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Using radio aids in the early years



National Deaf Children's Society

Spring 2018  
Issue 48

# families

## Finding Florence's confidence

**“ I visited a few universities and all of them told me my options for support. ”**





*This is a warm, friendly school where young people are cared for exceptionally well. They enjoy each other's company, show exemplary behaviour and have trusting relationships with staff. They engage in a wide range of activities within the school and local community, such as swimming and cricket.*

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Pupils and students can personalise their bedrooms. Each house has a clean, homely living area with activities, computer consoles



and games that they can use. All residential pupils and students have the use of the school gym, the floodlit ball court and the all-weather floodlit football pitch under staff supervision.

Care staff support all age groups to make the most of facilities in Brighton, and regular outings to the park, beach, cinema, bowling and to eat out are planned and organised with pupils.

### Save the date: Bike Ride and Summer Fete at Hamilton Lodge

23rd June 2018

Our summer fete is open to all and school tours are available. It will be held on our on-site playing fields in Brighton between 11am -4pm. There are refreshments and lots of free fun activities for all ages and abilities.

The Bike Ride finish line is at our Summer Fete – it is a long but lovely bike ride through the Surrey and Sussex countryside. To book or for more details on the bike ride please email [fundraising@hamiltonlsc.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@hamiltonlsc.co.uk).



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# My deafness didn't stop me...

## ...starring in a TV advert



**GEORGE (8), WHO IS PROFOUNDLY DEAF**, was very excited to be chosen last year to star in supermarket chain Asda's Christmas advert.


After spotting an advert on Facebook, George's mum Sarah sent some photos of him to modelling agency Zebedee Management, a new agency set up to support children and adults with disabilities get into acting and modelling. "George has loved modelling for them," Sarah says. "When he was chosen for the advert he was very excited he'd be on TV."


In the advert, George, who has cochlear implants, can be seen judging presents on a panel with other children using big green and red buttons. George has dyspraxia and sensory processing difficulties so found parts of the five-hour filming challenging. "He worked really hard

with the other child actors to keep up and process the director's requests," Sarah says. "At points, he got his red and green mixed up and found it difficult to keep in time but he did persevere.

**When he was chosen for the advert, he was very excited he'd be on TV.**

"Since starring in the advert George has grown in confidence and enjoyed the attention he's been given by his hearing peers. He had the advert shown at school on the big screen and friends keep telling him when they've seen it on TV or at the cinema. He's even done a few autographs!"

Now George is applying for other modelling jobs and the family are hoping we might see him on TV again soon. "I just want him to be happy and secure acting or modelling for as long as he wants to," Sarah says. "I feel the role helps others see that anything can be possible." 

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



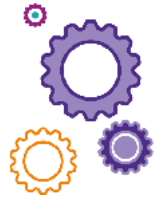
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# families



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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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**Issy's story**  
why she chose  
to sail across the  
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# Hello



This issue looks at the use of radio aids in the early years and the newly increased evidence of their benefits. Read four-year-old Chloe's story on pages 12–13 to find out why her parents recommend the use of a radio aid from as young an age as possible and pages 42–43 explain the benefits and the research behind this in more detail.

Is your child thinking of going to university? Have a look at pages 19–21 where Florence tells the story of her journey through to higher education and the support she receives there.

If your child is part of any clubs or extra-curricular activities then we have advice from parents on how to make sure they are deaf-friendly on pages 26–27.

Finally, you may remember we asked deaf young people to share their ideas on the technology of the future last year. They came up with some amazing suggestions and you can read about the winners' ideas on pages 32–33.

Enjoy the springtime and this issue and please send any feedback to [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk).

*Karen*

**Karen Harlow, Editor**

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

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# NEWS



## Deaf young people campaigning in Northern Ireland



Last year we were joined at party conferences by Aliyah and Alanis, deaf young people who have been members of our

Young People's Advisory Board (YAB). We go to party conferences to speak to politicians about the issues facing deaf children and young people. As part of the YAB, Aliyah and Alanis helped design the Right to Sign campaign and were very happy to come and tell politicians in Northern Ireland all about it. They had a real impact on everyone they spoke to and we'll be chasing up the politicians to make sure they follow through on the promises they made.

More conferences are coming up soon, so if you have ideas for our meetings with politicians or want to get involved, email [nioffice@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:nioffice@ndcs.org.uk).



## Support for families in Bradford

We've been working with families in the Bradford area\* to run a number of events including a successful Family Sign Language course, hosted by the Nashqbandia Islamia Mosque, where families with deaf children of all ages were able to find easier ways to communicate at home. We also ran a four-week parenting course called Raising a Deaf Child at the mosque, with Punjabi speaking tutors, to help parents feel more confident about their child's needs. Feedback was really positive and all families, no matter what their first language, were able to let us know how the course helped them.

More parents are now attending the mosque and coming together regularly to meet and support each other, meaning their children have more opportunities to get involved in their community. Recently the Bradford and Rochdale local deaf children's societies organised a circus trip where children and families had fun and made new friends.

To check out events running in your area have a look at [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events).

\*This project has been funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund.

## Papun learns to communicate

Papun (14) from India was identified as profoundly deaf at two years old when his parents noticed their youngest son wasn't reacting to any sound. He attended the village school but, despite the teacher's best intentions, was unable to learn or communicate.

In 2013 Lower Income People's Involvement for Community Action (LIPICA), a partner of our international arm Deaf Child Worldwide, met Papun, then 10, and found out he didn't know his name and couldn't count.

Over the next three years, our trained community-based rehabilitation staff supported Papun to develop his communication and everyday skills and he can now communicate and say his name. Papun and his family are very grateful for Deaf Child Worldwide and LIPICA's support to transform their lives.

Deaf Child Worldwide gives vital support in East Africa, Latin America and South Asia, focusing on communities where the need is greatest. Working with partner organisations, we ensure that deaf children and young people are fully included in family, education and community life. Find out more at [www.deafchildworldwide.org](http://www.deafchildworldwide.org).



## Could you volunteer on our summer residential events?

Each summer we run a number of exciting and challenging week-long residential events for deaf children and young people aged 8–18, with activities ranging from outdoor sports, arts and crafts, swimming and performing arts. This programme is run by our skilled staff supported by enthusiastic trained volunteers.

We're now recruiting summer residential volunteers to support this programme. We'd like to hear from both deaf and hearing people interested in volunteering with deaf children and young people and you must be:

- over 18 years old and resident in the UK
- competent in British Sign Language (BSL) up to a minimum of Level 3
- free for at least one whole week over the summer – from Friday afternoon until the following Sunday evening
- full of stamina and determination to volunteer on a very busy programme for a whole week
- happy to share accommodation with other volunteers
- free to attend one of our compulsory weekend training events in Birmingham (all expenses paid) on either Saturday 12 – Sunday 13 May or Saturday 23 – Sunday 24 June.

Volunteering is a great experience; very challenging and very rewarding – you'll make a real difference to deaf children and young people.

Email [volunteer@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@ndcs.org.uk) to request an application pack.

We're committed to keeping children safe. This is a regulated volunteer role so all applicants will require an enhanced DBS check.

## Comment

**Tell us what you think by 18 March for a chance to win a £250 gift voucher**

It's so important to us that the work we do is in your best interests and that we address issues that matter to you. That's why we ask you for feedback. We've just launched our membership survey, which is the perfect opportunity for you to tell us how you feel about the work we're doing and the support you get, or don't get, from services. The survey is open to all parents and carers of deaf children and young people – including those with a mild hearing loss or a hearing loss in just one ear.

What will we do with the results? That's simple. We'll anonymise them, analyse them and use them to continue to improve what we do for you. We'll share a link to the survey report on our website along with our plans for what we'll do next.

To complete the survey please go to [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/membership-survey-2018](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/membership-survey-2018). The deadline is midnight on Sunday 18 March. Everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a prize draw to win a £250 gift voucher.

Thank you in advance. I really appreciate you taking the time to give us your feedback and I look forward to seeing the responses.

Susan



**Susan Daniels OBE**  
Chief Executive



Our new 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!

All money  
raised will help  
us create a  
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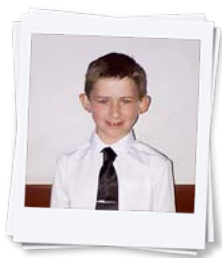
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# SUPERSTARS



**L**uke is profoundly deaf with bilateral cochlear implants. He's just taken part in International Dance Teachers' Association



(IDTA) ballroom dance qualifiers and made it through to the nationals in Blackpool in April. He's only been doing ballroom dancing since April 2016 and has really taken to it. We're extremely proud of him.

– Nichola, mum to Luke (7) who is profoundly deaf.

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

**B**rooke was diagnosed with moderate bilateral hearing loss when she was eight



years old. Despite being faced with new challenges she works so hard at her athletics and has recently been selected to represent her county at regional finals indoor athletics. She doesn't let anything get in the way of her sport! We're super proud parents.

– Kaye, mum to Brooke (11) who is moderately deaf.

**R**yan was born with moderate to severe sensorineural deafness and has worn hearing aids since he was four weeks old.



He's brilliant at telling jokes and playing pranks. We're astounded by his ability every day and are confident he'll thrive in the future.

– Elaine, mum to Ryan (8) who is moderately to severely deaf.

**D**emi-May has mild to moderate hearing loss and has worn hearing aids since she was five years old. She was

nominated by her peers to be the Year 6 School Councillor and Playtime Friendship Buddy. I'm a super proud mummy as Demi-May doesn't let her hearing loss or her Asperger's get in her way – even when she has bad days.

– Ashleigh, mum to Demi-May (10) who is mildly to moderately deaf.

**E**shan was born with a profound hearing loss and has had so many tests and hospital admissions since. He had his bilateral cochlear implant surgery at nine months old and was switched on at 10 months. He's almost bridged the gap for comprehension to his hearing peers



and is doing extremely well. Everyone is so proud of him. The implants have brought out his cheeky character!

– Sunny and Sarika, parents to Eshan (17 months) who is profoundly deaf.

**E**mmett is five years old and has bilateral implants. He blows us away every day with his abilities and every time I worry something might stand in his way, he proves I have nothing to fear. He uses British Sign Language (BSL) and speech and his communication is fantastic. When he took part in his school nativity and all the children signed *Away in a Manger* there wasn't a dry eye in the house!



– Adrian, Dad to Emmett (5) who is profoundly deaf.

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

# Is sign language right for our family?



**I remember my heart skipping a beat when she signed her name for the first time...**

## Raising Nancy:

the ups and downs of parenting a deaf child



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

### ALTHOUGH NANCY HAS COCHLEAR IMPLANTS AND COMMUNICATES USING SPEECH,

we still sign at night to tell the monsters to go away, in the bath so she can mess about with her sisters and at the side of the pool during swimming lessons with her hearing teacher. I know she'll value British Sign Language (BSL) when she's older, but I was pretty overwhelmed when I first saw it being used. I wasn't convinced signing was for Nancy. I didn't know why she might need it...

Nancy was five months old when I first experienced BSL. We'd gone to a local playgroup for deaf children and it was the first time I'd been in a room with so many kids wearing hearing aids. The children were playing happily, the staff were signing and I didn't have a clue. I felt isolated and not part of what was going on. I sat in a corner, confused about what to do; struggling to breastfeed Nancy and Connie while Alice stuck to me like a limpet.

But I carried on going to this playgroup and got more used to seeing BSL in action. Thankfully, one day our Teacher of the Deaf asked Jean, a play worker who supports families with deaf awareness and BSL, to come to our home. Jean was deaf and didn't use her voice so all communication took place in sign. Nancy watched, mouth agape and I'll never forget thinking: "Nancy needs this visual language!" I was elated – I had to learn BSL.

I enrolled onto BSL Level 1 and persuaded Matt to do the same. It was like a military operation as my mum put the kids to bed every Monday while we drove off together to the lesson. Sometimes Matt's parents

would help too – we'd come home to stories of how the bathroom got drenched, no-one went to bed at the right time and there was a massive den of toys in the lounge! The commitment to attending a class every week was exhausting but at the end of the year we both passed an actual exam! OK, it was only Level 1 but it was a huge boost in confidence and made us feel we had access to a bigger world. Signing was the only way we could communicate with Nancy for the first two years. I remember my heart skipping a beat when she signed her name for the first time; the letter 'N'. New spoken words came with a sign too, like her brain was linking up the two languages to help her say them.

**BSL has been brilliant for our family...**

BSL has been brilliant for our family. When Nancy's processor batteries run out unexpectedly I can communicate with her, even with hands all muddled and brain on overdrive. I only remember a few words but they speak volumes. I had a lot of things going round in my head when I first encountered BSL but it turns out it wasn't anything to be afraid of. It's definitely proven its value and I look forward to Nancy continuing to learn so she can teach me some new signs! 🗣️

➔ Find out more about learning sign language at [www.ndcs.org.uk/signlanguage](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/signlanguage).

# The quest for BSL



**FINALLY! WE FINALLY MADE IT TO A BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) CLASS** and we've just passed the BSL Level 1 exam. Here's the tale of our long and challenging quest to get this far.

The quest began when our plucky heroine Molly was only three. A beneficent NHS fairy had bestowed upon us the Gift of Hearing Aids and finally she was learning to talk.

Our first challenge was the Mist of Confusion spoken by our well-meaning but misinformed Teacher of the Deaf who befuddled us by saying we'd never need BSL. Meanwhile Molly wanted time with her aids out, the family were having to shout to be heard, and the aids brought challenges of their own.

Later we were bogged down in the Swampy Marsh by the promise of Cued Speech when a teacher thought the whole class could learn as it would help with their phonics and reading. But this proved too difficult for the school and didn't help Molly to talk to other deaf people who used only BSL, or to communicate with us when her aids were out.

For a long time, dispirited and lost, we languished at the inn bemoaning our misfortune and not sure where to turn next.

Our heroine, now grown older, grew increasingly frustrated with the Curse of Miscommunication put upon her. She began to meet other children who were BSL users but she was unsure in which realm of the kingdom she belonged: the Realm of Spoken Word or the Realm of Signed Language. She became powerfully determined to belong to both.


With renewed zeal we set about our quest again. We searched the land

high and low to find a place for young questors to learn. Adult seekers could enter the Citadel of Local College, but under 16s were stopped by an impenetrable Veil of Inaccessibility. We sought courses in other places but none could we find.

We discovered the only way was to seek out the Wise Woman at the private BSL college and somehow find enough silver to pay.

We again journeyed far. Finally, defeating the dragon who guards the treasure, we found a way to apply to the kind Circle of Trustees at a local deaf charity. They bestowed upon us sufficient coins for both heroine and mother to learn.

Now we are apprentice to the Wise Woman of BSL. It's an adult class except for our heroine who valiantly manages a long day and late bedtime as the Wise Woman's magic works only in the evenings and her cave is not near. The Tea of Reviving and the Biscuits of Bliss help sustain Molly, and mother and daughter are content to have special time together before bringing the hard-won knowledge home to share with the good family.

As mother to our heroine I believe all children with a hearing loss should have the right to learn BSL, without having to go on a quest. Don't you agree? 

 **Do you know your rights when it comes to accessing BSL?**  
Download our factsheet *Know Your Rights: Getting support from your local council* from [www.ndcs.org.uk/rights](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/rights).

To find out more about learning BSL go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/BSL](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/BSL).

**Raising Molly:**  
navigating between the deaf and hearing worlds

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



**I believe all children with a hearing loss should have the right to learn BSL...**



# Radio aid rescue

Use of a radio aid from when she was only three months old has really helped give Chloe (now 4) more access to sound.



**Chloe's story**  
how her radio aid has helped her hear more

**SARAH AND JAMES WATCHED THEIR DAUGHTER RUN OFF** ahead in the park but they weren't worried. They knew Chloe's radio aid was switched on so she'd hear Sarah call her to come back.

"It's reassuring for us from a safety point of view. Even if she's got quite far away I know she can hear me if I just shout 'stop'," says Sarah. James agrees, "It also cuts out a lot of the background noise. When we go to loud places Chloe could be freaked out by the noise but with the radio aid she can constantly hear us."

Although Chloe failed her newborn hearing screening, Sarah and James, who also have a son, Scott (9), were told not to worry – it was probably just fluid from the birth in her ears. But she kept being called back for further tests until she was diagnosed with severe sensorineural deafness. "Even though we expected to get that diagnosis by then, it still thumps you in the stomach a bit," remembers Sarah. James felt particularly upset. "Dads are meant to fix everything and this was something I couldn't fix," he says. "But you learn to live with it really quickly."

The family also found out that Chloe has 9p minus syndrome, a rare genetic disorder caused by the deletion of a portion of a chromosome and they aren't yet sure exactly what this means for her. "At the moment it's predominantly a developmental delay; she's eighteen months to two years behind on most things," explains Sarah. "She also has a

**...she could hear us better in the car and the buggy.**

## “Once you start using it properly the benefits are so obvious.”

speech delay – but that’s complicated by her deafness – and hypermobility. There aren’t that many children affected by 9p and they’re all so different so no-one is sure if it’s linked with her deafness or not.”

When Chloe was three months old, the family’s Teacher of the Deaf gave them a radio aid. “She said Chloe might be a bit too young but to try it in the pram and see how she gets on,” remembers Sarah. “It felt a bit ridiculous because she was so tiny. We didn’t use it very much in those early days because we didn’t get much feedback but as she got older and was sitting up we used it more and definitely noticed she could hear us better in the car and the buggy.”


At nine months old, more in depth tests revealed Chloe actually had a mixed hearing loss, but mostly conductive, and she was given a bone conduction hearing aid to replace her behind the ear hearing aids. This meant her radio aid was no longer compatible and she was left without one for a time. “That was OK. Chloe’s hearing levels with hearing aids had increased a bit anyway as she now had the correct type of aids for her hearing loss,” remembers Sarah. “We signed more when out and about and we got used to not having it but when we were offered the opportunity to switch devices to go back to having one; we couldn’t do it quickly enough – especially as, at 18 months, Chloe was finally crawling and would be starting nursery. That was when we started to need it more.”


The Teacher of the Deaf asked Sarah if she wanted to take part in a study the Ear Foundation and the National Deaf Children’s Society were doing on the impact of radio aids in the early years. “It was explained to us that part of the research would be to show that having a radio aid does benefit children at home and not just at school,” Sarah says. “We wanted to be involved because Chloe hadn’t had one for so long and we knew families in the next county were struggling to

get them at all.”

Over the next eight months the family made recordings of their interactions with Chloe, both with and without using the radio aid, so the study could compare her responses and conversations. “The results were really interesting. They showed that she definitely does more conversational turn-taking with the radio aid. Back then she didn’t have many words, but her babbling and attention levels were definitely more when we were using it and she could hear us more clearly. We went out for a meal for James’s birthday; although there were 14 of us the recording showed that with the radio aid Chloe could hear and still felt part of it even though it was a noisy situation with lots of people,” says Sarah. “The results also showed how much more she responded to talking we do in the car.”

The radio aid also increases Chloe’s confidence and independence. “At soft play or a friend’s birthday party she’ll go off and do things on her own that I think she’d be reluctant to without it, especially with her other issues. She’s reassured because she knows she can still hear us and once she’s looking at us we can use sign,” explains Sarah. “It’s like a security blanket for her.”

Sarah and James recommend use of a radio aid as early as possible. “Because we got it so early it became second nature to us. If we’d got it later it may have taken longer to get in the habit of using it,” says Sarah. “There are so many situations where we’d be really lost without it now. Once you start using it properly the benefits are so obvious.” 

 **To find out more about radio aids go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/radioaids](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/radioaids) and to read more about the Ear Foundation study see pages 42–43.**

## Your new spring checklist for the early years



### Support after first diagnosis

If you’ve recently found out about your baby’s hearing loss, you may be experiencing a mixture of emotions and feel overwhelmed at some of the choices you’re being asked to make for your child. Our booklet *My Baby Has a Hearing Loss* contains lots of information and support for you, download it at [www.ndcs.org.uk/baby](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/baby).



### Delaying school for a year

Is your child’s birthday on or between 1 April and 31 August? If so, you could decide to send them to school a year later than others if you think it would be best for them. A delay in starting school can help deaf children have the chance to develop the language, communication and social skills they’ll need to make the most of the opportunities school offers. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/summerborn](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/summerborn).

### Applying for DLA

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit for children under 16. You can claim DLA for your deaf child no matter how much you earn or the level of savings you have, and it’s not taxed or counted as an income when other benefits are worked out. For tips and advice on filling out the application form and to find out how much you might receive, visit our webpage [www.ndcs.org.uk/dla](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/dla).



# Happy at home

Elijah (5) struggled at pre-school so his parents decided to take a different path and home educate him.



**Elijah's story**  
why he's thrived  
being home  
educated

**RACHAEL WAS AT THE END OF HER TETHER** after picking her son Elijah up from pre-school and finding his hearing aid batteries had run out again. Unfortunately none of the staff seemed to have noticed.

This was just one of the problems Rachael had faced after sending Elijah, who is moderately deaf and has worn hearing aids since six weeks old, to a mainstream pre-school. "He was being excluded from some of the activities as staff said he wasn't following instructions but I hadn't had this problem outside of pre-school," Rachael says. "After some discussion I went to observe and found that some of the staff weren't following the deaf awareness training they'd received, such as getting his attention before speaking and sitting him in a position that he could lip-read. Then when Elijah got his radio aid, the staff all had training but they weren't using it correctly."

Until this point Rachael hadn't been phased by Elijah's deafness. She admits it was 'a bit of a shock' when he was diagnosed as deaf at just five days old at his newborn hearing screening. But after attending one of our newly diagnosed weekends and joining her local deaf toddler group, she met other families and began to feel confident in her son's abilities.

But after her bad experience with pre-school, Rachael worried about spending all of Elijah's education having to fight for his rights so she and husband Dan decided to investigate a different route. "I hadn't really thought about home educating to be honest but I didn't want the struggle I'd had with the pre-school throughout his education," Rachael explains.

Rachael got in touch with her local home education groups, which she found through a search on Facebook. To Rachael's surprise, there were over 75 other families home educating in her area. Although none of the children she

**He gets excited  
about learning.**

## I didn't want the struggle I'd had with the pre-school throughout his education.

has met are deaf, they all had their own unique reasons for choosing home education including special educational needs such as autism, lack of school places and bullying.

Now she has been home educating Elijah since September, when he would have gone to school. "We do about three hours structured work a day, that's split into three one hour chunks," Rachael says. "We have a more formal setup of home educating, other families I've met have different home educating strategies and the children are all learning and thriving. It's what works best for both the child and parents.

"There's so much out there on the internet to help. You can download the national curriculum online and I went on the Book People's website and bought some fantastic books and work sheets. I also have a Twinkl subscription, they give a discount to home educators, and you can print off worksheets and lesson plans there."

Another benefit of home educating for Rachael is that she can teach Elijah British Sign Language (BSL) as part of his formal education. "I did a family sign course for 10 weeks with Elijah when he was younger and then I bought some DVDs and books," Rachael explains. "Elijah is great at speaking and at the moment we're learning very basic BSL but as he gets older I'll focus on it more and pay for him to do the exams. That will set him up for life."


Elijah regularly mixes with other home educated children through the Facebook groups Rachael first joined. With them he attends gymnastics, swimming and forest school every week. They also still attend their local deaf group and believe it's important he mixes with deaf children too. With all this in place Elijah is thriving. "He loves sitting down and doing activities; he loves to learn and is like a little sponge. He's a pleasure to teach," Rachael says.


Another positive for Rachael is that she can teach Elijah at his own pace. "One of the good things about home education is I can whizz away with his maths whereas we can take more time

with phonics," she explains.

The only problem the family have encountered with home educating so far is that there is no financial funding available. "The radio aid he had in pre-school would have been continued if we'd gone into education," Rachael explains. "I had to fundraise to get a radio aid for Elijah as they cost a lot of money but we couldn't live without it, for safety out and about as well as the educational and social benefits."

Now Rachael has said she'll continue home educating Elijah and will do the same with her daughter Jess (2), who is hearing. "I've seen so many benefits, being able to work to their strengths and still being able to develop other skills at the same time," Rachael says. "Elijah's gaining confidence and he gets excited about learning because he can hear what I'm teaching him."

Rachael's advice for parents thinking about home educating is to join the Home Education UK Facebook group. "There are so many parents who have reached this point from all walks of life that can answer your questions and concerns as most of those we will have had ourselves," Rachael says. "You don't need to be a qualified teacher to home educate. There's so much support from other parents, social and sport groups and so many resources online or through your local library. It can cost as little or as much as you make it." 

 **You have the right to educate your child at home, which is an option that interests some parents of deaf children, but it's a big decision that needs careful consideration. To find out more about home education, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/homeeducation](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/homeeducation).**

**Do you know your child's rights? Find out what you can do if they aren't getting the support they need at school at [www.ndcs.org.uk/educationrights](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/educationrights).**

## Your new spring checklist for the primary years



### **Communicating with relatives**

Lots of us enjoy meeting up with relatives and friends over Easter but sometimes deaf children may feel left out if family and friends aren't deaf aware. Our flyer *Communicating With Deaf Children* contains lots of tips to share with others so everyone can join in with the fun during the holidays. Download at [www.ndcs.org.uk/communicationflyer](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/communicationflyer).

### **Join a local Deaf Children's Society**

Local deaf children's societies are a great way for families with deaf children to meet. They run a number of social events and activities in their local areas, such as day trips, parties and coffee mornings, and there are over 100 across the UK. The Easter holidays are the perfect time to join and meet others in a fun and informal setting. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups).

### **Buy our children's books**

We have two children's books, *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue* and *Daisy and Ted's Awesome Adventures*, aimed at 4-7 year olds. Both feature a deaf character so children can recognise themselves in the story. They can be bought from Amazon for £6.99 each and all money raised will help us create a world without barriers for deaf children. [www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine)





# Libby's life in the fast lane

Libby (13) is a hugely talented swimmer with big ambitions to compete for Britain – but being deaf means she faces an uphill battle to overcome obstacles that are placed in her way.



**Libby's story**  
how she's battled obstacles to competitive swimming

**With buzzer starts it's impossible for her to compete on a level playing field.**

**THE CLAMOUR OF APPLAUSE ECHOED AROUND THE SWIMMING POOL** as Paul and Rebecca watched their daughter Libby receive her medal. It was an emotional moment for the couple and for Libby – she'd just achieved qualifying times for the European Deaf Swimming Championships to be held in Poland in July. But keen sportswoman Libby has her eye on other glittering prizes. She also competes in mainstream swimming – at county and regional level – and this is where her real ambition lies. “One day she could take part in the Olympics,” says Paul. “But first she has to get over the hurdles that disadvantage her.”

Libby was five when she was diagnosed as moderately deaf. Her parents hadn't realised until her friend at school, about to move from the area, asked her mum, “What will Libby do without me, she follows everything I do?”

Libby got hearing aids but her hearing deteriorated until, by age 10, she was completely deaf. Three weeks before starting secondary school Libby had double cochlear implant surgery with great results. She'd been shy but her confidence grew and she was soon in top sets for maths and science.

Libby chose to avoid sports like hockey because of the risk of damage to her processors and her hearing. Instead she joined the school's cross-country running team,



## “The aqua kit has made a big difference as now I can hear my coach’s corrections really clearly.”

coming fourth in the schools county championship.

With a passion for swimming – like mum Rebecca who swam for Britain and Libby’s older sister Lucy (17) who swims at national level – Libby trained with a large mainstream club, six days a week. She made brilliant progress even though without her processors she couldn’t hear her coach. Then the family attended a Cochlear Day and found out about aqua kits which have a specialised processor magnet and cover for one processor, enabling it to be worn in water.

“We got a kit,” says Paul. “It helped greatly but acoustics in the pool are diabolical and when Libby moved away from her coach she couldn’t hear anything. Socially too, she was left out. It made me sad to see her standing alone poolside because she couldn’t join in with the other girls chatting. No one seemed to have time for her.”

Last spring Libby moved to a smaller club, which she’s found friendlier, with a sympathetic coach, and communication has improved hugely as she now has a mini mic – like a radio aid; the coach wears a microphone which connects wirelessly with Libby’s processor. “It has a range of 25 metres,” says Paul. “It’s brilliant; she can hear in and out the water. It’s made a massive difference to her.”

But the biggest barrier is race starts. Race rules prevent Libby from wearing her processor so she can’t hear the buzzer that signals the start – losing vital moments as other competitors dive in first. “She’s always last in the water,” says Paul. “When times are measured in hundredths of a second it matters! It’s impossible for her to compete on a level playing field.

“The only allowed alternative is a touch start but there’s still a delay while the coach, or Rebecca, hears the buzzer, taps her and then she reacts. And she’s embarrassed; she doesn’t want to draw attention to herself.

She’d rather enter the water slowly. She makes up the time in the water but it’s not fair; she’s not achieving what she would with an equal chance

at the start.”

The best option would be a lights system on her start block, working in tandem with the buzzer, which most swim clubs and leisure centres don’t have. “Some clubs have them and it makes a huge difference to Libby,” says Paul.


“The GB Deaf Swimming Club is very important to Libby. She’ll do well – she’s already a multi-age group winner. And she loves the social side of it; she uses basic sign language to chat with the other girls but events take place only a few weekends a year.


“Libby’s real ambition is to make national level in mainstream swimming and one day – if she can beat the disadvantage of the buzzer starts – maybe the Olympics. She’s a fit and competitive young lady and we’re behind her all the way.”

Libby adds, “I feel very happy when a light is available, especially in sprints because having a quicker start can make a big difference to my race. When clubs can’t provide a light it’s quite annoying. I’m trying to improve my underwater work to help reduce the delay I have on the start.

“The aqua kit has made a big difference as now I can hear my coach’s corrections really clearly. I find it tough to communicate with my friends when I’m on poolside though as the mini mic allows me to hear my coach but not the other swimmers as much.

“I find it hard at swim meets sometimes, when I can’t have my processors on all the time. Because I have thick hair, people can’t tell if my processors are on or not so they think I’m ignoring them!”

Libby has now been selected for to compete at the European Deaf Swimming Championships in Poland. Good luck Libby! 

 Find out more about how to make swimming deaf friendly at [www.ndcs.org.uk/swimming](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/swimming) or for advice email [swimming@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:swimming@ndcs.org.uk).

## Your new spring checklist for the secondary years



### How technology can help

Is your child keen to become more independent? There are lots of different products they can use at home, at school or even when out with friends. Technology can help them wake up on their own in the morning, use the phone and enjoy the TV. Our guide explains what might be useful for your child. [www.ndcs.org.uk/howtechcanhelp](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/howtechcanhelp)

### Tiredness in deaf children

It’s not unusual for deaf children to get very tired, especially after a day of concentrating at school or during the busy exam season. This is because deaf children have to pay much more attention than children with typical hearing levels; listening, lip-reading or following signed conversations. Our web content has lots of tips for dealing with this concentration fatigue, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/tired](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/tired).

### Joining a music club

There is a common misconception that deaf children can’t participate in or enjoy music. Our resource *How to Make Music Activities Accessible for Deaf Children and Young People* can be shared with all mainstream music practitioners to help them make sure deaf children and young people can fully join in with their music activities. [www.ndcs.org.uk/music](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/music)



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# Finding Florence's confidence

**Florence (18) hasn't let being profoundly deaf get in the way of achieving her dreams and attending university.**

**WALKING OUT THE DOOR OF HER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE** holding the envelope that carried her A-level results, Florence caught the eye of her mum and burst into tears. But happily they were tears of joy as she'd just found out she'd achieved a place at her first choice university. "I got three As in History, Psychology, and Philosophy and Ethics," Florence explains. "I was shocked. I really didn't think I'd do so well but the fact I did gave me the confidence I needed to go to university."

"We were thrilled when we found out Florence's A-level results," Florence's mum Sharon adds. "Florence had really set her sights on the University of Birmingham and we were just so delighted that she had achieved her goal."

Diagnosed as profoundly deaf at three years old, Florence always knew she wanted to go to university. Her dad Rob is a physiotherapy university lecturer and when she was young Florence would often join him in his lecture rooms colouring in special paper with the university's logo at the top. "We always knew that Florence was very keen to go into higher education," Rob says. "But we were worried about whether she'd get the right support." ►



**Florence's story**  
how she found  
the confidence  
to go to  
university

► Florence attended mainstream schools and communicates using speech and lip-reading. Initially she used hearing aids but at 13 decided to get one cochlear implant. Although she found it to be effective, school wasn't always easy. "School had its ups and downs," Florence admits. "I enjoyed it and had good support in place but sometimes I struggled hearing my friends. The canteen was so loud and I'd just sit there not hearing anything and feel quite left out. I also got really tired from concentrating and listening because I lip-read. In sixth form you're expected to go home and do lots of work in the evening but I was just too tired to do that."

Struggling with tiredness was one of the reasons Florence worried she wouldn't be able to achieve her dream of going to university. But after attending a summer course at University College London (UCL) for deaf sixth form students, she found out about the support that would be available to her and met deaf students who were already thriving at university. "That made me feel really confident," Florence says. "I visited a few universities and all of them told me my options for support and that made me feel better about higher education in general."

Another thing that boosted Florence's confidence was joining the National Deaf Children's Society's Young People's Advisory Board (YAB). Last year she even visited the Department for Education (DfE) to discuss the YAB's Right to Sign campaign which aims to get British Sign Language (BSL) included in the school curriculum.

"We went down to Westminster and the DfE and met three civil servants," Florence explains. "That was really great because I'm quite interested in politics and campaigning. I really enjoyed being on the YAB; it made me feel more confident and independent. The trip to the DfE made me think I might like to do something related to politics in the future."

"Getting involved with the YAB was a big turning point for Florence," Sharon adds. "We were surprised she even applied. She was really not confident and quite isolated at school at that time. But she applied for the YAB and just

**We were so  
delighted  
that she had  
achieved  
her goal.**

## I was shocked I did so well.

grew in confidence. It really stimulated her interest in trying to make things different for other people.”

With her experience on the YAB, her visit to the DfE and her brilliant A-level results behind her, Florence was excited to start at the University of Birmingham last September studying Philosophy, Religion and Ethics. “The first few weeks were quite strange being away from home,” Florence admits. “But the hardest thing I found was cooking for myself, I’m still getting to grips with that. I’ve had a few mishaps and even burnt my rice!”

Florence lives in student accommodation at the university, alongside all hearing students. Initially she admits she felt nervous about living with hearing peers and worried about how she would explain her deafness to them. “I also worried about not hearing fire alarms and things in my flat. But the university gave me a fire alerter that vibrates when it hears the fire alarm,” Florence says. “I also have a special doorbell; it flashes and it’s really loud. Actually things like that are quite a good ice breaker. On the first few days people would ring our flat doorbell to say hi and everyone would find the loud doorbell quite funny so then I could explain it. It was a good talking point. Now when I’m in group conversations I’ll notice someone remember and turn to look at me when they’re speaking.”


It hasn’t taken long for everyone to begin to adapt so that Florence always feels she can join in, even her local student pub. “Me and my friends go to this weekly pub quiz in a pub down the road,” Florence explains. “After they found out I had difficulty hearing the questions they installed something in the pub which displays the questions on the screen.”


And while at first lectures were a bit of a struggle as her lecturers hadn’t all been given deaf awareness training, Florence has found other support at the university. “I have to go and give my lecturers my radio aid and ask them to repeat questions from the students and not face the board,” Florence says. “That was a bit scary but most of my lecturers

have been really good. Seminars are more challenging because the hardest thing for me is if people are having discussions. The university has provided me with a key worker and I also have a notetaker and radio aid for lecturers and a Teacher of the Deaf who visits fortnightly, which are funded by Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs). So I have plenty of support in place if I’m finding anything challenging. I have to do a lot of reading for my degree and some of the language is quite hard to understand so I write down all the words that I didn’t understand and go through them with my ToD.”

In her spare time Florence enjoys singing but she found the university choir a challenge as they sung many songs in Latin so she took matters into her own hands. “I find singing therapeutic,” Florence explains. “But I didn’t know what Latin sounded like or how you pronounce it so my friend and I are setting up our own choir here. We’ve gone through the Student Union, who have been very supportive, and the choir will be for anyone; it doesn’t matter if you can sing or not.”

After achieving so much, Florence admits she’s not always been as confident as she is now. “My advice to other deaf young people would be, don’t think you can’t do stuff because you’re deaf because I didn’t know if I could do it either; just do it.”

And her parents Sharon and Rob agree. “When I first found out Florence was deaf and I was upset and worrying I would never have dreamed that she’d be this person now,” Sharon says. “I’d say to other parents to never put limits on what your child can do because they’re deaf. We’re so proud of her.” 

 **To find out more about going to university, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation).**

**For more information on Disabled Students’ Allowances, see [www.ndcs.org.uk/DSA](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/DSA).**

**To find out more about tiredness and deafness, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/tiredness](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/tiredness).**

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



### **Part-time jobs**

As summer approaches, your child might be looking to take on a part-time job after school, at weekends or during the holidays. Extra support may need to be put in place to make sure deaf young people feel confident in the work place so it’s important to understand the right to support your child has. There’s more information at [www.ndcs.org.uk/rightspostschool](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/rightspostschool).

### **Disabled person’s railcard**

Once your child turns 16 they will no longer be eligible for children’s fares on trains. If they regularly travel on the train, a disabled person’s railcard may benefit them. It gives a third off Standard and First Class Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance fares for the deaf young person and one other and costs just £20 for the year, £10 cheaper than a young person’s railcard. Find out more at [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk).

### **Being deaf at school**

17-year-old Katie struggled to get help at school but it became a particular problem in year nine when she found language and drama classes challenging. She decided to get a bone-anchored hearing aid (BAHA) and her mum asked for extra support for her at school and things improved almost immediately. Watch Katie and her mum share their tips in a video on our YouTube channel. Go to [www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam](http://www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam) and search for ‘my bone-anchored hearing aid’.



# Issy's transatlantic adventures

Issy (20) who is severely to profoundly deaf shares her experiences of sailing across the Atlantic.



**Issy's story**  
why she chose to sail across the Atlantic

**To make it a real challenge I enrolled myself in the transatlantic leg.**

**“WHEN MY MOTHER SIGNED NINE-YEAR-OLD ME UP FOR DINGHY COURSES** at the Portsmouth Outdoor Centre I refused to go. My excuses included my hearing aid getting wet and that I wouldn't be able to hear what was going on. But my mother never thought being deaf was a valid excuse not to do something, so I did not one but three dinghy courses – proudly gaining my level three certificate.

I was born hearing but had progressive hearing loss, thought to be a consequence of antibiotics for bronchitis, as my family has no history of deafness. I have severe hearing loss in my right ear and profound hearing loss in my left. I wore hearing aids in both ears from age three but stopped wearing my left hearing aid at around age seven or eight as it wasn't helping.

When I was 13 I was very self-conscious and acutely aware that my hearing aid set me apart (I attended a mainstream school where I was one of two deaf students). I found most social situations difficult, struggling to understand what was going on and know what new things were happening in the school day.

Then I got a cochlear implant in my left ear (I still wear a hearing aid in my right ear) and I felt as if I could do anything! I could hear so much better; I could understand what was going on. That's not to say that everyone benefits from cochlear implants and some people choose not to get them but for me, growing up in an oral family, my cochlear implant paved the way for a new life.

I had a dream to scuba dive the Great Barrier Reef at the time and I was concerned that my shiny new cochlear implant would prevent me. The Southampton Cochlear

## I have more support than I ever did at school!

Implant Centre put me in touch with Deaf F, a charity running activities for deaf children and young adults, which has since closed due to lack of funding. Deaf F arranged for me to go on a deaf diving course; I had to take my implant off but there was a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter so I didn't have any problems.

A few weeks later I received an email asking if I'd be interested in doing a Tall Ships Race that summer with an organisation called Discovery Sailing Project. Discovery was looking for two deaf 'adventurers' to join Sea, Hear, Discover – an initiative to get more deaf people into sailing – to advise on making sailing accessible to all.

Four years after my first sea voyage I am now a Watch Leader for the Sea, Hear, Discover scheme. Discovery has fitted a loop-system into their boats and is currently looking for qualified BSL interpreters with sailing experience. I have also passed my Royal Yachting Association Day Skipper exams.

This year I decided to combine my love of sailing with a challenge to raise funds for the National Deaf Children's Society. I enrolled as a crew member on board the Jolie Brise, which was participating in Sail Training's Rendez-Vous Regatta.

The regatta is made up of nine legs – totalling over 7,000 nautical miles. To make it a real challenge I enrolled myself in the transatlantic leg. The voyage would take just under four weeks, with 20 days to cross the North Atlantic. Yes, you read that right, the North Atlantic. What was I thinking?!

After spending the whole of May on board the Jolie Brise and meeting all sorts of characters from different countries and ways of life, I returned safely to dry land – and was very proud to have raised £550.

Before the trip I'd been concerned I might be excluded or judged by my crew mates because of my deafness. I needn't have worried. People behave differently at sea; they're more open and authentic and any differences seem unimportant when you're in the


middle of the Atlantic. There's also no room for discrimination when you're relying on each other in life and death situations. I think the only deafness-related challenge was remembering when to change my batteries!

I believe that if it wasn't for the National Deaf Children's Society and their vision of 'a world without barriers for every deaf child' which I absorbed every time we received *Families* magazine, I'd never have found the inspiration that kept me going through the years of struggling with self-confidence and being deaf in a hearing world.

Long before I found my home in sailing, the National Deaf Children's Society showed me examples of deaf adults who were leading successful lives in *Families* magazine. This, as well as providing my teachers with resources to help me in my education, kept inspiring me and made me feel like I wasn't the only one battling out there; there were people who were on my side.

I hope my transatlantic adventure will inspire other deaf children and adults and help them see that deafness should not be seen as a hindrance but as an asset, propelling you on to amazing things and fabulous adventures.

I started studying Anthropology at university last autumn and have settled in well. My classmates have accepted my deafness and I have a strong relationship with my support worker and the disability office. I have more support than I ever did at school!

I'm enjoying my subject and my time here immensely and I will keep on sailing and continuing to defy society's expectation of what it means to be a deaf person in a very loud world." 

 **For more information on support at university see [www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation).**

**Our Me2 resources support organisations to make their activities deaf-friendly. You can find them at [www.ndcs.org.uk/activities](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/activities).**

## Your new spring checklist for deaf young people aged 19-25



### **Taking a gap year**

Does your child enjoy travelling? British Sign Language (BSL) user Ruth (22) tells us about her gap year in Sri Lanka where she taught deaf children in a school. Watch Ruth give her tips and advice on deaf young people travelling in her video. Go to [www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam](http://www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam) and search for 'travelling in my gap year'.

### **Thinking about volunteering?**

Our Roadshow will be visiting many schools and community groups in the North of the UK soon. If your child is interested in volunteering, they might like to help out as a volunteer presenter. There are lots of other ways to volunteer for us as well, including picking up cheques from community groups in your area that have fundraised for us. For more information about all of our volunteering opportunities, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/volunteer).

### **Technology in the work place**

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



Tear out these pages, give them to your

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



The Scribble Club children have gone on holiday and made it all the way to the jungle! Colour in the picture and see which animals you can spot hidden in the trees.

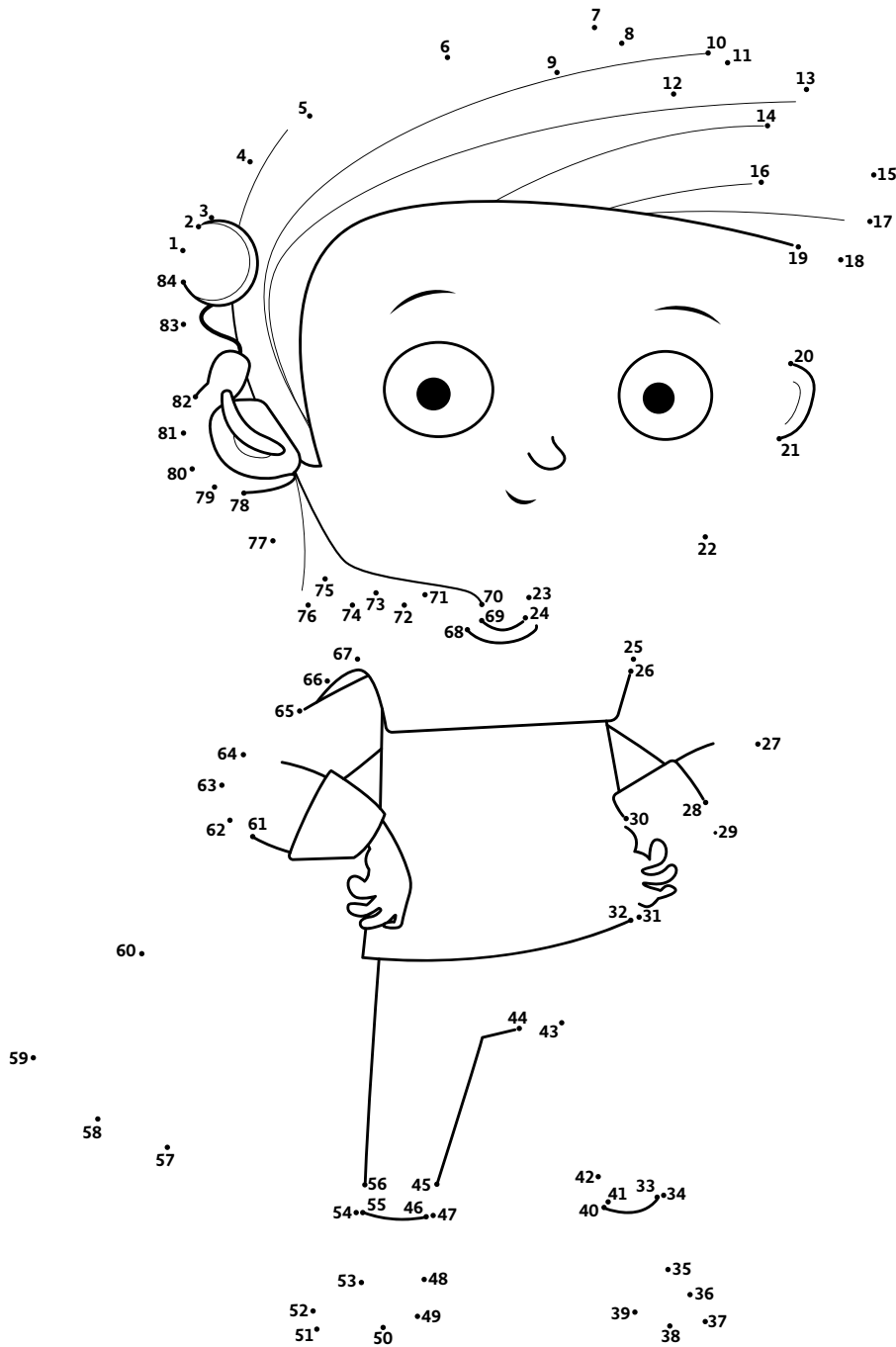




# Coloring

Let your child and let their creativity run wild!

## Dot-to-dot



Superhero Jake is ready to go on an adventure. Can you follow the dot-to-dot from 1 to 84 to find out what he's wearing?

Once you've finished you can colour Jake in too and design him a special superhero cape!

Read about Jake's adventures with new friend Jasmine in our book. [www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/jakeandjasmine)





# How do I...

## help my child's clubs and extracurricular activities be deaf aware?

Parents offer their advice on helping to make their child's after-school activities deaf-friendly and also share their tips on how they make sure their child is always able to join in and feel included.



**“...give clubs and provides information about supporting your child.”**

➔ Visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/findaclub](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/findaclub) to find deaf-friendly activities near you and for resources to help your child's club be more deaf friendly.

If you're concerned about potential damage to hearing equipment then speak to your child's audiologist before they begin a new sport or physical activity.

**Phil is dad to Jodie (16) who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

My daughter Jodie competes at a high level in rugby union. There were a number of adjustments we had to make as she was growing up and playing rugby outside of school. We used to attend training with her and explain her needs face-to-face and ahead of time. We always made sure to find ways to help training providers adapt to make participation possible for her, for example making changes to rugby scrum caps to protect her processors and using signs to make instructions clear for her. It was important to us that Jodie always spoke up about her deafness and her needs with her team. She has now developed a set of

responses and facts about her deafness that she can use in all sporting situations.

I also attended training sessions so I could later consolidate her learning and understanding at home. Jodie took rugby very seriously so we would do extra practice at home too.

Jodie also went to a Jujitsu club where I always encouraged the coaches to physically show her moves as her processors had to be removed for the activity.



**Linda is mum to Jessica (11) who is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.**

From an early age it became immediately apparent that the swimming lessons that have teachers poolside were no good for Jess; having a teacher in the pool face-to-face with her made a huge difference. Then she could see the teacher demonstrating strokes and lip-read instructions; also the teacher can physically move the kids' arms in the way they are supposed to move! Choosing a swimming class that was committed to having smaller class sizes was also good for Jess.

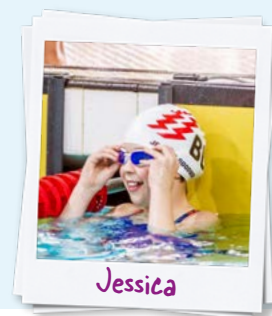
The coaches at Jess's club have seen the National Deaf Children's Society swim

course and this helps as I think sometimes we assume, as parents of deaf kids, that everyone will realise that facing the child and showing through demonstration helps, but actually people appreciate being told the best way to communicate.

Jess loves the fact she is often asked to write up the training plan on the white board. This is a great way for her to feel included in the team but also a sneaky way for her to have a 'heads up' on what's coming up in training. It means she can often lead the lane as she doesn't have to wait and see what the other kids do because she's missed the instruction from her coach.

Also the club has laminated the training sets for her to have poolside in case she needs to check what's next – before this she would often mishear and set off doing the wrong stroke or drill.

Jess also plays the clarinet and likes to run. It's time consuming but I always look into deaf music groups for her and search for tips online to help her pass exams.

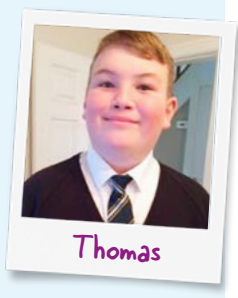


Jessica

**Melissa is mum to Thomas (12) who is profoundly deaf and has one cochlear implant.**

We've worked with the manager of Thomas's football club to make sure he understands his needs. The club have been very accommodating and helpful. Thomas was really keen to pursue a role as the goalkeeper in the team so we've agreed to buy a special head guard to protect Thomas's hearing equipment.

Thomas also took part in cycling proficiency. We worked with the sensory support service to help the testers understand his needs and how he could be supported to take part. The local sensory support team were brilliant and provided good input at Thomas's school and for out-of-school activities he takes part in. I'd encourage other parents to give clubs and providers information about supporting your child and also to look into organising support from other services like sensory support that can help providers of extracurricular activities.



Thomas

**Natalie is mum to Destiny (10) who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

My daughter goes to Brownies and is implanted. I had a quick word with the Brownie leader before she started and discussed that Destiny would sometimes need prompting in very noisy environments as she doesn't hear like her peers do. I also explained that, although Destiny is bilaterally implanted, she still lip-reads so whoever is speaking needs to make sure they speak clearly so she can see their lip movements. I also discussed with them that because Destiny has implants, any knock to the head must be reported directly to me and she must never have an MRI scan.

I believe that meeting with leaders prior to joining groups and having a good conversation about deafness is the only way. I really find that communication is the key; we are very open about Destiny's deafness and willing to talk to anyone who is interested and wants to ask questions. She has so much confidence thanks to attending groups outside of school and we're now even looking at her attending a youth club in our village.



Destiny



➔ **JOIN OUR FAMILY PANEL**

Next time in *Families* magazine: **How do I... help my child sleep?**

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





Orla

# ask the expert

**A good, reputable provider will advise and support you.**

Each issue a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Orla Pearson, a speech-to-text reporter who works with deaf young people, shares her insights.

## What is a speech-to-text reporter?

A speech-to-text reporter (STTR) provides communication support for deaf people. They type up everything that's being said in a meeting or lecture word-for-word using a special keyboard. The text appears in real time on a laptop, projector or tablet screen where the deaf person can see it.

## Are speech-to-text reporters sometimes called something else?

Yes, palantypists, speech-to-text writers or stenographers.

## In what settings do you support deaf young people?

I've worked with lots of young people at residential events and on trips. I've also provided in-class subtitling remotely for some students at university, college and at school, and STTR can be used at healthcare appointments and to enable deaf people to access events, such as the theatre.

## What is 'remote' speech-to-text reporting?

This is where the reporter isn't in the same room as the deaf person – they could even be in another country! They will use Skype or conference calling to call the deaf person and listen in. They send the deaf person a link and the text appears on their screen.

## Who pays for this communication support?

If a young person needs a STTR for work, they can apply to Access to Work to pay for it. If they're at university, they should apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). Getting funding at school or college can be harder but, if it's essential to your child's learning, it's worth looking into. Your child's healthcare provider is responsible for making sure their services are accessible, so they need to be told if a STTR is needed when booking an appointment. For events, such as a conference or concert, contact the organiser and explain that STTR services are required to make the event

accessible. Under the Equality Act 2010, providers should take steps to make such 'reasonable adjustments'.

## Where can I find speech-to-text reporters?

The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) [www.nrcpd.org.uk](http://www.nrcpd.org.uk), the Association of Speech-to-Text Reporters (AVSTTR) [www.avsttr.org.uk](http://www.avsttr.org.uk) and the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters (BIVR) [www.bivr.org.uk](http://www.bivr.org.uk) have details of registered reporters. But there are lots of other good reporters out there, so it's best to go on recommendations or to investigate companies. Think about your meeting type to get the right support – a good, reputable provider will advise and support you. Book as far in advance as you can – there aren't many reporters and they're all very busy.

## What will the speech-to-text reporter need?

It's the deaf young person's responsibility to make sure the reporter has what they need, including sending venue details, an agenda and minutes of the previous meeting in advance. The reporter will also need access to the meeting room early to set up and somewhere to sit with space for their equipment, and where they can hear all the speakers. They'll also need breaks for long meetings – so you may need more than one reporter.

➔ To find out about other communication support options, go to [www.buzz.org.uk/communicationsupport](http://www.buzz.org.uk/communicationsupport).

For more information on Access to Work go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/accesstowork](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/accesstowork) and for DSAs go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/DSA](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/DSA).





# Sound advice for the future

## Does your child understand the career options and support available to them in employment?

Many parents of deaf children and young people worry about their child's future after they finish education. Which jobs are suitable and how easily will they find one? If you're a regular reader of the 'When I'm a grown-up' article in this magazine (page 46) you'll know that deaf people work in a wide range of different roles and sectors. There are very few jobs that can't be accessible to deaf people with the right qualifications and experience.

Employers are required by law to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled employees. Communication support such as British Sign Language interpreters or speech-to-text reporters (also known as palantypists) can seem expensive but the Government's Access to Work scheme can provide funding to cover costs up to £42,000 a year (this amount will change in April. See

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-factsheet](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-factsheet) for up-to-date information). But is useful information like this reaching deaf young people?

From the age of 13 onwards your child is being asked to make choices about the courses they want to take, but are these decisions being made with some understanding of the support available to deaf people in employment? Our research has found that some deaf young people are making choices based on what they perceive to be more accessible options (for example working with animals rather than with people as communication will be easier).

Research has also identified that careers advice for deaf young people is very patchy and often not sufficiently tailored for them to understand the range of options available to them with the right support.

### What information should my child be receiving?

- The Access to Work scheme has been funding communication support and equipment for deaf people in employment since 1995. See [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) for more information.
- The Equality Act 2010 (or Disability Discrimination Act in Northern Ireland) requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to make sure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged in the workplace.
- Health and safety rules don't override the Equality Act. Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to minimise any risks to deaf employees.
- Further education, higher education and apprenticeships should be accessible to them. Government funding is available to support colleges and training providers with the costs of putting support in place for your child.

### What can I do to make sure my child gets the right advice and support?

- Look out for stories or examples of deaf people in work like the ones in our 'When I'm a grown-up' article on page 46 to show your child. These stories can be aspirational.
- Ask your child's sensory support service what they do to support careers advice. Some services work together with those providing careers advice in schools and colleges to make sure deaf young people receive tailored guidance. This should start early – at the age of 13 or 14 at the latest.
- Encourage your child to find out as much as possible about the options available to them in post-16 education. Taking A-levels (or Highers in Scotland) is one option but there are others such as BTECs, NVQs and apprenticeships.
- Decisions about your child's career path should be theirs to make. You can provide advice and support but encourage them to make decisions about their future for themselves.



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



The Careers and Enterprise Company is a body set up by the Government to improve links between schools, colleges and employers. It's been supporting Heathlands School for deaf children with their careers provision. They could see there was minimal employer engagement taking place at Heathlands so they introduced an Enterprise Advisor, Danie French, who works for a local building and refurbishment contracting company, T&B Ltd. Danie worked with a member of staff from the school to develop relationships with local businesses.

So far, the activities they've organised for Heathlands students to gain information and experience of careers and workplaces have included:

- a site visit to T&B Ltd., a contracting firm for building and refurbishments, including a formal work experience placement
- a talk held at the school about careers in architecture
- group visits to Whipsnade Zoo, a major local employer, by students in Years 9, 10 and 11 to learn about the variety of roles and skills needed at the zoo
- a careers morning where students met deaf people in a variety of roles talking about their work and how they got there.



### ✓ 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, but for young people moving to a further education (FE) college (England only), the deadline is 31 March. You can find more information on EHC plans at [www.ndcs.org.uk/specialeducationalneeds](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/specialeducationalneeds).

### ✓ Choosing childcare

If you are considering childcare for your child, there are a range of things to consider to ensure the childcare is deaf friendly and will support their language and communication. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare).

### ✓ 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](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/exams).

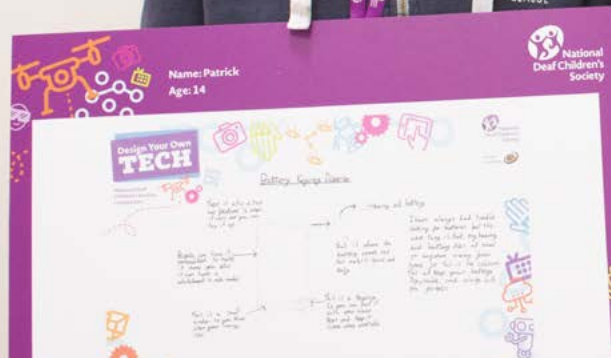


➔ Our booklet *This is My Future* is designed to help deaf young people start thinking about what they want to do next and provides information about the support available in education and employment. You can download it from [www.ndcs.org.uk/myfuture](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/myfuture).

The leaving school section of our website provides information on the different options open to your child and the support available. [www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/leavingschool)

Download our factsheet *Supporting Deaf Young People through Transition* from [www.ndcs.org.uk/transition](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/transition) and pass to professionals such as Teachers of the Deaf or careers advisors to help them support deaf young people with the move to post-16 education and work.

## Design Your Own **TECH**



# Technology designed by young people

We asked deaf young people to share their ideas on designing the technology of the future or improving existing technology in our Design Your Own Tech competition and invited the winners to present their ideas to product manufacturers.

Last autumn we ran our first ever Design Your Own Tech competition for deaf young people aged 12–18. We asked young people to describe their ideal technology to help overcome challenges they experience due to their deafness.

Thirty-seven deaf young people from across the UK submitted their most innovative and creative ideas. The judging panel, made up of deaf young people, was amazed by the entries and with a rigorous list of selection criteria they shortlisted ten entries and selected two winners: Patrick and Jonathan. Both were awarded a prize for their schools and the opportunity to present their ideas to a group of 40 manufacturers, technology designers, audiologists, Teachers of the Deaf and other professionals at our Technology and Innovation – the Future for Deaf Young People event last November. The attendees discussed the winning ideas, along with the other shortlisted entries, and some are taking steps to investigate making them a reality.

We asked Patrick and Jonathan to share their experiences of the competition and event.







### Patrick (14) who is moderately to severely deaf.

Patrick's ideal technology was an upgrade of an existing product: a keychain that dispenses hearing aid batteries. Patrick's alterations included adding storage for a larger number of batteries, a means of quickly checking how many batteries are left in the keychain and a compartment to store used batteries to be recycled and making it more customisable.

#### How did you come up with your idea?

I thought about the main problems my brother and I have and the concept of a battery holder sprung to my mind because both of us have been caught on a number of occasions without batteries and so haven't been able to hear.

#### What did your school and family think of you winning the competition?

They were surprised and very pleased to find out I had won.

#### How did you find presenting to a large audience?

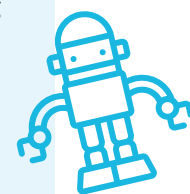
It was very nerve-racking but also very interesting to try something new that I hadn't done before and the audience was very supportive.

#### What are your hopes for your design idea?

I hope it will be taken on by manufacturers and be really useful to deaf people.

#### How are you and your school planning to use the gift vouchers?

The prize has been split between the design and technology department and the computing department to spend on new equipment for the school.



Patrick

### Jonathan (15) who is mildly deaf.

Jonathan's innovative idea was an app that shows (often difficult to hear) public transport announcements on a deaf person's phone. The app, 'AppDate,' sends notifications to alert the user to updates or changes that affect their journey.

#### How did you come up with your idea?

I have a mild hearing loss, so to help me think of an idea that could assist deaf people in everyday situations I asked others with a hearing impairment what they find difficult. The main theme was difficulties using public transport and hearing the tannoy announcements.

#### What did your school and family think of you winning the competition?

My school were over the moon and felt very proud of me. My parents were really pleased for me. Once I knew I'd won, my friends and professionals at our school helped me to prepare a presentation. It was great to have so much support from everyone.

#### How did you find presenting to a large audience?

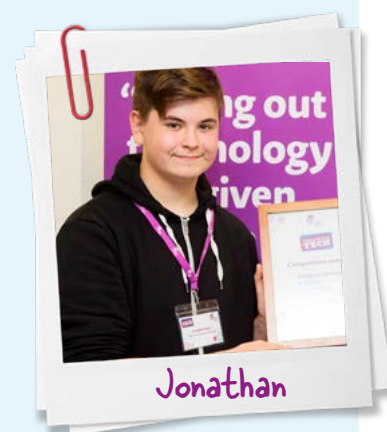
I felt very nervous but after practising my presentation at my school I felt more confident. I felt very proud of myself. It was a good experience presenting to an audience with a British Sign Language interpreter and transcriber.

#### What are your hopes for your design idea?

I hope AppDate will be available for people to use on public transport to help deaf people and reduce their anxiety.

#### How are you and your school planning to use the gift vouchers?

The vouchers will be used towards something for our Hearing Support Centre. I've been promised a treat too!



Jonathan



➔ To find out more about the wide range of technology that could help your child go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/technology](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/technology) or to borrow a product from our Technology Test Drive loan service go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive).

# Reviews

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

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



### Our School Signs

Written by Cath Smith  
Available from **Amazon**  
**Print on Demand**  
**£10**

5-10



I love the books from the Let's Sign series by Cath Smith. We use several from the series within our school already and I'm delighted that Our School Signs has been released as it

targets our needs and responsibilities within our Hearing Impaired Unit (HIU) perfectly. As per all books from the range, Our School Signs helps us to teach British Sign Language (BSL) to our deaf children, children within the mainstream and the wider network of staff within the school. We host two Signing Clubs at school, both of which are popular with the children and staff, and this particular book enables us to teach signs that are most relevant to school, school topics and school amenities and helps us to label equipment too. The 'Link the Sign to the Word' puzzle at the end of each section has also been very well received.

A parent of a child within our HIU commented that they may buy the book too as it will help to give them a greater level of knowledge about the topic of 'school' and fill in gaps they've not learnt while gaining their BSL qualifications.

It's a fantastic book, clear and easy to follow, and really does contribute to getting everyone successfully through their school day.

–Jane, Teacher of the Deaf

### Direct input leads

These leads allow your child to listen directly to any music device with a headphone socket.

Available to borrow from our **Technology Test Drive** ([www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive)) or buy from **Connevens** ([www.connevens.co.uk](http://www.connevens.co.uk)).  
**Price variable**

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25

My children like to listen to their iPad and iPod but we don't want them to turn the volume up really high, so we borrowed direct input leads from the National Deaf Children's Society Technology Test Drive. The Helpline told us which shoes we needed to connect the leads to our children's hearing aids and we borrowed those as well.

With the leads my children get a better listening experience as they can still keep their hearing aids in and are therefore not missing any frequencies. It makes them more attentive to whatever they are watching. At school they can plug the leads into the computer to help them with school work.

I think the leads are a fantastic product and they are so easy to carry with you. I've encouraged other parents at a National Deaf Children's Society weekend on starting school to borrow the leads to see if they can help their children as well.

–Brenda and Aidan, parents to Aaron (10), Aideen (8) who has a moderate hearing loss and Jonah (4) who has a severe hearing loss.



### → Key

This resource could be most suitable for the following ages:

0-4

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25

“ It also gives hearing impaired children a character they can relate to.

### Fairy Magic

Written by Cerrie Burnell and illustrated by Laura Ellen Anderson

Available from **Amazon**

**£6.99**

0-4

*Fairy Magic* is a beautifully illustrated children's book about a girl called Isabelle who meets a fairy called Summer-Blue at the end of her garden. As a deaf girl, Isabelle finds she can feel and sense things that her siblings can't.

This book is for those up to the age of five and provides some interesting facts on how other animals use senses instead of hearing to find their way. It also gives hearing impaired children a character they can relate to.

Ruby enjoyed listening to the book and, as soon as she heard there were fairies involved and a girl who had hearing difficulties like her, she was even more interested. Freddie loved the colourful pictures and pointing out the different colours, animals and children.

As a parent of two children with hearing loss I felt the book was well written and had the right balance of fun and information. I also found the relationship between Isabelle and her hearing twin and how they communicate in their own way very endearing.

Overall this is a nice, magical story, although for deaf children I can't help but feel there are already better books available (*Freddie and the Fairy* is our favourite).

– Hannah, mum to Ruby (5), who has a mild to moderate hearing loss and wears hearing aids, and Freddie (2), who has a mild hearing loss and also wears hearing aids.



Ruby and Freddie



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

# Helpline



**Q** My daughter is moderately deaf and her third birthday is coming up soon. Her friends' parents are asking me for suggestions for suitable toys or games to give as presents at her party. Do you have any suggestions?



There's no need to worry about suggesting special toys or games for your daughter. Toys and games that hearing children play with can be just as good.

Try thinking of toys that are appropriate for her age and level of development (look for age warnings and recommendations). If a game is too easy for your daughter, she may get bored. If she finds it too hard, she may become frustrated and not want to play.

Toys that make noises may help her to learn about different sounds and develop her listening skills. Building blocks, rhythmic toys or instruments, stacking toys and soft sensory toys are all suitable. Toys that have an interesting texture, feel nice to touch or are eye-catching may be particularly appealing.

For more information and ideas, have a look at our information about play time on our website, including our factsheet, *Toys and play for young deaf children*, produced in conjunction with The British Toy & Hobby Association, which has information about the importance of play and lots of ideas and tips:

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

As your daughter is having a party, we have some tips and suggestions for party games to help make sure no-one is left out of the fun. You can also read about family experiences of birthday parties and deaf-friendly party games at [www.ndcs.org.uk/parties](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/parties).

Wishing your daughter a very happy birthday!



## Glue Ear: A guide for parents

**What type of information is it?** A useful information booklet that's available to download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear) or order from our Freephone Helpline.

**Who's it for?** Parents whose child may have glue ear and who want to find out more about it.

**What's it about?** Glue ear is one of the most common childhood illnesses. This booklet tells parents what glue ear is, what will happen if your child is diagnosed with the condition and what can be done to help. It also details the support that's available to you.

**You might also like:** *Understanding Your Child's Hearing Tests*. This guide is available to order or download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingtests](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/hearingtests).



## Pragmatics: Everyday communication

**What type of information is it?** New web content available at [www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics).

**Who's it for?** The content focuses on early years children but is relevant to parents of children of any age who struggle with using language socially.

**What's it about?** Pragmatics is the skill of using language socially and being able to adapt it to different situations. It's key to being able to take part in conversations and interactions in socially acceptable ways. This webpage content explains why deaf children can struggle to develop pragmatics in their early years and how you can help your child develop these skills.



# What's new from us?

**You might also like:** *What are you feeling?* A guide to help deaf children understand and identify their emotions. This guide is available to order or download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/feeling](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/feeling).



## Fingerspelling postcard

**What type of information is it?** A colourful postcard that's available to download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/fingerspellingpostcard](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/fingerspellingpostcard) or order from our Freephone Helpline.

**Who's it for?** Anyone who wants to learn how to fingerspell!

**What's it about?** Our new look postcard shows you how to make the hand and finger shapes of the British fingerspelling alphabet. Great for brushing up on your communication skills and for deaf awareness at home, school or the workplace.

**You might also like:** Our poster and postcard on talking to your deaf friends. These can be downloaded from [www.ndcs.org.uk/deafaware](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/deafaware).



## Additional Learning Needs Reform in Wales: Questions and answers

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

**Who's it for?** Parents of deaf children in Wales aged 0–25.

**What's it about?** A broad summary of our understanding of the proposed changes to education law for children with additional learning needs, updated in January 2018.

**You might also like:** *Know your rights: Getting support from your local council in Wales.* This booklet can be downloaded from [www.ndcs.org.uk/rights](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/rights) or ordered from our Freephone Helpline.



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

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



“We gain so much from being part of our local Deaf Children Societies. Not only is it great for my daughter but it’s a wonderful support for us as parents too.”

# Meet parents of deaf children near you

Joining a local Deaf Children’s Society is a great way to meet other families with deaf children. Catering for a range of ages and levels of hearing loss, they help parents and carers to come together to support one another. Children also get the chance to make lots of new friends, both deaf and hearing.

There’s always something going on – from fun days and parties to coffee mornings and information sessions. Local Deaf Children’s Societies support the whole family. There are more than 100 across the UK. Each is run by a

committee of volunteers, usually parents of deaf children, who decide which events and activities they want to run in their local area.

Deaf Children’s Societies warmly welcome all deaf children and their families, so find your nearest group and get involved!



Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups) or contact [localgroups@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:localgroups@ndcs.org.uk) or 020 7014 5919.



Ryan (14) from Oak Lodge School in London gained so much from our Roadshow workshops that he's now organising a Roadshow visit himself for his school with support from Welfare Mentor Jessica Doyle.



**“It was such a fun day and I think I learnt lots of new things.”**



Ammaar



**THE ROADSHOW TEAM CAME TO MY SCHOOL** in November during Anti-Bullying Week and did some workshops in our class about online safety. I learnt so much about how to protect my information online, how to keep safe when talking to new people and things I shouldn't share online – like my address and passwords.

We also had a talk about going to the doctors and how, now that I'm getting older, I could start taking responsibility for booking my own appointments and making sure I had the support I needed to go to them by myself if I wanted.

I really enjoyed the talks; the Roadshow team were nice and it was easy to talk to them about things. It was such a fun day and I think I learnt lots of new things.

The Roadshow team brought Ammaar, a young volunteer, with them. He was 19 and told us all about his personal experiences of being deaf and that was really interesting for me and my friends. He's at university now, doing a degree, and it was great to know that there's lots of support.

They also told us about some

of the other workshops they do – things like talking about what happens when I leave school, the support I can get in college or on an apprenticeship as well as all the technology, and I was really excited to learn more. They also told us about their Roadshow bus and I thought it looked great! I was really excited.

I looked on the website and found out more information about the Roadshow bus and how to book it. I contacted the Helpline and they sent my email to the Roadshow team.

I got an email from them the next day with a booking form; Miss Doyle helped me to fill out the information and we quickly sent it back. It was really easy to do and I felt proud that I'd arranged the visit that would help me and my friends to go on the Roadshow bus and get lots of information.

I'll be getting a confirmation pack soon with all the information about the visit and I'm going to help Miss Doyle to pick the workshops and do a timetable to make sure that everyone at school gets a chance to go on the Roadshow. I can't wait!"

➔ **You don't have to wait for your school or college to request a visit from our Roadshow. We welcome requests from young people and families and we can then speak to your school to arrange a date to visit. To book a visit go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow).**

## Events

# In your area

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

### Events programme for 8–18 year olds

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

- **Science and Magic Weekend, 11–13 May**  
Derbyshire, England (age 11–15)
- **Multi Activity Weekend, 18–20 May**  
Greater London, England (age 14–18)
- **Big Scottish Sleepover, 19–20 May**  
Blairgowrie, Scotland (age 8–13)
- **Summer Holiday Scotland, 16–20 July**  
Argyll and Bute, Scotland (age 8–18)

# What's on?



### → INTERESTED IN ONE OF OUR EVENTS?

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



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

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

- **21 April**  
London, England
- **28 April**  
Leeds, England

## Introduction to childhood deafness (3–12 years)

A two-day information event for families with deaf children aged 3–12 years that have never attended one of our events before. Sessions will cover our services, your child's hearing, and support around communication and technology.

- **9–10 June**  
Birmingham, England

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



# Learning life skills

Skye (17) is profoundly deaf. Last summer she went on one of our week-long residential events for deaf young people aged 16–18. Throughout the week the young people had the chance to get advice and information on topics including sexual health, child sexual exploitation, social networks and their options for the future. They also took part in some exciting activities both on and off the water at Anderton Activity Centre in Chorley, and went on a one-night camping expedition in Rivington, Lancashire's mini Lake District.



"I wanted to go on this event because I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to learn new things and to get advice. And also because I hoped I'd get to meet new people and to make new friends.

During the week we did lots of activities for fun and to help us to get to know each other better. We went camping and sailing, which I'd done before, and I really enjoyed both. We also did lots of workshops to learn new life skills. We learnt about health and safety and sexual health and all the sessions were really helpful. The best bit about the event was that it helped me to think about what I want to do in the future – I was able to talk about this with other deaf young people and also with the staff. We talked about how I thought I might want to do support work when I'm older because I know how difficult it can be, being at college and not liking it because you don't feel supported. I've now decided that in the future I'd like to work either with children or in the catering sector. I found out about lots of new things as well as thinking about what I might want to do in the future, but the main thing I learnt from the event was how to look after myself and be more aware of staying safe.

I got on well with everyone and would recommend that other deaf young people go on the residential if they get the chance because it's good to mix with people who are going through the same things as you. I've been to a number of events run by the National Deaf Children's Society before and have really enjoyed all of them and wish there were more things for my age that I could go to."

### Has Skye's experience inspired you? Sign up to one of this year's summer events:

- **Mission Adventure England, 30 July–3 August**  
South West England (ages 8–15)
- **Multi Activity and 16+ Transition, 6–10 August**  
South East England (ages 8–15 and 16–18)
- **Mission Adventure Wales, 13–17 August**  
Pensarn Harbour, Llanbedr, Wales (ages 8–15)

➔ **There will also be summer events in West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events) to find out more.**

# Get involved



Campaign  
for radio aids

## Tuning in to radio aids in the early years

New research shows that using radio aids can have a big impact in the early years, so we're campaigning in England for local authorities to make this technology more widely available to families with deaf children.

### COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT FOR

good language and communication development in the early years. However as hearing aids and cochlear implants don't restore normal hearing, everyday situations, such as when in the buggy or the car, can be a noisy minefield for many deaf children, making it impossible for them to hear their parents. It's been estimated that deaf children under four spend almost a quarter of their day in noisy environments.

Last year, we commissioned research that shows that radio aid technology – that helps deaf children to hear their parents' voices clearly and directly, cutting out any background noise – can help promote parent-child communication. We found the use of radio aids led to 144% more conversations between parent and child when in the car and 88% more when outdoors.

Even with these clear benefits, over half of all local authorities in England don't make radio aids available to pre-school deaf children. This is despite local authorities and education settings in Great Britain being required, under the Equality Act 2010, to provide auxiliary aids (such as radio aids) as a reasonable adjustment.

We believe parents should be given balanced information about radio aids so they can make informed choices

about when the right time is to try using one with their child. It's also important that local authorities:

- provide families with ongoing training and support and the opportunity to try a radio aid at different ages
- ensure that home insurance is not a condition of being allowed to use radio aids in the home
- avoid any unnecessary delays in fitting radio aids.

### What we've been doing

In light of this new research, we've contacted all local authorities in England to ask them to review their approach to radio aids in the early years. We're also asking the Department for Education in England to make funding available so every child who could benefit from a radio aid is given access to one at the earliest possible opportunity. To keep up the pressure, we held an event with John Bercow MP, the Speaker of the House of Commons, to encourage MPs to lobby local authorities that still aren't providing radio aids for families to use in the home during the early years. We are continuing to support and challenge local authorities that aren't doing this.

### What you can do

If you're a parent and would like to be able to use a radio aid at home to support spoken language communication with your child, speak with your child's Teacher of the Deaf to find out the approach your local authority takes and if there are any specific reasons why a radio aid might not be right for your child.

If your local authority's policy is not to provide one but you feel your child would benefit from using a radio aid at home, write to the Director of Children's Services in your area. Explain why you think a radio aid would benefit your child and remind them that local authorities must provide them as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. Highlight our research which shows the benefits they can have.

Other parents and campaigners can also support our campaign by asking their MP to get involved to make sure the Department for Education and local authorities do everything they can to make radio aids available to all deaf children, right from the start.





Kelly is mum to Thom (4) who is severely deaf and wears hearing aids.



### “THOM WAS FINALLY GIVEN ACCESS TO A RADIO AID

when he was about three-and-a-half. We find it useful in most situations but particularly when he’s in the back of the car, at his group activities such as ballet or rhythm time and when we’re out and about at the supermarket or in the park.

The radio aid gives Thom better access to what he’s doing and allows him a better chance at reacting in group situations at a similar time to his peers. For example, if in his rhythm time group the leader asks the children to do something (such as get a ball from the basket), over the noise of all the other children he usually wouldn’t completely catch what was being said and so would rely on what he thinks he’s heard

as well as watching the other children, but by having the radio aid he has a much better chance of hearing the task and can respond at a similar time to everyone else. This also lessens the gap of him being ‘different’.

I have four boys and they’re a bit like marbles – we get to a place and they just hit the ground running and spread out everywhere! If Thom’s decided to run into the next aisle at the supermarket or hide behind a display in a shop and I call to the boys to come back, his brothers can hear me but Thom can’t (especially if he’s buried in a rack of clothes!). But the radio aid makes it safer as he’s then able to hear the instructions to come back to me. It’s the same for soft play centres, the park, or any situation

where he can go further than arm’s length from me.

We now use the radio aid daily. I put it on in the morning then hand it to school, they hand it back at the end of the day and I continue to wear it until after dinner.”

→ You can download the research report on using radio aids with pre-school deaf children from [www.ndcs.org.uk/research](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/research).

To read about Sarah and her daughter Chloe’s experiences of using a radio aid see pages 12–13.

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

# Get involved



## Let's Get Quizzical

Feeling inspired to raise some money to support deaf children this year? Host your own quizzical night...

**NOT KEEN ON BREAKING A SWEAT?** Not into baking either but still want to raise some cash? Well we've got the answer! Why not cash in on the office competitive spirit and host our Let's Get Quizzical quiz night? It's so easy to take part. We've got you covered with questions galore, instructions and answer sheets – everything you'll need to get top marks. Join our team and help us raise vital funds for a world without barriers for all deaf children.

### 1. Where can you hold a quiz?

- A. At your place of work
- B. At a local pub or community centre
- C. Any of the above

### 2. Who's a quiz for?

- A. History buffs and pub quiz regulars
- B. Knowledge novices
- C. Anyone and everyone who wants to have fun!

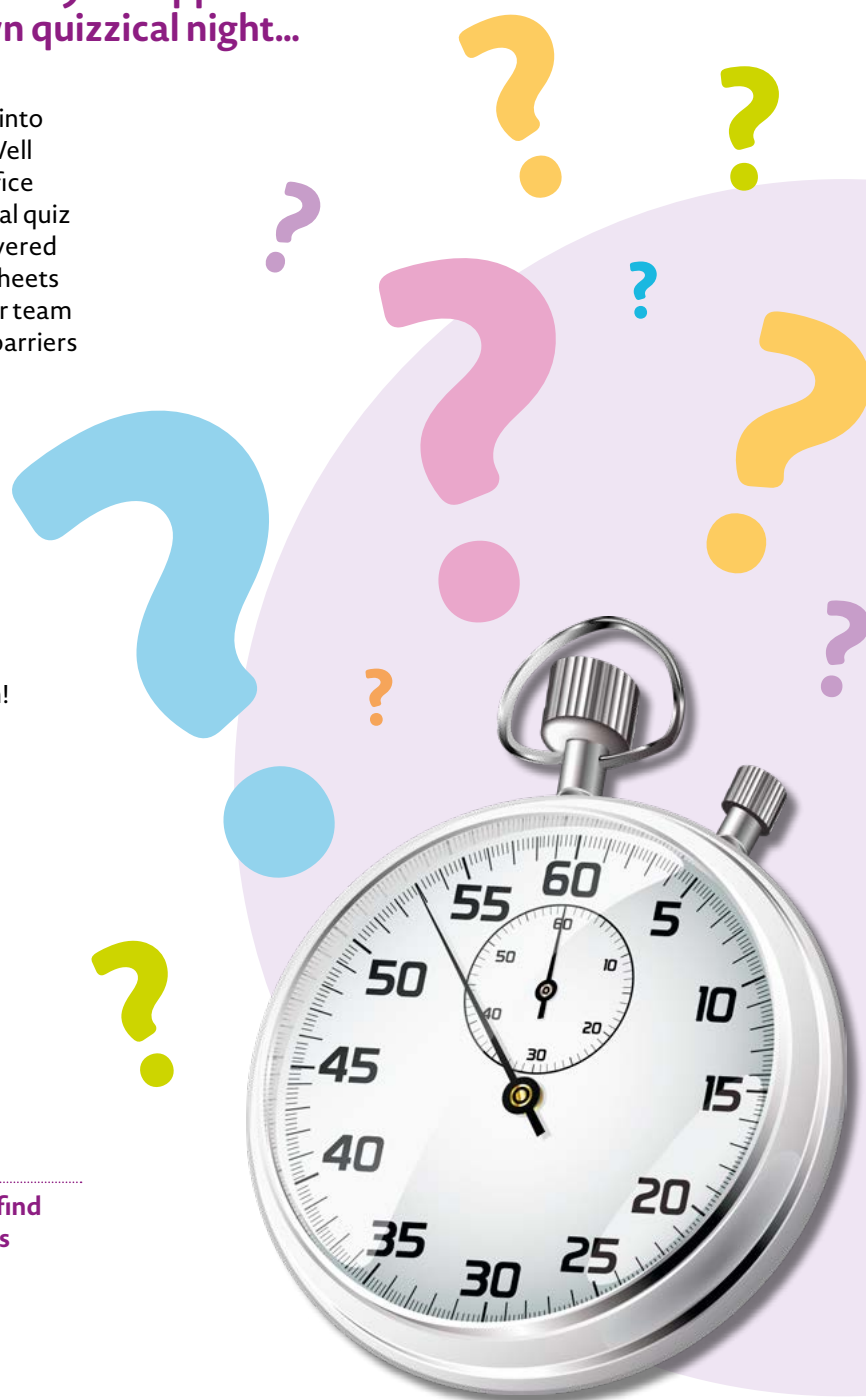
### 3. What's the easiest way to prepare for a pub quiz?

- A. Spend hours trawling the internet for questions
- B. Make them up on the spot – no pressure!
- C. Use up to 10 rounds of our pre-prepared Let's Get Quizzical questions

### 4. What's the fastest animal in the British Isles?

- A. A tortoise
- B. A snail
- C. Find out the answer in Let's Get Quizzical

➔ To register for your free quiz pack and to find out all the answers to the above questions please contact our Fundraising team on [corporate.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:corporate.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk) or 020 7014 1135 or visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/quizzical](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/quizzical).



# Great Wall of China Trek

21–29 October 2018

Join us on this incredible half-term adventure and help create a world without barriers for deaf children.



For more information and to sign up, visit [www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/chinatrek](http://www.ndcschallenges.org.uk/chinatrek)



National Deaf Children's Society



When I'm a

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

# grown-up

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



## I'm a professional sports photographer because...

I love the challenge of photographing big sporting names at events around the UK. I wasn't born deaf, but suddenly lost my hearing as an adult and am now profoundly deaf. I wear hearing aids, use speech, British Sign Language

(BSL) and lip-reading. I became a sports photographer after I lost my hearing but I knew I didn't want my deafness to stop me from achieving my dreams.

The biggest barrier in my job is that I find it hard to hear what the stewards are saying and, when the scoreboard isn't working, I struggle to know who scored. I overcome this by using the BBC Sport app on my phone and a notebook

to communicate with other photographers.

Outside of work I help my local basketball club with photography and deaf awareness and came second in volunteer of the year in my local area.

– Hannah Fountain

## I'm a senior data journalist because...

I love the idea that I can make a real difference – data helps inform all aspects of people's lives, such as whether they buy or rent a home. I work with statisticians, coders and other journalists to share data and statistics in an engaging and interesting way.

I have high-frequency deafness. I've tried using hearing aids but they made me feel worse – the shape of the hearing aid blocked my normal hearing and I felt like I was underwater – so I tend to rely on lip-reading. I always make people aware that I'm deaf and that if I don't respond it's not because I'm being dismissive, I just genuinely can't hear!

At work I don't have many adjustments – the key is ensuring that people know I'm deaf, so I may need to sit in a specific place, or need people to speak up or repeat themselves.

I'm a respected journalist in my field and I'm proud of how much I've done over the years, things that previously seemed impossible.

– Sophie Warnes



## I'm a personal trainer because...

It's rewarding knowing that I'm making a difference to people's lives. I'm profoundly deaf but have good, clear speech and lip-reading skills – I consider myself bilingual and am equally comfortable conversing in English or BSL.

Before becoming a personal trainer I dropped out of a photography degree – I got stuck and was unsure what career I really wanted. I ended up going to my local gym to keep myself occupied and started to really enjoy it. I had a lightbulb moment and applied to qualify as a personal trainer. I'd finally found my passion!

I had a communication support worker and BSL interpreter on the course and once I qualified I started looking for a job. It took some time but when Xercise4Less employed me as a personal trainer I was over the moon! I worked there for 10 months and am now self-employed.

– David Edgington



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

# St John's

Catholic School for the Deaf



For residential and day pupils aged 3 - 19 years

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

Ofsted, 2015



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

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

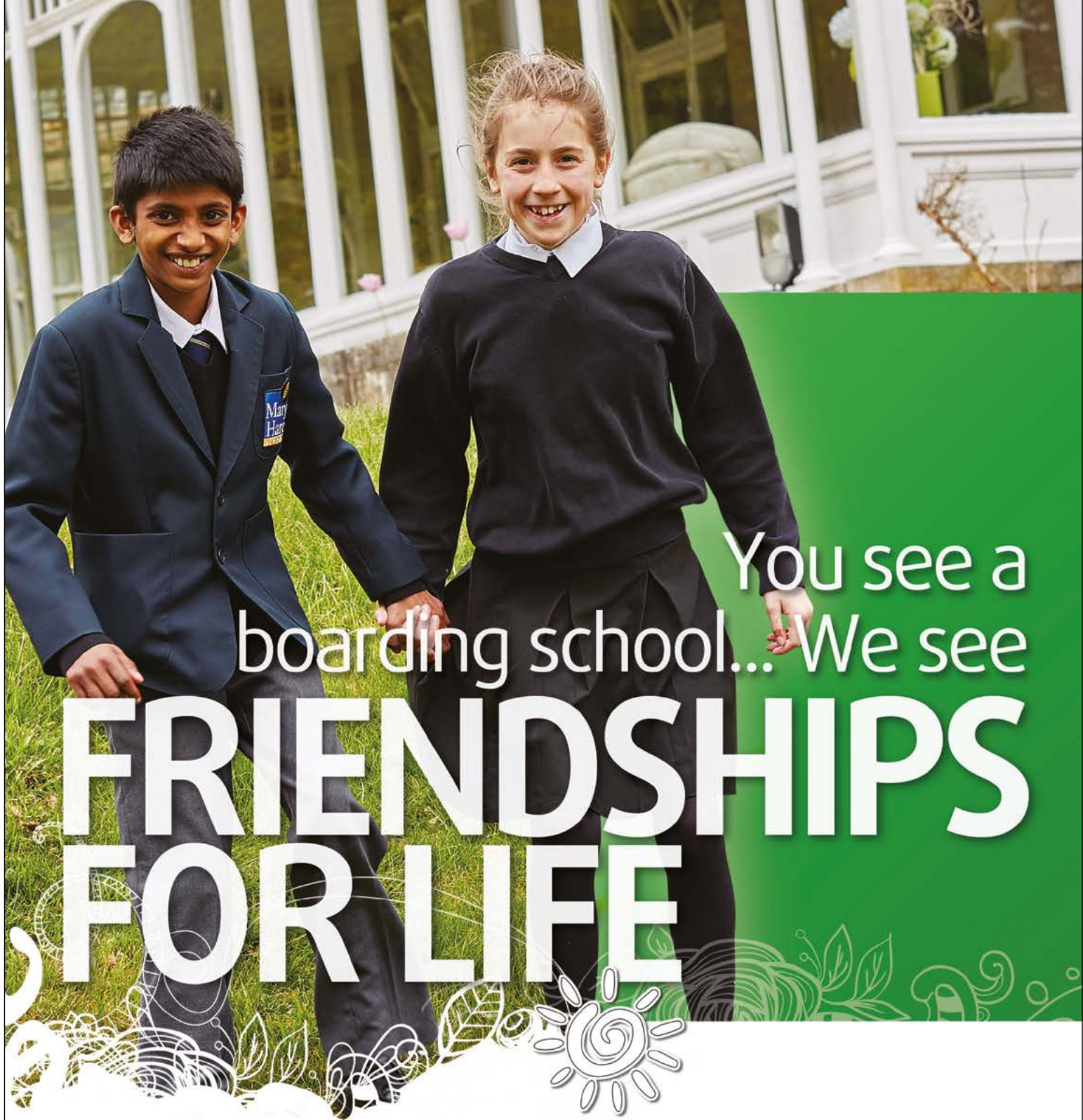
**For more information or to arrange a visit please contact:**

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

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

**Where every voice is heard and celebrated**





You see a  
boarding school... We see  
**FRIENDSHIPS  
FOR LIFE**



The right learning environment, the right attitude and the right approach can make a world of difference. At Mary Hare School we offer our pupils a large enough peer group to make friends for life.

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



**SECONDARY SCHOOL OPEN DAY, MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**  
To book a place, please visit:  
<https://www.maryhare.org.uk/events/secondary-school-open-day>



*Securing the future of deaf children and young people*