

23



Advice from a special educational needs coordinator

26



Tips on choosing childcare

30



Technology for the workplace



National Deaf Children's Society

# families



## Maya's big book win



She's over the moon to win the book competition and we're so proud!



**DOUBLE  
OUTSTANDING  
FOR CARE  
(Ofsted 2019)**

## Why Choose St John's?

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

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

**Our care is officially  
"outstanding"- again!**

"Outstanding" Residential Care"

"They are relentless in their drive to ensure that children learn skills and gain qualifications to be able to live fulfilled lives"

"Parents say that they are amazed at the progress and the skills children acquire"

Ofsted 2019



**100%**

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



**10**

**YEAR 11s AT THE SCHOOL SECURED AN  
AVERAGE OF 10 QUALIFICATIONS EACH -  
RANGING FROM ACADEMIC SUBJECTS TO  
MORE VOCATIONAL OPTIONS**



**100%**

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



**Get in contact:**



**01937 842144**



**info@stjohns.org.uk**



**www.stjohns.org.uk**



**stjohns4thedeaf**



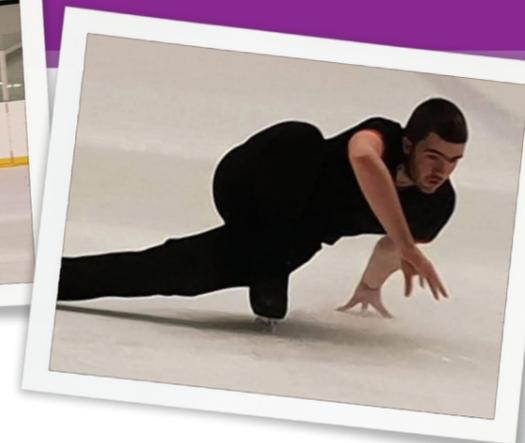
**stjohnsschoolforthe deaf**

# My deafness didn't stop me...

## becoming a champion ice skater

By Kerrina Gray

**Billy**



**BILLY (19), WHO'S  
PROFOUNDLY DEAF,  
STARTED SKATING WHEN  
HE WAS 10 YEARS OLD  
AFTER SEEING HIS OLDER  
SISTERS HAVE LESSONS.**

Since then he hasn't stopped and is now ranked number one in the world at inclusive skating (skating for those with additional needs).

Usually Billy wears two cochlear implants and uses both speech and British Sign Language but he has to remove one of his implants when he's training. "I only use one cochlear implant when I'm skating and I have to use double-sided tape to attach it to my head," Billy explains. "Before, my cochlear implant kept falling off during spins and jumps.

"When I'm skating, my coach has to show me what she wants me to do rather than explain it. When I'm trying new moves, I have to stop and skate

back to her to get feedback rather than her just shouting instructions at me. If music is played, I also have someone to give me a signal so I know when to start skating."

**“ My main goal  
is to become a  
figure skating  
coach.**

Billy says his greatest achievement is being ranked number one in the world since 2017. "Last year I went to Colorado to represent Scotland at the International World Figure and Fancy Skating Championships and I came first," he says. "My main goal is to become a figure skating coach."

Skating is a huge part of Billy's life and he recommends it to other deaf young people too. It isn't just a sport to Billy but has allowed him to visit lots

of new and exciting places, experience different cultures and meet new people too, which has helped improve his communication. "Skating's fun, it keeps you fit as well," Billy says. "And if you decide you want to compete you can go all over the world and meet new people."

Good luck for future competitions Billy!



**For information you can  
share with professionals  
about adapting activities for  
your child, visit  
[www.ndcs.org.uk/  
deafawarenessresources](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/deafawarenessresources).**



# #goodresults

Mary Hare offers an exceptional educational environment for deaf children, enabling them to reach their full potential, both academically and personally. We offer:

- Subject specialists who are also qualified Teachers of the Deaf
- A broad range of GCSEs, A Levels, BTECs and vocational courses
- Small class sizes
- Technology to enable every child to hear each other and the teacher
- A fully resourced Audiology unit
- A large Speech and Language team

As the biggest school for deaf children in the UK, we are committed to giving our students the education they deserve, and the confidence they need, for the future they desire.

For more information or to arrange an individual visit, please contact

**Debbie Jacobs:**  
**d.jacobs@maryhare.org.uk**  
 call **01635 244215**  
 or visit our website **www.maryhare.org.uk**



Securing the future of deaf children and young people

## families

### ✉ Get in touch

Families magazine  
 Ground Floor South, Castle House,  
 37-45 Paul Street, London EC2A 4LS  
 Telephone: **020 7490 8656** (v&t)  
 Fax: **020 7251 5020**  
 Email: **magazine@ndcs.org.uk**  
 Website: **www.ndcs.org.uk**  
 Freephone Helpline:  
**0808 800 8880** (v&t)

### 🐦 Twitter

@NDCS\_UK  
 @NDCS\_Cymru  
 @NDCS\_Scotland  
 @NDCS\_NIreland

### 📘 Facebook

NDCS.UK  
 NDCSScotland  
 NDCSNIreland

### 📷 Instagram

@NDCS\_UK

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

**Editor** Kerrina Gray  
**Designer** Sarah Levy  
**Production Manager** Andy Long  
**Distribution** Maria Piazza

**Contributors:** Katy Blanchard, Lois Drake, Emma Fraser, Kim Hagen, Karen Harlow, John Larkin, Claire Lubbock, Elayne Nunan, Liam O'Dell, Kerry Ross, Michelle Terry, Becky Triffitt, Rosie Vare, Julie Wheeler.

**Advertising sales**  
 Sharon Davies, Landmark Publishing Services,  
 7 Adam Street, London WC2N 6AA  
 Tel 020 7520 9474 Email sharon@lps.co.uk

**Printed in the UK** by The Magazine Printing Company www.magprint.co.uk

Families is published by the National Deaf Children's Society. The National Deaf Children's Society is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 1016532 and in Scotland no. SC040779. Opinions in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the policies and views of the National Deaf Children's Society. We support families to make informed choices and no one option will work for all families. This magazine highlights some of these options. For further information, see our website or call our Freephone Helpline.

Advertisements do not necessarily imply endorsement by the National Deaf Children's Society. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction in part or whole is prohibited without written permission. Photographs and artwork are accepted on the basis that the National Deaf Children's Society and our agents do not accept liability for loss or damage to them.



**Hugh's story**  
 how he settled into a new nursery  
**p12**



**Ethan's story**  
 how he overcame concentration fatigue  
**p16**



**Hooriya's story**  
 how she and her mum put their mental health first  
**p18**



**Ollie's story**  
 how he achieved his dream of going to the University of Oxford  
**p20**

# Hello



Welcome to the last issue of 2019 but my very first as editor! I'm absolutely delighted to be taking the reins at Families magazine and bringing you lots of useful stories and information each season.

I've been working on the magazine behind the scenes for two years now and one thing I've always felt is most important is that you're able to hear directly from other families of deaf children and young people. Speaking to you is my favourite part of the job and I always walk away from an interview feeling inspired! If you have a story you'd like to share, please do get in touch.

In this issue, the parents of our book competition winner Maya (9) tell us why being creative has really helped her to thrive (page 14). Sadly we also bring you the last Raising Molly column, as mum Lara speaks about how far her family has come on their journey (page 11). On the bright side, that means there's now an opening for a new columnist! So contact me if you're interested.

I really hope you enjoy this issue and I wish you a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

*Kerrina*

**Kerrina Gray, Editor**  
 ✉ **magazine@ndcs.org.uk**

## Contents

<b>3</b>	<b>My deafness didn't stop me... becoming a champion ice skater</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Young people 19-25</b> Living the dream
<b>5</b>	<b>Contents and note from the editor</b>	<b>INFORMATION, TIPS AND ADVICE</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>News</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Ask the expert</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Scribble Club</b>
		<b>26</b>	<b>How do I... choose the right childcare for my child?</b>
<b>YOUR STORIES</b>			
<b>9</b>	<b>Superstars</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Education and learning</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Raising Nancy</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Technology</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Raising Molly</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Reviews</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Early years</b> Hugh's smooth nursery move	<b>34</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Primary years</b> A write success	<b>37</b>	<b>In your area</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Secondary years</b> Beyond exhaustion	<b>42</b>	<b>Get involved</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Young people 15-18</b> Helping Hooriya put her mental health first	<b>ROLE MODELS</b>	
		<b>46</b>	<b>When I'm a grown-up</b>

# NEWS



## Enid's legacy

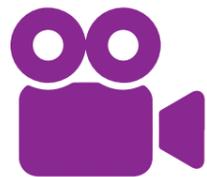
Enid's colourful life included tracking enemy aircraft with the Royal Observation Corps and attending art school. But she found her true calling as a teacher. "She could bring out the best in any child," a former pupil told us.

Enid leaves behind a wonderful legacy through the many children she taught over the years, but it doesn't end there. Her own hearing loss meant she understood the difficulties that many deaf children face and she made sure our support will be there for everyone who needs it by including a gift to us in her will.

If you'd like to do the same, you can find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/giftsinwills](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/giftsinwills) or get in touch on [giftsinwills@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:giftsinwills@ndcs.org.uk).

**Did you know?**  
Thomas Braidwood established Britain's first school for deaf children in Edinburgh in 1760. All three of his daughters went on to become Teachers of the Deaf!

## Where are the subtitles?



Our recent study shows thousands of deaf children are being let down by their local cinemas with the vast majority not providing any subtitled films.

For each of the summer's top children's films, an average of seven in 10 cinemas didn't provide subtitled screenings. Less than half of all cinemas subtitled the top 11 children's movies, like *The Lion King* and *Toy Story 4*. "The magic of the cinema is still out of reach for most deaf children," said Helen Cable, who leads our work with children and young people.

If you'd like to join our campaign and share your story, please email [media@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:media@ndcs.org.uk).

## Book competition update: We've found our illustrator!

We're delighted to announce that we've found an illustrator for our next children's book! Lucy Rogers (23), who is profoundly deaf, will be working with our book competition winner Maya (9) to turn her story into a real-life book. "Maya's story is lovely and I'm truly amazed that a nine-year-old wrote it," Lucy said. "I can't wait to get started on bringing the world she's invented to life!" You can find out more about our brilliant winner Maya on page 14 and our lovely illustrator Lucy on page 46.

## Northern Ireland communication course continues

Thanks to continued support from the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland, we're offering more Communication is Fun sessions in March 2020.

This brilliant course is for anyone with a deaf child from 0-4 years old and will help you explore all the different options for communicating with your deaf child. This includes language development, interactive learning and Family Sign Language.

"We, as parents of a deaf child, can feel lost sometimes about what we could be doing more of to help our child develop," said one previous participant. "We've had so much advice and information and feel that we now have a base to start helping him. Everyone has been so friendly, the event was a lot of fun - I wish we could do it all over again!"

Contact [nioffice@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:nioffice@ndcs.org.uk) for more information.



## Our award-winning information

Our booklet *Meningitis and Childhood Deafness: A guide for families* was shortlisted in the self-care award category at the annual Patient Information Awards.

The judges said: "This is an excellently produced booklet covering a really important topic. It provides a useful resource for parents. It introduces the different options to help in a non-biased manner, respecting parents' rights to information and choice."

If you'd like to download the booklet, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/meningitis](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/meningitis).



## Sign of the season: Christmas



# Comment

## What would you like to see from us?

We're really proud that our membership is free and offers everyone the opportunity to access our information and resources, attend our events, get advice and even read this magazine! But we're keen to make sure we're always offering you exactly what you want.

Your values and experiences are key to all our work but we've not always fully understood what our members - including diverse groups within our membership - want from the organisation. We want to know what's most important to you and what you'd like us to do more of.

So, we're reviewing what we offer our members and we're talking to you directly. You may have already seen social media posts encouraging you to take part in our consultation. We've held some initial focus groups and interviews with parents and professionals and will continue to carry out our annual survey too.

We're also particularly keen to understand how we can best work with deaf young people. We support deaf children up to the age of 25 and we're therefore expanding our membership offer to deaf young people - we want to develop an offer that will be both exciting and helpful.

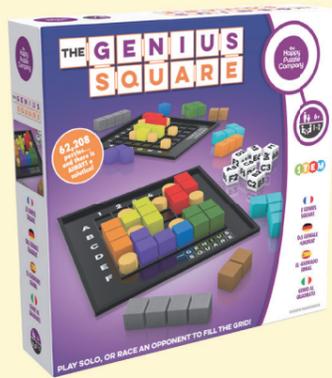
This review will help to make sure the work we do continues to focus on what you most want from us, while giving you a greater say in setting our priorities. It will be an ongoing process so please do watch this space (and our other channels) for further opportunities to get involved!

To tell us what you think, please visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/about-us/member-benefits](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/about-us/member-benefits). I really look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your help.

Susan

Susan Daniels OBE  
Chief Executive





# 'Is this the cleverest game ever invented?'

**BRAND NEW!**

**Special Offer!**  
**20% OFF**

Reg. Price ~~£16.99~~  
**Now £13.59**  
when you quote Ref: FM1A

For a strictly limited period ONLY!!



## Welcome to The Genius Square!

The aim of each of the 62,208 possible puzzles is to complete the square using the nine coloured shapes, once the seven 'blockers' have been positioned. There may be times when it seems impossible, but there will ALWAYS be at least one solution...and that's why it's called The Genius Square!

Each player receives a Genius Square grid (two are included) and a set of the nine coloured shapes, plus seven 'blocker' pieces. Roll all seven of the dice together and place a 'blocker' piece into the squares matching the seven co-ordinates that appear on the dice. Now race your opponent to fill every other space on the grid using the nine shapes.

There are 62,208 possible combinations in which the dice can fall. Using a specially devised computer programme, we have confirmed that all of them have at least one possible solution. Some combinations will be easy to solve, some much harder. It's all in the luck of the roll of the dice.

As soon as somebody finishes first, roll the dice and play again! An example of how to play is shown above. You can also play alone and challenge yourself against the clock!

Ages 6 to adult. For 1 or 2 players. Box size approx. 27cm x 27cm.

Remember to quote FM1A to get your SPECIAL OFFER price



RATED 9.3 OUT OF 10 FROM OVER 14,500 REVIEWS!



Available in the UK from



**"Outstanding. Nobody in the family can put it down. We are actually getting a second set - it's that good! Best game any of us has ever played!"** ★★★★★  
*Debra Sobel, London*

**Buy Now! Call 0844 848 2823**

quote ref. FM1A to receive your 20% discount.

or visit [www.happypuzzle.co.uk/genius](http://www.happypuzzle.co.uk/genius)

Send coupon to: 'The Genius Square' Families Offer  
c/o THPC, PO Box 586, Elstree, Herts WD6 3XY

FM1A

Order Code:	Item:	Qty	Was	Now	Total
HPCGNS	1 x 'The Genius Square' 20% OFF!		<del>£16.99</del>	£13.59	
HPCGNS	2 x 'The Genius Square' SAVE £6.80!		<del>£33.98</del>	£27.18	
HPCGNS	3 x 'The Genius Square' SAVE £10.20!		<del>£50.97</del>	£40.77	
<b>Standard Delivery</b> (approx. 3 to 5 days) Please note that offer code also discounts delivery charge by 20% (regular p and p £4.95) <b>Orders over £50 have FREE Standard UK delivery</b>					£3.95
<b>Next Day Delivery</b> - Order before 2pm and receive your order on the next working day (excludes weekends and Bank Holidays)					£8.95
<b>Grand Total</b>					

Title Initial Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 I enclose a cheque / postal order, payable to THPC  Value £ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Or please debit my credit / debit card  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Card No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Valid From Date \_\_\_\_\_ Issue No. \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Digit Security Code. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Happy Puzzle Company would like to permit carefully chosen third party companies to contact you with special offers from time to time. If you don't wish to receive this information, please tick here

\* Our 0844 numbers cost 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge.

**Offer ends 11.59pm 29th February 2020!**

# SUPERSTARS

SUPERSTARS



Elliot has had a hard start to life, after a neonatal stroke which has left him with ongoing brain and respiratory issues. He also has spina bifida. He's wearing hearing aids now and is getting referred for a cochlear implant soon. He's so smiley even after everything he's been through. He truly is a superstar.



**Amy is mum to Elliot (5 months) who is profoundly deaf.**

Isabelle is great at wearing her hearing aids and doesn't let them stop her from doing anything. She's recently moved up to the older class in ballet and contemporary dancing and her reading level is way above average. Isabelle makes me so proud, I couldn't be luckier to be her mum.



**Charlotte is mum to Isabelle (6) who has moderate hearing loss.**



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

Fin was aided at seven weeks and he's been excellent at wearing his hearing aids and even tells us when they're falling out. We've been signing since he was young and, not only is he saying lots of words, he's up to almost 100 signs. He makes us so proud every day.



**Gemma is mum to Fin (2) who has moderate hearing loss.**

Congratulations and thanks to my son Krsna's grandmother, uncle and aunts for passing their British Sign Language (BSL) Level 2. Krsna relies on sign language to communicate, and thanks to their hard work and dedication, he can now participate in family conversations.



**Kirsty is mum to Krsna (8) who is severely to profoundly deaf.**

Since getting hearing aids, Abigail's hearing and confidence have improved. My little mermaid has nearly finished her stage 4 swimming and has just been on her first camping trip with Brownies. Having hearing loss didn't stop her from doing all the activities, including zip lining and crate building! She's very determined and we're so proud of her.



**Stacey is mum to Abigail (8) who has mild hearing loss.**

Daisy has amazed us with how proud she is of her hearing aids. She has unicorn stickers on them and loves to chat to everybody she meets proudly showing off her 'unicorn ears'. Daisy has amazed us every day since her diagnosis and we are so proud to call her our daughter. Nothing holds our little superstar back.



**Sarah is mum to Daisy (3) who has moderate to severe hearing loss.**



# Learning to swim

## Raising Nancy

The ups and downs of parenting a deaf child

**“ Nancy was ecstatic the first time she heard a splash!**



Jess and her husband Matt are parents to Alice (8) and twins Nancy and Connie (6). Nancy is profoundly deaf and was fitted with cochlear implants at 20 months.

**I’VE LEARNT A LOT ABOUT WHAT NANCY NEEDS AS SHE’S LEARNT TO SWIM.** She used to love squealing and splashing around in the water with Connie; the two of them were hilarious. But I wanted her to develop a swimming technique.

Nancy started lessons when she was three years old with Kate, who was full of expression, big smiles and gestures. She was wonderful and really understood Nancy’s needs. Kate got in the water with her so she could get right up close to her face for Nancy to read her lips. She even opted to go on a National Deaf Children’s Society course for swimming teachers in her own time.

As time went on, Nancy needed to understand the nuances of learning to swim and, because she couldn’t hear in the water, she started to slip behind Connie. She was nearly five and it was obvious that she was relying on copying other children. Kate had left two years before and the girls’ new teacher wasn’t quite as dynamic: no animation when he talked and he shouted after Nancy as she swam. I’d explained to him the importance of ensuring he had eye contact with Nancy when he had something to say. I even handed him a printout of the National Deaf Children’s Society’s notes for swimming teachers, but he lost it!

Some swimming pools provide teachers trained in deaf awareness and British Sign Language, but they were too far for us to travel to. I always sat at the side for Nancy’s lessons and signed to her as backup, when she chose to look at me or wasn’t trying out a handstand!

We didn’t think it was possible for

Nancy to wear her cochlear implants in the water but then I heard about waterproof covers. At first we put them on just one processor in case it got damaged or the water leaked in. But she still couldn’t really hear her teacher; the microphones were masked by her waterproof cover and swimming hat. Then we just decided to go for it and bought them for both ears. What a difference! Immediately Nancy could hear and followed the teacher’s instructions. I hadn’t been prepared for the cost though: £7 a swim on top of the lessons (thank goodness for her Disability Living Allowance!) The water gets in from time to time, so we have to stick the processors in the drying machine overnight. But she can now communicate while she’s in the water. She was ecstatic the first time she heard a splash!

A couple of months ago, Nancy had a cover teacher, Kelsey, who seemed to really understand her. After a brilliant lesson, Kelsey told me, “My nephew’s deaf, so I kind of get it.” That was all I needed to decide we were changing teacher. The other day Nancy completed a width of the pool unaided, I couldn’t be prouder of her. 📌

➡ To find out more about learning to swim and adjustments that can be made in the water, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/learningtoswim](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/learningtoswim).

For more information about Disability Living Allowance (DLA), go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/dla](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/dla).



# Goodbye from us!

**THIS WILL BE MY LAST COLUMN FOR FAMILIES MAGAZINE.** I write it as Molly and Faye have just returned from a holiday with the National Deaf Children’s Society where they did all sorts of outdoor activities and had a wonderful time.

Faye has a mild hearing loss due to intermittent glue ear, yet she was welcomed in. It was so great to see her meet and make friends with other kids who, like her, don’t always hear things first time. Faye will probably grow out of her hearing loss at some point but it’s still so important for us to recognise that kids with glue ear struggle with their hearing loss too. Even a seemingly mild loss can have a profound effect on learning and socialising. Mild hearing loss is one of those hidden disabilities and it was so great for her to experience an environment where she didn’t miss things, communication was clear and she felt she fitted in.

For Molly, the best part of the events is meeting other kids who are deaf and wear hearing aids like she does. When I think back to her first time away weekend, she’s a transformed girl. That was four years ago and, since then, we’ve gained British Sign Language (BSL) Level 2, joined our local Deaf community and Molly has been on multiple National Deaf Children’s Society events.

For me, the worst advice I was ever given was that Molly would not need or use sign language as she would be in a hearing world due to only having a moderate loss. It’s true that she does live mainly in the hearing world but she also has a significant hearing loss and therefore lives in the deaf world too.

Once we realised she would always be bridging that gap, Molly started to find her identity and her confidence. It’s not been easy. She’s been bullied and discriminated against, she’s left school to be home educated and she’s felt at times like both a misfit and a member of the Deaf community. With all the trials of growing up, like not knowing where you fit in, feeling different or wrong as so many young people do, Molly will always be welcomed by the Deaf community. I want to thank the National Deaf Children’s Society for bringing so much of that sense of belonging to her life. Meeting with other deaf kids and adults is just so important.

As we left the holiday this year, Molly, who is just about to turn 13, said to me that she’s ready to start learning BSL Level 3. When I asked her why, she said she wanted to come back as a volunteer for the events when she’s old enough. I think that’s a grand plan!

We’ve really enjoyed writing this column documenting Molly’s ups and downs and journey through life. We wish you and your children all the best for the future! 📌

➡ If you or your child would like to attend one of our events, you can find out more information and find one close to you at [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events).

For more information about glue ear, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear).

## Raising Molly

Navigating between the deaf and hearing worlds

**“ Meeting with other deaf kids and adults is just so important.**



Lara and her husband Henry are parents to Conrad (15), Molly (12) and Faye (9). Molly is moderately deaf and Faye has intermittent glue ear.



# Hugh's smooth nursery move

By Katy Blanchard

**Faced with the choice of moving their son to a new nursery or seeing his classroom support taken away, Stacey and Darren threw themselves into preparing Hugh (now 5) and everyone at the new nursery for the change.**



**Hugh's story**  
how he settled into a new nursery

**AS HE WALKED ONTO THE STAGE FOR HIS GRADUATION FROM NURSERY,** four-year-old Hugh was brimming with confidence. He collected his graduation certificate and sat down with his friends at the front of the hall. Just six months earlier, parents Stacey and Darren couldn't imagine their son being so happy and relaxed to take part.

"I thought he would cling to me and refuse to get on the stage," says Stacey. "But his confidence has grown massively and I'm sure what he's been through has contributed to that."

It's been an unsettled time for Hugh. When he was two years old, and at his first nursery, he was diagnosed as moderately deaf and started wearing hearing aids. "We had a close bond with all the staff there, especially because they

supported us with the diagnosis," says Stacey.

Just months before he was due to finish there and start school, the local authority told the family it could no longer provide support for Hugh in his nursery. The family live close to the border of two local authorities and the nursery Hugh attended for two years was just the other side of the boundary of the local authority they live in. To continue getting support, including a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD), speech and language therapy and sensory support workers, Hugh would have to move to a nursery in his local authority area – even though he would only be there for six months.

"Being told he would have to leave his nursery was a real blow, it was so distressing," says Stacey. "Hugh's communication had come so far and we were worried that a big disruption would set him back."

Stacey and Darren channelled their worries into how they could make the move to a new nursery easier for Hugh. There were transition days, led by the ToD, but the family knew

**“Being told he would have to leave his nursery was a real blow.”**

there was a lot they could do too.

The whole family got involved. They visited the new nursery several times so Hugh could meet the staff and familiarise himself with the setting. They took photographs of the building and the staff and went through them with



Hugh at home. His sister Charlotte (17), who wants to work in early years education, helped too as they all walked past the nursery together with Hugh in the lead up to him starting.

Preparing for the move didn't end there. The family liaised closely with the staff at the new nursery, who had never supported a deaf child before, and contacted parents of other children there with tips for communicating with a deaf child.

"Everyone at the new nursery was very supportive," says Stacey. "The ToD held information sessions with the children and we sent a letter to the parents explaining about Hugh's deafness, how he communicates and what support he needs. We invited them to get in touch with us if they had any questions. Some people told us how pleased they were to get the letter and we felt much better by the time Hugh started."

Hugh was involved in getting everyone at the new nursery ready too. Stacey helped him make a poster so the other children could learn about his hearing aids.

Despite the hard work the family put into making the transition smooth, Stacey recalls a difficult few weeks while Hugh got used to being somewhere new. "There were tears and Hugh was clingy and wouldn't leave me. There were also some toileting issues while it was all so new," she says.

Fortunately, Hugh wasn't unsettled for long. Within a few weeks things started to improve and in six months he'd formed relationships with the staff and made new friends. "When

**“I'm so glad we got involved and didn't just leave it to the professionals.”**

he woke up in the morning, he'd look forward to going. I knew then that everything we'd put into the transition had paid off," says Stacey. "I'm so glad we got involved and didn't just leave it to the professionals. As well as helping Hugh, it set our minds at ease."

Everyone at Hugh's new nursery even got involved in the Deaf Awareness Week activities Stacey helped organise this year, including a 'wear it loud' fancy dress day and a bake sale. "The support was phenomenal," says Stacey. "Hugh had only been there a few months but we felt so welcomed."

"In spite of the upheaval, he had a lovely six months there. It wasn't easy and it was incredibly frustrating the move had to happen when it was just for a few months. We've faced constant challenges but the love and support we all have for Hugh has helped us through it. And the challenges have helped build his confidence and prepare him for the future."

The nursery Hugh transitioned to was attached to the primary school he'd be moving up to months later – one of the family's main reasons for choosing it. "The level of support he receives is set to drop when he starts school so that will be a huge challenge," says Stacey. "But he actually left nursery feeling excited about the next step and starting school." Good luck Hugh! 📞

➔ **For more information about choosing childcare for your child, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare) or turn to page 26 where parents give their tips.**

**To find out what services should be doing to support your child in the early years, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/EYqualitystandards](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/EYqualitystandards).**



## Your winter checklist

### ✔ Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the skill of using language socially and being able to adapt to different situations.

It's key to taking part in conversations and interacting with other people. Deafness can sometimes make it more difficult to develop pragmatics but there are fun activities you can do at home with your child to help. Find out more and read tips from other parents at [www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics).



### ✔ Wearing hearing aids or cochlear implant processors

When a child first starts wearing a hearing aid or cochlear implant processor it's important they wear it regularly but it can take them time to get used to it. Making sure they're comfortable and secure and building up the time they wear them for makes a big difference. Find out how, along with other tips, at [www.ndcs.org.uk/wearinghearingtech](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/wearinghearingtech).

### ✔ Support at nursery

Our *Supporting the Achievement of Hearing Impaired Children in Early Years Settings* resource is full of useful guidance for nursery staff. It includes guidance on being deaf-friendly and how to help a deaf child achieve their potential. It can also be helpful for parents as it gives an idea of what expectations of the staff can be. [www.ndcs.org.uk/supportingachievement](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/supportingachievement)





# A write success

By Kerrina Gray

This year we launched our very first book competition for 7–11 year olds. With over 150 entries, our judging panel, which included author of *The Gruffalo* Julia Donaldson CBE, found it very hard to pick a winner. In the end Maya (9) triumphed with her captivating story of an underwater quest.



**Maya's story** how her love for reading led to a big win



**WHEN MAYA GOT A SKYPE CALL FROM THE NATIONAL DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY TO TELL HER THAT HER STORY HAD WON OUR FIRST BOOK COMPETITION, SHE COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.** "I think it took a while to sink in for her," dad Jeff explains. "She's over the moon and we're so proud. Her story is going to be published, that's amazing!"

Although it was a surprise for the family, Maya has always loved reading and writing. "Reading has always been her real interest ever since she was little," Jeff says. "We read to her as a baby and then, when she started to lose her hearing, it became even more important to us."

Maya, who is now severely deaf, didn't seem to have any issues with hearing until she was three years old. "She had recurrent ear infections from about one year old," mum Jessica explains. "But by three years old I remember noticing Maya was not speaking as much as her friends. I wondered if this was because I'm from El Salvador and spoke to her in Spanish. I also noticed when she was playing with her friends I'd call her, and all her friends would turn back but she was the last one to stop. A friend asked whether perhaps she had problems hearing but I dismissed it."

But aged four Maya had another bad ear infection so Jessica took her to have her ears checked by the GP, who referred her to audiology. She was diagnosed with glue ear and mild hearing loss so she had grommets fitted. "The glue ear cleared," Jessica explains. "But we didn't realise the impact the hearing loss would have on Maya. It wasn't until we sought a second opinion that we learned that Maya may lag behind in school even if the hearing loss was mild. We were urged to get hearing aids for her."

Maya started school but her hearing unfortunately dropped. "That year was really tough," says Jessica. "Maya had almost

## When Maya started to lose her hearing, reading became more important to us.

constant ear infections and her hearing got progressively worse so her hearing aids kept being turned up." After many more tests, she was diagnosed with a permanent progressive hearing loss and the family are now considering cochlear implants.

Jeff explains that when they first found out Maya's hearing loss was permanent and severe, they felt "depressed" but then they got involved with the National Deaf Children's Society. "We went to a Newly Diagnosed event. It was really helpful seeing other deaf children, talking to the other parents and realising we're not alone."

Maya uses speech but Jessica has just completed her Level 1 in British Sign Language. She's started signing to Maya and her hearing younger sister Emma (6). "Maya is very happy and content but she's much more tired than other children at school," Jessica says.

Since losing her hearing, reading has become even more important to Maya as a way to relax after a long day concentrating. "Maya loves books," Jeff says. "At mealtimes she reads, before bed, anywhere. I think it's because it's hard for her to follow a conversation, especially in loud places, so she'll always have her nose in a book."

"She really loves immersing herself in all kinds of stories. When we read to Maya we make sure she can see our lips and the area is very quiet. But she's already finished reading herself the *Harry Potter* series. She says she thinks she's a quick and accomplished reader because she's so used to reading subtitles."

As well as reading, Maya is also interested in storytelling and has entered a number of writing competitions before. Earlier this year she decided to enter our first ever book competition.

"I write my own sci-fi kids' stories so that might be how Maya became interested in writing," Jeff says. "She loves fantasy. She and I would make up our own stories and tell them to each other."

Maya will now be working with author Sarah Driver and deaf illustrator Lucy Rogers to turn her story into a published book. "Maya is so looking forward to working with Sarah and Lucy," Jeff says. "She read Sarah's books and loved them! She can't believe Julia Donaldson read her story too; we love *The Gruffalo* and *What the Ladybird Heard*."

"I was thrilled when I heard she won," adds Jessica. "I was really moved because her story is so caring and I'm happy that she's so proud of herself. Her school are so excited for her too and can't wait to read it."

It's not just reading and writing that Maya's excelling at, she's also a talented musician, footballer and ballerina! "She's always been very musical, she likes singing and has had violin and piano lessons," Jeff explains. "Maya loves ballet and recently auditioned for a programme called Junior Associates at the Royal Ballet School. They pick around 100 students across the country to study once a week with real ballerinas. Maya auditioned and got in!"

Now the family are looking towards the future and can't wait for Maya's book to be published. "She changes her mind about what she wants to be all the time," Jeff says. "One minute it's a dancer then a movie star but right now it's a writer. Winning this competition has really inspired her. I'm so proud of her, she'll achieve whatever she wants to achieve."

→ **Maya's story will be published in summer 2020. For more information, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/bookcompetition](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/bookcompetition).**

**If you'd like to find out more about phonics and helping your child to learn to read and write, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/phonics](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/phonics).**

**Find out more about our illustrator on page 46.**

## Your winter checklist

### ✓ Apps to develop reading and writing

Children learn reading and writing in different ways, and apps can provide a fun opportunity to practise their skills. There are some popular mainstream apps, which have been recommended for deaf children, on our website at [www.ndcs.org.uk/readingandwritingapps](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/readingandwritingapps).

### ✓ Signed songs

Signed songs can be a great opportunity to raise deaf awareness and introduce others to signing. Add a signed song to your Christmas concert or do an entire signed performance. We have information about signed songs and a link to videos to help get you started, including the always popular *Last Christmas*. [www.ndcs.org.uk/signedsongs](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/signedsongs)

### ✓ Cycling and cycle helmets

Learning to ride a bike is a big step for all children and for a deaf child there can be extra things to consider, like finding a helmet that fits over hearing aids or processors and understanding instructions when they're focused on the road ahead. We've put together our top 10 cycling tips from parents. [www.ndcs.org.uk/cycling](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/cycling)





# Beyond exhaustion

By Elayne Nunan

After Ethan (13) kept coming home drained from listening, lip-reading and learning all day at school, his behaviour became difficult for the whole family. But with new strategies in place, this term should be a different story...



**Ethan's story**  
how he overcame concentration fatigue



## SELINA GLANCES AT HER PHONE; THE KIDS ARE DUE HOME FROM SCHOOL SOON.

Before she would have felt tensions rise, knowing she'd face battles when they got back. But then she reminds herself those times have gone. Ethan walks in smiling, happily chatting to his sister Grace (9) about his day.

"It was awful when Ethan started high school," recalls Selina. "He'd come in exhausted after concentrating intensely all day on lip-reading, listening and learning. We could see it in him, a glazed expression, first noticeable during his Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATS) in Year 7.

"We'd get him to do homework but he'd refuse. That switch-off from school, where his brain's gone into neutral, he couldn't switch it on again. He wanted to watch *Spiderman* so the screaming and shouting would begin. His volume became louder as his self-regulation went. He'd blow out, get stroppy, slam doors."

But that's all changed thanks to the strategies put in place following meetings Selina and husband Nathan had with Ethan's school.

Ethan is severely deaf, has worn hearing aids since six weeks old and uses speech and lip-reading. "High school is more challenging than primary," says Selina. "He's a visual learner, practical elements are easier for him to process so he's more tired on days full of theory-based subjects.

"He had to learn to lip-read eight or nine teachers instead of one. In French he had three teachers with different accents – Welsh, French and Irish – it was hard! His auditory processing

## He'd come in exhausted after concentrating intensely all day on lip-reading, listening and learning.

memory isn't great and when he has to look at the whiteboard, lip-read and write, he can't do it."

Then a pupil started bullying Ethan, including calling him 'Mickey Mouse'. "Ethan had always been confident in his deafness but he said he didn't want to be deaf anymore," says Selina. "It was heartbreaking."

Selina and Ethan's Teacher of the Deaf called a meeting with the school and they dealt with the bullying. Ethan got his confidence back and became the sociable outgoing boy he had been. At the meeting, Selina explained how tiring it is for a deaf child to concentrate all day and asked them to make reasonable adjustments to support Ethan.

They suggested Ethan spend lunchtime in the library, with access to a teaching assistant (TA), with other pupils who needed time out. "It provided a rest from playground noise and the pressure to have conversations, particularly after mornings with more theory-based lessons. On days with less mentally demanding subjects, like PE, he'd hang out with his mates instead," says Selina.

Other meetings brought new ways to support Ethan. Some teachers started supplying Ethan with glossaries of new words and advance topic information so he could get visual information on YouTube. For spelling, Ethan works in the corridor with a peer buddy who gives him the word in a sentence for context.

Ethan found some classes too noisy so the school gave him a five-minute card, allowing five minutes out of a lesson. "It's a good escape valve," says Selina. "But we told him 'Don't abuse it or you'll lose it!'"

He also has a red card for 'mute the mic' on his radio aid, a green one for 'unmute mic' and a '?' card for asking a question.

All these changes have helped Ethan enormously but the key thing that's defused the homework battles is homework club. "We only learnt it when we spoke to the school about Ethan's tiredness," says Selina. "It's an hour after school. He does his homework the same day usually, his academic brain hasn't switched off

yet. He's often the only one there so he gets 1:1 support and a cookie!"

"Being tired is difficult and your brain wants to close down," Ethan adds. "Homework club helps because if I'm tired and I've gone to the club I don't have to think when I get home. I can rest my brain and there isn't any shouting about having to get homework done."

Another problem was Ethan not hearing homework set at the end of lessons, with classmates scraping chairs and packing bags. "He relied on the electronic homework system but whenever it crashed he didn't know what was required so got told off for not completing the homework which was unfair. Now the TA writes it in his planner," says Selina.

Selina now feels optimistic about Year 8 and beyond. "Ethan loves school," says Selina. "He's outgoing, talks to all the teachers, not just his own. He's meeting targets, other than in English and Maths. His effort is really good. He likes practical rather than academic subjects, like Design Tech and Food Tech. In Drama he did the lighting, watching for cues from kids on stage – he got it in 10 minutes, whereas most take all term to learn it because it's visual.

"Year 8 will be harder but we've all these processes in place ready. Before the summer we met with the Year 8 head of year – who stays with the year group until the end of school – and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) to discuss Ethan's needs.

"We've agreed to put in half termly meetings to ensure enough time for discussions. If I email the head of year, I'll copy in the SENCO and Ethan's Teacher of the Deaf so everyone's in the loop. It's about maintaining that communication."

**To find out more about concentration fatigue, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/tired](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/tired).**

**If your child is experiencing bullying, we have help and advice at [www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingguides](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingguides).**



SECONDARY YEARS

## Your winter checklist

### ✓ Making Christmas deaf-friendly

There are lots of opportunities to celebrate and catch up with different friends and family over the winter months. Big get-togethers and new people can make it difficult for deaf children and young people to follow what's going on and feel included. We've put together some top tips to help improve deaf awareness over the festive season at [www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips).



### ✓ EmergencySMS

The emergencySMS service has been designed to allow deaf people and people with speech difficulties in the UK to have a text conversation with the police, ambulance service, fire and rescue or coastguard. Your child will be able to call for help or alert them to any kind of emergency. They'll need a mobile phone to use the service and will have to register it first. [www.ndcs.org.uk/relayservices](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/relayservices)

### ✓ Waking up independently

Having an alarm clock is often one of the first steps towards independence and taking control of your daily routine. Rather than just an alarm sounding, vibrating alarm clocks have a pad that sits under the pillow that vibrates when it's time to get up. Visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/borrowalarmclocks](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/borrowalarmclocks) to view the different models available.



**Year 8 will be harder but we've all these processes in place ready.**



# Helping Hooriya put her mental health first

By Kerrina Gray

Hooriya (15) struggled with feeling down, stressed and anxious after being left out at school. But after taking positive action to improve things, now she's ready to take on her GCSEs.



**Hooriya's story**  
how being left out at school affected her mental health



**All of a sudden she would be upset because she didn't want to go to school.**

**HOORIYA AND MUM BOBBY ARE ON ONE OF THEIR REGULAR LONG WALKS** putting the world to rights arm in arm. They've come a long way since Hooriya started suffering from stress and anxiety at just eight years old and now both feel confident they can work through any worries together.

Hooriya was diagnosed as profoundly deaf at 14 months and had a cochlear implant fitted at two years old. "It was a big shock when she was diagnosed," Bobby says. "I threw myself into learning everything I could."

Hooriya has always been shy and finds the social side of mainstream school challenging, particularly when she's in noisy environments. "The school canteen is one of the big problems because it's really noisy," Hooriya says. "I eat my food and go, I don't talk to anyone."

At eight years old Bobby noticed this was starting to have a real effect on her daughter. "She was really tearful," Bobby says. "Initially we put it down to hormones but all of a sudden she would be upset because she didn't want to go to school."

At the time they discovered the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). "I looked into alternative therapies and took her to a hypnotherapist to help her anxiety," Bobby explains. "What a stupid decision! You have to close your eyes and Hooriya said, 'No I'm not closing my eyes, then I can't see or hear.'"

"But the hypnotherapist recommended EFT, it sounded quite strange but we were desperate. You tap energy points on your body and say a positive phrase. We did one session to learn how to do it and then did the tapping whenever she was anxious."

"I didn't believe it at first," Hooriya adds. "But I found

**With all the strategies in place, I do feel more confident and positive.**

it really useful. I used to go into the school toilets at lunchtime and do it."

The pair also learnt and used breathing techniques. "If she got stressed, we did special breathing to help her relax," Bobby says. "We still do it now. We were at a wedding last weekend and she was nervous because there were so many people so I said, 'Just concentrate on your breathing.'"

Though these techniques helped, things got worse after Hooriya moved to secondary school. "She came out with a rash and initially we thought it was an infection but it didn't go away," Bobby explains. "We used antihistamines, applied lotions and potions, were referred for food intolerance tests but a skin specialist diagnosed eczema and decided it was stress-related. It was a cycle because stress would cause her to scratch, then the rash would get worse and she'd struggle to sleep because she was scratching all night. It was awful."

"Hooriya became very self-conscious that the girls at school in the changing rooms would look. The specialist said he would look after the skin but he told us to go back to the GP and see if we could get a mental health referral."

Unfortunately the area they lived in didn't offer NHS talking therapy for children. "I thought about going private but, as a single mum, it was difficult to budget for this," Bobby explains.

The GP said that a school counsellor could refer her to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) so Bobby and Hooriya investigated with her school and put her name on the waiting list.

In the meantime Bobby became anxious and stressed so she referred herself for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) on the NHS. "The lady was brilliant and gave me tips which I shared with Hooriya when I came home."

Eventually Hooriya saw her school counsellor. "It was a bit weird at first," she says. "But it was quite helpful. We made the connection that a lot of my

stress and worries are deaf-related. It's worrying about talking to people and feeling left out."

Since seeing the counsellor, Hooriya has come up with a number of new strategies to help improve her mental health. She keeps a worry diary, goes for long walks and has found new hobbies.

"We schedule in time for worrying," Bobby says. "Hooriya will text me and I'll say, 'We'll talk about this at 8pm tonight.' Then she'll write it down in the diary and we don't worry about it for now. Often what seemed massive then feels a little bit smaller later on."

"Two or three times a week we go for a walk and she chats nonstop! As she's got older, she's also found walking on her own helps her to relax and she now walks back from school when I work late."

Hooriya has started new after-school clubs, including playing the viola in a strings orchestral group and joining a cricket team. "It's nice because you belong somewhere and you know different people," she says. "It gives me something I can talk about in school with friends."

Now Hooriya is studying for her GCSEs and both her and Bobby hope all the techniques she has put in place will allow her to remain calm throughout a stressful time. "It's going to be a lot of work," Hooriya says. "Everyone is talking about GCSEs and it's scary. With all the strategies in place though, I do feel more confident and positive."

"As a mum I'm still worried that she's worried," Bobby adds. "But it's nice to have these tools. It's just about recognising when we're both getting stressed and realising we need to go for a walk, keep an eye on it, keep things stress free." 🧘

**We have more information about supporting your child's wellbeing and your own at [www.ndcs.org.uk/wellbeing](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/wellbeing).**



**YOUNG PEOPLE 15-18**

## Your winter checklist

### ✓ Moving to adult audiology services

Some services specify an age when a young person will transfer from paediatric to adult audiology services but often there will be flexibility and you and your child can agree when will be a suitable time. Usually it will be between the ages of 16 and 21 and your child should be offered an appointment with adult audiology services before paediatrics discharge them. We have more information about what to expect at [www.ndcs.org.uk/audiology](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/audiology).

### ✓ Funding for education

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a benefit for students aged 16-19 who live in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For students in England, EMA has been replaced with the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Find out more about the criteria at [www.ndcs.org.uk/finance](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/finance).

### ✓ Are you READY?

We've commissioned the Universities of Manchester and Edinburgh to carry out a study called READY (Recording Emerging Adulthood in Deaf Youth), tracking deaf young people between 16 and 18 years old for five years. It aims to find out what happens to them after they leave education and become an independent adult. If your child is interested in taking part in the project, please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/thereadystudy](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/thereadystudy).





# Living the dream

By Karen Harlow

Experiencing a sudden drop in his hearing and having a cochlear implant aged 15 didn't stop Ollie fulfilling his dream of going to the University of Oxford.



Ollie's story how he achieved his dream of going to the University of Oxford



I have a good mix of loud, rich sound from the hearing aid and the implant makes it crisper and clearer.

**OLLIE (19) VIVIDLY REMEMBERS THE MOMENT HE FOUND OUT HE'D BEEN ACCEPTED TO STUDY HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.** "I was so shocked," he recalls. "I wasn't expecting to get in but I'd put a lot of work in. I had to fight to show why I should go because it's so competitive so it was a real sense of achievement. I'm still proud of it."

"We were absolutely thrilled!" says dad Phil. "Never in our wildest dreams did we think he'd end up at Oxford."

Parents Phil and Liz were stunned when Ollie was diagnosed as profoundly deaf at one year old. "We had no idea and felt guilty, isolated, worried about the future and jealous of other parents with 'perfect' babies. Yet we were determined to give him as much love and support as possible," says Liz. "We assumed he'd never talk properly, would possibly never have a loving relationship or get a decent job - it was hard to be positive at the time."

Ollie was fitted with hearing aids and quickly made good progress with listening and speech. After much agonising, the family decided against cochlear implants as he was doing so well with hearing aids.

Then, when Ollie was 15, something happened which made them revisit that decision.

"I woke up one morning and the hearing in my weaker right ear had gone to virtually nothing, making my hearing aid useless," says Ollie. "It came back a few weeks' later but that started discussions about cochlear implants, which were accelerated when my left ear did the same a few weeks after."

"To suddenly lose 50% of his remaining hearing was a massive blow," adds Liz. "He didn't want the uncertainty of one day having hearing and the next not so he decided to have

I have to be aware of my limits and know when to go back to my room and just switch off.

bilateral implants after his GCSEs."

Ollie was implanted on his right side, where his hearing was worse, but as he experienced complications during the surgery, the surgeon decided against attempting the second implant. "I was disappointed but I think it was fate intervening because I now find my balance of hearing pretty much perfect. I have a good mix of loud, rich sound from the hearing aid and the implant makes it crisper and clearer," Ollie says.

Ollie enjoyed mainstream school and had good support, including a radio aid. But he found the initial adjustment to hearing with his implant when he started sixth form challenging. "Because I'd got a good level of sound with two hearing aids, it was a real climb down. Getting used to the speech processor and the new kind of sound was difficult. Everything sounded manufactured and metallic. It took about six months to get my hearing up to being better than it was with two hearing aids," he explains. "I remember despairing of how little I could hear in noisy environments at sixth form. It got better but I remember feeling scared of missing out and not picking up on everything."

Ollie thought the implant would put his ambition to go to Oxford on hold, but a year after surgery he went to the open day. "When I saw Oxford first-hand I was just taken aback by the place and it made me want to go for it," he remembers. "Before my interview I made my college aware I was deaf and I'd be using a radio aid. They were very accommodating."

Ollie uses his radio aid in lectures and, with heavy reliance on the note-taking support he receives using his Disabled Students' Allowance, has coped well. "One of the reasons I wanted to go to Oxford is the college system, which has a strong welfare commitment at the heart of it," he explains. "That was particularly helpful for me in adjusting."



Increased tiredness from listening has been his biggest struggle. "I've been knocked out in the evenings, particularly in the first few weeks. I like to attend talks and try out societies and things but I have to be aware of my limits and know when to go back to my room and just switch off," he says.

In the college bar, or at social events, he relies heavily on lip-reading. "Voices disappear, especially as lots of the social areas are old, high-ceilinged rooms which aren't ideal for listening, so I fix on the mouth movements and facial expressions," he says. "Surprisingly that does seem to carry me through but it's exhausting."

Ollie has always been open about his deafness, especially with girlfriend of two years, Ellie (19). "We met through a mutual friend who mentioned Ollie was deaf and that he wasn't self-conscious about it but didn't want to be defined by it," remembers Ellie. "So I didn't want to prompt or force him into saying anything. We spoke about it when he took off his hearing aid and showed me how he lip-reads."

Communication between the couple has never been an issue. "I genuinely forget he's deaf," says Ellie. "But I do hand gestures and my mum's noticed I elongate my vowels and move my mouth in a slightly different way when speaking to Ollie. I'm used to him depending on lip-reading but it's not a drastic thing. Ollie wouldn't be the person he is if it wasn't for his deafness."

For more information about going to university, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation).

You can learn more about Disabled Students' Allowances at [www.ndcs.org.uk/dsa](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/dsa).



YOUNG PEOPLE 19-25

## Your winter checklist

### Visiting the cinema



With lots of big films coming out over the festive period, there's plenty to see at the cinema. Apps like Your Local Cinema can help your child to find which cinemas near you have captioned showings for the movies they want to see. Download it from your app store.

### Travelling in a gap year

Taking a gap year or travelling in general is a great way to learn about the world and yourself. For a deaf young person, it can also bring specific challenges. Our deaf vlogger Ruth shares her tips and experience of travelling in her gap year using British Sign Language. Go to [www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam](http://www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam) and search for 'gap year'.

### Money Advice Service



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



Make your dreams come true

**Win £25,000!**

Play our lottery and it's not only your dreams that could come true. You'll also be helping deaf children live fulfilling, independent lives.



[lottery.ndcs.org.uk/families](http://lottery.ndcs.org.uk/families)



Janet

# Ask the expert

Each issue a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Janet Humble, a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), shares her insights.

**It's vital that all staff have as much knowledge and understanding of deafness as possible.**

### What is a SENCO?

A SENCO coordinates provision for and works with pupils with special educational needs (SEN). As a SENCO I'm responsible for all pupils on the SEN register which is around 50-60 pupils at my school. Every school must have a named SENCO who must be a qualified teacher.

### Which different methods do you use to communicate with deaf children and young people?

All our pupils wear hearing technology and I use eye contact, speak slowly and clearly and supplement with gesture and photographs/props as necessary. In our school Makaton is also used to help a range of learners.

### How and when do you work with deaf children and young people?

Working with pupils can range from calling into a classroom to observe them for a short period to interacting with them around the school and trialling activities and interventions with them before recommending these to staff. I often work alongside a teaching assistant. When working with deaf children and young people, I would always try to gauge how they're feeling about school and build up a relationship with them so that they'd feel able to be honest about any concerns they have.

### What challenges do deaf children and young people face at school and how do you overcome these?

It's vital that all staff have as much knowledge and understanding of deafness as possible. Teaching styles need to be about using visual and practical based teaching too. It's also important that their peers recognise any challenges deaf pupils face so that they can be as understanding and supportive as possible.



### What support can deaf children and young people expect from their SENCO?

A SENCO will ensure staff training is up to date and coordinate meetings with other professionals, for example the Teacher of the Deaf. We make sure we consider the different environments the pupil's working in, adjust provision to maximise progress and wellbeing and build on the child's strengths. The SENCO also liaises with the family.



### What advice would you give to parents of deaf children or deaf young people working with a SENCO?

I would say they should always feel comfortable to ask questions and seek clarification if they're unsure about anything. It's important for both parents and SENCOs to share as much information as possible with each other.

### What are the most rewarding parts of your job?

Seeing first-hand the positive impact of arrangements you've put in place is very rewarding. I feel most satisfied when families work closely with us and develop trust and confidence that we have their child's best interests at heart.

If parents work closely together with all the professionals involved with their child then we can build an effective team.

To find out more about the professionals you may meet, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/people](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/people).



# How do I...

## choose the right childcare for my child?

Finding and choosing childcare that works for you and your child can be challenging for any parent. But as the parent of a deaf child, there are some other issues you'll need to think about. We asked parents to share how they picked the right childcare.

**It really matters to me that they're deaf aware.**

To find out more about choosing childcare, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare) and see page 12 for one family's story about settling their child into nursery.

You can find help with creating a personal passport at [www.ndcs.org.uk/passport](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/passport).

Also check your local authority's Family Information Service for more information about childcare options in your area.



**Craig is dad to Thomas (3) who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

Choosing the right nursery for Thomas was really important to us. We wanted to make sure he was in an environment that would cater for his needs. We looked at a number of nurseries and chose one because it seemed a calming environment and we got a good feel for the staff when we visited.

The nursery was completely upfront from the start that they had no experience of working with deaf children but they were willing to learn. All the nursery staff received deaf awareness training from our Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) in



**Thomas**

their own time; they've been fantastic.

It took Thomas a couple of weeks to settle in but he's now thriving and loves the time he spends there. We work with the nursery on a regular basis to make sure we're all meeting Thomas's needs. We have an Early Help Assessment meeting led by the nursery every six weeks. This includes Thomas's ToD, nursery manager, key worker and speech and language therapist. It's vital to make sure that everyone is working on the same things.

The nursery helped to support extra funding for Thomas to get a teaching assistant to support him an hour a day while in nursery; this has really helped his progress too.

**Emma is mum to Toby (6) who is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.**

Toby has attended a council-run play scheme over the school holidays before and he also goes to a childminder before school and one evening a week.

When looking for childcare, I start planning early as really good providers fill up quickly. I do my research and read reviews, especially Ofsted reports. I always ring the



**Toby**

provider and discuss Toby and his hearing. Sometimes you're not talking to the best person, for example the receptionist, so I'll ask to talk to the leader. I make sure I'm honest that it really matters to me and Toby that they're deaf aware and he's made to feel comfortable and at ease in the setting. I'll also visit if possible so I can see if acoustics may be a problem and how they manage the other children.

I continue communication with the care provider and also with Toby once he starts. If he isn't happy, I'm sure to raise it.

**Amy is mum to Ryan (14) who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**

Ryan loves to be around people, especially children his own age. Over the years we've tried many different types of holiday and after-school clubs but have often found that staff lack deaf awareness skills.

I'm a pushy mum and letting Ryan fade into the background has never been an option. I don't want him to miss experiences that kids without hearing loss get to do without a second thought. When looking at clubs he can attend, I always check the number of kids in the group, the acoustics of the



**Ryan**

building, how many children there are per staff member and the welcome or reaction I get when I first call.

For the holidays, we tend to focus now on camps that hold Ryan's interest and that he can talk about and understand clearly e.g. swimming and sports. I've created a personal passport for Ryan with information on how he hears, how his implants work and how to look after them. It includes basic deaf awareness tips. I've also offered to talk to the groups so they understand that Ryan can struggle with communication. Children are curious so I find it's best to be open.

**Lorenza is mum to Eliza (3) who is moderately to severely deaf and wears hearing aids.**

When I was pregnant we viewed many nurseries with the aim of me returning to work. Instantly on viewing one nursery, we knew it was the one for our baby. But when she was born Eliza was diagnosed with CHARGE syndrome and hearing loss so nursery was the last thing on our minds. Before she was due to start, the nursery reached out to me. I explained the challenges Eliza had overcome and expressed my concerns about her attending now, but they went above and beyond to reassure me it was still an option for us.

After many meetings, Eliza started just after her first birthday. Due to her other medical needs, 1:1 support was put in place. The settling in period had its ups and downs and she took time to adjust to the noise level, in particular the other children crying. They've put in place lots of techniques to overcome these challenges, they take her for regular sessions alone to do structured activities and they funded staff to achieve Level 1 British Sign Language.

Since starting nursery she has made so much progress with her communication. Taking the leap to send Eliza to nursery turned out to be the most wonderful decision we could have made.



**Eliza**



Next time in Families magazine: How do I... boost my child's self-esteem?

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



# Primary school tests

By Emma Fraser (Teacher of the Deaf)

Tests, whether your child is five or 16, can be stressful for all the family. Making sure you and your child are prepared and know the right arrangements and adaptations are in place will help you both feel calmer.

## Which tests will my child take?

Children will come across tests throughout their school life so it's important to know what's coming up and to be prepared. In the UK, all children will be tested at regular intervals throughout their primary years.

In **England**, primary school tests include Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), the new Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), the phonics screening check and multiplication tables check (MTC).

All children in **Wales** now take National Reading and Numeracy Tests every year, from Year 2 through to Year 9. They're available in either Welsh or English.

Children in **Scotland** are tested in reading, writing and numeracy in Reception, when they're 7-8 years old and when they're 10-11 years old. These tests are called the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) and are online. All children have opportunities to practise beforehand.

If you live in **Northern Ireland**, your child will be assessed by their teacher in communication, using Mathematics and using ICT every year from Year 4 until Year 7. The reports will be shared with you and the National Database.

We have answers to some frequently asked questions about primary school tests below.

## What are SATs?

In England, your child will sit KS1 SATs when they're six or seven years old (Year 2). Teachers will use the results from these tests, along with the work your child has done throughout the year, to help them understand how your child is progressing in English, Maths and Science. Tests in English and Maths can be taken any time during May. Your child may not even know they're taking them as many teachers will build them into everyday classroom activities.

If you have a child in Year 6, they will take tests in English grammar, punctuation and spelling, English reading and Mathematics. The tests help measure the progress pupils have made and are also used to assess a school's performance. The KS2 tests will be taken on set dates.



## What's the phonics screening check and does my child have to take it?

It's designed to give you and the school information on how your child is progressing in phonics and help identify whether your child needs additional support. The check is taken individually by all children in Year 1 in June. Your child will be asked to read up to four words per page and they'll probably do the check in one 5-10 minute sitting. If your child uses British Sign Language or other sign-supported communication to spell out individual letters then they may not need to take it.

## Will my child be taking the MTC?

All children will take the MTC from Year 4 onwards in England. It helps to find out whether your child can recall their times tables fluently. Schools have a three-week window in June to carry out the test. The MTC is an online assessment.

## What's the RBA?

From September 2020, all schools in England will carry out the RBA within six weeks of your child starting their first school in England. Children will do different activities which will give the teacher information on their language, communication, literacy and Maths skills. It will last about 20 minutes. The RBA provides a snapshot of where your child is when they arrive at school so their progress can be tracked until they leave school in Year 6.

## I'm worried that my child may find tests too difficult or not be able to access them. What should I do?

Ask for access arrangements to be put in place. Access arrangements involve making adjustments to the way tests are delivered or assessed. This is important for deaf children because they may have difficulties with language because of their deafness. It might be harder for them to be sure what they're being asked or to show what they know.

## What adaptations and access arrangements can be made for my child?

Not all deaf children require special arrangements; this will depend on the individual child, their deafness and what's being assessed. Your Teacher of the Deaf or special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) can advise on this. Access arrangements and adaptations can be as simple as making sure your child is seated in a quiet place. Make an appointment to meet with the school SENCO to talk through any difficulties your child may have. If your child has an Education, Health and Care plan, access arrangements should be discussed at their annual review.



➔ The Standards and Testing Agency has lots more information about tests at primary school in England. [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/standards-and-testing-agency)

Information on the National Reading and Numeracy Tests in Wales can be found at [hwb.gov.wales](http://hwb.gov.wales) by searching 'reading and numeracy assessments'.

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments site provides lots of information on primary assessments. [standardisedassessment.gov.scot/parents-and-carers](http://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/parents-and-carers)

More advice and information on access and adaptations to primary school tests can be found at [www.ndcs.org.uk/additionalsupport](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/additionalsupport).

## Supporting your child's education this winter

### ✔ Preparing for school

As a parent, you play the most important role in helping your child learn and succeed. There are many simple things you can do to develop your child's reading, writing and maths skills before they start school. Find out more at [www.ndcs.org.uk/homelearning](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/homelearning).

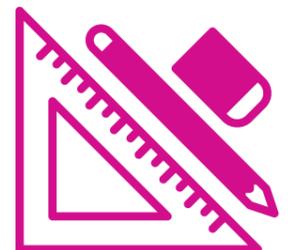


### ✔ Planning for GCSEs

If your child is in Year 8 or 9 they'll be thinking about their GCSE options. Help your child to make choices by attending open evenings and information days and listening to their views and opinions. Visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/planningthefuture](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/planningthefuture) for help and advice.

### ✔ Transition meetings

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





# Staying switched on in the workplace

By Kim Hagen (Technology Research Officer)

Do you ever worry about the challenges your child may face in the world of work? In this article, deaf adults tell us how technology helps them to overcome barriers and do the job they love.

## Midwife Lucy is severely to profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.

I'm a midwife and provide care to women and their babies throughout pregnancy, labour and after birth. To make phone calls, I use a Phonak Roger Select radio aid transmitter and telephone adapter. It sends the caller's voice directly into the Phonak Roger X radio aid receivers attached to my hearing aids. I also have the amplified



Lucy

Thinklabs One Digital Stethoscope. I connect my radio aid transmitter to the stethoscope and this sends the stethoscope's sound to my radio aid receivers and hearing aids. It allows me to take patients' blood pressure and heartbeat.

My advice to deaf young people is that with the right support and equipment anything is possible. I'm working in my dream job and I feel so lucky every day that I have the right equipment for the job I love.

## Teaching assistant Elizabeth is moderately to severely deaf and wears hearing aids.

I'm a teaching assistant in a mainstream primary school. I use a Phonak Roger Pen radio aid transmitter and a Phonak Roger MyLink radio aid receiver that sends the sound picked up by the transmitter into my hearing aids. It helps me hear in meetings with other staff and when I'm working with groups of children.



Elizabeth

The children speak into the Roger Pen and pass it around between them. In meetings I place the pen in the middle of the table so it picks up sound from all around.

I would say be positive and don't give up. I failed all my exams in school as my hearing loss wasn't diagnosed.

I did most of my qualifications as an adult and had to be persistent to get where I am now, but it's paid off as I love my job. It's all possible with the right attitude and support.

## Deaf advisor Lenka is moderately to severely deaf.

I work as a deaf advisor at a mental health trust. I use British Sign Language interpreters and have a phone that allows me to make video calls. We have flashing fire alarms, flashing doorbells and clinical staff use vibrating



Lenka

paggers for emergencies. If any other departments hear their doorbell ring three times, they know that it's a deaf staff member or service user and they will greet them face-to-face. My advice to deaf children would be to take opportunities, chase your dreams, work hard and keep learning.

## Archaeologist Rebecca is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

I'm an archaeologist and do excavation work as well as writing archaeological reports. I use the Cochlear Phone Clip to call clients about their reports and to arrange site visits. The Phone Clip sends calls straight to my cochlear implants. I can completely remove all background



Rebecca

noise if I'd like or, when I'm on building sites, for safety I can hear a mix of both the surrounding environment and the telephone call. Having the call streamed to both implants means I have a better chance of being able to follow what the other person is saying on the call. Finding out what technology works for you is important. There's no one single solution that suits everyone, we're all different.

## Trainer in a call centre James is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

I train staff that join our company and am on the phone with clients a lot. I use the Phonak Roger Pen radio aid transmitter for taking and making calls and training new staff. For calls, I place the Roger Pen in its charging dock and connect the charging dock to the telephone. The pen then transmits the customer's voice directly to the receivers in my hearing aids but also removes



James

all background noise in the call centre which is great. I wear a standard telephone headset too so that I can use the microphone to speak to customers separately. When I'm training staff, I place the Roger Pen on the table and it picks up the voices nearby and sends them to my hearing aids, meaning hearing people is extremely easy. My advice to deaf young people is to let employers know about your deafness. There's amazing equipment available and a ton of support out there for everyone!



## Access to Work

Most people in this article use Access to Work to get technology provided with no cost to them. Access to Work is an employment support programme that can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability. Support can be provided where someone needs help or adaptations beyond the reasonable adjustments that must be provided by your employer. Access to Work can pay extra costs which would not be reasonable for an employer or prospective employer to pay. For more information, visit

[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work).



Phonak Roger Select radio aid transmitter



To find out more about 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, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive).

Have a look at our video which shows many of the radio aids mentioned in this article. Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera or go to [www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam](http://www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam) and search 'radio aid'.

Our website has more stories of how deaf children, young people and adults use technology to overcome everyday barriers, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/techcasestudies](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/techcasestudies).



# Reviews

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



Would you or your child like to write a review for Families magazine? Email [magazine@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:magazine@ndcs.org.uk).

### Key

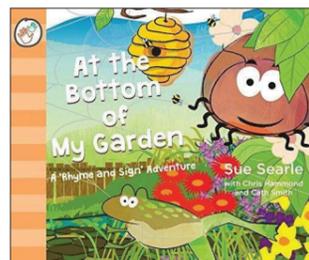
This resource could be most suitable for the following ages:

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

### At the Bottom of My Garden and Out of My Window

Written by Sue Searle  
Available from **Amazon**  
£6.99 and £7.49

0-4 5-10



My son Isaac has always loved books. We don't routinely use sign language but we have learnt basic British Sign Language together. *At the Bottom of My Garden* is a delightful book aimed at young children. There's lots to explore as the story takes you on a journey through a garden full of creatures. On each page you're introduced to a new garden creature and told something about them. The repetition and rhyme really appeals to younger children, as does the task of finding the different creatures as they appear in the pictures.

*Out of My Window* is another great book from the series. The story invites you to look out of the window as you enjoy a train ride through the town and countryside. The focus is on different vehicles and what they're for. The rhythm and rhyme of the story is really appealing to young children. It follows the 'I spy' format I'm sure lots of children are familiar with.

In both books each page has pictures of key signs that accompany the story. I found, even though Isaac doesn't sign much, he was really interested to learn how to sign the words. For beginners, there are useful tips at the beginning of the books and illustrations of how to form some of the basic hand shapes. There's also a guide with tips on how to get the most out of reading with your child, help them to practise key skills like paying attention, observation and language development, and to increase their confidence and enjoyment of reading.

Overall we gave both these books a huge thumbs up in our house. We would recommend them for signers and non-signers alike.

**Eleanor is mum to Isaac (5) who is severely deaf and wears a bone anchored hearing aid.**



Isaac

### Phonak Roger Pen

The Roger Pen is a radio aid transmitter that looks like a pen. Like other radio aids it works with a receiver (or receivers) and allows your child to hear speech more clearly.



Available to borrow from our Technology Test Drive ([www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive)) or buy from Connevans ([www.connevans.co.uk](http://www.connevans.co.uk)).

Price variable

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

At primary school I used the Phonak Roger Inspiro radio aid but for the first year of high school I've used the Roger Pen. I've found it so much better in the short time I've used it. It still connects via the extra feet (receivers) that fit the end of my hearing aids but it's so much clearer. There's no interference and it's helped me in many ways at school when I need to hear the teacher directly, but also in a group conversation where I can put it on the table and hear everyone who's talking. I've even taken it on bike rides so I can hear my dad who's wearing it around his neck in busy and noisy traffic.

The Roger Pen connects to my mobile phone via Bluetooth so when I get a call I can answer through it and the call is transmitted through my hearing aids rather than having to hold the phone to my ear. This makes it much easier to hear who's calling me.

I've found the Roger Pen easier to use at school than my old radio aid. I have to take it from one lesson to another and pass it over to the teacher there so it saves time as no wires and microphones have to be clipped on. It's also less obvious to the other pupils.

**Emily (12) is mildly to moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.**

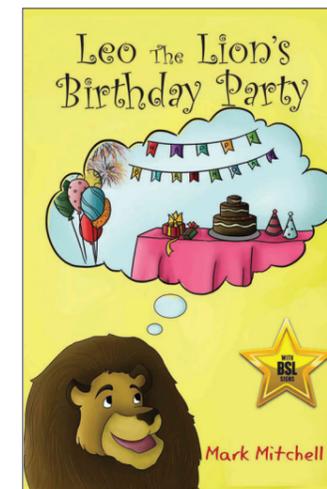


Emily

### Leo the Lion's Birthday Party

Written by Mark Mitchell  
Available from **Amazon**  
£9.60 (paperback) /  
£3.50 (kindle edition)

0-4 5-10



What a brilliant book! It captured my son's attention immediately and is now his favourite bedtime story.

He loved Leo the Lion and the excitement of a birthday party was an added bonus. The whole concept of the shopkeepers not understanding the lion is so clever and my son found it hilarious when the lion roared. Due to the repetition, he was even ready to roar along with Leo at the appropriate time!

My son uses both speech and British Sign Language so he loved it when Leo the Lion returned to each shop, signed his request and got the goods he wanted. It was so refreshing to have both communication methods in a book in such an interesting way.

The illustrations throughout the book are perfect. Each page has a clear simple picture explaining the content so it visually captures the little one's attention.

I can't give this book a better review, I can't think of any fault and it certainly has my son's approval!

**Laura is mum to Zak (3) who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.**



Zak

# Resources



## Helpline



With Christmas coming up, how can we make it a special time for my eight-year-old daughter Lucy and make sure she feels included in all the fun?

Deaf children and young people can sometimes feel left out at large gatherings of family and friends, particularly if they include people who aren't very deaf aware. However, there are lots of things you can do to help Lucy feel more involved with the festivities. Here are a few tips:

- When using fairy lights, rooms can sometimes be darker than usual. Think about how to provide enough light for Lucy to see people's faces so she can lip-read.
- If you're playing music, don't turn it up too loud. Ask Lucy what volume she feels comfortable with so it's easier for her to communicate.
- Think about ways you can include her in the celebrations. Handing out presents, helping with decorations or with the Christmas lunch are all ways you can make her feel part of things.
- When it comes to eating together, a round table can help Lucy to see everyone. If this isn't possible, try letting her choose where she sits. She may prefer to eat first and join in the conversation afterwards.
- If you're playing games, make sure Lucy can see everyone so she can keep up with what's going on. Games that rely on noises may not be as much fun for her as more visual games.
- When you're watching TV or films together, use subtitles (knowing in advance how to do this will save a lot of stress!)

Before the big day, make sure you have a chat with your less deaf aware friends and family and encourage them to brush up on their deaf awareness and signing (if that's how Lucy communicates). Even if they only use a few signs, it will mean a lot to her.

Remind them to face Lucy when they talk to her, as it'll help her keep track of conversations. Encourage them to persevere if she doesn't understand and not to say 'it doesn't matter' or 'never mind, I'll tell you later'. We have lots more tips about how to make Christmas deaf-friendly on our website: [www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips).

Have a wonderful Christmas!

## What's new?

### Understanding Your Child's Hearing Tests

**What type of information is it?** Printed booklet, available to download or order from [www.ndcs.org.uk/understand](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/understand).

**Who's it for?** Parents looking to learn more about their child's diagnosis.

**What's it about?** This is an update of an existing booklet which explains the different types and levels of deafness. It also includes information on the different tests that can be used to check your child's hearing.

**You might also like:** Our booklet *My Baby Has a Hearing Loss*, available to download from [www.ndcs.org.uk/baby](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/baby).



### Protecting Deaf Children from Bullying

**What type of information is it?** Printed booklet, available to download or order from [www.ndcs.org.uk/protecting](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/protecting).

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

**What's it about?** This is updated guidance on how schools can adapt existing arrangements to prevent bullying and handle bullying incidents involving deaf pupils.

**You might also like:** Our webpages with information and advice on bullying for parents of deaf children. You can find them on our website at [www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingguides](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingguides).



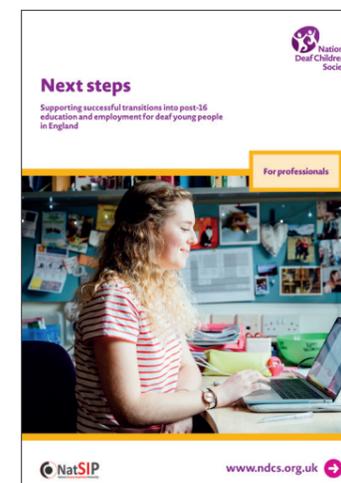
### Next Steps

**What type of information is it?** A PDF available to download at [www.ndcs.org.uk/nextsteps](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/nextsteps).

**Who's it for?** Professionals working with deaf young people in England.

**What's it about?** This updated information is aimed at professionals who support deaf young people when they leave school or college. This includes those with and without an Education, Health and Care plan.

**You might also like:** Our webpages with information on supporting deaf young people for their future, whether they want to stay in education, enter the world of work or do something else. You can find them at [www.ndcs.org.uk/yourchildsfuture](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/yourchildsfuture).



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

Join Sound Out, our network of people affected by childhood deafness who want to improve outcomes for deaf children. There are loads of ways you can get involved and help us improve our information, services and publications.

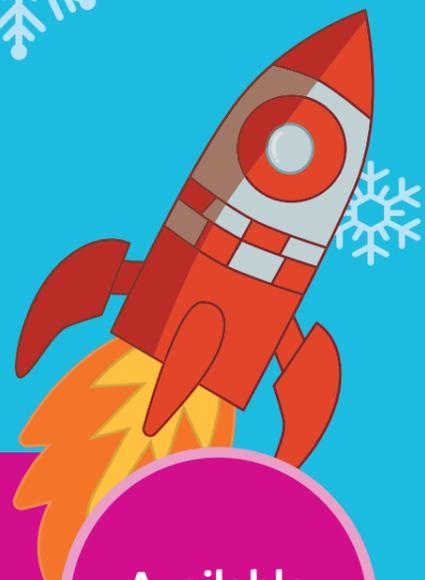
We need reviewers, people to take part in surveys and focus groups, families to share their stories or simply tell us what else they need. Go to [www.ndcs.org.uk/soundout](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/soundout) for more information.

Once you've set up a new account on our website you can download or order any of our publications for free from [www.ndcs.org.uk/resources](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/resources). Or you can order through our Freephone Helpline.

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

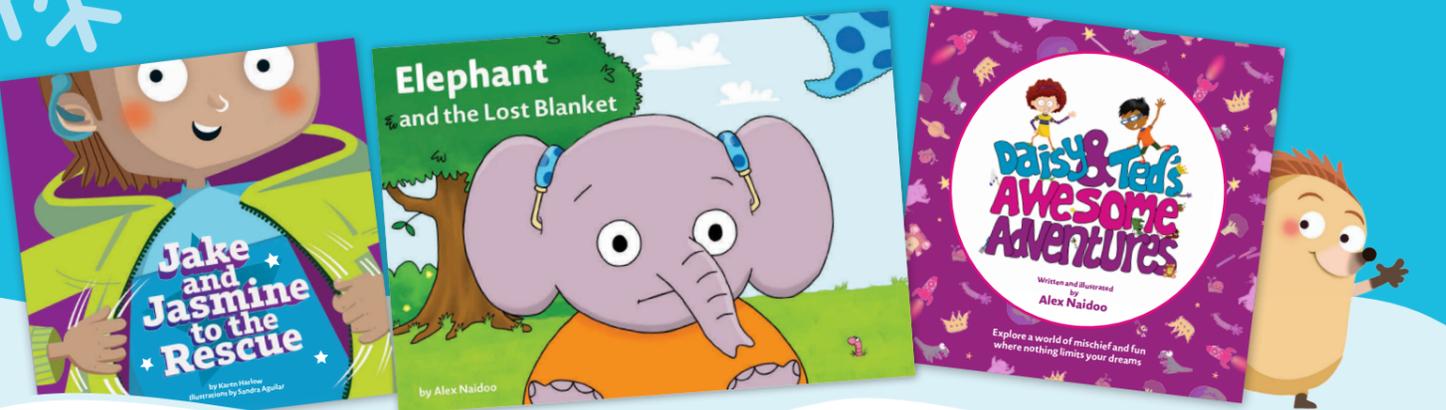
## Pick up the perfect present for your child this Christmas!

Our books for children make the perfect Christmas gift for your 0–7 year old. *Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue*, *Daisy and Ted's Awesome Adventures* and *Elephant and the Lost Blanket* all feature deaf characters, who prove that nothing can hold them back.



Available  
on Amazon!

➔ Find out more about our children's books at [www.ndcs.org.uk/childrens-books](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/childrens-books).



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

# In your area

## Helping them to help themselves

A Roadshow visit can empower students to become their own champions, just like it did at Lister Community School.

“I’m so pleased they’re taking charge of their own lives.”



Claire

“After previously attending a Roadshow visit, I thought it would be something that would hugely benefit my deaf pupils. They’re

becoming great self-advocates for their needs and we wanted to continue to build on and reinforce this.

The visit had such a profound impact on the students, they were talking about what they had learnt for days. What’s been great is that they’ve been teaching each other about the sessions.

Being able to work with other deaf adults on the Roadshow has also been beneficial and offered some of the students something they hadn’t seen before, helping to show them they can be completely independent.

They’ve even decided to apply for

the National Deaf Children's Society's Young People's Community Fund now, pitching for money to deliver deaf awareness training to their local council!

I’m so pleased they’re taking charge of their own lives and showing real initiative.”

**Claire Wiltshire, Teacher of the Deaf and Head of Deaf Support.**



Sam

“Visiting the Roadshow was a very fun and informative experience. I especially enjoyed looking at the technology available to deaf people. It helped me consider options for myself that would make my life easier and far more accessible.”

**Student Sam (15) is profoundly deaf.**



➔ To arrange a visit from our Roadshow team, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow) or email [roadshow@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:roadshow@ndcs.org.uk).

You can find more information on our Young People's Community Fund at [www.buzz.org.uk/young-peoples-community-fund](http://www.buzz.org.uk/young-peoples-community-fund).

# Local leaders

We have over 100 local groups across the UK run by kind and brilliant volunteers. But what do they get out of running their own group? We talk to three local group committee members to find out more...



➔ To find a group in your area, check out our map at [www.ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup).

Whether you want to join a group, become a volunteer or even set up your own group, we're here to help. If you'd like to know more, get in touch with the team on [local.groups@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:local.groups@ndcs.org.uk).

IN YOUR AREA

# In your area

**Pam is treasurer for Northamptonshire Deaf Children's Society. She's mum to Keira (13) who is profoundly deaf.**



Keira and Pam

### How did you get involved with your local group?

A couple of other parents and I decided to start the local group as there was nothing in our area catering for deaf children. Seven years on, we have a thriving and very successful group supporting well over 50 families around the region!

### What do you do as a committee member?

Our committee is made up of seven parents and we all spread the load organising events, activities and fundraising. As a committee we have a planning meeting every two months (this usually involves copious amounts of tea and cake!) Obviously it's extra

**Amy is Chair of Peterborough and District Deaf Children's Society. She's mum to Jack (9) who is profoundly deaf.**

### What do you get out of your role as Chair?

There's nothing better than seeing all the kids together making friends and having fun. My son is at a mainstream school with no other deaf children so this group is really important for his friendships and wellbeing. It all gives me a good happy feeling.

### How much of a commitment is being Chair?

It's varied. We have a Facebook group so I'm on there most days, posting, answering questions and putting

work for us all but it's exciting planning all the fun things we get up to as a group.

### What do you most enjoy about being on the committee?

It's so rewarding seeing the children make new friends and watching them grow in confidence. I love it when they try something new. It's great when parents recommend the group to others too – we know we're doing something right then.

### What would you say to a parent whose child has just been diagnosed as deaf?

You're not alone! Other parents can give you practical solutions and honest advice that professionals can't and their children provide a great peer group for your child.

people in touch with each other. Sometimes I do get overwhelmed with running the group but, as most things I do benefit Jack, it doesn't feel too much like work. My husband runs the group's finances and I have a co-chair, committee members and my hearing daughter Poppy (21) who I can ask for help.



Jack and Amy

### What do families gain from joining your group?

The best thing is gaining lots of new friends, both parents and children. They meet deaf role models as we have deaf volunteers who help out too. We arrange cinema trips, deaf aware swimming, summer play schemes, Christmas and Easter parties and family play evenings.

**Millie is Chair of Swindon and North Wiltshire Deaf Children's Society. She's mum to Tabitha (10) who is moderately to severely deaf.**



Millie and Tabitha

### How did you get involved with your local group?

A small group of us were looking to meet up in 2012 and were told about the local deaf children's society. Sadly there were no events being held at the time. We bit the bullet and a meeting was held where we set up a new committee and revived the local group.

### How did you find the process of setting up your group?

It's taken a lot of time to slowly build the group. Finding committee members was probably the most challenging part. We found that assigning roles and responsibilities worked well so our committee members only took on specific tasks that were suited to their skills and the amount of time they could commit.

### What do you love about your role?

I love watching the group grow year on year and the feeling that we've created this. It's also great to see the children all together making new friends and being excited to meet up and spend time together.

### What makes you proud to be Chair?

Our biggest achievement to date is being chosen by the Swindon Mayor as one of his charities of the year. The press coverage has raised awareness of our group and we're seeing our membership rise as well as donations. This has made me immensely proud.

# In your area

## Events

**Interested in one of our youth events?**  
Application deadlines are up to three months before the event.  
Visit our website to find out more about the applications process.

### Events for 8–18 year olds

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

**Winter Weekend**  
(ages 14–18)  
Near Aviemore, Scotland  
7–9 February 2020

**First Time Away Weekends**  
(ages 8–12)  
Lee Valley, England  
7–8 March 2020  
Worcestershire, England  
14–15 March 2020

**Get Creative Day**  
(ages 8–15)  
Glasgow, Scotland  
28 March 2020



### Getting your child ready for school (2–4 years)

Information events for parents and carers with deaf children aged 2–4 years. These events will cover either education rights and responsibilities or communication and technology.

**Education Rights and Responsibilities**  
Doncaster, England  
Bedford, England

**Communication and Technology**  
Bournemouth, England



### Newly Diagnosed Information Days (0–2 years)

A one-day information event, sessions will cover hearing, technology and support from local services. It's also a great opportunity to meet other families.

**Belfast, Northern Ireland**  
1 February 2020

**London, England**  
Please check website for more details.

**West Midlands, England**  
Please check website for more details.

**Sheffield, England**  
7 March 2020

### Happy Futures: Transforming deaf children's mental health

An opportunity for parents and carers to learn more about supporting your child's emotional health and wellbeing.

**London, England**  
1 February 2020

➔ We hold many more free events all over the UK for deaf children, young people and their families. Find one in your area at [www.ndcs.org.uk/events](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/events).

## Change makers

Deaf young people are leading the way in campaigning to change attitudes towards deafness. Maisy (12), who's moderately deaf, tells us about her passion for protest and how she's been challenging assumptions through our craftivism workshops.

"I first heard about the craftivism workshops because my hearing support teacher recommended them. I was interested because I've been protesting all my life – starting with not being able to have chocolate before bedtime! I'm argumentative, stubborn and I won't take no for an answer. I'm always asking questions.

I've been to two sessions so far. At the first one we made a banner and at the second one we made posters for our local area. Mine said: 'Does it look like I speak robot?' I chose that because it really annoys me that a lot of people talk slowly and robotically to deaf people. If someone takes the feeling out of their voice, it makes it really hard to figure out their tone, or tell if they're asking a question. Lots of people have seen the posters and said that it's made them think. It helps them to see deaf children's perspectives.

I'm part of my local deaf children's society and a lot of the children were also involved in the craftivism group. We had free rein and designed our own ideas but an artist was also there to show us how everything was done. There were lots of people there from the National Deaf Children's Society too. They're super kind, so nice and bubbly, which is right up my street!

There are so many things that I'm interested in campaigning about. I want to see more people who are



Maisy

“It annoys me that people speak slowly and robotically to deaf people.”

like me: role models and famous people who are deaf. I also think there should be more done to create environmentally friendly hearing aids!

I've also recently become a Young Campaigner for the National Deaf Children's Society and as part of that I visited the Roadshow bus at the Glasgow Science Centre. Next time we'll be meeting an MSP. I have so many plans for the future – one day my name's going to be in lights!"

### What is craftivism?

Craftivism is a form of campaigning that uses arts and crafts to get a point across while getting young people excited about activism.

The craftivism sessions are part of a three-year project in Scotland, aimed at deaf pupils aged 12–18. It involves young people getting involved in the political process and local government, challenging things that don't work for them and using this to form the basis of campaigns.

We also introduce young people to British Sign Language (BSL) representatives who include the young people's thoughts in their local BSL plans as part of legislation in Scotland.

➔ You can find out more about the craftivism project by emailing [youth@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:youth@ndcs.org.uk).

# Get involved

## Making a difference with radio aids

Over a quarter of councils in England still don't fund radio aids for pre-school deaf children – but you can help us change that.

### Struggling to get a radio aid?

If your council refuses to give you a radio aid to use at home with your child, take a look at our website where we have a template letter you can send to your local council. [www.ndcs.org.uk/radio-aids-toolkit](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/radio-aids-toolkit)



Levindinos and Sophie

It was when Sophie saw the challenges her son faced without a radio aid that her heart broke. "I definitely wouldn't wish that on any other child," she says. Yet thousands of children are still without a radio aid simply because of where they live.

"My son used to get into trouble a lot at nursery and I think the lack of a radio aid played a huge part in that," Sophie says. When her son Levindinos (5) was refused a radio aid by their London council, she was lucky enough to be able to buy one herself. "With a radio aid, he's had a new lease of life and many more opportunities to learn," she explains.

"He learnt how to write his name in two months at school and he's now ahead in maths and literacy. "If Levindinos hadn't had a radio aid to use at home, he'd have missed out on his independence," Sophie adds. "Without it, he always wants to be close to me to make sure he can hear what I'm saying. He feels less secure exploring without a radio aid."

With a radio aid making a massive difference to Levindinos' life, it's no surprise Sophie believes they should be available across England. "Widely available radio aids for all children at home would have a huge impact," she says. "Some families, like us, won't even know radio aids exist if they're not given access to one."

### Looking for New Year's resolutions?

We have two easy things you can do to improve the lives of deaf children in the New Year:

#### 1. Pledge to meet your MP in January and tell them how a radio aid helps you and your child:

If your council doesn't fund radio aids, ask your MP to pressure them to look again at their policy so other families can benefit too. [www.ndcs.org.uk/radio-aids](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/radio-aids)

#### 2. Join our Campaigns Network:

Visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/campaignsnetwork](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/campaignsnetwork) to find out how you can get involved with local and national campaigns to support deaf children.

## Teamwork makes the dream work



**In Scotland we've seen how working together with wider family, other parents of deaf children and professionals can make a real difference to deaf children's lives so we're campaigning to increase the support available to you.**

Over three years Everyone Together, which was funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, supported 186 families across Scotland. The project included teaching families to communicate using Family Sign Language, training parent volunteers to provide emotional support to other families and specialist workshops for professionals.

One parent who attended our Everyone Together language and communication course as part of the project explained, "Having families with deaf children all together

isn't something we're used to, being from remote areas. I had no previous knowledge of language and communication development, in fact I didn't even know the difference between the two. I left the weekend feeling empowered."

**Other parents, children and professionals tell us why taking part in the project and working together helped them.**

"The one thing I'll do differently after today's training is not be scared of doing the wrong thing, but I'll use my skills and knowledge to help support families and not just 'leave it to the experts'."

**Rebecca (health visitor)**

"I feel very happy because I can talk to [my brother] and teach him more signs. I think he feels happy because he

can understand us and communicate more easily."

**Thomas (11) who has a deaf sibling.**

"I'm getting stronger by the month. I'm his voice now. From the 1:1 sessions I have gained more confidence and self-esteem."

**Jacqui is carer to Brandon Lee (3) who is profoundly deaf.**

**We're looking to build on the success of the project and make sure deaf children and their families across Scotland continue to receive the early years support they need. For more information and to lend us your support, visit [www.ndcs.org.uk/earlyyearsupportscotland](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/earlyyearsupportscotland).**

# Fundraising for all

New Year's resolutions can be difficult to stick to. Lots of us plan to get fit or do something for charity but never get round to it. Why not tick both off your list by joining #TeamNDCS for a challenge event in 2020?



## Ride London

Take on the UK's largest closed-road cycling event on Sunday 16 August and help us make a difference to the lives of deaf children and young people. Starting in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the route travels 100 miles through the iconic sights of the capital and into the serene Surrey countryside.

## X-Runner

Voted obstacle race of the year, the X-Runner is the ultimate adventure playground, and in 2020 will have more amazing obstacles, more mud and less running! Children as young as four can take part so the whole family can get involved and have fun together.



## Kiltwalk

Walk a marathon distance (or something a little shorter) across the Scottish countryside perhaps while donning your kilt! There are lots of different events available across Scotland and the Hunter Foundation will even top up your fundraising total with an extra 40%.

## Skydive

One for the thrill seekers! If your New Year's challenge is to take on something that truly terrifies you, this might be the right choice. Falling 125mph from 10,000ft is truly out of this world. It's a once in a lifetime experience and you can raise money for the National Deaf Children's Society at the same time.



# New year, new you, new challenge?



Find out more about our fantastic range of events and how you can get involved at [www.ndcs.org.uk/challenges](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/challenges). Whatever challenge you decide to take on, we're here to support you every step of the way. Either visit our website, contact the team on 020 7014 1199 or email [ndcschallenges@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:ndcschallenges@ndcs.org.uk) to kick start your year!

# When I'm a grown-up

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

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



### I run my own business because...

I love the freedom and creativity it gives me. I can focus my energy on what's important to me and my clients and make the most of my skills.

One part of my business involves giving companies digital support and the other is about giving deaf awareness advice via blogs, podcasts, videos and public speaking. I also run workshops to help businesses support deaf employees and customers.

I'm moderately deaf and have always struggled with phone calls at work because of background noise and poor quality equipment. Now I make video calls as it means I can lip-read. I also make sure I wear headphones and sit in a quiet room.

As a result of my work I've been accepted to speak at major events about deaf awareness. It's not something I ever thought I'd do because of lack of confidence and not wanting to talk about the fact that I'm deaf. But being open on my YouTube channel has allowed me to focus my energy into connecting and sharing stories with others.

Ahmed Khalifa | [hearmeoutcc.com](http://hearmeoutcc.com)



### I'm an illustrator because...

Getting the chance to draw stories and bring texts to life with pretty illustrations is a dream. And, as a freelancer, I get to be my own boss!

I work on children's books, character design and book cover design. I also spend some time on contracts, finances, emails and looking for new freelance work.

I'm profoundly deaf and wear two hearing aids. I'm also a lip-reader and this has helped me with Skype calls and going to meetings with clients. My view is that if people don't understand how to deal with you, then explain openly to them about your situation. If that still doesn't work, you have plenty of other opportunities in life.

My biggest achievement so far is getting into and graduating from my dream uni, Falmouth University, with an illustration degree. I was also shortlisted for the prestigious book cover competition 'Penguin Student Design Award'.

I'm now really excited to be illustrating the National Deaf Children Society's next children's book.

Lucy Rogers | [www.lucyrogersillustration.com](http://www.lucyrogersillustration.com)



### I'm a web developer because...

I'm really passionate about my work – it feels more like a hobby than a job. I make websites and apps with a particular focus on web accessibility, I enjoy making digital experiences accessible to everyone.

I'm profoundly deaf and unable to hear anything without my hearing aids. Having lost my hearing at around 21, I didn't get enough help because I was in denial. It was only post-university that I embraced my deafness and everyone has been very supportive since.

I'm very good at lip-reading and use text to speech apps to assist me in phone conversations.

I chose my career as I figured it would make things easier for me in the long run, as it requires less verbal communication than some others. I graduated from university and progressed from a junior to a more experienced role over seven years.

In 2016 I cycled 3,200 miles across the USA raising over £13,000 for children with deafness or cancer and since then I've completed three Ironman distance triathlons.

Shane Prendergast



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).

British Sign Language

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

Speech and Language Therapy

Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary (OFSTED 2018)

Residential and Day Places Available

Small Classes

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

Teachers of the Deaf

Pupils thrive at your school (OFSTED 2018)

Outstanding Children's Home



## Doncaster School for the Deaf

Established 1829

Leger Way, Doncaster DN2 6AY

[jgoodman@ddt-deaf.org.uk](mailto:jgoodman@ddt-deaf.org.uk) [www.deaf-school.org.uk](http://www.deaf-school.org.uk)

01302 386733



# #goodresults

Mary Hare offers an exceptional educational environment for deaf children, enabling them to reach their full potential, both academically and personally. We offer:

- Subject specialists who are also qualified Teachers of the Deaf
- A broad range of GCSEs, A Levels, BTECs and vocational courses
- Small class sizes
- Technology to enable every child to hear each other and the teacher
- A fully resourced Audiology unit
- A large Speech and Language team

As the biggest school for deaf children in the UK, we are committed to giving our students the education they deserve, and the confidence they need, for the future they desire.

For more information or to arrange an individual visit, please contact

**Debbie Jacobs:**

**[d.jacobs@maryhare.org.uk](mailto:d.jacobs@maryhare.org.uk)**

call **01635 244215**

or visit our website **[www.maryhare.org.uk](http://www.maryhare.org.uk)**



*Securing the future of deaf children and young people*