Emily's first task was to find a house and some housemates to live with. "My mum helped me a lot," she explains. "It was all very last minute because I had the job interview and then in two months I had to move. I'd only been to Birmingham twice before! It was stressful looking for a house; it was far from my home so we only had one day to do viewings."

"We had to keep emailing estate agents and often they wouldn't check their inboxes. We couldn't call so we'd use the Next Generation Text Service (NGTS) to call – you type to the relay assistant who speaks your words to the person you're calling and then types their reply to you."

Emily's family helped her prepare for the move and gave her lots of their old possessions to furnish the house with. "I didn't want to accept that I had to pay for house essentials," Emily says. "I've changed my mind about that now; I'm actually about to buy a £200 washing machine!"

Emily's housemate Francesca is also deaf so between them they made sure to install the technology they needed in their new home. "Technology helped us a lot," Emily explains. "We have a smoke alarm that wakes us up through vibration if there's a fire, vibrating alarm clocks and a flashing doorbell. It was a main priority for us when we moved in; we got in touch with Deaf Services and they installed them."

But Emily found there were a number of other challenges to overcome when living independently as a deaf young person. "The main challenges were sorting out letters about Council Tax or bills," she says. "I found the English jargon was hard for me to understand because I mainly use BSL now. I had to look up what words meant and ask other people's advice on what to do."

"It was hard not being able to use the phone as well. I couldn't ring the GP and it was hard to stay in touch

with people at home. NGTS is a godsend for that; I've used it lots."

The commute to work was also difficult for Emily at times. "I've missed trains because I haven't heard announcements," she explains. "I find using the Trainline app useful or asking staff, although sometimes I just have to follow the crowd and hope for the best!"

But Emily recognises that other challenges she encountered would affect all young people moving out of home for the first time. "It was tough to budget my money to work out if I could pay for bills, food etc. And it was difficult to do a 9–5 job, keep the house clean and keep my social life on track! I found it really hard to find the balance."

Overall, though, Emily has had a ball living independently and wouldn't change it. "Birmingham has lots going on; there's always something to do," she says. "It's also quite deaf aware; I've met a few people who sign and those who can't write things down or type on my phone."

"My parents are a lot more confident about me living independently now; they know I can manage anything and see me as a strong person. They know that I'd go and ask for help if there was something wrong." 



Your local council may be able to help supply equipment, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/localcouncil for more information.

We have lots of information about useful technology at www.ndcs.org.uk/technology. To find out more about NGTS, read our technology article on page 30.



YOUNG
PEOPLE
19–25

Your winter checklist



The Money Advice Service

If you'd like extra help and advice to improve your finances, you can visit the Money Advice Service. Set up by the government, it's free and impartial and can offer support both on the phone and online. There are also some handy tools and calculators to help you and your child keep track of spending. It's a great tool for young people who may be just starting to manage their money independently.

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk



Technology in the workplace

If your child has just started work, they may find some technology and products useful to help them. This might include telephones compatible with hearing aids, textphones, paging systems or deaf alerters. Under the Equality Act 2010, which applies in England, Wales and Scotland, employers must make 'reasonable adjustments' to make sure their workplace is suitable for a disabled person. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/technologyatwork.



Disabled Persons Railcard

If your child needs to travel on the train regularly, perhaps to work or to university, a Disabled Persons Railcard may benefit them. It gives a third off Standard and First Class Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance fares for the deaf young person and one other. It costs just £20 for the year – £10 cheaper than a 16–25 Railcard. Find out more at www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk.





How do I...

keep my child safe?

Every parent is concerned about keeping their child safe, but when your child is deaf sometimes you have to give certain situations more thought or planning. Parents and young people give us their advice on keeping children safe in lots of different places.

Using a radio aid alongside signing works best for us...



For resources you can share with professionals to help keep your child safe, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/safe.

To borrow technology for free from our Technology Test Drive, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive.

For more information about emergencySMS see www.emergencysms.org.uk.

The Council for Disabled Children has information about transport and travel to help keep deaf young people safe. Go to www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk and search 'transport and travel'.

Sarah is mum to Chloe (5), who is severely deaf and wears bone conduction hearing aids.

As well as having hearing loss, Chloe has a rare genetic disorder known as 9p minus syndrome.

This means that she has global development delays, and safety awareness and following instructions are things she struggles with.

We've been very lucky to have had the use of a radio aid since Chloe was very young; currently we use a Cochlear Mini Mic 2 with her Cochlear Baha 5 bone conduction hearing aids. This works really well as Chloe can hear us even if she has gone a bit ahead of us or we're in a noisy situation. We can talk to her and know she can hear us.

We've also used sign language with Chloe since she was a baby

and find this very useful in helping her understand instructions. We've always found using a radio aid alongside signing works best for us in keeping Chloe safe.

A really good example was on a recent holiday.

Chloe wanted to join in with the dancing with other children at the disco. It was very noisy and Chloe had gone to the other side of the room, but we could talk to her through the Mini Mic and also sign to her, which she could see

across the room, so she understood to come back to us. It has also been very reassuring that at school the teacher can use the Mini Mic and we know that whatever else is going on in the room, Chloe can still hear instructions keeping her safe.



Chloe

Ellie (21) is profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.

As a child you're bound to be adventurous and it must be a nightmare as a parent! Before we went outside, my parents always set ground rules for whichever situation it was and made sure I'd understood what they said. This included things like: don't talk to strangers, stay nearby, don't run onto the road etc. If I questioned why, they'd explain the worst case scenario and it would eventually stick, so I'd obey



Ellie

their rules. As well as my teachers using it at school, my family used my radio aid out and about as a way of ensuring they had direct communication with my hearing aids. If there was danger, I'd hear only Mum shouting!

Throughout my A-levels, school helped me to become more independent, to prepare me for the 'outside world.' As we only did three to four subjects, and subjects like Textiles and Media Studies were creative subjects, I used that opportunity to not have learning support assistants with me so I could become independent. If I didn't understand what to do, I'd ask the teacher to explain, similar to

being out in public and having to ask people questions.

We also looked into vibrating, flashing smoke alarms which the Fire Service installed in case of an emergency. They discussed escape routes and what to do in a fire i.e. text 999 on emergency SMS and tell them the important details.

A key element of personal safety is going out alone in the dark as I can't see or hear. If I'm to be in this situation, I always keep my fully-charged phone on me and a personal safety alarm. So my advice would be: be seen, be safe, stay in well-lit areas and never go out alone in the dark. If you're unsure, always ask.

Sophie is mum to Harry (4), who is mild to moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

Harry wants his freedom when we are out and about, for example at the park, and wants to go a bit ahead and explore. Rather than trying to shout after him to 'stop' or 'wait' I set him boundaries before he goes, such as 'go as far as that tree' or 'wait for me when you get to that bench'. That way I know he knows the limits and I don't have to worry about whether he can hear me shouting after him (which he wouldn't).



Harry

Liz is mum to Emma (11), who is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

Crossing roads can be a problem for Emma. She doesn't hear cyclists or traffic with all the background noise around so I have to make sure that she's watching the road and the traffic. We usually link arms as I walk Emma safely home from school. Motorbikes are especially frightening for a child with hearing loss as they're very fast and approach all of a sudden with deafening noise. Emma is always nervous of motorbikes.



Emma

We leave the house together and stay together on the walk; Emma always walks on the inside away from the road. If we have to walk single file then Emma always walks in front of me.

Walking home on a winter evening when it's dark is especially challenging for a child with moderate hearing loss. Emma always wears a brightly coloured fluorescent jacket to counteract this. She loves to chat and tell me about her day and is usually very excited on the way home from school. I have to really concentrate on the walk and be very vigilant for cyclists, joggers, motorcycles and cars as the roads are very busy.



JOIN OUR FAMILY PANEL

Next time in *Families* magazine: How do I... access sign language lessons?

If you have any tips, advice or suggestions to share, get in touch at magazine@ndcs.org.uk.



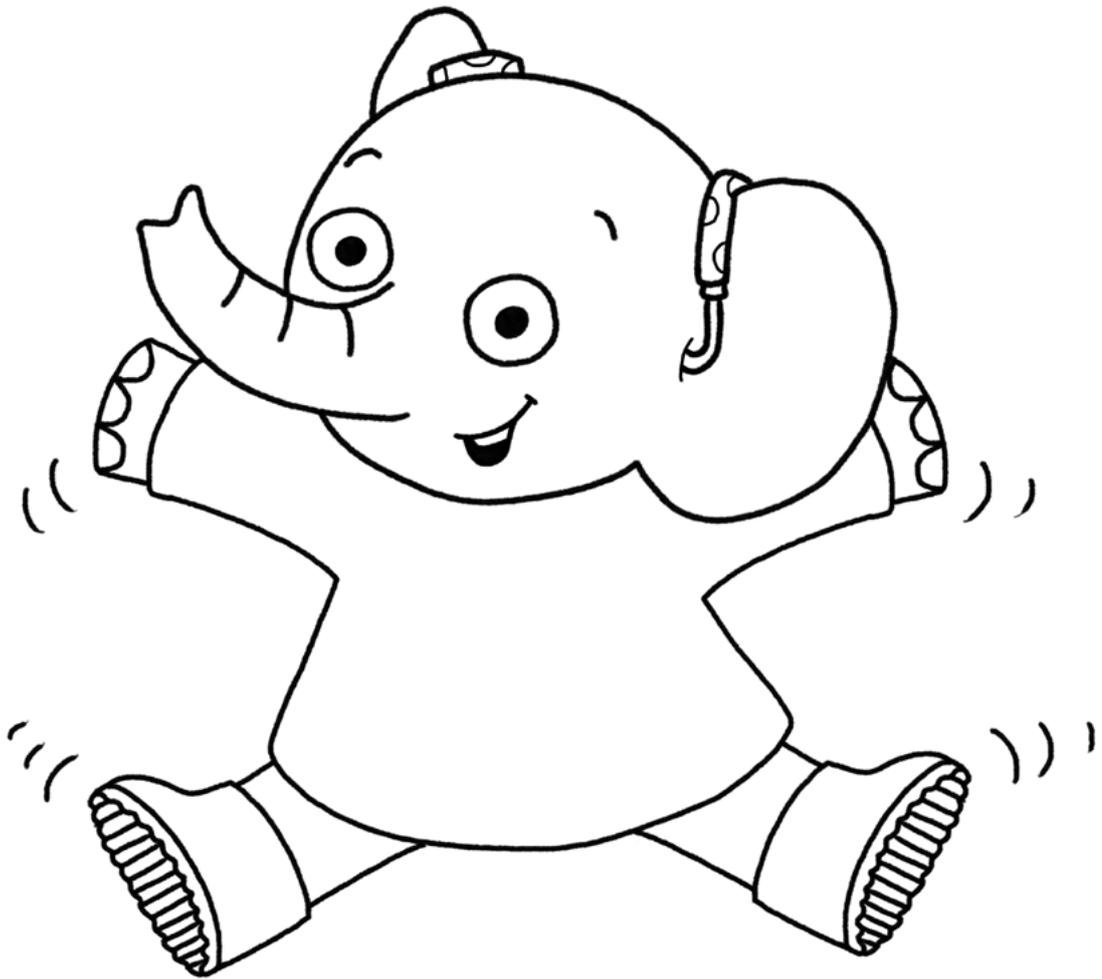
Tear out these pages, give them to your friends!



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



Colour in



In our new book, Elephant is jumping for joy ready for a fun day at the park with her friends! Colour in this picture of Elephant in her welly boots. What colour will you pick for her special hearing aids?

Look out for our new book *Elephant and the Lost Blanket* to find out more about Elephant's day at the park. Coming soon...



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

Spot the difference



Have a good look at these two pictures.
Can you tell what's changed in the second one?
There are five differences. How many can you find?



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An Outstanding School with a bilingual philosophy...

Where our children Learn, Grow and Flourish

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Skype: frankbarnes2003



Frank Barnes
School for Deaf Children



I can see what you're saying!



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Talk to us about learning
Cued Speech for your deaf child

Charity registered in
England and Wales No 279523

ask the expert



Rachael

Each issue a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Rachael Merry, who works with deaf young people at theatre company Deafinitely Theatre, shares her insights.

What types of children and young people do you work with?

Deafinitely Theatre is a bilingual theatre company led by deaf people. Our Youth Theatre is a reflection of this and welcomes deaf and hearing young people aged 14–25. Our young people come from various different communication backgrounds across the UK.

How do you communicate with the deaf young people you work with?

While I'm hearing, I have British Sign Language (BSL) Level 6. Depending on workshop size and communication needs within the room, I always have at least one qualified interpreter with me to ensure full access. It's not uncommon to be working with one group of young people using BSL, Sign Supported English, lipspeaking and spoken English all at the same time!

How do you plan for leading a class or workshop with deaf children and young people?

Deaf actors are incredibly visual so respond much better to examples or modelling rather than lengthy explanation. I like to have lots of ideas and visuals ready; that way I can respond to the group and adjust the plan as we go. I also make sure the room is well lit and an appropriate size and ask for the communication needs of the group beforehand.

What challenges do deaf young people face in drama classes and how can they be overcome?

The beauty of drama is that it's a practice accessible to everybody. However, if a deaf young person finds English challenging, the process of working with scripts may be off-putting and sometimes there is a lack of deaf awareness in mainstream drama classes. To overcome this I work with a Deaf assistant director, adapt scripts or work visually.

The beauty of drama is that it's a practice accessible to everybody.

What tips do you have for deaf children and young people who want to attend a local drama club?

Explain your communication needs to the facilitator and suggest a deaf awareness session for the whole class. Include things like speaking clearly, getting your attention before they start speaking and using visual cues or signs where possible. Games involving BSL are also a great introduction!

What do you find deaf children and young people get out of drama classes?

Confidence, communication and an environment in which to socialise where they feel comfortable and can express themselves in a different way. It's an opportunity to explore and create and it's also a lot of fun!

Do you have any other advice for deaf children and young people who want to get involved with drama?

Come to Deafinitely Youth Theatre! We hold summer schools, a fortnightly Youth Theatre and a training hub for deaf adults wanting professional training who may not be able to access drama school. Aside from that, keep going and don't give up – you CAN do it!



To find out more about Deafinitely Theatre, visit www.deafinitelytheatre.co.uk.

For more opportunities in the performing arts, have a look at www.ndcs.org.uk/raisingthebar.

Improving acoustics at your child's school or nursery

If your child comes home from school or nursery saying they sometimes find it hard to hear their teacher or friends, improvements may need to be made to their listening environment.

The need for good listening conditions begins right after birth when having a quiet home environment will help develop your child's understanding of sounds and language. Once they start going to nursery or school, a quiet environment will become harder to achieve.

Fortunately there are lots of things you can do to help make sure deaf children have the best possible listening environment in education.

Why are good listening conditions important?

Good acoustics are important for all children but they're especially important while children are developing language. Children need to be able to distinguish between the different sounds in spoken language and hear all of the word, including word endings, in order to learn new vocabulary, support reading and spelling and make sense of what's being said.

As adults we're able to fill in the gaps when we haven't heard the full message because of our knowledge of language. But children have less knowledge of language so find it much harder to do this.

Poor listening conditions can also make it difficult for deaf children to make the best use of their hearing aids and cochlear implants as these amplify all noises in the classroom, not just the teacher's voice.



What should I do before my child starts nursery or school?

If your child hasn't started nursery or school or is transferring to a new school next year, there are some simple things you can look out for.

- Make sure you visit the school or nursery during the day so you can hear how noisy it is when the children are all there.
- Talk to staff about any quiet areas that are used for small group or individual work.
- Ask staff about what happens at times when the children need to listen, such as story time, to make sure your child will be able to hear.
- Find out if there's any technology that could help your child, such as a radio aid or soundfield system.
- Make sure the person responsible for supporting the special or additional needs of deaf children (special educational needs coordinator or SENCO in England) and the teacher have been told of your child's hearing loss and that the school and local council or authority are aware of any possible adjustments that would have to be made.

What are my child's rights?

You should try to raise any concerns you have with the teacher or headteacher in the first instance. If that doesn't work, you could consider:

- Making a formal complaint. Read up on the Equality Act and make it clear that you're asking the nursery or school to make 'reasonable adjustments'. If they fail to take appropriate action, you can then appeal to a Tribunal.
- Asking for a formal statutory assessment of your child's needs. This is a legal process and may lead to the production of a plan or statement that sets out your child's needs (including for a good listening environment). If your child already has a statement or plan, you can ask for their needs to be reviewed in the next annual review.
- Contacting our Freephone Helpline for information and advice.



How can acoustic conditions in my child's school be improved?

There are lots of simple things that your child's nursery or school can do to improve their listening environment. Sometimes it's just about reducing any unnecessary background noise. For example, the teacher making sure doors are shut when teaching and turning off electrical equipment that's not being used.

They may also need to make adjustments to the classroom itself. Many classrooms have lots of hard surfaces which produce an echo effect. This happens when a sound continues to 'bounce' around the room (known as 'reverberation'). If the surfaces in the room are hard then the sound may bounce around the room for longer, arriving at the child's ear at different times and making it difficult to listen to the message. To change this, the nursery or school can:

- use fabric in classroom wall and table displays to absorb sound
- fix plastic buffers on chair or table legs to reduce the scraping noise
- suspend displays from the ceiling
- have as many carpeted areas as possible.

Your child's Teacher of the Deaf will probably play a key role in advising nurseries and schools on acoustics. If not, you can share with your nursery or school our resources for professionals.

Radio aids and soundfield systems can help your child hear their teacher – but they should be in addition to, not instead of, good acoustics.



If you want to find out more, download our factsheet *Creating Good Listening Conditions in Education: Information for parents* and find resources about improving listening conditions for professionals at www.ndcs.org.uk/acoustics.

For more information about your rights, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/educationrights.

To find out more about statements or plans of special educational needs or additional support needs, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/additionalneeds.



Supporting your child's education

✓ 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.

✓ Preparing for exams

If your child will be taking exams this year, there's lots you can do to help them prepare. You can also find out how their school or college can make special arrangements for them at 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/leavingsschool.



Making calls using relay services

Text messages, email and social media have changed the way deaf young people communicate but in some situations phone calls are unavoidable. Here we discuss how relay services can help deaf young people communicate independently with hearing people on the phone.

Text and video relay services allow deaf people to call hearing people via an assistant. Deaf young people can use their smartphone, tablet or computer and can speak, type or sign (using video) to the relay assistant who then speaks the words to the person receiving the phone call. The assistant then types or signs the reply back to the deaf caller. Some services are more useful for British Sign Language (BSL) users, whereas others are also useful for people who don't use BSL.

Relay services can help deaf young people become more independent. They're particularly useful for calling organisations or institutions that can't be contacted in other ways, for example healthcare professionals. Relay services can help make sure the deaf person understands important information correctly.

All calls handled by relay assistants are confidential and personal information is relayed securely.

You can find out more about these services at:
www.ngts.org.uk
www.signvideo.co.uk
www.interpreternow.co.uk

Text relay services

Text relay services work with remote assistants or operators who type out what a hearing caller says for the deaf caller to read. Deaf young people can use the Next Generation Text Service (NGTS) for free to call any organisation or individual. Those receiving the call don't need to have NGTS installed and all phone companies in the UK work with NGTS so calls are charged at the same rate as standard telephone calls. NGTS is a convenient way for deaf young people to make important calls. It can even be used to call emergency services.

There are different ways to use NGTS to make a phone call. Some people use its app called NGT Lite. They can install NGT Lite on their mobile phone, link their phone number to the app and choose how they want to communicate, for example 'typing and reading' or 'speaking and reading'. They can then call the number they want to reach by including the NGTS 18001 prefix before dialling the number. Once the call is connected the hearing person receives a message that the deaf caller uses text relay and the relay assistant can guide the hearing person through the call if necessary. The NGT Lite app uses a very small amount of data (if you're not connected to WiFi) and disconnects automatically when it's not used. Users can also install a desktop version so their calls will be shown on a bigger screen.





“ I use NGTS on my mobile phone and computer depending on where I am. I text NGTS and the operator reads out my text to the other person and texts their reply back to me. I use NGTS for things like making bookings, getting takeaways or calling my GP. It helps me access the information I need and it gives me the confidence and independence to do it myself, without other people having to ring up for me.

Emily (19) is profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.

“ I used SignVideo to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about my Disability Living Allowance (DLA). It was super easy and quick to use! All I did was click on the link on the DWP website and then spoke to an adviser through a BSL interpreter on the screen. It meant that I didn't have to rely on anyone else and my DLA was sorted out in five minutes on Video Relay Services (VRS) rather than taking weeks over email!

Jake (23) is severely to profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.



Video relay services

VRS provides BSL interpreters as relay assistants. These are paid-for services and organisations can sign up to a VRS of their choice. This means the organisation pays and the service is free for the deaf person to use. It does use some data if the caller isn't on WiFi. Some VRS services, such as SignLive and SignVideo, also offer VRS packages for personal use so deaf young people can call any organisation or individual using an interpreter, even if organisations haven't paid for VRS. However, the deaf caller would need to pay for this themselves.



A commonly used VRS is SignVideo. Many banks, telecommunication companies and public services have signed up to SignVideo. Deaf young people can install the free SignVideo app on their smartphone and find the organisation they want to call in the app's directory or on SignVideo's website. The deaf caller is then connected to a BSL interpreter who will appear on the screen. The interpreter will relay what the deaf person is signing to the organisation receiving the call and sign back their spoken reply.



Examples of other VRS include InterpretersLive, SignLive and InterpreterNow. Deaf young people can use InterpreterNow to call our Freephone Helpline, SignHealth, NHS 111 or other organisations who have signed up to InterpreterNow. They need to install the free InterpreterNow app, create an account and then call the organisation they're looking for. Similar to SignVideo, an interpreter appears on their screen and relays the conversation.

To use VRS deaf young people need to have a smartphone with a video camera and be connected to the internet. They could also call using a laptop, computer or tablet.



To find out more about technology that could help your child go to www.ndcs.org.uk/technology or to borrow a product from our Technology Test Drive loan service go to www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive.





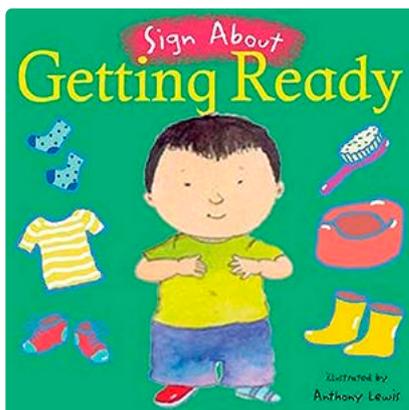
Reviews



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



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



Sign About book collection: Sign About Meal Time, Sign About Play Time and Sign About Getting Ready
Written and illustrated by Anthony Lewis

0-4

5-10

Book

Available from **Amazon**

📦 **£3.99 each**

These books have been a godsend as I've just started British Sign Language (BSL) lessons and some of the everyday baby words are not always included in the course. It's fantastic to be able to sit with my daughter Primrose and show her the pictures and do the signs with her.

We take the books everywhere with us so we can use them at all times. Primrose is always watching intently whenever we use BSL and she's already starting to use her hands as a form of communication, even at just five months old! The *Sign About Getting Ready* book is very useful in the morning and we've just started weaning so the book *Sign About Meal Time* is very informative. *Sign About Playtime* is just a really fun one! I would highly recommend the books to anyone as a great form of learning and communication. I'll definitely buy more books and will pass them around to my friends to show how amazing they are so they can invest too.

We absolutely love these books!

Nadine, mum to Primrose (5 months) who is severely to profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.



➔ Key

This resource could be most suitable for the following ages:

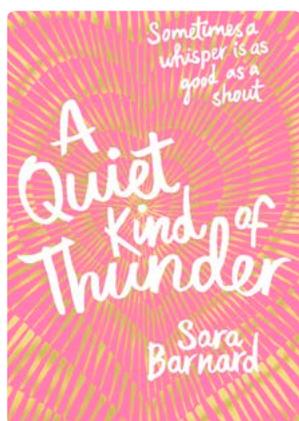
0-4

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25



A Quiet Kind of Thunder

Written by Sara Barnard

15-18

Book

Available from **Amazon**

£5.98

(paperback)

£4.74 (Kindle Edition)

After reading this book, I just wanted to give Steffi and Rhys a massive hug. This coming-of-age tale takes you on an emotional rollercoaster as Steffi and Rhys work out who they are together, while figuring out who they are by themselves. Steffi has selective mutism and Rhys is deaf.

Steffi is lost without her best friend Tem on the first day of sixth form but is soon introduced by the teacher to the new kid Rhys, as they both know British Sign Language (BSL). The book follows familiar teenage themes as we watch Steffi navigating arguments with her best friend, lying to her parents and falling in love for the first time.

Sara Barnard created Steffi and Rhys to be relatable and real. The author wrote all their thoughts as raw and unfiltered – it felt like I was a part of their story, not just a spectator. The story focuses on hard subjects but the author writes with truth and depth. However, as the book was told from Steffi's point of view, I would have liked to have read more about Rhys.

As a deaf person, I think it's a great book for other deaf teenagers to read as Rhys's experiences were very relatable – he even mentions the National Deaf Children's Society at one point! He mentions his frustration with not being able to hear things and that he feels he must depend on people, however he also mentions the opportunities he receives from being deaf and the community he can be a part of.

This heart-warming book would be perfect for people aged 14 to 18 and is a brilliant book for both deaf and hearing teenagers alike.

Esther (15) who is severely deaf.



Esther



Wake 'n' Shake Voyager

The Wake 'n' Shake Voyager is a battery-powered portable alarm clock with vibration, sound and flashing light. It can also be used as a timer and torch.

11-14

15-18

19-25

Product

Available to borrow from our Technology Test Drive (www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive) or buy from Connevens (www.connevens.co.uk)

Approximately £25 plus VAT

This alarm clock is small and very portable. I used it when I was away from home for a weekend. Because it's so small it could fit in my suitcase without taking up too much space and it was easy to take with me.

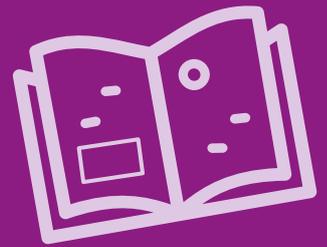
I want to be more independent and this alarm clock helped me with that. My parents usually wake me up but they weren't there for my weekend away. This alarm clock made it possible for me to wake up on time by myself without relying on other people.

It was easy to use and it has a pillow clip so I didn't need to worry about it falling out of my bed. However, I couldn't find a way to make the Wake 'n' Shake Voyager make sound, vibrate and flash all at the same time – I'd have liked it to do all three. But I do like this alarm clock and I'd use this again when I'm away from home.

Cam (14) who is moderately to severely deaf.



Resources



Helpline



“ My son, Benjamin, who’s deaf, started school a few months ago. The school put some strategies in place to support him, but I’m not sure if they’re working very well. What can I do? ”

Every child is different and it can sometimes take time to get everything right when supporting children with special educational needs (SEN) when they start school.

The approach to managing a child’s SEN support is described as an ‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’ cycle. Benjamin’s teacher and/or special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) should be looking at his needs and any issues he’s having, planning ways to support him and putting the support in place. Yours and Benjamin’s views should both be taken into account, so that his school has a clear understanding of his needs. External professionals such as a Teacher of the Deaf, speech and language therapist or educational psychologist can also give the school extra advice and support, if Benjamin needs it.

The plan for support should be reviewed regularly to check it’s working for Benjamin and helping him to progress. Targets should be set for him and the strategies and resources being used to support him should be recorded. If you have concerns about his progress or feel the support in place isn’t working, we’d suggest discussing it with his teacher or SENCO. Different targets, strategies or resources should be tried. If the support still isn’t working after trying some different approaches, you or his school can request an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment for an EHC plan. These are legally binding documents which are usually only needed if the school can’t or will be unlikely to provide all the support needed.

Find out more about SEN support, EHC assessments and plans at www.ndcs.org.uk/senprovision.

Under the Equality Act, schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments (such as making sure deaf children sit at the front). For more information, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/educationrights.

If you have any questions about your child’s support at school, please get in touch.

What’s new?

 **Meningitis and Childhood Deafness: A guide for families**

What type of information is it?
A printed booklet (available to download or order) available at www.ndcs.org.uk/meningitis.

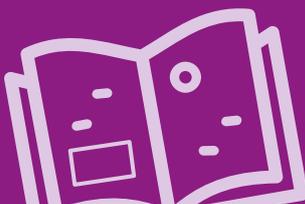
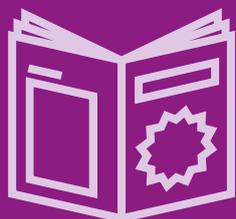
Who’s it for? Parents and families who’ve found out their child has a hearing loss after having bacterial meningitis.

What’s it about? Developed in partnership with Meningitis Now, it gives information about the hearing tests that are carried out following meningitis, explains about childhood deafness and gives an introduction to communication and technology options and the support that is available.

You might also like: *Understanding Your Child’s Hearing Tests.* www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingtests



 **Freephone 0808 800 8880**
 **helpline@ndcs.org.uk**
 **www.ndcs.org.uk/livechat**



Access Arrangements for Your Child's Exams

What type of information is it? An updated factsheet available to download from www.ndcs.org.uk/exams.

Who's it for? Parents of deaf children and young people who will be taking exams or assessments at school, college or university.

What's it about? The different arrangements that can be put in place to support your child and make sure they can access exams fairly. It explains why your child might need these arrangements, the different arrangements that might be available, how to ensure they're in place ready for your child's exams and what to do if something goes wrong.

You might also like: Music Exams – Information on the adaptations available for young deaf candidates. www.ndcs.org.uk/musicexams.



Appealing a Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment Decision (England, Scotland and Wales)

What type of information is it? Factsheet available to download from www.ndcs.org.uk/publications.

Who's it for? Parents who are appealing their child's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) decision, supporting their child to appeal their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decision or appealing a PIP decision on behalf of their child if they're their child's appointee.

What's it about? How to appeal a DLA or PIP decision, how to prepare for the Tribunal hearing, what to expect at the hearing and what to do once the Tribunal has reached a decision.

You might also like: General information on DLA and PIP at www.ndcs.org.uk/financialsupport.



 JOIN SOUND OUT AND HELP MAKE OUR INFORMATION EVEN BETTER

Join Sound Out, 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 for more information.

In your area

Parent power

Across the UK parents and carers of deaf children are coming together to share advice and give each other practical and emotional support.

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From regular parents' group meetings to more ad-hoc online conversations, it's clear that being able to connect and share with someone who's going through (or has gone through) something similar can be hugely beneficial for parents. Three parents tell us how peer support has changed their lives.

Juliet is mum to twins Bess and Elin (5) and Rosie (7). Bess is profoundly deaf. Juliet helped set up Bristol Deaf Children's Society which is now beginning to look at ways to offer peer support in a more formalised way.

The idea came about a couple of years after Bess was born and diagnosed as deaf. First, I'd had some specialist counselling which really helped me come to terms with her deafness. Talking to somebody who understood special needs made me think about how support was so desperately needed for parents with deaf children to help them understand the journey they were on.

At the same time I was going to a brilliant playgroup run by local Teachers of the Deaf. Here I was able to talk to other parents about the day-to-day challenges of raising my daughter: how I should communicate with her, how I should put in her hearing aids, where I could get sign language lessons, how I could make the decision about whether or not to give her cochlear implants.

Talking to other parents made me realise they felt the same way I did: guilty that I couldn't provide for Bess's needs and that her deafness was my fault. Talking to other parents

helped me get over that. It enhanced my wellbeing and helped me in a way that no professional could have.

I thought of all those parents who didn't have another parent to talk to and the need for parent-to-parent support out there. Having a deaf child is a unique experience and sometimes it's not enough to be able to talk to family members or friends, as they aren't raising a deaf child. Parents of other deaf children understand what it's like. This support fills a gap that professionals such as Teachers of the Deaf and audiologists, amazing though they are, can't always fill.



Juliet and family





Samantha, mum to Georgia (15) who is profoundly deaf, has been helping parents in a different way.

When we finally found out Georgia was deaf – at 10 months old – I needed to find other families of deaf children to speak to. It was such a blow at first – we were floundering. I wanted to meet other deaf children to see what kind of experiences and examples there were, and when I did, it was amazing to see what older deaf children had achieved.

For the last few years, my husband and I have invited parents of newly diagnosed deaf children to meet us at home – we’ve met between 20 and 30

families, usually on Sunday afternoons. It’s nice and relaxed – we’re all there, including Georgia who is 15 now and has come a long way. It’s often an emotional afternoon but it’s lovely being able to chat and offer some help to parents who might have only recently found out their child is deaf.

In those early days we did everything and tried everything – every group, training session, course and workshop; if it was offered, we accepted – and the National Deaf Children’s Society support was brilliant. We learnt a lot about school, education and communication and we really wanted to pass that knowledge

on and give something back to other families. People need hope – every family is starting from scratch and trying to find out what to do to help their child.



Samantha and family

Clare is mum to Haydn (5) and Emma (2) who are both severely deaf. She’s now part of the committee running Salford Deaf Children’s Society which helps families come together and take part in fun activities.

There’s no doubt in my mind that parents want and need a group to share experiences with each other. When Haydn was young I joined a local parents’ group run by a Teacher of the Deaf in my area. It was a life-saver for me – a place to see my son wasn’t the only child who was deaf and where I could talk about my worries and share experiences with other mums and dads. Being a new parent is hard enough but finding out your child is deaf is even harder and this place just gave me comfort. It led me to join Salford Deaf Children’s Society where I’m now part of the committee. We’ve arranged events and activities for children, like visits to the ice cream farm and paddle boarding.

I’ve also helped set up a parents’ group because we realised we needed a space just for us. We use Facebook as a way to bring parents together and we’ve been discussing things like accessories for hearing aids to encourage children to keep wearing them with confidence. We’ve focused on helping to feed into and improve services but there’s also a need to connect parents around other issues, such as different age ranges or activities – and having children being the representatives for the groups would be great!



Clare and family



Parents are reaching out for help and advice and finding comfort and guidance from other parents of deaf children in many different ways, including via social media.

If you’d like to find groups near you, take a look at www.ndcs.org.uk/findalocalgroup. If there’s not one near you and you’d like to connect with other parents, you could try:

- our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NDCS.UK)
- attending one of our family events (www.ndcs.org.uk/familyevents)
- contacting our Local Groups team on localgroups@ndcs.org.uk
- asking your local audiology service or your Teacher of the Deaf.

In your area

Supporting Molly's passage to high school

During the Roadshow's recent tour of Scotland, the team visited Molly (11), who is profoundly deaf, to help prepare her and her friends for the move to high school. Her mum Sandra tells us why the visit was such a success.



Molly with her Teacher of the Deaf Emma

"Molly is nervous about going to high school next year, partly because I'm a teacher at her current school so she's gone through primary school having me around. But also because she's afraid the children she meets from other schools won't understand what being deaf means for Molly and how to communicate well with her.

"I really wanted to give Molly some reassurance that things will be fine and make sure she feels excited about the change rather than scared. Molly was really looking forward to the Roadshow coming to her school, Lochinver Primary School, mostly because of the actual vehicle – she's really interested in transport.

"When on the bus, Molly liked seeing the different technology available to help her access music as this is an area we haven't really investigated before. She was especially impressed with the way the vibrating headphones allowed her to feel the music; all her friends had a turn trying them out as well and they all loved them. It's great we can borrow them at home from the Technology Test Drive service.

"I think a highlight of the Roadshow visit was Molly having time on the bus with just her sister and a few of her best friends. She really felt like a star and it was great that she could share this with her closest friends. It was useful for me as well because if there's something I'm not sure about I can ask her friends; they are much more tech savvy than me!



“The Roadshow team were excellent and so welcoming. Meeting Steven (the Roadshow Logistics Officer) was great. He’s an excellent deaf role model for Molly and the hearing children at school.”

Molly added: “I was buzzing after the bus came to my school! It was great for my friends to see some of the things I have to help me, like the vibrating alarm clock to get up in the morning. All my friends thought the technology was really cool.”

To further support Molly’s transition to high school, the Roadshow team also paid a visit to another local primary school, Ullapool Primary School, to meet children who will be going to the same high school as Molly.

Anthony O’Flaherty, teacher at Ullapool Primary School, told us: “Kerry and Steven from the Roadshow visited Primary 7 class at Ullapool Primary and gave us a much better understanding of deafness in

general and especially how best we can support and communicate with a deaf peer. This will be important in our Primary 7 transition activities and into next year at high school when they will have Molly joining their class.

“One of our pupils, Toby, said that he was inspired to support deaf people. He learnt how important it is to look at deaf people when talking to them and to use sign and gesture to help them understand.

“Another pupil, Calvin, found out how hard it is to lipread and realised how difficult it can be for deaf people when there are lots of people talking.

“As a deaf adult Steven showed us that deafness does not have to hinder anyone from doing things. Another pupil, Arwen, was surprised to learn that deaf people can drive even though they can’t hear and was impressed to hear about Steven driving all over the UK in the Roadshow bus.”



You don’t have to wait for your school or college to request a visit from our Roadshow. We welcome requests from young people and families and we can then speak to your school to arrange a date to visit. To book a visit, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow.

To find out more about our Technology Test Drive service, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive.

In your area

Events

Events programme for 8-18 year olds

At our events young people get involved in many activities whether sporty or creative. 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.

Weekend Residential

(ages 14-18)
South Wales
8-10 February

Boots and Paddle Weekend

(ages 16-18)
Cumbria, England
22-24 February

➔ INTERESTED IN ONE OF OUR EVENTS?

Application deadlines are up to three months before the event. Visit our website to find out more about how to apply.

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.

First Time Away Weekend

(ages 8-12)
North Yorkshire, England
9-10 March

First Time Away Weekend

(ages 8-12)
Southampton, England
16-17 March

First Time Away Weekend

(ages 8-12)
Cambridgeshire, England
23-24 March

Winter Weekend

(ages 8-15)
Nethy Bridge, Scotland
8-10 February

Get Creative Day

(ages 8-15)
Livingstone, Scotland
24 March

Getting your child ready for school: Communication and Technology (2-4 years)

An information event for parents and carers with deaf children aged 2-4 years. Learn about technology, communicating and the importance of learning through play.

Thurrock, England
2 February

Leicester, England
16 March

Introduction to childhood deafness (3-12 years)

An event for families with deaf children aged 3-12 years (including those newly diagnosed, with a late diagnosis, new to the National Deaf Children's Society, new to the country and foster carers). Sessions will cover support around hearing, local services and technology. It's also a great opportunity to meet other families.

Liverpool, England
2 March

Newly Diagnosed Information Days (0-2 years)

A two-day information event for families with newly diagnosed deaf children aged 0-2 years. Sessions will cover support around communication, early learning and hearing and technology. It's also a great opportunity to meet other families.

London, England
26-27 January

Birmingham, England
9-10 February

Milton Keynes, England
23-24 March



Confident about the future

Our transition events are a great opportunity for 16–18 year olds to make friends, become more independent and start planning for the future. Zahra (16), who's profoundly deaf, tells us why it was one of the best weeks of her life.

I've been surrounded by the hearing community my whole life so I was ecstatic when I heard about the opportunity to go away with the National Deaf Children's Society. I was curious to experience being with the deaf community and I really hoped to make new friends.

We took part in exciting challenges such as abseiling and laser tag, and workshops where we learnt about the different support and resources available at schools, universities and work. We also learnt how to write CVs, had an emotional health and wellbeing session and learnt about the different kinds of volunteering that young deaf people can participate in.

My favourite part was the evenings when we had the opportunity to get to know the other participants. We all just laughed together right until bedtime!

The volunteers were also friendly and extremely funny. They made communication smooth and easy so you were able to have a conversation with whoever you wanted, whenever you liked. Generally I use speech

but the transition week gave me an amazing opportunity to practise my signing.

I made some amazing friends and we've kept in regular contact. We've met up since and have called each other on Skype. It felt so comforting to know that there are people who have faced similar experiences as me. I shared a special connection with the other participants that I hadn't felt before.

I feel more prepared for the future because now I'm aware of the different kinds of support available e.g. things like palantypists and Access to Work. And activities such as the 'leap of faith' helped me believe in myself.

I'd say to another young person who is thinking of signing up to one of these events to 100% go for it! This was without a doubt one of the best weeks of my life because I have never felt so comfortable and happy with myself. It's a great and super-easy way to make friends, challenge yourself and learn about how you can strengthen your skills for the future.



Zahra



Find out more about our transition events for deaf young people at www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

I made some amazing friends and we've kept in regular contact.

Get involved

Meeting MPs outside parliament

Back in July our Campaigns team took the Roadshow bus to parliament to raise awareness of the £4 million cuts to deaf education services in England this year.



What better way to catch the attention of politicians than to park our big purple Roadshow bus right outside the Houses of Parliament! Our Campaigns team spent the day meeting with MPs to tell them about the effect of the cuts on deaf children and young people and to encourage them to campaign with us against the cuts. They were joined by three members of our Young People's Advisory Board (YAB), parent campaigners and their deaf children, and members of our local deaf children's societies, who all spoke about their own experiences.

Husna, a parent campaigner from Tower Hamlets in London, attended the event and made sure her local MP, Jim Fitzpatrick, turned up. Jim is the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness. We spoke to Husna after the event and she told us how it went.

Can you tell us about your past experience of campaigning?

When I took on the role as Chair of the Tower Hamlets Deaf Children's Society, we were fighting our own campaign to save the closure of a day nursery which supported deaf pre-school children. I campaigned for three months with the support of other parents and the National Deaf Children's Society and stopped the closure going ahead. It's a tough situation to be in, especially if it affects you personally, but you give it your best shot, don't back down and keep stepping up when it gets tough.



You can find out if the council in your area is cutting services by visiting our interactive cuts map at www.ndcs.org.uk/map.

To join our Campaigns Network visit www.ndcs.org.uk/campaigns.

Why did you want to come to the event outside parliament?

I've been a campaigner for four years now, as the Chair of the Tower Hamlets Deaf Children's Society and as the parent of a deaf child. I felt it was important for me to show my support for all the hard work the National Deaf Children's Society does in relation to stopping cuts to deaf children's services.

How did you get your MP to come along?

I emailed my MP and told him I'd be attending the Roadshow event and I'd be grateful if he could show some support and he did, which was a real bonus!

How has your MP been involved in your campaigning?

Jim has been very supportive throughout my campaigning. When I campaigned to stop the nursery from

closing, he attended meetings with us and talked to me and other parents about our concerns and worries. He took the time to really understand the situation we were up against. He helped with our campaign by writing emails and discussing matters with the Mayor of London at that time. In terms of the current £4 million cuts to services, I've emailed him and he's found out the answers to my questions or sent me in the right direction to access the answers.

Did you enjoy the Roadshow event?

I liked the fact it was right outside parliament which made it easier for all MPs to attend. I also liked that the Roadshow bus was at the event as it was good for me as a parent to enquire about new technology for my son on the bus. It was great to meet the National Deaf Children's Society's Campaigns team too.

Why should other people get in touch with their MP?

I feel a lot of us don't know who our MP is or how to get hold of them. I also think many feel it's a complete waste of time and that their MP wouldn't be helpful. Unless you get in touch with your MP and tell them about the cuts to services and how it affects you as a parent, you won't know if or how they can support you or the avenues you can access to get support.

Thanks to campaigners like Husna, the event was a big success! Over 40 MPs came down to the Roadshow bus, including the Minister for Children and Families Nadhim Zahawi MP. We're still campaigning to protect education services for deaf children.



Husna (second from left)

A landmark achieve

Join **#TeamNDCS** for London's quirkiest half marathon on 24 March 2019.

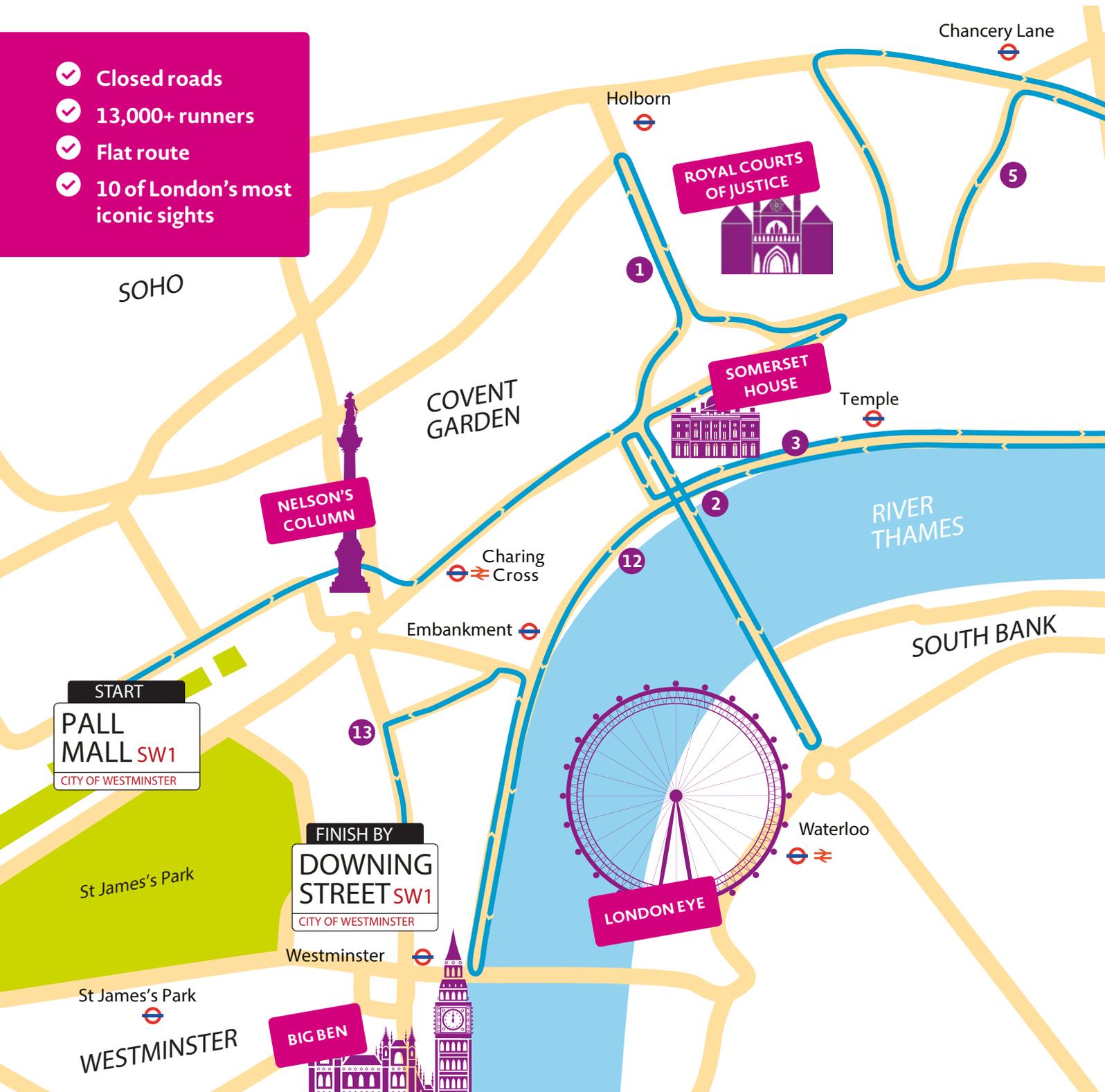
The London Landmarks half marathon isn't your average running event. Discover quirky facts and hidden city secrets at every mile marker on this fantastic new half marathon.

Starting from Pall Mall and finishing on Downing Street, 13,000 runners will have fabulous views of London's most iconic landmarks including Big Ben, St Paul's Cathedral, Nelson's Column, the Tower of London and the London Eye.

Want a charity place in this unique race?

To join our fabulous team of runners please complete our application form and we'll be in touch to confirm your place. We ask you to commit to raising a minimum sponsorship of £375 with a £30 registration fee. We'd love for you to take part and help give deaf children a brighter future.

- ✓ Closed roads
- ✓ 13,000+ runners
- ✓ Flat route
- ✓ 10 of London's most iconic sights

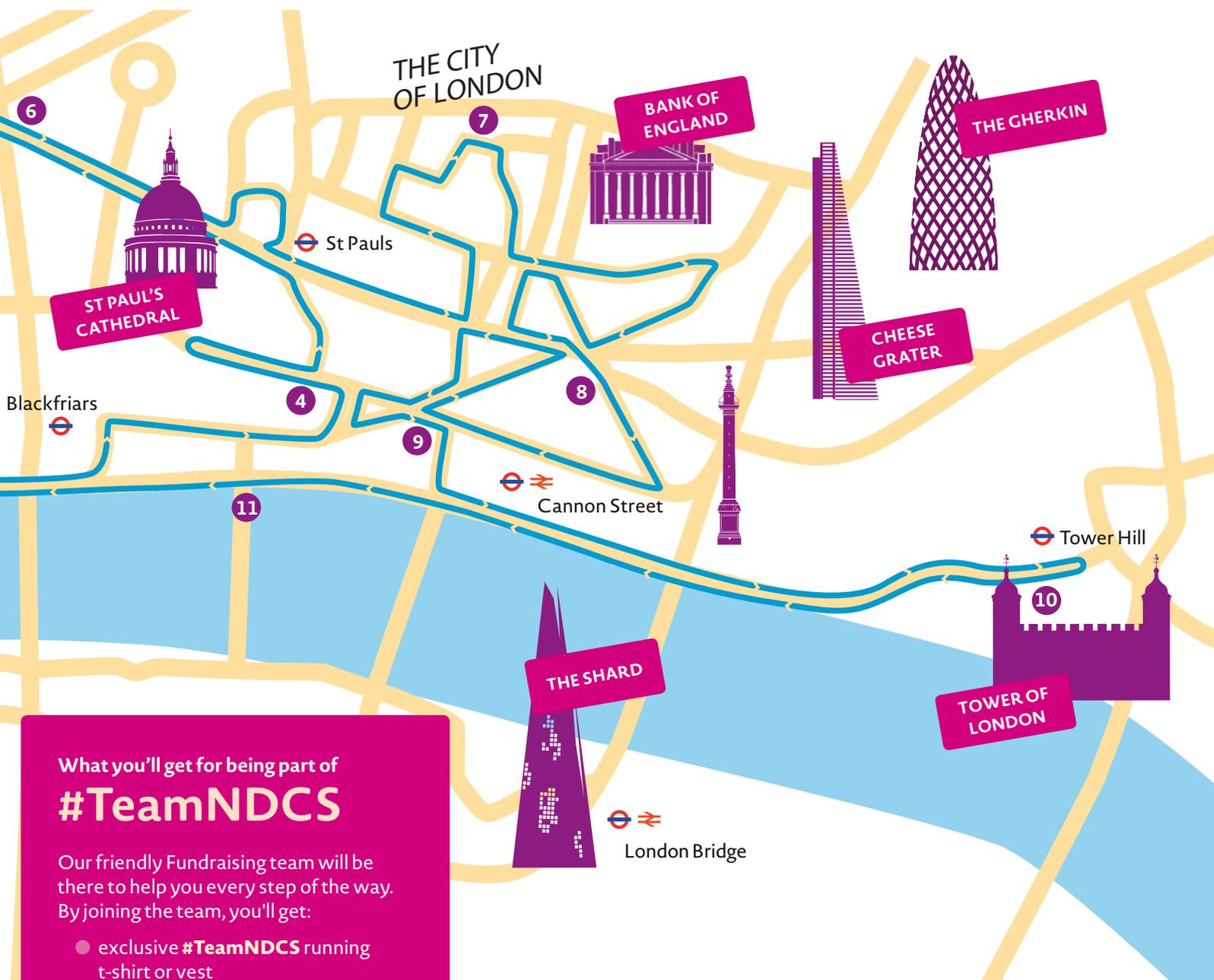


ment

A member of #TeamNDCS said:

"A huge thanks for your support at the weekend. I had an absolutely amazing time – can't put into words how brilliant the event was! Hearing you guys cheer for me was awesome – I felt like a celebrity! Go #TeamNDCS. Also just want to say a huge thanks for the support and encouragement you've given me over the past few months – your emails, cards and t-shirts have been fab."

Charlotte Bennett



What you'll get for being part of #TeamNDCS

Our friendly Fundraising team will be there to help you every step of the way. By joining the team, you'll get:

- exclusive #TeamNDCS running t-shirt or vest
- helpful training advice
- dedicated fundraising support and materials from our friendly team
- a dedicated Facebook page to chat to your team mates.



If you want to join #TeamNDCS for London's quirkiest half marathon visit www.ndcslondonlandmarks.com for more information and to sign up.



When I'm a

grown-up

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

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



I'm chief marketing officer because...

I value the chance to treat people right and to work with people I really like.

We're a start-up just over a year old. Most of my job involves helping our clients with their marketing, social media and PR. Since it's my own company I'm also co-founder, director, chief letter opener – you name it! At the moment our team is fairly small so we do everything ourselves. Running your own business is tough but gives you freedom and autonomy.

I used to be a journalist but couldn't lipread while I did shorthand. I still loved writing and websites so moved into PR and digital. It was a total shock dealing with clients, but after a few years you get the hang of it.

My biggest challenge has been explaining that I'm half deaf upfront. Things have been much better since I spoke up and shared ideas for how colleagues could best communicate with me. I've asked for meeting rooms to be changed or calls to be done on Skype so I can read people's lips or avoid bad acoustics. Other than my hearing aids I don't use special equipment.

One of my biggest achievements is surviving a year of running a new business – an extreme learning curve.

Amy Rowe



I worked as a volunteer manager because...

I'm passionate about making a difference and helping people to realise their potential.

I managed a team of over 200 volunteers providing face-to-face counselling and support groups. I was responsible for recruitment and training, arranging annual celebration events and carrying out DBS checks.

When people aren't deaf aware, it can be difficult to bounce back. Fortunately my colleagues have been happy to make small adjustments, such as facing me when speaking, reducing background noise and taking regular breaks in meetings.

I'm lucky to have had support from my parents, who never allowed my deafness to be a barrier and encouraged me to follow my dreams. Their persistence and determination gave me a great foundation and work ethic. I didn't have a group of deaf friends until I was in my early 20s. They have really helped as we can share ideas and experiences and it has massively improved my self-confidence.

I'm severely to profoundly deaf and when I was diagnosed, my parents were told that my speech and language would suffer and that my education achievements would be limited. I achieved 4 As at A-level and a First Class degree.

Claire Baldwin



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.



Why Choose St John's?

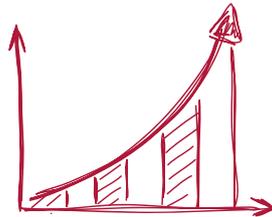
St John's has a proven track-record in supporting deaf and hearing-impaired children to achieve outcomes that support success in the real world. Our residential and day options offer flexible support for children who are deaf, have communication difficulties or are affected by multi-sensory impairment.

An autism-friendly environment, St John's is inclusive and welcoming and a place where children thrive among their peers supported by in-house audiology and speech and language therapy. Our sixth form provides an excellent preparation for students moving into the next phase of their lives.



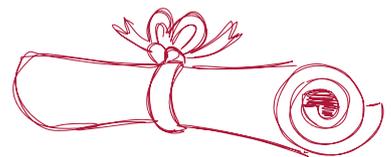
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**STUDENTS WHO
PROGRESS TO
FURTHER EDUCATION,
EMPLOYMENT OR
TRAINING**



100%

**YEAR 11 STUDENTS
ACHIEVING
QUALIFICATIONS IN
8-12 SUBJECTS**



100%

**LESSONS TAUGHT
BY QUALIFIED
TEACHERS OF
THE DEAF**

Get in contact:



01937 842144



info@stjohns.org.uk



www.stjohns.org.uk



stjohns4thedeaf



stjohnsschoolforthedeaf



I have a
peer group

I am thriving
academically

I am thriving
socially and
emotionally

I have
confidence and
independence

Thinking about a primary setting for your child?

You may not need us right now, your child may be doing well - but you may need us in the future. We can help close the gaps, whatever these may be, to ensure your child reaches their full potential.

For more information or to arrange an individual visit, please contact
Faye Oliver: (f.oliver@maryhare.org.uk or 01635 573800)
or visit our website www.maryhare.org.uk

**PRIMARY SCHOOL OPEN DAY
TUESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2019**

To book, visit <https://www.maryhare.org.uk/events/primary-school-open-day/2018>

Securing the future of deaf children and young people

