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Home
alerting
systems



National
Deaf Children's
Society

families

Primrose's choices



Sign language gives her the
freedom to choose how she
wishes to communicate.





Introducing St John's Catholic School for the Deaf

We're a specialist school which can support children with a range of communication difficulties.

You're invited...

We're holding a very special open day for families and children to experience for themselves all that our wonderful school has to offer.

Families and children are welcome to visit on Monday April 1st 2019 between 10am and 4pm.

You will be able to:

- Meet past and present students and their families
- Meet our Teachers of the Deaf, Audiology, Speech and Language teams and our Ofsted 'Outstanding' Care team
- See how our specialist environment supports children with communication difficulties to learn effectively
- Visit our Sixth Form and learn how we prepare young people for their futures
- Visit our Outstanding care provision and meet students who enjoy weekly boarding at St John's

There will also be talks and demonstrations on all aspects of funding, audiology, mental health support, speech and language and other key topics.

If you would like to make individual appointments to meet with our Headteacher Ann Bradbury or if you would like to arrange to visit on another date please email info@stjohns.org.uk



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



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



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TEACHERS OF THE DEAF**

St John's has a proven track-record in supporting deaf and hearing-impaired children 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.

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My deafness didn't stop me...

climbing some of the tallest mountains in the world



Chris

CHRIS (29) LOST HIS HEARING INSTANTLY IN A GRENADE ATTACK IN AFGHANISTAN WHILE SERVING IN THE ARMY AGED 20. He's profoundly deaf and has one cochlear implant and one hearing aid.

Chris has never let this hold him back and, since being medically discharged from the Armed Forces, he's got involved with Walking With The Wounded, a charity who raise money and public awareness for veterans by climbing mountains and taking part in other challenges. "My favourite thing about climbing mountains is the amazing scenery," Chris says. "The valleys in the Alps and Himalayas are phenomenal."

Chris has now trekked to the base camp of Mount Everest, over 5,000m up, climbed Matterhorn and Mont Blanc in the Alps and on Manaslu in Nepal. But he does encounter

challenges climbing with a hearing loss. "When you're climbing, the most important people around you are your mountain guide and whoever you're attached to," Chris explains. "What the guide says is really important. They use a series of predetermined tugs on the rope to let me know what we need to do. The guide or climbing partner also makes sure they never get too far away from me."

"My greatest achievement was standing at the summit of the Matterhorn. I ended up going to Chamonix three times to do it as the weather wasn't good enough to climb the first two. On my third attempt I was the least prepared and least fit but still managed the summit. There was a storm behind us on the way down; I was just fast enough to get down the mountain ahead of it so I didn't get stuck. A true experience like none other." 

They use a series of predetermined tugs on the rope to let me know what we need to do.



To find out more about Walking With The Wounded, visit www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk.

We run outdoor activity weekends for deaf children, find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

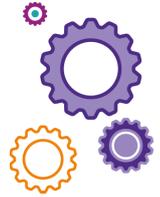
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The National Deaf Children's Society depends almost entirely on generous support from individuals and organisations. **The public is responsible for 95% of our income**, and without this we wouldn't be able to support families of deaf children and young people. See pages 44–45 for more information on supporting our work.

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Audrey's story
how she found success with ballroom dancing
p16



Joab's story
how his passion for music has brought him opportunities
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Oliver and Harry's story
how the Duke of Edinburgh Award has increased their independence
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Fraser's story
how he started his own business
p22

Hello



This issue explores extra-curricular activities which can have a big impact on deaf children's confidence and independence. Audrey (6) has gained confidence through her love of ballroom dancing (pages 16–17), Joab (14) explains how playing instruments has brought him new opportunities (pages 18–19) and Oliver and Harry (both 16) talk about what they learned from their school taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme (pages 20–21).

We're also excited to announce that we're launching a book competition where the winner will help write our next children's book! We're searching for all aspiring young writers and storytellers aged 7–11 to share their creative ideas. See the entry form enclosed with the print version of this magazine or visit www.ndcs.org.uk/bookcompetition for more information. The closing date is 30 April.

Finally, if you're thinking about learning sign language with your child then read Primrose's story on pages 13–15 and find out more about ways to learn sign on page 26–27.

Enjoy the springtime and happy reading,

Karen

Karen Harlow, Editor

✉ magazine@ndcs.org.uk

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NEWS



Elephant and the Lost Blanket

We've recently published our third children's book, *Elephant and the Lost Blanket*, for younger children aged 0–5. We think it's important for deaf children to see themselves reflected in the books they read so both Elephant and her best friend Tiger are deaf and wear hearing technology.

Elephant takes her special blue blanket everywhere. It's her favourite thing in the whole world. So when it goes missing in the park one day, she's desperate to find it. Elephant's friends help her search, but all is not as it seems...

To read reviews of the book, go to page 35. To buy the book, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/elephant. All money raised will help us create a world without barriers for deaf children.

Could your child help create our next children's book?

We're also very excited to be launching a brand new book competition for deaf children aged 7–11. The winner of our competition will be working with us and Sarah Driver, talented author of *The Huntress* trilogy, to turn their story into a real-life book which we will then publish! Not only that, celebrated author of *The Gruffalo* and *What the Jackdaw Saw*, Julia Donaldson, will be one of our judges.

So if your child has a passion for storytelling and a vivid imagination, make sure you get their entry in. To find out how to enter, and for some top writing tips from Sarah, see the insert in this magazine or visit www.ndcs.org.uk/bookcompetition. The competition is open until 30 April.



Watch our new technology videos

Have you seen our latest videos on technology that deaf children and young people can use at home? In the videos deaf children and young people explain how using technology helps them in everyday situations. The videos are useful for parents and children and also for professionals. Use your smartphone's camera to scan the QR code and instantly watch them, or go to www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam and search 'listen to music' and 'hear alarms'.



Family Sign Language in Liverpool



As part of our Positive Families Plus project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, we worked with local services to run a Family Sign Language course at Knotty Ash Primary School. It gave families a chance to come together, learn some sign language to help support everyday communication and meet other families with deaf children in the area.

The parents that attended gave some really positive feedback and told us: “The volunteer helped us with sign language a lot because we are still very new.”

“It builds confidence and helps [to] meet others in the same situation.”

We then worked in partnership with the St Helens Deafness Resource Centre to support families to attend weekly sessions at the Happy Hands Deaf Children’s Society, so they could continue to build friendships.



A British Sign Language (BSL) first in Northern Ireland

It was a confident debut by the young lad in the green jersey at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park in Belfast last year. But Trevor (18) who is profoundly deaf wasn’t on the pitch that night – he was on the big screen!

For the first time ever, the Irish Football Association (IFA) invited a deaf fan to sign the official introduction to the game in BSL on the big screen alongside the spoken announcement. Trevor, who is a huge Chelsea fan and plays football with Belfast Deaf United, stepped up to the mark and did a fantastic job.

This was the result of great work by the IFA, as part of their Football For All initiative, who want their recently rebuilt stadium to be accessible to all football fans. Congratulations to Trevor for raising deaf awareness and making other deaf fans feel welcome.



Our London office needs your skills

Do you live in London? Do you have office and admin skills? Do you enjoy volunteering in an office or busy reception area, welcoming people and answering phones?

We’re looking for office volunteers who live within zones 1–6 to travel into Old Street station. If you can spare some time during office hours (Monday to Friday 9am–5pm), are over 18 and interested in volunteering in our friendly London office, then please email us at volunteer@ndcs.org.uk. All travel expenses will be covered. Volunteer support to our very busy teams means that more deaf children and their families get the support they need.

The National Deaf Children’s Society is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Vetting and barring checks relevant for each role will be carried out.

Comment

Take a look at our new website

To help us deliver our ambitious plans to support deaf children and improve the service we deliver to you, you may have noticed we recently launched a brand new website. As well as providing a range of new information, the website is easier to navigate on different devices, making it quicker for you to find the best content and resources to support your family.

Hopefully you’ve had a chance to look around and explore our exciting new features such as maps that pinpoint local deaf services and our brand new section on parenting and family life. This contains useful information and support on the day-to-day experiences of bringing up a deaf child, such as advice on leisure, hobbies and celebrations, emotional health and wellbeing, and family relationships.

Those who read the digital version of this magazine will also see a change as we’re now able to host this directly on our website, making it more interactive and giving you access to a wide range of back issue content that you may find useful on your child’s journey. A PDF version of each magazine is also available for those who prefer this.

As our website is brand new, you’ll need to register for a new account to access all these features. Registering is easy and will allow you to choose the information you’d like to receive from us.

We hope you enjoy our new website (www.ndcs.org.uk) and find it helpful in supporting your family.

Susan



Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive



Our storybook,
**Jake and Jasmine
to the Rescue,**
is an ideal gift for
children aged 4–7.

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

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raised will help
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barriers for
deaf children.



Find out more
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jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine)

Available to buy on Amazon

SUPERSTARS



Mackenzie has been in and out of hospital since he was born. He's such a brave little boy, always has a smile on his face and doesn't let anything bring him down. He had his first hearing aids fitted in September and the smile on his face says it all. We're so proud of our gorgeous little boy.



Rebecca, mum to Mackenzie (8 months) who is severely to profoundly deaf.

Annabelle is a superstar in everything she does including playing tennis, dancing and attending theatre school – she never lets her deafness hold her back. Since getting her hearing aids last August she has learned to speak, read and write. Next up sign language!



Kathryn, mum to Annabelle (5) who has a moderate to severe 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.

Six months ago we found out Elliot was deaf. There have been lots of ups and downs but Elliot couldn't make us prouder. He's always been eager to wear his hearing aids, his speech is rapidly developing and he's confidently signing. He's recently had cochlear implants and hasn't moaned or complained once. He's remained the happiest child, with the most infectious smile.



Alison, mum to Elliot (3) who is severely to profoundly deaf.

Cobie struggled after starting senior school because of lack of deaf awareness. With the help of his amazing Teacher of the Deaf, Cobie devised a presentation to show teachers how to support him. The response was amazing. Cobie received a Head Teacher's Commendation and has been asked if he'd be willing to share the presentation with other schools. I'm a very proud mum right now!



Leisa, mum to Cobie (12) who is severely deaf.

Dylan had cochlear implants at 22 months. He soon grasped language and moved on to primary school without any extra support in the classroom. Dylan has just gone into Year 6 and has become a great role model for two other deaf children in his school. He is so kind, caring and hardworking and we couldn't be prouder of him.



Stacey, mum to Dylan (10) who is profoundly deaf.

Being unable to hear or speak and being ineligible for cochlear implants has never held Max back. Since starting to learn British Sign Language 18 months ago his ability to communicate through sign is now incredible. He's also found a passion for BMXing, following in the footsteps of his older brothers and dad. Nothing will stop my little 'Max Power' giving his all in everything he does.



Emily, mum to Max (4) who is profoundly deaf.



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.

Nancy's confidence at school



Raising Nancy

The ups and downs of parenting a deaf child

I want to fight for what Nancy needs but it's exhausting!



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.

IT'S BEEN A WHOLE SIX MONTHS SINCE NANCY'S BEEN AT SCHOOL. She troops in every morning in her oversized school uniform and little black shoes, her school bag hanging by her knees and a big smile on her face. She looks forward to going every day. She talks about what she'll take in for 'show and tell' and how she can't wait to have curry for lunch. She tells us what the other children talk about and she wants to read at home like her big sister does. It's very different to how I thought she'd get on!

I'd worried that in a mainstream school she'd be lost and not understand what was going on around her, but Nancy is confident at school. I think this confidence comes from three things. First, her teacher, who is really on it when it comes to Nancy's needs. Second, me: I went into school many, many times over the first few weeks to explain Nancy's needs to the teacher. Third, her radio aid: through this piece of technology, Nancy can hear every word her teacher is saying. The teacher wears a microphone and her voice is sent directly into Nancy's cochlear implant processors. Nancy sometimes comes home speaking in full sentences, which she was rarely doing before. It's remarkable! A radio aid could have worked wonders for Nancy's language and listening at nursery too, but our local authority doesn't provide them for pre-schoolers. When I think about what might have been if she'd had a radio aid earlier...

Nancy is in the same class as her twin, Connie. I wanted them to be happy so it was logical to keep them together. Surprisingly, Nancy seems to have settled in a little easier than Connie!

She seems to power on through without batting an eyelid, whereas Connie has been quite emotional. Another surprise. Poor Connie doesn't get all that extra attention – that's what I think she's thinking sometimes anyway!

Nancy's Teacher of the Deaf has been amazing too, going into the school and training all the teachers about Nancy's needs and how to be deaf-aware. We even took a video of Nancy talking about her cochlear implants that the teachers watched. Nancy is now finally going to get extra help with her phonics and listening by having a 1:1 teaching assistant employed by the school. Perhaps it would have happened eventually without parental pressure but schools are overstretched and not all families can keep popping in to advocate for their children at the drop of a hat. I want to fight for what Nancy needs but it's exhausting! I can't remember everything. I've even forgotten to change Nancy's batteries on a few occasions and they've run out at school! But I try not to beat myself up about these things. All parents have moments like this. We do only what we can do. Bring on the next challenge! 



Find out more about radio aids at www.ndcs.org.uk/radioaids.

An Education, Health and Care plan can help ensure your child gets the support they need at school. Find out more about getting additional support at www.ndcs.org.uk/additionalsupport.



Finding your tribe

MOLLY IS SETTling INTO HER NEW SCHOOL. She was bullied and discriminated against at the old one and she came to join the other kids in Year 7 full of apprehension and with low self-confidence. I've been pleasantly surprised by the school so far. They've really put a lot of effort into understanding Molly's needs. There's another, older deaf child at the school so Molly benefits from staff who are fairly deaf aware, happy to use the radio aid and familiar with many of the issues facing a deaf pupil.

We met with the other deaf girl and her mum recently. How amazing it was to share our stories and see how many similarities there are between the girls, despite their age difference. I'm often hard on myself; when Molly isn't happy I assume it's some shortcoming in our parenting, yet here was another girl having many of the same experiences. They both avoid the dinner hall with the raucous background noise. They both try to avoid using their radio aid because they feel it cuts them off from their classmates and only allows the teacher's voice to be heard. They both suffer low confidence and anxiety. They are both exhausted at the end of a school day. Most of all they both hate it when they don't hear something, say, "Pardon," and the other kid says, "Oh never mind."

Molly loves meeting other deaf children; then she genuinely feels she fits in. This is one reason she enjoys the National Deaf Children's Society events so much. Recently we've been getting more involved with our local Deaf Association. The girl from school, Molly and our younger daughter Faye, who uses hearing aids

intermittently due to glue ear, took part in a signing choir last year as part of a Remembrance Day concert. It was such a fun experience for them. They worked with a guy from Music and the Deaf and signed so beautifully that audience members were reduced to tears.

In the supermarket recently I met a mum with a three-year-old with cochlear implants. I'm shameless in introducing myself to any parents I bump into who have deaf kids. She asked me how my deaf children found school as her little boy would start soon. I said it wasn't easy but how could I explain the multiple challenges facing a deaf child in mainstream school whilst standing next to the cheese section? She seemed reluctant to get involved with the Deaf world and I felt that deep down she was hoping her child would never need the Deaf community because his implants would make him just like a hearing person. My heart sank a little, for if I had my time over I would've made much more effort to learn British Sign Language early on and to join in with the Deaf community from day one. We all need our tribes and in my opinion there's one tribe deaf kids really need and that is deaf friends, both adults and children. 



To meet families with deaf children in your area have a look at www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups.

For more information on our youth events, see www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

Raising Molly

Navigating between the deaf and hearing worlds

“They both avoid the dinner hall with the raucous background noise.”



Lara and her husband Henry are parents to Conrad (15), Molly (12) and Faye (8). Molly is moderately deaf and Faye has intermittent glue ear.



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Primrose's communication choices

When their newborn baby was diagnosed as deaf, Nadine and Joseph decided to teach her sign language, even though they had every hope cochlear implants would enable her to hear and learn to speak.

AS HER FRIEND'S BABY LAY ON THE PLAY MAT BABBLING AWAY, Nadine smiled. Her seven-month-old daughter Primrose was lying there beside her waving her hands around – she was doing exactly the same 'baby babbling' but in sign language.

It was a big shock to Nadine and partner Joseph when, after failing her newborn hearing screening, Primrose was diagnosed as profoundly deaf. She had a tiny amount of hearing in her right ear and none in her left. "We were very shocked and upset," says Nadine. "But we focused straightaway on coming to terms with it. We accepted that our daughter was deaf and knew we'd do everything we could to support her." ►



Primrose's story
why her parents are teaching her to sign

▶ At six weeks old Primrose had hearing aids, but they didn't seem to make any difference. Nadine and Joseph tried to find out all they could about deafness, including different ways of communicating. The doctors were already talking about cochlear implants as an option.

Primrose was assigned a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) who discussed communication options, including signing. They were advised to be aware that over reliance on one of the communication methods wouldn't be as effective. Signing but no implants would mean speech was adversely affected and vice versa would mean when the implants weren't in or were broken, there'd be no other method of communicating.

"We decided we wanted Primrose to learn to sign," says Nadine. "Even if her hearing aids were helping, what if she was poorly and couldn't wear them, or if they broke? Or if she's in the bath? If it turned out she could have cochlear implants, we'd go for it – we wanted her to be able to hear, to learn speech. But we felt it was still really important she learn to sign because, then when she was older, it would give her the choice of which communication method she wanted to use. She'll meet other deaf children, some who'll use hearing aids and speak and others who'll sign. It's important she has all options."

Their ToD put them in touch with a sign language teacher called Tracey. She came to the house once a week for a month and taught Nadine basic signs, such as 'milk' and 'hungry'. By five months old Primrose was making signs for 'milk' and waving hello and goodbye, and at seven months signed 'thank you' when she was given a baby biscuit.

As Tracey's home visits ended, Nadine found out about free British Sign Language (BSL) classes from her local council and she and Joseph's mother Monique signed up to learn Level 1. "We were lucky, we asked our local authority about doing a BSL course and they provided it free, no problems. I know it's different in some regions," says Nadine. "We talk to Primrose as well as signing. When I speak, I put

We sign - and talk - to Primrose all the time, just like you'd chat to a hearing baby and talk about what you're doing and seeing.

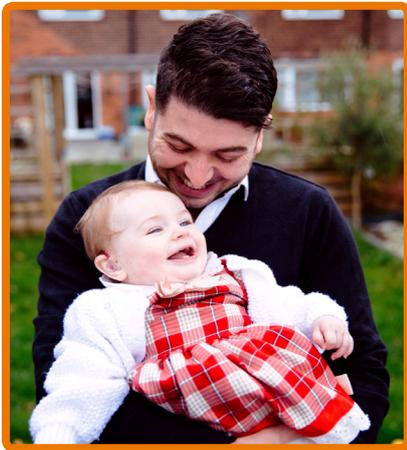
She'll meet deaf children who'll use hearing aids and speak, others who'll sign. It's important she has all options.

her hand on my chest so she can feel the vibration and vice versa when she makes sounds. I sing and shush her when she's going to sleep, hold her against my chest so she can feel the vibrations.

"Daddy is learning some signs from Monique and me, and so is my mum. Some friends have learnt basic signs, like 'hello' and 'how are you?' and one's doing a short BSL course," says Nadine. "We sign – and talk – to Primrose all the time, just like you'd chat to a hearing baby and talk about what you're doing and seeing. If people stare and look interested I explain that we're signing because she's deaf. I don't mind if they ask questions; I want people to be aware of deafness and understand that she's completely normal, just deaf.

"If we go into the garden, I show her signs for flowers and trees. We have three cats and two dogs, so I sign the words for them. Whatever's going on, I'll sign about it. I also sign when I'm reading books with her – we have books on getting ready and playing and I sign the key words to her. She watches your mouth so intently – she has done ever since she was born, gazes really wide-eyed at your mouth. I think she'll learn to lip-read."

Nadine takes Primrose to a fortnightly Sight and Sound baby group, for babies who are deaf and/or blind. She also takes her to a National Deaf Children's Society group that meets once a month. "There are deaf children from babies to teenagers," says Nadine. "It's lovely to see them grown-up and doing all the things other children do; it's inspiring. I sit with the adults and practise signing."



Primrose has just been accepted for cochlear implants and doctors hope to implant her this spring. She's recently been diagnosed with a heart defect – one which is linked to cot death and sudden adult death syndrome – which is the cause of her deafness. Doctors have put her on beta blockers and a specialist anaesthetist will assist at the implant surgery.

Now Nadine and Joseph are looking forward to Primrose getting her implants and hoping she'll be able to hear and learn speech. But they'll continue with sign language; Nadine will go on to Level 2. "It's fascinating that there are

differences in signing for regional accents," says Nadine. "I have a strong Yorkshire accent which will affect the signs I use for some words but I want it to be as straightforward for Primrose as possible. We hope that she'll be bilingual: speaking and signing." 



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

Not all local authorities offer BSL classes for free but see pages 26–27 for other ways to learn.

Watch a video about Primrose's journey to signing by going to www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam and searching 'sign language'.



Your spring checklist

✓ Elephant and the Lost Blanket

Our new children's book, *Elephant and the Lost Blanket*, is a delightful story for children aged 0–5. Join Elephant (who wears hearing aids) as she looks for her lost blanket with the help of her friends Tiger, Giraffe and Lion. The book costs £6.99 and includes a guide to help you get the most out of sharing it with your child and a link to a video to show you how to sign some of the key words.

www.ndcs.org.uk/elephant

✓ Early skills apps

Apps can be a fun, interactive way to help your child develop their communication and learning skills. We have details on early skills apps that can help your child learn BSL, practise literacy and numeracy and develop social and problem-solving skills. Lots of these apps are fun and interactive, using colourful characters that have exciting adventures or journeys. Others use animation to keep your child enthralled as they travel on their own learning journey. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/earlyskillsapps.

✓ Making decisions

Parents of deaf children can have lots of decisions to make, from what hearing technology (if any) is right for their child, to choosing a communication approach and finding the right school. In our video, *My Deaf Child and Making Decisions*, Laura and Kerri share their experiences of raising twins Emmie (who's deaf) and Olive and all the decisions they've made along the way. Watch it at www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam (search for 'decisions').



Strictly a star

Audrey (6) has fallen in love with ballroom dancing and recently competed in Blackpool.



Audrey's story
how she found success with ballroom dancing



I felt pride beyond belief.

SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE in the Winter Gardens Blackpool, Tracey and Andrew couldn't believe they were watching their little girl competing in a national dance competition. "I felt pride beyond belief," Tracey says. "She had overcome so much to get there, things parents of hearing children could never understand."

Audrey was diagnosed as moderately deaf at two weeks old. "We were seen later by audiology and they ran all of their tests during a five-hour appointment," Tracey explains. "It was very stressful and emotional."

Audrey was fitted with hearing aids at six weeks but, with no history of deafness in her family, Tracey was devastated. "That was the most awful time because I wasn't aware of a single other child who wore hearing aids," Tracey says. "I thought all of the worst things. I'd imagined ballet and piano lessons for Audrey and in that moment it felt like that was no longer possible."

Tracey and Andrew then went to one of our newly diagnosed weekends. "That was brilliant," Tracey says. "The other parents were versions of you so you felt safe to express yourself. I could say how Audrey's diagnosis had made me feel without any shame. It was a turning point."

When Tracey and Andrew were looking for schools for Audrey's older brother Harry (9) they were thinking about finding a school that would work for Audrey too. "Our Teacher of the Deaf came and looked at schools with us and assessed the acoustics," Tracey says. "In the school we chose, the classroom was open-plan but the school put a door up especially for Audrey. You can't really ask for more than that!"

Audrey loves school but is happiest being creative and her real passion is dancing. "I'm a big *Strictly Come Dancing* fan," Tracey says. "Two years ago when she was four, Audrey was up late one night and she was captivated by the show."



“ Audrey’s very confident to tell anyone what she needs them to do.

She was dancing around the lounge and asking her dad to lift her up like the dancers. We’ve got a local ballroom dancing school so I enquired and in the January term Audrey started there.”

When Audrey joined, Tracey spoke to the teacher about her hearing loss and explained that she’d need to see the teacher’s face when the music was on. “Audrey’s main communication is speech but when she’s in an environment where the hearing aids take on a louder sound, for example dancing with loud music, she relies on lip-reading,” Tracey explains. “She’s also quite led by people’s body language so it’s important to communicate her needs.

“They once had a new teacher at her dance school and Audrey came home saying she was struggling to hear him. I went in and explained that sometimes he turned his back to Audrey, so now he makes sure he bobs down to her level so she can always see his face. The staff there are brilliant.”

Audrey loves her dance classes but Tracey realises what she’s overcoming every time she attends. “For her to get up on that dance floor and not be able to hear her dance teacher’s voice over the music is a challenge that other children don’t face and yet she takes it in her stride.”

Audrey’s also made new friends through dancing. “We’ve bought some books with deaf characters in, like *Freddie and the Fairy*, which we read with her,” Tracey says. “They’ve taught her how to tell other people that she’s struggling and now she’s very confident to tell anyone what she needs them to do. She’ll say, ‘Don’t put your hand over your face’ or ‘Make sure you’re looking at me.’”

Audrey hasn’t let anything hold her back and in two short years has achieved a lot in the dancing world. She’s already taken exams in Latin dancing and ballroom dancing and passed with honours. “In her first year she was in the Christmas and summer shows,” Tracey says. “Then her dance school said they were going to be doing competitions. My husband and

I weren’t sure about it but Audrey asked to do it so we thought we’d give it a go.

“Last year she went to Gillingham for her first dance competition. We went with no expectation whatsoever but at that competition she qualified to compete in Blackpool at the UK National Finals. We couldn’t believe it!”

Between then and the finals, Audrey competed in a number of other competitions to get used to the environment. “She’s got a lovely little dance partner called Violet,” Tracey says. “They are doing phenomenally well in their pairs competitions.”

When it came to the big weekend in Blackpool, the family decided to make the trip and enjoy a weekend away. “It took us nearly nine hours to get there but we took Harry and our mums with us and we saw the Illuminations which was incredible,” says Tracey.

“Audrey competed on the Saturday and it was mind-blowing; she got into the quarter-finals in one discipline and the semi-finals in another. It was very emotional; I was in tears in the audience.

“I want this positive message to go out to any other parent; maybe they’ve just found out their child is deaf and are feeling devastated like us. It’s not as bad as you’re thinking right now. For my husband and I to stand and watch Audrey compete in Blackpool – never in a million years would we have thought that was possible. I’m so proud of her.”



To find out more about our newly diagnosed weekend events, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

Raising the Bar celebrates the success of deaf young performers, for more information go to www.buzz.org.uk/raisingthebar.

Your spring checklist

✓ Parenting and family life

In the new parenting and family life section of our website you’ll find lots of content including:

- family relationships
- parenting tips on issues like tiredness, getting your child to sleep and playtime
- how to look after your own, and your child’s, emotional health and wellbeing
- making sure your child gets the most out of hobbies and leisure activities
- the laws that protect you and your child from discrimination.

Take a look around at www.ndcs.org.uk/parentingfamilylife.

✓ Great family days out

The Max Card offers free or discounted entry to attractions across the UK for foster families and children aged up to 25 who have additional needs. The card aims to give everyone access to great days out at places as varied as zoos, bowling alleys, trampoline parks and lots more. Visit www.mymaxcard.co.uk to find out if the Max Card is available from your local authority.

✓ My child and glue ear

Glue ear is one of the most common childhood illnesses; it’s usually temporary but longterm glue ear can affect children’s hearing and speech development. Find out about Rachel and Peter’s experience of glue ear, the treatment options they chose for their daughter, Libby, and how we helped them make the right decisions for their family. Watch the video at www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam (search for ‘glue ear’).



Taking opportunities

Joab's (14) passion for music has opened up a world of new experiences for him. He tells us why he thinks deaf young people should grasp all the opportunities they can.



Joab's story
how his passion for music has brought him opportunities



Music's my getaway.

JOAB STILL REMEMBERS THE MOMENT he knew he wanted to learn to play the drums. "I was in Year 3," he recalls. "We had someone come in and showcase the drums and I thought, 'I want to learn how to do that.'" He's been having lessons ever since and has never looked back.

Having no hearing in his right ear hasn't stopped Joab from learning other instruments as well. He describes himself as a "drummer at heart but also a percussionist". Having already achieved Grade 8 drums, he has also managed to fit in Grade 4 tuned percussion (xylophone, snare drum and timpani) and Grade 6 snare drum. On top of that, he's self-taught in piano. "It's always good for musicians to know how to play piano," he says sensibly.

Music isn't just a hobby for Joab – it's something he feels can benefit people in many ways. "Music's my getaway," he explains. "Whenever I'm feeling down or stressed, I play some music or the drums. Playing music offers a whole new side of life that you get to involve yourself in. The experiences you get don't just help you become a better musician, they help you with confidence."

In Joab's case, he really has taken as many opportunities with his music as possible. In fact, his personal motto is 'A missed opportunity is a missed growth in personality.' He's been involved with orchestras through school and his area's music service. And through doing that, other opportunities have opened up. "About a year ago I played the Royal Albert Hall's Music for Youth Proms; that was a really fun experience. I've also played Birmingham Symphony Hall and St David's Hall, Cardiff," says Joab.

Not only that, but he's also busy every school lunchtime in the music room participating in things like wind band, folk group and melodica club. All these activities, and the fact that Joab was a member of our Young People's Advisory



I've had difficulties, but I've been able to overcome them.

Board (YAB), led him to win his Headteacher's Award for inspiring young people in Year 7.

But although Joab has had success with music, being a deaf musician does come with some challenges. For him to have the best chance in his music exams, some adjustments have been needed. "I had to have the speaker on my left-hand side and we've had sound checks to make sure I can hear the music I'm playing along to," explains Joab. Music teachers too have had to learn to be patient and repeat instructions when necessary.

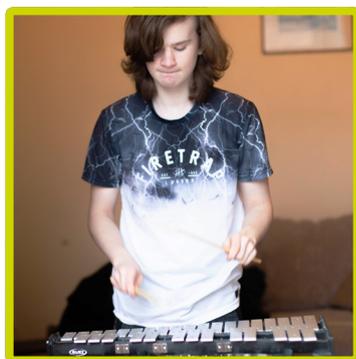
One exam experience where Joab didn't hear any of the playback tracks left him feeling upset. "He thought he'd completely failed it," says mum Jules. "He just had to make it up. I phoned up to complain but they said, 'He's got a distinction!' He'd been pulled down a bit on the playback but he'd more than made up for it with near perfect marks on his pieces."

Joab is becoming more and more confident about speaking up when he can't hear and Jules believes that being on the YAB is the main reason for this. "The YAB is the best thing that ever happened to him," she says proudly. And Joab agrees, saying, "Without it I wouldn't be the person I am today." While it isn't possible for all deaf children to be on the YAB, Jules has some advice for other deaf young people: "Find someone you can talk to, to give you that confidence to actually say, 'I can't hear,'" she says.

Luckily, Joab doesn't have to speak up too much at his current school, whose support he can't fault. "I'm very lucky," he smiles. "We've got an amazing inclusion department; they deal not just with deafness but all sorts of disabilities. Whenever I've struggled with hearing in class, I can

ask my friends or go to the teachers who are very deaf aware." Perhaps Joab appreciates this more as it wasn't always the same story in primary school, which was the time the family needed support the most.

Joab wasn't diagnosed until he was four, at a school hearing test. "They sent us to the hospital and they confirmed it," remembers Jules. "They said the nerves didn't connect at birth so he'll never have any hearing on that side. He can't even have a hearing aid because there's zero sound. It was a shock, especially because three



weeks later we found out he had limited sight in his right eye." With no prior knowledge or experience of deafness, Jules armed herself with information from us, which she describes as 'brilliant'.

Jules is clearly proud of how far Joab has come since then and describes him as a bright and articulate

boy with big plans for the future. "He already knows what A-levels and university degree he wants to do," she says. Unsurprisingly, music is the path he wants to go down and current plans include being a music teacher and setting up an online music business.

Like his mum, Joab too has some encouragement for other deaf young people. "Take opportunities," he advises. "You don't know until you take them what the outcome's going to be. Most of the time, it's going to be positive. I've had difficulties but I've been able to overcome them. And I can do things that hearing people can do." 



To find out more about deaf young people learning musical instruments and taking music exams have a look at www.ndcs.org.uk/music.

Your spring checklist

✓ Try out new technology

Our Borrow to Buy pilot scheme offers deaf children, their families and the professionals working with them immediate access to Phonak products. Each product can be borrowed for up to 90 days. At the end of the 90-day loan period you can choose to buy the product if you think it's helped your child or you can simply return it to us. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/borrowtobuy.

✓ Health and wellbeing

The Buzz, our website for deaf children and young people aged 12-18, has lots of great content on health and wellbeing. We have information and advice on topics like mental health, self-harm, eating disorders and living well. There's also our My Life, My Health resources which aim to help deaf young people become more independent when going to healthcare appointments. The resources include videos and factsheets on three main topics: booking appointments, visiting the doctor and going to appointments on your own. Encourage your child to take a look at www.buzz.org.uk/category/health-and-wellbeing.

✓ Stay safe online

As children and young people live more of their lives online it can be stressful for parents who want to keep their child safe, while allowing them the freedom to explore the digital world. We have tips on what you can do to protect your child, and encourage them to make smart choices in their online life. www.ndcs.org.uk/esafety





Journey to independence

Harry and Oliver (both 16) explain how taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award scheme has helped them gain independence and life skills.



Oliver and Harry's story how the Duke of Edinburgh Award has increased their independence

What is the Duke of Edinburgh Award?
The DofE is a youth achievement award for 14–24 year olds. Awarded at Bronze (14+), Silver (15+) and Gold (16+) levels, participants must dedicate a minimum of an hour a week for a specific period of time to each of three sections:

- physical
- skills
- volunteering.

In addition they must take part in an expedition lasting at least two days and one night. Participants have until their 25th birthday to finish the award.

PUPILS FROM THE ROYAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF DERBY are working towards a Bronze DofE Award. They have completed physical challenges including cycling and football and improved their skills in areas such as drama and British Sign Language (BSL) with one pupil even taking a GCSE in History in a year. They also went on a group expedition in the Peak District.

Oliver, who is moderately to profoundly deaf, attended an after-school club to improve his football for the physical challenge and has worked hard on his speech with a speech and language therapist for the skills section. Harry, who is severely deaf and has cerebral palsy, chose boccia (a sport a bit like bowls) at a club outside school for the physical section and is working towards BSL Level 2 for his skill. They told us a bit more about their experiences.

Q. Why did you want to do a DofE Award?
Oliver: We were offered the chance to take part through our school and I thought it would be fun.

Harry: I wanted to learn and do new things. I'd only been camping once before but it was very different doing it for the expedition.

Q. How did you find the expedition part of the award?
Oliver: I thought it would be easy but it was difficult! I was part of the walking group and it was very hilly. We walked around 12–14km over two days. There were five of us and we had to read maps and sometimes we weren't sure, so we talked about it as a team and took it in turns. We set off from school, were dropped off and did our walking, then we went back to the campsite, set up our tent, made some hot chocolate and cooked our dinner.



I learned I could do it and overcome difficulties.

Harry: I cycled; I like cycling and do lots of it with my parents. It was easier because it was quite flat but we had a bit of uphill on the first day that was quite hard. We cycled for five hours each day. We had to be careful because we were on the trail with lots of other people on bikes, so we had to be in a line and not move away too much or there could've been a crash. We had to be well-organised and work as a team.



Q. What's been the hardest part of the award?

Oliver: Definitely the expedition. It was hard because my rucksack was so heavy which made it much more tiring than normal walking.

Harry: When we were camping it wasn't easy for me to get into the tent because I use my walking frame. I could ask the teachers if I needed help but I still had to get out of my tent to get them.

Q. What did you learn from it?

Oliver: I learned how to cook for myself. We also learned to work as a team and help each other out.

Harry: I also learned to cook. The whole experience made me feel a bit more confident.



Q. What are you most proud of?

Oliver: I'm proud I finished the expedition. I was struggling on the second day because of the heavy rucksack, but I learned I could do it and overcome difficulties.

Q. What are you planning to do for the volunteering part of the award?

Harry: We'll be raising money for different charities, helping to organise different events. Then in September we'll be involved in other charity work linked with school.

Q. What would you say to other deaf young people thinking of doing a DofE Award?

Oliver: I'd say definitely get involved – it's a one-off chance.

Harry: Yes, get involved!

Q. What are your plans for the future?

Oliver: I'd like to do something related to sport or woodwork – I'm looking at college courses at the moment.

Harry: After I finish school I want to learn to drive.

Good luck Oliver and Harry! 🍀

DofE teacher Mrs Hassall, who supported the pupils on their expedition, said:

“As part of their preparation we do map skills and route planning, basic first aid, practise putting up tents and a bit of cooking in our enrichment time. We also do a practice expedition so they know what to expect on the assessed one. We go with them and support them, but at a distance. They had to do all the map reading; if they get lost, we monitor them and only help if needed! They had to really look around for landmarks to match what's on the map as obviously they couldn't hear things like the road traffic or the river to know they were there. They all worked so hard and were so determined to finish. We're so proud of them all. It's helped with their confidence and given them life skills.”



Find out more about the Duke of Edinburgh Award at www.dofe.org.

Your spring checklist



Technology Test Drive now open to 16–25 year olds

Our Technology Test Drive (TTD) is a free technology loan service for our members, giving 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. 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.



Health information in BSL

SignHealth is a charity dedicated to making sure Deaf people get the same access as hearing people to healthcare and health information. It has the country's largest collection of BSL videos on physical and mental health issues, as well as first aid. www.signhealth.org.uk/health-information/health-advice/



Accessible theatre and cinema

Finding a cinema screening with subtitles or a theatre performance with captions or live subtitles can be difficult. Your Local Cinema (www.yourlocalcinema.com) lists subtitled film screenings across the UK. You can also download the app for free from the App Store or Google Play. Stagertext provides captioning and live subtitling services to theatres and other arts venues to make their activities accessible to deaf people. Find out more, and get details of accessible shows and talks near you, at www.stagertext.org.



Building a better life

Entrepreneur Fraser (24) has pushed through a difficult start to become a business owner and deaf role model.



Fraser's story
how he started his own business



WORKING HARD ON THE BUILDING SITE Fraser sees a green flashing light in front of him that signals it's time for a break. Every day is busy, especially since he's built the business up from scratch and employs five people, but Fraser loves working on huge projects and is currently building an eight-floor block of flats.

Fraser was born profoundly deaf and is the only member of his immediate family with a hearing loss. He uses speech and British Sign Language (BSL) and has one cochlear implant. While he's thriving now, Fraser had a tough start and struggled with being deaf at his mainstream school. "I was bullied and it wasn't very nice," Fraser says. "I also got into trouble at school so I finished early and left when I was 16. I couldn't sit Highers [the Scottish equivalent of A-levels in the rest of the UK] because I wasn't very good at English."

But while Fraser didn't enjoy school, he found solace being on our Young People's Advisory Board (YAB). "I was excited to be part of the YAB," he says. "We created a campaign called Look, Smile, Chat, focused on deaf awareness, and I took this to my school and tried to get them to improve. I taught them how to speak to me in the right way: speak normally, clearly and face me."

"I even met some Members of the Scottish Parliament in Aberdeen. I met First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and we had a nice discussion about my experiences. She was willing to help with our deaf awareness campaign and even had a sign name!"

Since leaving school Fraser has continued to work hard to help other deaf young people. "I work for Deaf Action and I set up Deaf clubs for young people. We get together, meet and organise trips. We've been climbing and go-karting," he says.

Don't give up and nothing can stop you.

“ I think I was the first deaf person to become a qualified joiner in Scotland. ”

“I’m also a mentor for the British Deaf Association. I support young people from deaf homes; they come to me saying they want to learn how to use the local bus system, for example. I’ll go with them and show them how it’s done, how to use a timetable and how to know where you get off or where to go to get a bus to a certain place. I train them up to become independent. I always say to them ‘just be brave; give it a go.’”

But Fraser’s passion has always laid on the building site. “I’ve always enjoyed working with my hands and doing physical work,” Fraser says. “I’m not the sort to work in an office, typing on my bum all day! I thought working on a building site and in carpentry would be really fun. I watched a guy building an extension for my mum and dad’s house and was fascinated.”

When Fraser left school he decided to find an apprenticeship. “Apprenticeships are great,” he says. “You go to work and college and get paid as well. I was a joiner and worked on a building site. I also went to college to learn from experienced joiners and carpenters. It was a four-year course.”

Unfortunately though, Fraser didn’t have a good experience with his college. “I had no support,” he says. “I tried to get an interpreter but they wouldn’t give me one because they said I could hear and speak fine, so I spent extra time and did extra work to make sure I picked up on information I might have missed out on.”

Fraser persisted and three years ago he qualified as a joiner. “It was the best day ever. All my pals and family were so happy. I think I was the first deaf person to become a qualified joiner in Scotland; it was amazing,” he remembers.

After qualifying, Fraser worked for small local firms to get more experience around the building site.

But his entrepreneurial spirit led to him quickly launching his own business and he now employs five people. “We work on big building sites. It’s a really busy job but really fun!”

To make sure his business is deaf aware, Fraser has a simple badge he wears to say he’s deaf. “The most important thing is that I always let anyone on the building site know I’m deaf so they come and see me rather than shout at me,” Fraser says. “I have a special pager in my pocket



which I wear in case there’s a fire alarm on the building site. If someone wants to talk to me they can also text me.”

They also make use of technology on the building site. “We have different signals and flashing lights; green means break time and red is the fire alarm for example.”

After such an amazing success story, Fraser is keen to continue sharing his experiences with deaf young people and is always passing on advice. “I’d say to deaf young people: do whatever job you want to do – you can do it,” he says. “Don’t give up and nothing can stop you. Look at me, I’ve gone from leaving school to my own business with five boys working for me. It’s pretty sweet, isn’t it?”



To find out more about Look, Smile, Chat, visit www.buzz.org.uk/looksmilechat.

To learn more about apprenticeships, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/apprenticeship and for more information on rights in education and employment, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/19-25info.



YOUNG PEOPLE 19-25

Your spring checklist

✓ NHS 111 BSL service

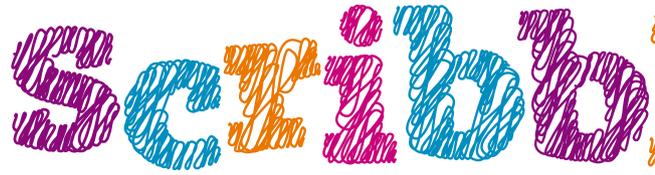
If your child uses BSL they can contact the NHS 111 (non-emergency service) via InterpreterNow. They can use their computer webcam or the InterpreterNow app on their smartphone or tablet to make a video call to a BSL interpreter. The interpreter phones an NHS 111 adviser and relays the conversation. Where possible the NHS 111 team will book your child an appointment or transfer them directly to the people they need to speak to. interpreternow.co.uk/nhs111

✓ Access to Work

An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support for your child in the workplace, such as communication support or equipment. Access to Work is available for full-time and part-time employees, including those on apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships, and those who are self-employed. Funding is also available for support in interviews. Find out more about how Access to Work could support your child at www.gov.uk/access-to-work.

✓ Deaf travel inspiration

Is your child thinking of taking a gap year? Or would they like to travel but worry about how they’d manage? Ed Rex is profoundly deaf and uses a hearing aid and cochlear implant. He blogs about his travels (recent destinations include Malta, Norway and Paris) at www.rexyedventures.com. He has a deaf-specific section of his website where he discusses topics like ‘Is Dusseldorf barrier-free for people with deafness and hearing loss?’ and ‘Travelling solo with a cochlear implant’.



Tear out these pages, give them to you

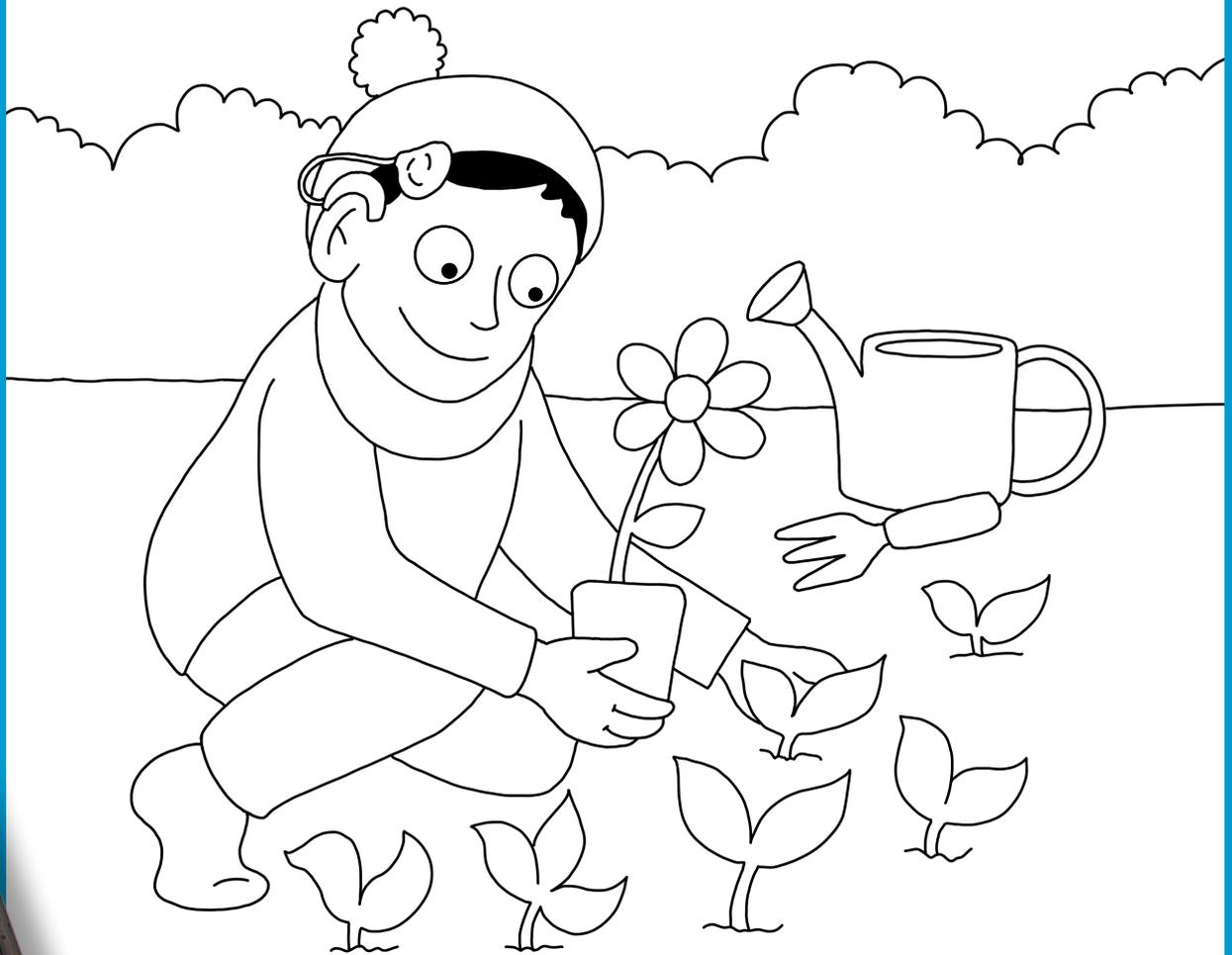


Welcome to
Scribble Club,
our activity
section for deaf children
just like you.



Colour in

GARDEN



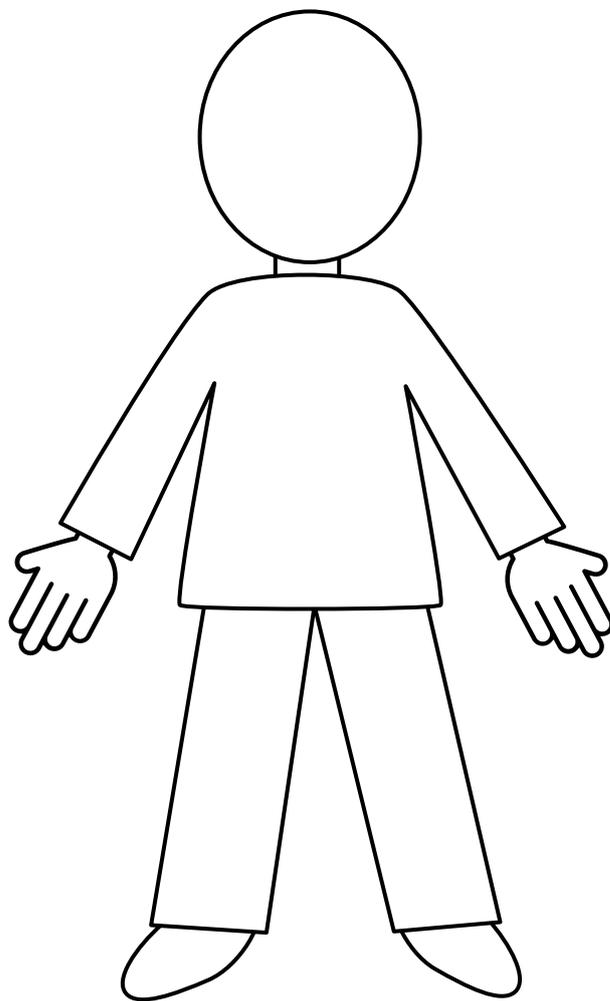
Colour in this picture of a child planting flowers in the garden.
Which colour will you choose for the watering can?



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

Design your own character

If you were to write a story with a deaf character, what would they be like?
Use the start of the picture below to draw your character.



Now you have a character, what adventures would they have?
Why not write their story, and if you're aged 7-11 you could enter
our competition for the chance to have your book published.
Have a look at the entry form with this magazine (or ask a parent
to go to www.ndcs.org.uk/bookcompetition) to find out more.

How do I...

access sign language lessons?

There are many different ways to learn sign language and it's important to explore the options in your local area to find one that suits your family. We asked parents to share with us how they learnt.

“ We just searched for ‘baby sign language’ and ‘BSL’ on YouTube...

→ Find out about the different options for learning sign language at www.ndcs.org.uk/bsl.

Learn more about your family's rights to funding from your local authority to learn sign language by downloading our guides from www.ndcs.org.uk/localcouncil.



Esme is mum to Isaac (3) who is profoundly deaf. He wore hearing aids when he was first diagnosed and now has cochlear implants.

We started to learn as soon as Isaac was diagnosed so that we could help him with his speech and communication and so he would be able to communicate with other deaf children. He was born with moderate to severe hearing loss but at two years old it became profound, and our only way of communicating with him was through sign.

We started by attending local 'Tiny Talk' baby signing classes. There was a waiting list but we were given lessons straightaway as we had a deaf child. Isaac's Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) arranged for someone from our local Sensory

Support team to teach us family sign at home and my husband and I went on to complete our British Sign Language (BSL) Level 1, organised again by the ToD and funded through our local authority.

Learning sign really helped Isaac's speech – every sign he used he also tried to say the word. Being able to communicate with us from a young age also meant he was less frustrated.

After having his cochlear implant operation, knowing sign was immensely helpful – Isaac relied on signing and lip-reading for about four months while he was learning to hear with his new implants.



Isaac

Lesley is mum to Nicole (18) who is profoundly deaf. She wore hearing aids until the age of nine when she had cochlear implants.

My husband and I wanted to learn sign so that we could communicate with our daughter as when she was diagnosed at 18 months, she had no spoken language. Nicole's first sign was 'bath' – just a couple of months after we started signing to her.

We learned BSL Level 1 for free at our local college. We'd learn new signs each week and then teach them to Nicole at home. We shared basic signs with other family members too so they could also communicate with her, and ask her



Nicole

if she wanted juice or a biscuit. As Nicole got older, she started to naturally drop the signs and use speech, which became her main method of communication. She still uses sign when she takes her implant processors off. It's so useful in noisy environments and she doesn't wear her implants when she goes swimming.

Nicole (18): If my mum is leaving early in the morning, she wakes me up to tell me where she's going using sign – I don't need to put my implants in to understand. When I'm feeling sleepy and my implants are out I don't need to struggle to lip-read my mum – she just signs instead.

Jen is mum to Alex (9 months) who has a moderate hearing loss and wears hearing aids.

We wanted to learn sign language as a family so that Alex wouldn't feel left out during day-to-day activities and family life.

I was looking for local baby classes and found a company called 'Tots Play' which included baby signing, baby yoga, baby massage, sensory play and music all in one class. The teacher is very helpful and knowledgeable and it isn't as overwhelming for us as a formal BSL course – it's really fun! We pay for it ourselves and it's been a fantastic way to meet other mums with babies the same age as Alex.



Alex

We also watch a lot of YouTube videos together as a family, searching for terms like 'baby sign language' and 'BSL'. There are so many videos for all ages and abilities and it's easy for us to watch and practise together. Joe (4), Alex's brother, is a very quick learner and loves to watch them and test us! When we sign 'food' and 'milk' to Alex he gets very excited and he smiles lots when we sign 'mummy', 'daddy' and 'brother'! Baby signing has been fantastic in helping us let Alex know what's going on around him and who the main people in his life are.

Arlene is aunt to Aurora (4) who is severely deaf and wears hearing aids.

I got a place on a BSL Level 1 course through our local deaf children's society that Aurora and her parents are part of. The group fundraised and also secured a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to run the sign language classes for those caring for deaf children. There are 14 members who are learning, made up of both family members and professionals who work with deaf children – even Aurora's swimming teacher is learning with us!



Aurora

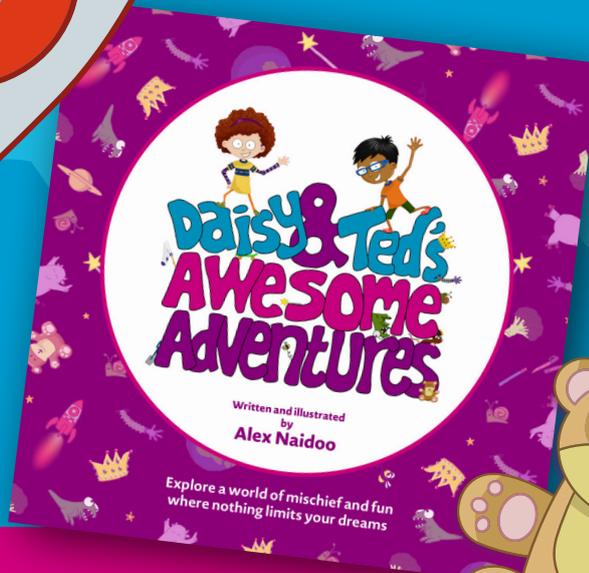
I also go with Aurora's other aunt and two cousins. We meet up at Aurora's granny's house a few times a week too and practise what we've learnt. The kids are picking it up quickly and Aurora loves to see her whole family signing – her face lights up! It's brilliant to communicate with her in a way she understands as I know this stops her feeling isolated or getting frustrated. Aurora's mum and dad have also learned sign through National Deaf Children's Society classes. Learning sign has helped ensure Aurora is a happy, confident little girl as her family can communicate with her fully, whether she's wearing her hearing aids or not.



JOIN OUR FAMILY PANEL

Next time in *Families* magazine: How do I... share toys and activities with my child?

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



All money raised will help us to create a world without barriers for deaf children.

Our storybook,
**Daisy and Ted's
Awesome Adventures,**
is an ideal gift for children aged 4–7.

This exciting adventure story follows a deaf girl and her hearing friend on their imaginary travels through time and space.

It's a great way to get children thinking about deafness but ultimately it's an imaginative tale any child can enjoy.

Find out more at
[www.ndcs.org.uk/
awesomeadventures](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/awesomeadventures)

Available on Amazon



ask the expert



Estelle

Each issue a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Estelle Gerrett, an Auditory Verbal therapist, who works with deaf children and their parents at Auditory Verbal UK, shares her insights.

Auditory Verbal therapy is one of the communication options available to families of children with a hearing loss.

What is Auditory Verbal therapy?

Auditory Verbal therapy (AVT) is one of the communication options available to families of children with a hearing loss. AVT is an early intervention method that supports parents in developing the skills and knowledge to develop their child's listening, talking, thinking and social skills through listening. Our programme typically lasts for two to three years with up to 20 hourly sessions per year, either in person or by Skype.

Who might benefit from AVT?

We work with children who have a permanent hearing loss and are under the age of five, which is the critical period for developing spoken language through listening. We work with children with all levels of permanent conductive or sensorineural hearing loss and we encourage families to get in touch with us even if their child is not yet fitted with aids or implants.

What does an Auditory Verbal therapist do?

A therapist assesses each child's needs and then coaches parents to enable their child to speak by making use of their residual hearing or hearing technology. All activities are play-based and delivered to develop the child's listening skills. The session begins by checking the child's hearing through their hearing aids or cochlear implants. The parents are coached to do this at home and equipped with listening strategies to be implemented as part of their everyday routines.

Do you work with children who sign?

Although we don't use sign in our sessions, some families we work with do choose to sign with their child at home.

How can families access AVT?

Families can contact us through our website. As a charity, we believe that every family should be able to access our programme irrespective of their financial circumstances and so we subsidise all of our fees and the amount that families are charged depends on their household income.

What made you decide to follow this career path?

I was a special needs primary school teacher when my baby son contracted meningitis leaving him profoundly deaf. I wanted a spoken language outcome for him so went back to university and retrained while teaching him to speak. It was a logical pathway then to share this with others.

Can you pick out a highlight of your job?

The best part of my job is coaching parents on how to develop their children's language and speech. Seeing the thrill for parents when their deaf child utters their first word makes the job so rewarding. Many parents experience stress and anxiety surrounding the challenges their children face and watching that lift as their children succeed makes it all worthwhile.



To find out more about Auditory Verbal UK, visit www.avuk.org.

Equality for deaf children

Knowing what your legal rights are can help make sure that your deaf child gets the support they need in their education.

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, your child will be protected under the Equality Act 2010, while in Northern Ireland the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 apply. These laws are similar and apply to all public bodies, including local authorities, nurseries, schools, colleges, training providers and universities. They mean that it's against the law for any public body to engage in discrimination, harassment or victimisation against any disabled person.

Examples of situations where these equality laws can help you include:

- your child's school has refused to include them in an outing for a reason related to their deafness

- your child has been excluded from school, or punished in some way, for a reason that you believe is connected to their deafness
- you believe that your child's nursery, school or college isn't deaf aware
- your child's deafness makes it harder for them to do well and they need more support
- your child needs special arrangements so that they can sit exams or tests
- your child is about to start studying at a further education college or university and you want to make sure that they get the right support.



Reasonable adjustments

One key part of the Equality Act is that all public bodies must make what are called 'reasonable adjustments'. A reasonable adjustment is a change a provider makes so that a deaf child can do something which they wouldn't otherwise be able to do. If an education provider refuses or fails to make reasonable adjustments, then this can be seen as discrimination.

The law doesn't say exactly what a reasonable adjustment would be. This is because what's 'reasonable' may depend on the situation. But if something can be done easily, quickly or inexpensively then it should be seen as a reasonable adjustment.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- teachers being asked to make sure that they face your child when speaking so that your child can lip-read
- basic deaf awareness training being organised for all staff
- your child being given extra time to complete an exam, because they take longer to process what they read
- a college or university providing a notetaker to help your child.

You should never be charged for any reasonable adjustment, nor asked if you can use your child's Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment to cover the cost.

Auxiliary aids and services

In England, Scotland and Wales, under the Equality Act, education settings and local authorities must also provide 'auxiliary aids' as reasonable adjustments. The term 'auxiliary aids' covers any aid or service that might help your child and includes, for example, radio aids. We believe that local authorities should provide radio aids to all deaf children who may benefit from one, including in the early years.

Unfortunately, there isn't a similar requirement in Northern Ireland.

What if a reasonable adjustment can't be made?

In some cases, it's not possible for an education setting to make a reasonable adjustment because it would be too expensive or difficult to do so. In these cases, the law says that the local authority may need to provide additional support themselves as a reasonable adjustment.

In other cases, the fact that an education setting can't make reasonable adjustments may mean that your child meets the threshold for an Education, Health and Care plan (England), a statement of special educational needs (Northern Ireland or Wales) or a coordinated support plan (Scotland). These are legal documents that set out the support that your child needs. They are usually given to a child where they need more support than a nursery, school or college can reasonably provide. They are not available to young people in higher education.



Supporting your child's education

✓ Moving to another school or college this September (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

If your child has a statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and is due to move to another school in September, the local authority must have issued a new statement/EHC plan naming the new school by 15 February. For young people moving to a further education college (England only), the deadline is 31 March. You can find more information at www.ndcs.org.uk/specialeducationalneeds.

✓ Moving on from school

If your child will be leaving school in summer 2019, you should start discussing their options now, including university, careers and apprenticeships. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool.

✓ Exam access arrangements

Is your child taking exams this spring and summer? Read how exam access arrangements can help deaf learners access exams fairly at www.ndcs.org.uk/exams.



What to do if you think discrimination has taken place

In most cases, you should be able to work with your child's school to resolve problems and concerns. However, if you need to take matters further, you have the right to appeal or make a claim to a specialist independent Tribunal. There are different Tribunals for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

You can do this as well as, or instead of, making a complaint to the school, but you need to remember that time limits usually apply. Any claims to the Tribunal must be made within six months of when the discrimination happened.

Top tips

- If possible always raise any concerns you have informally before making a formal complaint.
- Sometimes just showing that you're aware of your legal rights can mean that the education setting will take your concerns more seriously.
- Keep a record of phone calls and copies of any letters, emails, meeting notes or reports to do with the complaint.
- Try to stay calm and polite. It will be easier for other people to dismiss your concerns if they feel that you're being aggressive or unreasonable.

➔ For more information on the Equality Act, as well as template letters, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/equalityact.

To find out more about special or additional needs, have a look at www.ndcs.org.uk/specialeducationalneeds.



Staying safe with home alerting systems

As your children get older you'll want to see them develop into independent young people in control of their own lives and safety. A home alerting system can be useful to let them know what's going on around the house and prepare them for safely living on their own.

Alerting or paging systems are made up of transmitter products and receiver products. Transmitters send signals to the receivers, which pick up the signal and alert the deaf person using light, sound or vibration. For example, when detecting smoke, a smoke alarm transmitter sends a signal to a receiver such as an alarm clock. The alarm clock then alerts the deaf person with a specific light, sound or vibration pattern. This pattern is different from alerting to other transmitters, such as the doorbell. There are many different transmitters and receivers, and you can mix and match.

The Bellman Visit alerting system is available to borrow from our Technology Test Drive.* Jessie (17), Lily (16) and their parents tried it out. Jessie and Lily are both profoundly deaf and wear cochlear implants.

How did you find setting up and using the system?

Lily: Really easy! It's one of the biggest things I loved about it. As soon as I took it out of the box it worked. The instruction manuals are very visual. The only complication is if you live next door to another household that uses the same system you'd then need to change the radio frequency on which your system works.



Parents: Lily set up the system on her own. She was explaining it to us and we were really impressed; it looked really simple. I think that young deaf children could use it easily; it's very family-friendly.

Which parts of the system did you use?

Jessie: I used the pager receiver to be alerted to things. You can clip it to your belt so it's not really visible which is nice. It didn't feel like a 'piece of deaf tech'. I used it with the push-button transmitter. It looks like a doorbell push-button, so you can put it at the door and be alerted when someone presses it. My parents also used the push-button in the house to 'call' me, so they don't have to text me or come to find me. I like being able to go around the house and be notified of the doorbell or when my parents want me! I didn't use the receiver that alerts me to messages or calls on my mobile phone as I'm always by my phone.

Lily: I tried the alarm clock, the pager and the wrist receiver. The wrist receiver is comfy to wear and it's portable and works with vibration like the pager but I prefer the pager because it's practical: I can easily clip it on and off. The push-button transmitter can alert multiple receivers at the same time, so my sister could wear the pager and I could wear the wrist receiver or I could get another pager. You feel the vibration and then you're like, "Oh I need to go downstairs." It's really good to let you know when tea is ready! I can relax around the house and not need to put my processors on. It saves my parents a lot of hassle as they find it quite annoying when I don't put my processors on! I also like the flash receiver to alert me to things. It's like a siren. It flashes a bright white light but there are individual small lights which flash different colours depending on what it's alerting you to. I wouldn't use the portable receiver as I find it a bit clunky and not very subtle.

How did it help you?

Jessie: I like knowing what's happening when I'm around the house. I feel a lot safer and it reduces stress and anxiety across the whole family. I'm going to university next year and will move away from home and my biggest concern is if there's a fire and I'm alone. This system is designed to help someone live on their own. I'd like to have the alarm clock and pager connected to a smoke alarm and the doorbell. It will ease my worries and I'd feel more ready for living alone.



Lily: The vibrating alarm clock has made my mornings so much easier as I can take control of waking up and my parents can relax, knowing I'll wake up. I've been telling my friends about it and they think it's cool that the alarm clock vibrates. If we had the smoke alarm I could take my processors off and still be safe. My parents wouldn't need to have people over to look after us when they're out. It would make life relatively easy. I'd like to have two or three push-buttons and receivers, including one by the bathroom – so important for privacy!

Parents: We'd like to purchase this system as it's made our life at home so much easier. When dinner is ready we used the push-button and they'd receive an alert and come down to get food. The alarm clock supports their independence as we don't have to wake them up. It has showed us how independent the girls could be. We like the idea of the smoke alarm as it means we can go out and leave Lily and Jessie in the house and they will be safe. We also feel reassured about their capacity to cope living alone as they get older.

*For safety reasons we don't include the smoke transmitter in the Bellman Visit system on our loan service.



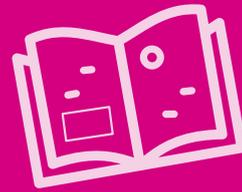
The Bellman Visit alerting system is the alerting system most commonly provided by local councils but other systems are available. To find out more about your rights to technology from your local council see www.ndcs.org.uk/rights.

For more information on 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.



Have a look at our video in which the Bellman system features: scan the QR code with your smartphone or go to www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam and search 'hear alarms'.





Reviews



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

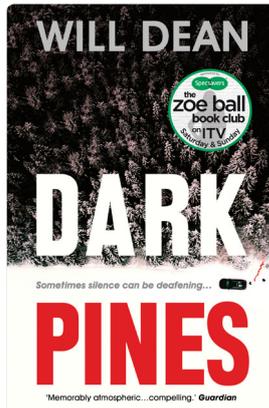


➔ Would you or your child like to write a review for Families magazine? Email magazine@ndcs.org.uk.

➔ Key

This resource could be most suitable for the following ages:

- 0-4
- 5-10
- 11-14
- 15-18
- 19-25



Dark Pines
Written by Will Dean

19-25

Book
Available from **Amazon**
£6.33 (paperback)
99p (Kindle Edition)

In many ways *Dark Pines* by Will Dean is your traditional Swedish crime novel. With a unique setting, confident characters and a gritty crime at its heart, it's a bold debut. Yet perhaps more unconventional is the protagonist, Tuva Moodyson, a journalist for the local paper, who is deaf.

Often described as an invisible disability, seeing how writers represent deafness is always interesting. In this case, Tuva's hearing aids are constantly mentioned across the 300-or-so page novel. Sometimes it's relevant but in other instances it serves as an unnecessary reminder.

Throw in some other characters – of which there's a unique bunch, including a creepy taxi driver, eccentric ghostwriter and haunting doll makers – and you not only get a classic whodunnit but also some interesting conversations with hearing characters who are far from deaf aware.

The over-the-top fascination with deafness and the backhanded compliment 'you talk well for a deaf person' both make an appearance but are quickly challenged in Dean's writing. While working on the book, the author consulted with blogger Deafinitely Girly and the research shows.

The same goes for the setting. Based in a fictional forest, it's a landscape familiar to Dean, an Englishman who now lives in rural Sweden. However it isn't long before he runs out of imaginative ways of describing the surroundings, with similes getting more far-fetched and bizarre as the story drags on.

Like most crime fiction, *Dark Pines* is slow to develop with a lot of repetition to make up for it. But when the story picks up pace in the second half of the book it becomes a gritty, thrilling and worthwhile read.

I'd give the book three stars out of five.
Liam (21) who is mildly deaf.

Liam



Elephant and the Lost Blanket

Written and illustrated by Alex Naidoo
National Deaf Children's Society, 2018

Elephant takes her special blue blanket with her everywhere. It's her favourite thing in the whole world. So when it goes missing in the park one day, Elephant is desperate to find it. Her friends come to the rescue and help her search, but all is not as it seems...

Following the success of our two books for children aged 4–7, *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue* and *Daisy & Ted's Awesome Adventures*, we've launched our third book and this time it's for little ones aged 0–5. We think it's important for deaf children to see themselves reflected in the books they read even from a young age, so we've created the perfect book for young children with deaf characters they can identify with.

0–4

5–10

Book

Available from www.ndcs.org.uk/elephant

£6.99

I think this is a really good book. I like how simple it is; there's not too much going on in the story or on each of the pages, making it easier to read and show my daughters. Both of them are at different stages so it's great to read the words to my older daughter who's able to follow the story more and point to the elephant or butterfly for the younger one. I also like how it's clear to see Elephant has hearing aids but it's not made into a big issue. It also shows her being able to do things like other children who are hearing.

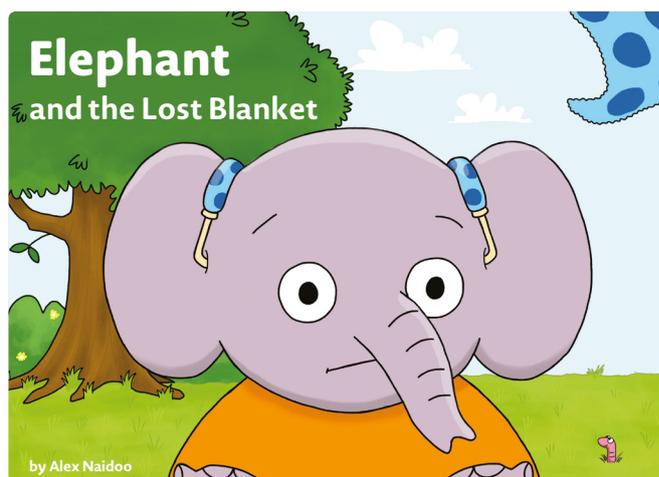


Mia and Ava

It would be good to see more sound words in the book, for example when Elephant rushes down to breakfast there's the word 'crunch' but that isn't shown anywhere else in the book. I feel it could be added to the page where Elephant is checking her boots are still good for jumping and her blanket blows away, for example under the blanket the word 'whoosh' or when giraffe is going down the slide 'weee'. As a parent whose daughters go to speech therapy, these types of words are brilliant for keeping children engaged.

Throughout the book I also thought it would be good to see signs so I was pleased when I got to the end to see the top tips for reading and also the video link for bringing signs into the book to make it come to life.

Missy-Anne, mum to Ava (2) and Mia (8 months) who are both moderately deaf.



Elephant and the Lost Blanket is about a young elephant who loses her favourite blanket during a trip to the park with her friends.

The book is set in a child-friendly environment with the contents of the book featuring everyday occurrences in a child's life.

The book is useful for developing language with deaf children, particularly as it includes words for objects, animals, activities and the emotions that they learn throughout their early years.

The book is handy for reading at home and nursery and is useful for prompting children to explore the sounds and noises that the characters would make. It's vibrant, colourful, exciting and packed full of illustrations and words that can bring the story to life. It also includes some useful tips to make sure that deaf children can access and learn as much from the book as possible.

It's reassuring for deaf children to read stories where the main characters wear hearing aids/cochlear implants and this provides a valuable talking point when narrating the story. I would recommend this book for all children, but especially to parents, carers, teachers and supporting staff of deaf children as a fun way to learn and develop language.

Stuart, dad to Lois (3) who is profoundly deaf.

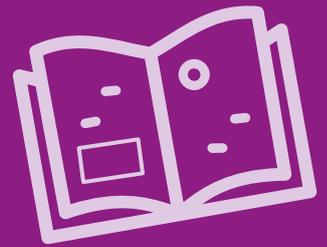


Lois





Resources



Helpline



“ My daughter is severely deaf and has been receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA). She’s turning 16 soon and has received a letter asking her to apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Will she be successful?

PIP is a benefit paid to disabled adults and young people aged 16 and over. Some deaf young people can get PIP – it depends on how much their deafness affects their life. It can be more difficult to get than DLA and it’s assessed very differently.

Your daughter will receive a PIP questionnaire, *How Your Disability Affects You*. It’s important that it’s returned by the date given otherwise her DLA payments will stop. If she makes the claim for PIP in time, her DLA will continue until her PIP claim has been dealt with. If she needs extra time, she must contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to ask for an extension before the deadline.

We have useful PIP information for young people at www.buzz.org.uk (search PIP) and you can have a look at our factsheet for parents, *Supporting Your Child with Filling in the ‘How Your Disability Affects You’ questionnaire (PIP2)*. Both can be downloaded from www.ndcs.org.uk/pip.

Our factsheet for parents goes through the questions asked in the PIP questionnaire with guidance on the information needed when responding to each question. This should be used alongside the information booklet that will be provided with the questionnaire.

Although it’s really important to ensure the claim is returned in time, your daughter doesn’t have to complete it all at once. Doing a bit at a time, taking breaks or doing the easier questions first may help her complete it without feeling too stressed or overwhelmed.

It’s likely that your daughter will also be asked to attend a face-to-face assessment. There’s more information about this at www.ndcs.org.uk/PIPclaim.

If her claim is turned down, get in touch with our Freephone Helpline as quickly as possible as we may be able to help with challenging the decision.

What’s new?

 **Supporting the Achievement of Deaf Children who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

What type of information is it? Printed guide (available to download or order) and video available at www.ndcs.org.uk/eal.

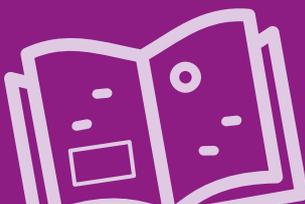
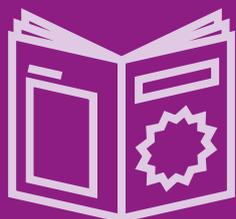
Who’s it for? Education professionals working with deaf children who use English as a second language.

What’s it about? Information on the specific challenges facing deaf children who use English as an additional language and suggestions of teaching strategies and practical steps education professionals can take to support them.

You might also like: Resources to share with teachers (www.ndcs.org.uk/resourcesforteachers), a section on our new website bringing together information you could pass to teachers and other school or college staff to help them support your child.



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



Ali gets Hearing Aids, Going to the Hearing Clinic, Harvey gets Grommets

What type of information is it? Three updated comics, available to download or order from www.ndcs.org.uk/resources.

Who's it for? Primary school children.

What's it about? Each comic uses fun pictures and simple text to explain what to expect from a visit to the hearing clinic and what happens when getting grommets or hearing aids.



You might also like: Our other comic, *Chloe gets Cochlear Implants*, available to download or order from www.ndcs.org.uk/resources.

Mild Hearing Loss

What type of information is it? Printed booklet, available to order or download from www.ndcs.org.uk/resources.

Who's it for? Education professionals in nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools.

What's it about? This is an update of an existing booklet explaining the signs and impact of mild hearing loss in children. It also gives deaf awareness tips, suggestions on adapting teaching strategies and signposts to more information.



You might also like: Our video with five tips for teachers on supporting children with a mild hearing loss, at www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam (search for 'mild').



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, families to share their stories or simply tell us what else they need. Go to www.ndcs.org.uk/soundout for more information.

 Once you've set up a new account on our website you can download or order any of our publications for free from www.ndcs.org.uk/resources. Or you can contact our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880 or helpline@ndcs.org.uk.

In your area

The power of many

Kris, mum to Thomas (10) who is severely to profoundly deaf, is so pleased she overcame her initial nerves to join Surrey Deaf Children's Society. Now she's been a member for 10 years and is the chair, she explains why her local group has given both her and her son a whole new friendship group.



Kris and Thomas

How did you come to be involved with your local deaf children's society?

When Thomas was born, I started looking for information to learn as much as I could about deafness and what that would mean for him and us. I joined the National Deaf Children's Society and then I heard about our local group, Surrey Deaf Children's Society. I decided to go along to a coffee morning when my son was only four months old.

How was that first coffee morning for you?

It was daunting because I didn't know anyone but the people hosting were so friendly and welcoming. I was immediately made to feel so comfortable. They listened to our story and were generally just friendly mums! I remember hearing one mum call upstairs to her deaf son and I was amazed that he could hear her. It was all so new to me, but just little things like that gave me such hope. For the next couple of years we dipped in and out of events but once we started to get to know people better, we started making friends and going to a lot more events.

What was your main reason for joining your local group?

We wanted Thomas to grow up seeing other deaf children locally. Additionally it was to meet other parents in a similar situation to us – people we could connect with when our local friends didn't quite understand the logistics of having a deaf child and all the appointments involved.

How has your involvement in Surrey Deaf Children's Society changed over the years?

Over the years (10 now!) my involvement has evolved from coming to the occasional event to joining the committee and now I'm the chair. I'm so passionate about families coming together as I know how invaluable it has been and how, 10 years down the track, we've all benefited so much from being involved in the group, regardless of our level of involvement.





Tell us about one of your recent events...

We recently returned from a trip to the New Forest, where over 20 families got together. We have a super group of teenagers who spent the whole time hanging out together, a strong group of 9–12 year olds, most of whom have been friends since they met as babies and toddlers, and a large group of younger kids, toddlers and babies who are our fabulous next generation coming through.

Why do you think the local deaf children's society is so important to Thomas?

I just can't stress enough the benefits of deaf children having a deaf peer group and for siblings to be able to make connections too. It's by coming regularly to events that the children are able to build on these friendships year after year. And an added bonus for us? As parents we're making

friendships that are lasting too. We all start out not knowing each other very well but as you meet up at events and get chatting, those friendships develop just like the children's.

Why else would you recommend joining your local group?

Besides friendships, being involved in a local group can provide families with support, either in person or online. That can be enough for some people. Just having a collective group to run ideas by or to ask for advice about support, equipment, and audiology and education issues can be invaluable. I urge all parents to become involved in their local deaf children's society in whichever manner they like. Although, like most local groups, we're always looking for more parent volunteers to join the committee or to help at events, being involved can take many forms.

And what does Thomas think?

I really enjoy the fun activities we do, getting together again with my friends from Surrey Deaf Children's Society. I also like helping out and playing with the younger children. If they don't know what's going on, I like to explain it to them. The bigger kids are good friends and they always treat me kindly. I especially like it when my dad dresses up as the Elf at the New Year's Party, and of course my mum is the chair so I get to go to all the events for my age. I like helping her out too!



If you'd like to find groups near you, take a look at www.ndcs.org.uk/findalocalgroup.

In your area

Events

Events for 8–18 year olds

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

Life Skills and Development Adventure Weekend

(ages 14–18)
South West, England
7–9 June

Get Outdoors and Adventurous Weekend

(ages 14–18)
North East, England
7–9 June

Interested in one of our youth events?

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

Woodland Adventure

(ages 14–18)
East, England
28–30 June

South Downs Summer Adventure

(ages 8–15)
South East, England
5–9 August

Stand Up Paddleboard Lakeside Adventure

(ages 8–15)
North West, England
12–16 August

Summer Outdoor Adventure in Devon

(ages 8–15)
South West, England
19–23 August

Big Scottish Sleepover

(ages 8–13)
Killin, Scotland
1–2 June

Summer Holiday Scotland

(ages 8–18)
Lochgoilhead, Scotland
22–26 July

Adventure and Explore in Wales

(ages 8–15)
South Wales
29 July–2 August



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.

Leicester, England
16 March

Birmingham, England
Date: Contact us for details

London, England
Date: Contact us for details

Doncaster, England
Date: Contact us for details

➔ We hold free events all over the UK for deaf children, young people and their families. For more information and how to book go to www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

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.

Milton Keynes, England
23–24 March

London, England
22–23 June

Manchester, England
11–12 May

Glasgow, Scotland
27–28 April



Getting ready for school

Are you thinking ahead to your child's first day at school? Our education days can help you choose the right school for your child and make sure that vital support is in place from the start. Dad, Ben, shares his experience of our event.

Byron is three years old and has a moderate hearing loss. We signed up to the education day because we were hoping to get an insight into how schools can support a child with a hearing loss.

At the start of the day each family shared their different needs. We then heard from a parent whose son is deaf and is doing well at university. It really helps to put people's minds at ease.

It's so crucial to know your rights and what your child is entitled to. Some schools may not know about deaf children's rights around exam adjustments, radio aids or access to a Teacher of the Deaf. We learnt that schools have a responsibility to provide reasonable adjustments for deaf children and about the Equality Act and the Disability Discrimination Act. It was really useful to hear about the small changes that schools can make to improve acoustics and make it easier for deaf children, such as having carpeted floors or putting rubber tips on the bottom of chair and table legs.

The speakers and National Deaf Children's Society staff were fantastic. They answered every single question that was asked by the people there.

It was also great to meet other families with similar experiences and terrific to see that their children are doing so well.

We would certainly recommend the education day to other parents of deaf children as it's important to know your rights. I'm a primary school teacher and I still learnt a lot at the event so I'm sure other parents must have learnt lots too! It spurred us on to start looking for a placement for Byron in September and we've now applied for a lovely small school for him.

Byron is doing absolutely fantastically at the moment in all areas and has lots of friends. We just want him to be happy at school.



Our education days cover everything from your child's legal rights to how technology can help in the classroom and local support services you can use. To find out more and book your place go to www.ndcs.org.uk/events.



Byron



We learnt that schools have a responsibility to provide reasonable adjustments for deaf children...



In your area

Mythbusting

A visit from our Roadshow to your child's school, college or family or community event can help bust some of the myths surrounding deafness...

.....

Our Roadshow brings information and technology to the heart of the community to challenge common misconceptions about deafness and help to improve understanding. Here are some of the common myths we help to dispel:

Myth: Deaf people can't enjoy music

The Roadshow is equipped with all the latest technology for deaf people to listen to music, as well as vibrating alarm clocks, flashing doorbells and radio aids, all of which deaf children and young people can try out during the visit.

Myth: Deaf people can't drive

Our Logistics Officer, Steven, who is profoundly deaf himself, drives our eight-tonne Roadshow bus all over the UK, showing deaf young people and their hearing friends that driving is definitely something a deaf person can do!



Myth: All deaf people use sign language

Our team of outreach officers, who are all deaf themselves, have a range of different communication methods, including speech and sign. They deliver deaf awareness information in class or assembly, to help hearing children better communicate with their deaf friends, as well as delivering workshops for deaf children on lots of different topics – emotional health, deaf identity, online safety and options for the future. We have interpreters supporting their communication at every visit, helping people to understand that everyone is different.

Myth: Wearing hearing aids or cochlear implants means a deaf person can hear the same as a hearing person

The Roadshow team helps other young people to understand the challenges faced by deaf children and young people with hearing aids and cochlear implants in school – how a noisy classroom or lunch hall, lots of people talking at once or not looking at them when they are talking can make it really difficult to communicate. We then look at ways to help break down any communication barriers, allowing deaf young people to feel more included.



To find out more about our Roadshow and to book a visit for your child's school or community please visit www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow.

Get involved

A problem shared...

Poppy (4) is profoundly deaf in her right ear and has glue ear in her left. Mum Cathryn decided to share her story with the media after being told Poppy had to wait six months for a new earmould, which led to an appearance on *Channel 5 News*.



Poppy



Could you help bring our campaigns to life? Sharing your experiences with the media can help to encourage services and government to improve policy and practice for deaf children. Our Media team will always get your agreement before sharing your details with the media and will support you through the process. If TV isn't for you there are other options, such as appearing in print articles. You can change your mind at any time – no explanations needed.

What made you want to share your story?

We want the best for Poppy and were worried about her starting school without a working hearing aid – we were told she'd have to wait six months for a new earmould at a time when she needed it most. Poppy's teacher noticed problems with her hearing aid and that she was struggling at school. I'd written to the paediatric audiology service about the delayed appointment but had heard nothing. A week later an email from the National Deaf Children's Society arrived asking people to complete a survey about their experience of audiology services. I completed it and was then contacted by their Media team and asked if I'd consider talking to the media. I thought 'why not?'

It feels lonely being a parent of a deaf child sometimes and I wanted other parents in the same situation to know they weren't alone.

Did you have any concerns before doing it?

I was a bit nervous and worried about sounding silly – but in the end it was fun! Poppy loved it! It was an adventure for her and she liked seeing herself on TV. We sat at home and watched it together and now she tells everyone she meets that she's been on TV!



Were there any benefits to Poppy of sharing your story?

I'm really glad I did it; the TV coverage really helped to move things along. Two weeks after the piece aired on *Channel 5 News* my husband was contacted to rearrange her appointment. Now that Poppy has her aid working properly she's doing much better at school. This week she came home and showed me that she'd learnt to write her name!

What advice would you give to other parents who are thinking about talking to the media?

It's fine to be nervous, but the people from *Channel 5* were really lovely! The process was really easy and we didn't have to go far for the filming as it was at Poppy's school. The film crew organised everything with the school, who were happy to help. We had a great result and I hope it's helped other parents watching to know there are others in the same situation.



To find out more, get in touch with us at yourstories@ndcs.org.uk.

Get your bake on for Deaf Awareness Week



Deaf Awareness Week (6–12 May) is going to be sweeter than ever this year. Get involved by holding a Big Cake Bake in aid of the National Deaf Children's Society.

Baking a difference

You can hold a bake sale anywhere where people like cake! Every donation helps us provide a lifeline to deaf children, young people and their families. Our free Big Cake Bake fundraising pack has everything you need so you'll be sure to get a great rise on your fundraising totals!

We have some sensational celebrity recipes, including this mouth-wateringly simple Normandy Tart from Prue Leith.



Prue Leith's Normandy Tart

You will need:

Pastry

8oz plain flour
5oz butter
1 egg
Pinch salt
2oz caster sugar

Almond filling

6oz butter
6oz caster sugar
8oz ground almonds
2 eggs
1 tablespoon Calvados,
Kirsch or whatever you like
Few drops almond essence

Topping

3–5 eating apples,
depending on size
Half a jar smooth apricot jam,
warmed with a tablespoon of
water to a thick syrup.

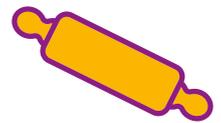


Image: Prue: My All-time Favourite Recipes



Method:

- Set the oven at 200C or gas mark 6 and put a metal tray in it to heat.
- Whizz all the pastry ingredients together until the mix forms a ball. Roll it out between two sheets of polythene until it's big enough to line a 10-inch flan ring. Chill for 30 minutes. If the dish is porcelain, bake the pastry blind. If it's metal, don't bother.
- Whizz the almond filling ingredients together in the food processor and then spread it on the pastry.
- Peel the apples if you like, but there's no need. Core them and cut them in half from the top to the stalk end. Slice each half-apple finely. Arrange them on the filling.
- Set the tart in the middle of the hot oven and bake it for 15 minutes. Remove it from the oven.
- Paint it with hot jam and return it to the oven.
- Turn the oven down to 180C or gas mark 4 and bake the tart for half an hour until the filling is firm and brown.
- Remove it from the oven and give it another brush with the jam.



To find more recipes and sign up today visit www.ndcs.org.uk/bigcakebake.

Send a photo of your cakes to community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk to be in with a chance of winning a prize!

Prudential RideLondon -Surrey 100



4 Aug 2019

Experience this epic event as part of #TeamNDCS and you'll receive:

- guaranteed entry in this sell-out event
- an exclusive cycling jersey
- one-to-one support from our friendly events team
- a family-friendly cheer point, to give you the support you deserve
- a post-race picnic to celebrate your success.



Event
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£30!



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When I'm a

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

grown-up

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



I'm an English teacher because...

I enjoy sharing my passion for stories, poetry and creative writing. I volunteered for youth groups before university and this ignited my desire to be a teacher.

My first language is British Sign Language (BSL) so studying for a degree in English Literature was challenging. After graduation I moved to Thailand to get experience in the classroom. It was difficult to teach without BSL support but I enjoyed myself.

I moved back home to train as an English teacher to pupils aged 11–17. I'm in my probationary year and, as a BSL user, it's been difficult teaching in a mainstream school and can be quite isolating but my mentor has been extremely supportive.

I'm profoundly deaf and wear a cochlear implant. I speak when teaching but use a BSL interpreter to translate what the children are saying.

I recently set up a BSL club to encourage hearing pupils and school staff to learn.

Jamie Dow



I'm a vet because...

No two days are ever the same and I never stop learning. Although I love working with animals, the most rewarding part is working with owners to make sure each animal gets the best care.

At school I was told it would probably be too hard for me to become a vet because I have 60dB hearing loss in each ear. My parents were incredibly supportive and my mum, in particular, encouraged me to aim high.

I've been a vet for three years and I'm now an intern at a referral hospital treating dogs and cats. It's the first step to becoming a specialist.

Situations where I can't lip-read are difficult, including where masks are worn during surgery or when the lights have to be turned off for an examination. When I'm consulting I face the person speaking to me and it's usually quiet (except for the occasional barking dog!). I have a stethoscope with amplifiers so I can listen to my patient's heart and lungs.

Lauren Hamstead



I'm a producer, director and performer because...

I'm passionate about all stages of the production process and about improving access for the Deaf community.

I run my own production company and I'm involved in inclusive theatre workshops and performances that improve access for Deaf people.

I'm profoundly deaf and a BSL user. I use a BSL interpreter through the Access to Work scheme and also use SignVideo – a video relay service using iPad, mobile or laptop to communicate with businesses and service providers.

Recently I was named in Bristol's 100 Most Influential Black and Minority Ethnic People, out of 500 people in Bristol. I was so honoured to hear this fantastic news.

David Ellington



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.



**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**



Doncaster School for the Deaf

Established 1829

Leger Way, Doncaster DN2 6AY

jgoodman@ddt-deaf.org.uk | www.deaf-school.org.uk

01302 386733



Thinking about the right secondary school for your child?

We offer a full national curriculum in a specialist setting without the common barriers to learning often experienced by deaf children in a mainstream setting.

Find your feet academically; be part of a large group of young people just like you; find the confidence to 'set your sights high'.

For more information or to arrange an individual visit, please contact **Debbie Jacobs**: (d.jacobs@maryhare.org.uk or **01635 244215**) or visit our website www.maryhare.org.uk

Securing the future of deaf children and young people

