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Top tips from parents on learning at home



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Our new columnist suggests simple speech and language exercises



30

Bone conduction hearing technology tips



National Deaf Children's Society

families



Sign language gives Syrian family hope



We noticed that with sign language we were able to learn English even faster.





New Deaf Academy opens in Devon 2020

Imagine a brand new, world-class Academy where every deaf child will be able to learn and live in a space designed around their needs. A place of light, colour, discovery and achievement.


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The new Deaf Academy opens in beautiful Exmouth this year; just 20 minutes from junction 30 of the M5 and 10 minutes' walk from the beach. An exciting new chapter in the proud history of the UK's oldest deaf school.

Find out more at
thedeafacademy.ac.uk/admissions

A bespoke, language-rich curriculum for each child (British Sign Language and English)

Pathways from childhood through to employment and independent living



"Staff at the Academy are passionate... pupils engage positively with staff and their learning."

- Ofsted, 2019

My deafness didn't stop me...

becoming a fashion designer

By Abbi Brown



Luke

WHEN LUKE CHRISTIAN (27) BECAME FED UP OF EXPLAINING HIS DEAFNESS, HE FOUND A BRILLIANT SOLUTION AND LAUNCHED HIS OWN FASHION BRAND.

“Growing up, I was always told how deaf I was and how to act,” says Luke, who is severely deaf and wears hearing aids. “I didn’t know which world I belonged in.

“My fashion line Deaf Identity aims to show that there is no right or wrong way of being deaf. I want to make hearing people realise that deaf people won’t be told, ‘Never mind, it doesn’t matter,’ because it does. We shouldn’t put up with that any more.”

“I wanted to create a brand that championed deaf talent and showed deaf people in a different light.”

Success didn’t come easily. After studying beauty therapy at college, Luke moved to Manchester to pursue a career there, but it didn’t work out.

“I moved back home a little sheepish and embarrassed that my big dream had failed,” Luke says. His best friend suggested he put his beauty knowledge to use as a blogger. Four years later, with a successful blog under his belt, Luke took redundancy from his retail job and set up Deaf Identity.

The brand sells clothing for all ages and genders, featuring phrases in English or British Sign Language. Clothes are modelled by deaf models or children of deaf adults.

“I wanted to create a brand that championed deaf talent and showed deaf people in a different light,” he explains.

As Deaf Identity has grown, so has Luke’s confidence in his own identity as a deaf gay man. “I used to ‘warn’ dates

that I was deaf, as if it was a bad thing,” says Luke. “As I’ve become more secure, I’ve realised if someone has a problem with me being deaf, that’s on them, not me.

“I would tell other young deaf people to embrace who they are. Stay focused, don’t get distracted, do your research and always listen to what feels right for you.”



Find out more about Luke’s brand at www.deafidentity.com.

Our campaign Deaf Works Everywhere aims to get more deaf young people into jobs that inspire them. www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere

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

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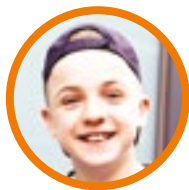
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how his school adapted a school trip for him
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Rhodri's story
how he became confident enough to travel independently
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Cam's story
how he navigates the world of parties as a deaf young person
p18



Sarah's story
how she successfully claimed Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
p20

Hello



It's been a strange year so far, but we hope this regular issue of Families magazine will offer you some comfort, advice and a semblance of normality. Please do note that lots of the stories and interviews in this issue were written before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent shutdown, including our five main feature articles. This means not all of the articles might be relevant to you and your family just now, but keep this copy handy and refer back to it when life returns to normal and we can all get out and about again.

If you're staying inside this summer holiday, you might find other parents' advice on learning at home helpful (page 22). We also have tips from experts on preparing your child to move from one school to another (page 9) and home-based fundraising ideas (page 45) if you fancy a challenge.

Our cover story is heart-warming and won't fail to lift your spirits. Yasmin (4) moved from Syria to the UK with her family last year. Though she had no means of communication at all until very recently, she's thriving in her new home, learning Family Sign Language together with her parents. Turn to page 12 for a much-needed smile.

We've also had lots of questions from young people about claiming PIP. If your child is over 16 and needs to claim this benefit, show them Sarah's story (page 20) to give them plenty of tips, advice and encouragement.

Our thoughts are with you all at this challenging time. Stay safe this summer.

Kerrina

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

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NEWS



Deaf children still falling behind

The exam results for deaf children from the last academic year show that they continue to fall behind at every stage of school, even though deafness isn't a learning disability. On average, deaf children still achieve an entire grade less than their hearing

peers at GCSE, with the situation getting steadily worse.

Last year, we estimated that closing the gap in results between deaf and hearing children would take 21 years, but that number has now increased to 24 years.

There's no reason deaf children should achieve less than anyone else at school, so this is clear evidence that many of them aren't getting the support they need. This follows the latest report by the Consortium for Research in Deaf Education, which revealed that there was a loss of one in ten classroom assistants over the last two years.

The Government has announced an extra £780 million for special needs education. Our mission is to ensure some of this money is invested in specialist, frontline staff to give every deaf child the chance to reach their potential at school. You can find out more about our campaigns at www.ndcs.org.uk/campaigns.

A big thank you to our bloggers!

We'd like to thank all of the parents and family members who have contributed to our family blogs so far. We've been publishing a new blog every week for nine months now and they've proved incredibly popular.

Our authors have covered a huge range of topics from reading with your deaf child to Christmas presents and bedtime routines to sibling experiences. One of our most popular blogs from the last few months was written by Josie whose daughter Maia (14) has Treacher Collins syndrome and wears bone-anchored hearing aids.

Writing about the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, Josie explained what the 'new normal' meant for their family: "Our calendar may now be empty but social media is fit to burst with live-streaming suggestions, fitness to-dos and home-schooling opportunities. We're excited to explore these but for now, thanks but no thanks. In our house we are all drawing breath, doing what fuels us and trying to relax into what will be our new normal for the weeks to come."

Catch up on all our blogs at www.ndcs.org.uk/familyblogs or if you'd like to write for us, get in touch at families@ndcs.org.uk and we'll help you to get started!



Our summer superstar!

"Konrad doesn't let his hearing loss or his high functioning autism hold him back and he will always find a way around things with help. This year Konrad, who is in the RAF contingent of his school's Combined Cadet Force, won the Margaret Price MBE Chalice for going over and above and overcoming his disabilities. We're very proud of him, especially as this is the second year Konrad has won an award!"

Kim is mum to Konrad (16) who has moderate to severe hearing loss.

Giving the minister an education

Two brilliant deaf young campaigners made the most of their opportunity when they met the Northern Ireland Minister for Education earlier this year. The minister, Peter Weir, was speaking alongside former Young People's Advisory Board member Aliyah Black (19) at the Northern Ireland launch of our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign at Stormont.



Aliyah challenged the assumption that deaf people aren't capable in certain jobs stating: "This is simply not true." She also reminded everyone that, "There is no one deaf person or a way that a deaf person must be."

After the speeches were over, Esha Razak (17) talked to the minister about her dreams of going into politics and the importance of deaf young people having a voice in politics and public life. We're sure these young campaigners made a big impact and we know they won't stop there!



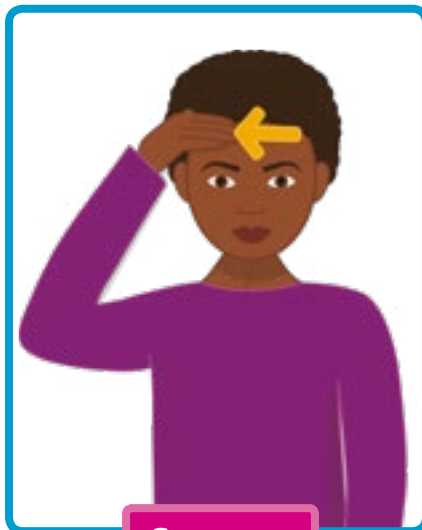
Our Young Authors and Artists competition

The Young Authors and Artists Competition event in Belfast City Hall, which was scheduled to take place in March, was unfortunately cancelled due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Nevertheless, we received some brilliant entries from deaf children across Northern Ireland.

The competition was open to deaf children between the ages of 4–18 and the 'My Future' theme this year complemented our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign, which hopes to get more deaf young people into work and into jobs that inspire them. We received over 100 entries from across Northern Ireland and one of our amazing winners is featured here.

We would like to thank every one of the fantastic children and young people who entered for all their fabulous entries and congratulate them on their hard work.

Sign of the season



Summer

Did you know?

There are over 900 registered British Sign Language interpreters in the UK.

Comment

Supporting you through this challenging time

I know things are very difficult at the moment and that many of you are worrying about what to do and how to support your deaf child as well as the rest of your family. I want to reassure you that we, the National Deaf Children's Society, are here for you.

This year we've found ourselves in the midst of a period of huge upheaval as we've had to change the way we live in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Our day-to-day lives have changed in a way that we wouldn't have even believed possible just a few months ago. While we don't know what the long-term effects of the pandemic will be just yet, we do know that the support parents and families of deaf children rely on has been upended.

Our face-to-face services may be on pause at the moment, but the rest of the organisation certainly isn't. There's lots of helpful information on our website, our Helpline is free and ready to answer any questions you may have and The Buzz remains a safe online space for deaf young people to go to for support and guidance. Our Campaigns team is also working with Government, local authorities, and health services to monitor how deaf children are being affected by this crisis, and feeding back your views and experiences to decision makers. We're doing everything possible to make sure you continue to get the support you need both in the short term and the long term.

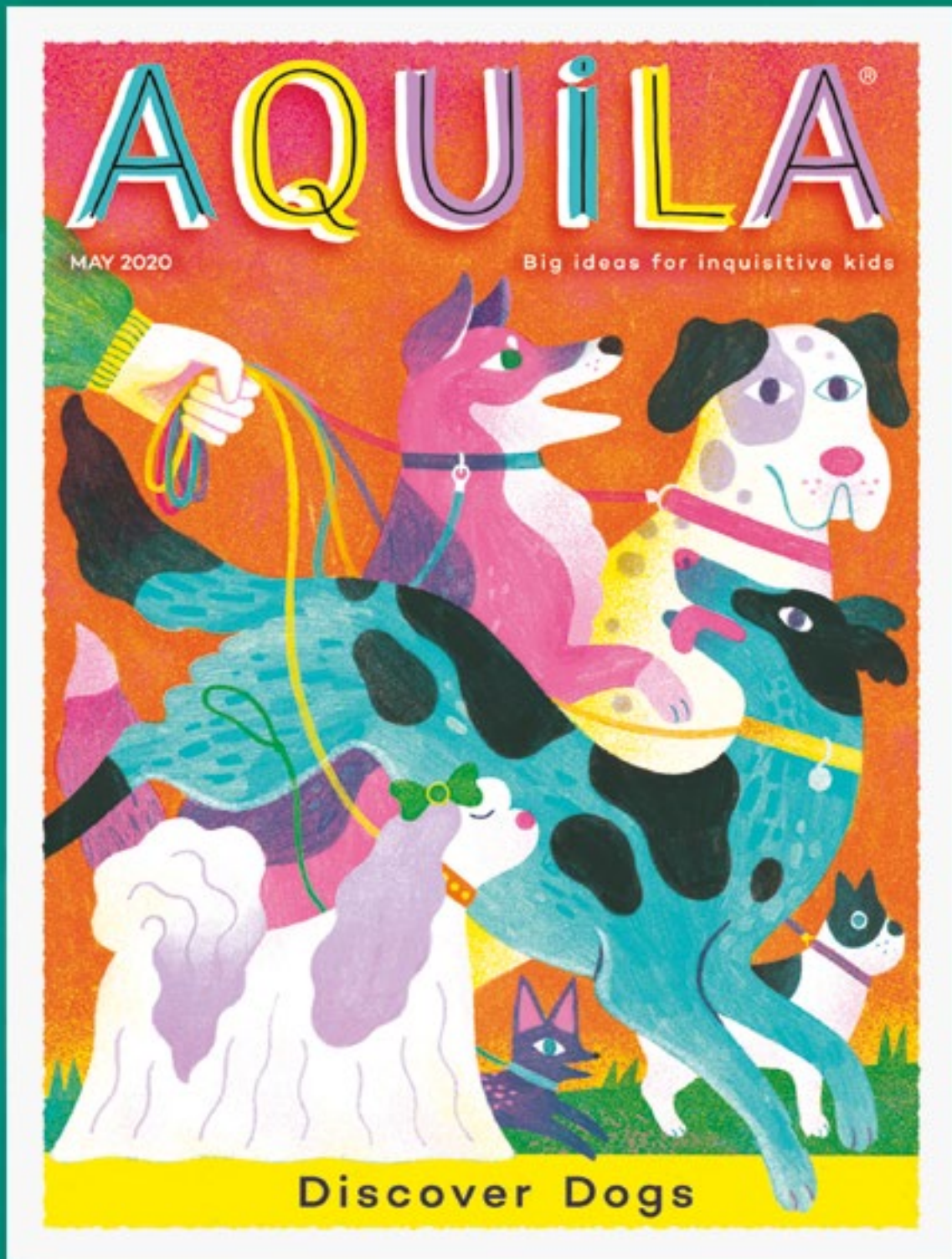
And of course, this magazine is still being delivered to you. Although quite a lot of it was written before the lockdown, it's still packed full of stories of parents and deaf young people doing amazing things, which will hopefully raise a smile. There's some handy tips and advice for adjusting to this new normal too.

Above all, I want to hear from you. How can we support you, your deaf child or young person and your family best at this time? Whatever ideas, thoughts or suggestions you've got, I'd love to hear them. You can email me at SusanD@ndcs.org.uk.

With best wishes to you and your family,

Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive





The MAY issue of AQUILA investigates the story of **Man's Best Friend** – warts and all! Find out why dogs come in all **shapes, colours and sizes** – and what's with the wet nose? Children can read about vegetarian dogs and the fearsome '**Black Shuck**'. PLUS: discover the history of the **American Hot Dog**, find out '**What kind of canine would you be?**' and bake some dog biscuits.

AQUILA MAGAZINE is a witty and intelligent children's publication that brings a book's worth of reading every month. Ideal for curious children aged 8 – 13, every issue is a feast of Science, Arts and General Knowledge. Upcoming topics: Japan, Amazon, Industrial Revolution and Robotics

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Richard Robinson, Brighton Science Festival



Top tips...

Moving from one school to another

At the best of times, it can be unsettling for deaf children and young people as they leave old friends, move to unfamiliar surroundings and learn to become more independent. But following the extended quarantine from school, greater preparation is key. Here are some top tips from our team of experts for those moving to primary school, secondary school and university this year.

→ Key

● Moving from primary to secondary school

● Moving from nursery to primary school

● Moving from secondary school to university

1

Make sure that other professionals involved with your child (Teacher of the Deaf (ToD), Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) etc.) get in touch with the new school to pass over information and offer deaf awareness training.

Emma, ToD.



2

Preparation is key. Meet the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and class teacher with your child before the term starts. Ask your child if there's anything they'd like to discuss.

Nicola and her daughter Isabelle (2) are both profoundly deaf.



3

Make your child a book with photos of the playground, their coat peg and school staff. This can help prepare them for the move.

Sarah, Specialist SLT.



4

It may take your child time to get used to the acoustics of the new environment. Consider starting them on a reduced timetable to combat initial tiredness.

Esme, mum to Isaac (4) who's profoundly deaf.

5

Provide a communication profile outlining your child's hearing levels, equipment and language level, and communication strategies for staff.

Martina, Highly Specialist SLT.



6

If your child will be taking responsibility for passing a radio aid between teachers, ask their primary school SENCO to help your child take gradual control, to build up their confidence.

Chris, Social Worker.



7

Encourage your child to use technology to stay in touch with old friends. Get to know other parents to clarify school information. Don't overfill the after-school calendar.

Josie, mum to Maia (14) who has Treacher Collins syndrome with moderate to severe hearing loss.

8

Iron out problems with access to lessons as soon as possible. Find someone to rely on for support. To make new friends, throw yourself into activities, form study groups and teach some sign language.

Kirsty (17) is moderately deaf.



9

Contact the student union, support service, halls of residence, course tutor etc. to see if there are other deaf students. If your support needs aren't met, talk to your personal tutor or the disabled students' team.

Dr Hannah George and Helen Phillips, Deaf CAMHS North.



10

If moving to a new place, get a home alerting system to ensure you're aware of someone at the door, your alarm going off, the fire alarm going off or the phone ringing.

Kim, Technology Research Officer.



→ For more information about moving schools, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/education. To find dates for our Getting Your Child Ready for School events, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/events. For more information about mental health and your deaf child, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/wellbeing.



Sara Says

Summer on a shoestring

Our brand new columnist Sara, who lives in Northern Ireland, is mum to Sam (13), Matthew (10), Oliver (8) and Charlotte (6). Charlotte's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

www.facebook.com/DeafPrincessNI
[deafprincessni](https://twitter.com/deafprincessni)

We realised that Charlotte didn't know the word for light switch.



For lots more ideas on how to support your child's learning, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/learningresources.

HELLO I'M SARA, MUM TO SAM, MATTHEW, OLIVER AND CHARLOTTE, WHO'S PROFOUNDLY DEAF. We use a mixture of speech and British Sign Language (BSL) at home to maximise our communication and Charlotte's access to language.

The extra time I get to spend with my children over the long summer holidays is invaluable for so many reasons and I'm always grateful for the reprieve from all the appointments, taxi runs and being a slave to the clock. But, because we're always trying to improve Charlotte's language development, I do worry that she'll have a lapse in progress due to Speech and Language Therapy, her Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) and Occupational Therapy all taking a break from working with her, and the extra time away from school this year with the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

While it's easy to think you need to fill your time with activities in the summer holidays to make up for time away from school, that can get expensive. Our daily lives are so interesting and full of opportunities for developing vocabulary, language and social skills too. I try to use everyday scenarios to teach her new language and ideas.

For example, after a test with her ToD earlier this year, we realised that Charlotte didn't know the word for light switch but she knew what a light switch did. This got me thinking, there are probably tons more of these words out there. Does she know the words 'skirting board', 'fish slice' or 'firelighter'? The summer holiday is a great time to start learning these sorts of words.

Sometimes just being together in the house is a wonderful opportunity to talk – learning the social cues of taking turns, listening to each other, responding appropriately to other people's feelings and opinions. We ask, "What shall we eat today? Where do we find those foods? In the fridge or the cupboard?" We talk about play, cleaning, the weather. Throughout it all, Charlotte learns new words and concepts.

Then there are day trips. When we were allowed out of the house we loved day trips as a family. Sometimes they're planned in advance but often they're weather dependent, we live in Northern Ireland after all! On days out we talk about directions, we make decisions on whether to eat a picnic or in a restaurant, and sometimes we give Charlotte pocket money to practise maths.

There are loads of free resources to download from the internet. RSPB has challenges that you can print to do as a family at a local park or in your garden – everything from spotting fungus and wild flowers to building your own bird feeder or mini pond.

We love car games for the way home as well – how many red cars can you count? How many VW camper vans can you find today? We play memory games, guessing games, we make up stories, and sometimes we just sing along to the radio. All these games can be adapted for around the house too.

I hope that gives you lots of ideas for the summer, and the reassurance that you can make it a learning experience regardless of your educational level, teaching ability or budget. **i**

Life for Louise

Bonjour Paris!



Louise (25) is our young person's columnist. She is severely to profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.

www.louisedeafawareness.com

[LouiseDeafAware](#)

I was excited to see how I would cope with the experience of travelling on my own.



This column was written before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic unfortunately cancelled many travel plans. Please check current government advice before planning to travel.

For parent tips on helping your child to travel independently, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/independenttravel.

TRAVELLING. USUALLY MILLIONS OF US ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE THE LUXURY OF BEING ABLE TO TRAVEL ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. From short holidays to long-term travelling adventures.

I try not to let my deafness stop me from seeing the world. I have a bit of wanderlust in my blood, something inherited from my late grandmother and grandad who spent their lives travelling the world together.

At the beginning of this year, I went to France to visit my childhood best friend. I was not nervous about the travelling at all, I was excited to see how I would cope with the experience! I caught four trains to London Euston station from home, then boarded the Eurostar.

I would recommend that you plan ahead. Research all the trains you must catch and what times they depart from and arrive at your location. Two barriers I faced were trying to understand the Eurostar staff's French accents and also not hearing the announcements. I asked other passengers, 'Is this train departing for...?' just for peace of mind.

One tip I would suggest is to carry a notepad and pen, in case you come across any problems communicating. You can also use the notepad app on your phone to ask someone to type what they're saying.

Unlike the easy journey out there, on the way back from France I encountered a lot of difficulty! I arrived at London Liverpool Street station to discover it practically empty. I went to the information desk where they explained there were planned rail



works and I'd have to get the Tube to another station.

It was dark and I was feeling irritated hauling my heavy rucksack. I arrived at the station and boarded the train, which took me closer to home. I then had to find my rail replacement coach. I asked a coach driver which was the right one but he got agitated with me for bothering him. Two members of staff noticed I was having trouble and pointed me to a group of people waiting for the coach.

This is where I got confused and upset; I had no idea where this coach was taking me because I couldn't hear announcements. I had to get my phone out and type: "Hi I'm Deaf, could you tell me where this coach is travelling to?" I passed it to the two ladies sitting in front of me and, to my horror, they told me Witham station! I needed to travel back to Suffolk in the opposite direction! I asked for the driver to speak to my mum on my phone and they arranged for a member of staff to walk me to a train which was heading to Suffolk.

Eventually I got home and felt defeated. My mum highlighted that it was just a one-off and that I was capable of anything! Just look at how well the journey out there had gone.

My top tips would be to always carry a battery pack, keep your phone charged, keep an eye on the screens, and stay in touch with someone you trust who is on hand to pick you up if you get stranded! 📞



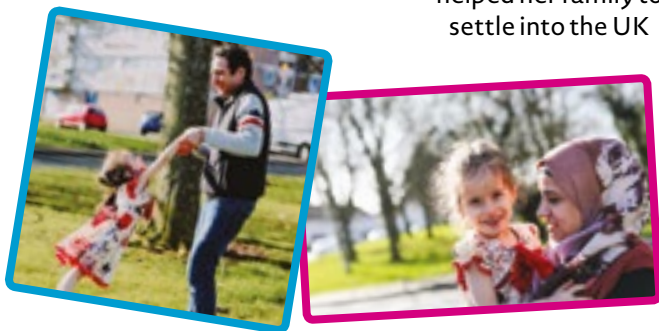
How sign language helped one family settle in the UK

By Kerrina Gray

Moving from Syria to Northern Ireland as refugees took some adjustment for Nour and Omar. But with support in place and sign language under their belt, they're now feeling positive about daughter Yasmin's future.



Yasmin's story
how learning Family Sign Language helped her family to settle into the UK



“We're so happy right now that we're all learning sign language at the same time together.”



AS SHE RUNS AROUND THE HOUSE LOUDLY PLAYING AND LAUGHING, IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE YASMIN (4) HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANYONE UNTIL VERY RECENTLY. “Yasmin has a strong personality,” dad Omar says. “She likes to mess about or be a little bit cheeky.”

The family, who are originally from Syria and speak Arabic, only moved from Lebanon to the UK last year. “In the beginning, we didn't know Yasmin was deaf,” Omar explains. “We took her to the doctor who did some tests and gave her a nose spray. Nothing changed. So we took her again and they found she had a very low level of hearing. She only responded to loud noises, if there were bombs or explosions or things like that near our house. Anything else, she wouldn't respond to.”

The family had no experience of deafness and were offered very little support from health services in Syria. “When I found out she was deaf, I couldn't explain the feeling,” Omar says. “It was sadness, depression. It was very hard news to take in. The doctor said there was hope she could regain her hearing with cochlear implant surgery but we couldn't afford it.”

“Yasmin was frustrated, she was unable to communicate at all. Before we came to the UK, we had concerns. There were no schools for her in Syria. We didn't know how to help her, I couldn't reach her in any way.”

The family, who had then moved to a refugee camp in Lebanon, applied for refugee status stating Yasmin's deafness and poor quality of life as the main reason they needed to move. Happily when she was three years old, they were resettled in Northern Ireland. “It was quite difficult in the beginning getting into a routine but we got used to it,” Omar says. “We're very happy here. My wife goes to college

full-time to learn English and I take part-time courses when not looking after Yasmin. We're both very keen to learn."

With support from a Barnardo's keyworker, the family were introduced to life in the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme. Yasmin was referred to the NHS and the Education Authority, who assigned her a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). Their new GP put Yasmin on a waiting list for cochlear implants.

Last September, she started nursery. "We noticed progress in her immediately," mum Nour says. "She was concentrating more, paying attention and becoming calmer. She began to wake up on her own, ready to go to school, and she would point at things like her school uniform when she wanted to put it on. She was able to communicate with us for the first time."

Once Yasmin started nursery, her ToD put the family in touch with the National Deaf Children's Society as she felt they could benefit from Family Sign Language (FSL) lessons. "The ToD described Yasmin as a bright spark who was yearning to communicate," says Paula, our Language and Communication Officer. "While there was a long wait for implantation, the ToD really felt sign language was going to play an important role in enhancing communication in the family home."

"We thought it might be a bit difficult," Omar says. "Especially as we don't even know the language of the country!" He was right, it was a complex set-up with the parents, their Arabic interpreter (who luckily and by chance knew a little British Sign Language (BSL)), Paula and the FSL tutor Agnes. Agnes is profoundly deaf and a full-BSL user so Paula would translate her signs into English for the interpreter to translate into Arabic for the family. The family started learning the fingerspelling alphabet, an immediate challenge as the alphabet is slightly different in Arabic. "Over the sessions, the translator and I had a lesser role as Mum and Dad began to communicate more directly with Agnes," Paula explains. "Agnes would always praise Omar and Nour as she could tell they practised hard between sessions."

"We found her way of teaching very sweet and funny," Nour adds. "After we started using the signs repeatedly,


“ She only responded to loud noises, if there were bombs or explosions.

Yasmin started to use them too. If she wants to eat, she will sign 'eat' and she uses signs to tell us what she wants to do and if she needs to go to the toilet."

"We noticed that with sign language we were able to learn English even faster compared to just listening to the words," Omar says. "If we signed them, it helped us remember and understand them. We're so happy right now that we're all learning at the same time together."

"My favourite sign is 'love,'" adds Omar. "And mine is 'bad,'" laughs Nour. "Yasmin always messes about and when I sign 'bad' she finally recognises she's done a bad thing!"

Agnes was also the first deaf adult the family met and it was an important moment for them. "We felt optimistic meeting Agnes," says Omar. "We hope that Yasmin continues to progress in both sign and spoken language – we hope she will be trilingual with English, Arabic and BSL! We realise that deaf people here still have a future, they can do a lot of things and keep on learning. In Syria and Lebanon where we were, they don't have a future."

For other families who have moved to the UK or have English as an additional language, Nour and Omar have advice. "Don't waste any time," they say. "Learn sign language as soon as you can!" 



The FSL lessons Omar and Nour received were part of our Signs for the Future Project which is made possible through funding from the Department for Communities: Languages Branch in Northern Ireland. We are very grateful for their support.

To find out more about FSL courses near you and available online, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/events.



EARLY YEARS

Your summer checklist

Toys and play

You're likely to be spending lots of time in your house this summer so we've got plenty of playtime tips and ideas to keep your whole

family entertained. Visit our website for advice on deaf-friendly games and activities at www.ndcs.org.uk/play.

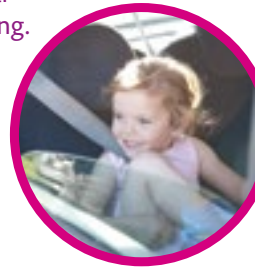


Communicating in the car

For deaf children, long car journeys can be frustrating.

Loud background noise and the inability to lip-read, sign or see facial expressions can mean deaf children struggle to join in with family conversations or keep themselves entertained.

Visit our technology webpages to see how you can use technology in the car to help children feel comfortable and included. www.ndcs.org.uk/car



Planning for primary school

It's been a strange year so far with the disruption in routine, and you may be feeling anxious if your child is due to start primary school this September. With their daughter Jemima, who is moderately deaf, James and Julie put in preparation at home to give her the best start at school. Read their tips at www.ndcs.org.uk/jemima.



Learn more about FSL at www.ndcs.org.uk/familysignlanguage or visit page 27 to read our interview with an FSL tutor.



Confidence trip

By Elayne Nunan

Siobhan and husband Brian were concerned son Conor (11) would miss out when he was too anxious to join his classmates on his first school residential trip – but thanks to his dedicated teaching assistant, adjustments enabled him to participate.



Conor's story
how his school adapted a school trip for him



Conor was worried about managing his hearing equipment, being somewhere unfamiliar, sharing a room and total deafness at night.

SIOBHAN WAVED AS CONOR SET OFF IN THE CAR HEADING TO DORSET FOR A SCHOOL TRIP TO A WORLD WAR 2 (WW2) THEMED EXPERIENCE. It was a three-day residential, but Conor was scared to spend nights away from home. So, thanks to Teaching Assistant Keira, with lots of adjustments and preparation, he was joining them for one day.

“Conor was adamant he wasn’t going,” says Siobhan. “But the trip was important, a chance to bond with friends and be independent.”

Diagnosed as profoundly deaf at six weeks old, Conor had cochlear implants at 18 months. “Conor found school difficult, initially,” says Siobhan. “He had a two to three-year speech delay so his speech wasn’t level with his peers. He’s always been very shy, like his sister Sinead who’s 14. But it’s an excellent school, and Conor’s Teacher of the Deaf trained them on deaf awareness. They improved acoustics and adapted the curriculum to suit him – he’s a very visual learner.”

With the help of a radio aid, 28 hours per week one-to-one support in his Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, and lots of input at home, Conor progressed. He joined in sports and made friends. Then came the trip last October, to support their Year 6 topic on WW2.

“Conor refused to go. He was worried about managing his hearing equipment, being somewhere unfamiliar, sharing a room and total deafness at night,” Siobhan explains.

So, the school arranged with the trip venue to make an exception and have Conor there as a day visitor. The school paid expenses, like petrol and car insurance, and agreed to release a second staff member for the journey with Conor.

When the rest of the class set off, Conor and Keira stayed in school, watching videos of the venue to familiarise him

“After the trip he lost his fear of new things; he’s willing to try new experiences.”

with the layout. Using pictures, they discussed activities, the timetable, the two-hour journey, listed anything he’d need and talked about any worries.

Once there, Conor handed his radio aid to the tutors and spent one-to-one time with them as they explained the tasks and crafts. He took part in all of the activities – role-play, craft and cooking, learning about rationing and baking with limited ingredients.

Simulating an air raid could have been problematic as there were loud sirens and the group had to get to shelter in a cellar. So Keira briefed Conor about the noise, steep steps, the small, dark enclosed space and how they’d pass time playing games and singing.

Conor then spent free time with the friends he’d have shared a dormitory with. “He began to wish he’d opted to stay, as it was the first time away for many of them,” says Keira.

The evening was a celebratory feast for VE Day, with bunting, music and dancing. After dinner, an outdoor murder mystery orienteering event presented more fun and challenges. Being outside at night in small groups, with adults supervising from a greater distance, could have been an issue, but Conor enjoyed using a torch and being with his friends. They made sure he knew where the meeting points were and it was an exciting, empowering experience.

After a long, exhilarating day, Conor arrived home at 11pm exhausted but very happy. “I think the trip gave Conor great insight and inspired more self-confidence in him to ‘have a go’. He was surprised at how the experience of being with friends, away from home and family, inspired such comradeship and brought the children closer,” says Keira.


“It was only made possible with the help and cooperation of the school, teachers, trip venue, his Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), parents and teaching assistants. But with careful planning and orchestration, it enabled Conor to be totally included in such a positive, enlightening experience.”

“He’s really grown in confidence – the trip was massive for him,” Siobhan adds. “As scared as he was, he didn’t want to come home! He absolutely loved it. It encouraged his friendships to grow even more in a different setting away from school. He felt included.

“After the trip he lost his fear of new things; he’s willing to try new experiences, such as going for a meal and to the cinema. Now if he can’t hear you, he’ll say so, or that you need to turn up the radio aid – it’s a huge step for him.

“He even spoke to the TV news about the trip. Every little thing he does is a big thing. This last year we’ve seen a massive change in him; he’s more independent in so many ways. He’ll say, ‘I can do it for myself Mum, I’ll ask if I want help!’ He applies himself to his homework, gets his own breakfast or makes his packed lunch. He’s working hard, preparing for SATs without me pushing him.

“He’s very funny, witty, and even more so after the trip. His confidence has increased greatly. He’s started to see he can do anything at all. He’ll do an impression of my Dublin accent, he’s hilarious! My ma talks with him on Skype and she really noticed the change in him chatting away to her.

“Keira is amazing, she encouraged him and said how beneficial the trip would be. She’s gone above and beyond with the work she’s done with Conor. She’s intent on doing what’s best for him. She puts in time, effort and resources, day-to-day, all the hours she’s with him. And it’s paid off, we’ve seen Conor’s confidence grow hugely.” 



Your child may want to attend one of our First Time Away Weekends to get them ready for a residential school trip. These are on hold during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic but check www.ndcs.org.uk/events to find out when they’re starting up again.



PRIMARY YEARS

Your summer checklist

✓ Staying safe while swimming

Lots of families enjoy spending time by the pool or on the beach in the summer holidays. If your child uses hearing technology, it’s important to make sure that they will be safe in or around the water, without their hearing aids or processors in. Visit our webpages on deaf-friendly swimming for advice on how to make swimming safe and fun for deaf children. www.ndcs.org.uk/recreationalswimming



✓ Alarm clocks

The summer holidays can be a good time for children to practise getting themselves up and out of bed independently, ready to go back to school in September. If your child is unable to hear a regular alarm clock, they may benefit from trying a flashing or vibrating alarm clock instead. Visit our technology webpages at www.ndcs.org.uk/wakingup to see what’s available.



✓ Sibling strategies

Having all the kids at home together can be a challenge. Mum Josie tells us about her daughters’ close-knit relationship and her tips for managing disagreements and sibling jealousy in a blog. Read more at www.ndcs.org.uk/allhailsiblings.



Rhodri's ticket to independence

By Kerrina Gray

Rhodri's morale was low and then he was diagnosed with a mild hearing loss. But armed with new hearing aids, he's worked hard to build up his confidence, including trusting himself to travel independently around the UK. Now, he's feeling more sure of himself.



Rhodri's story how he became confident enough to travel independently



“I've always said ‘No I can't do that, I'm not good enough.’ That's changed.”

• EARLIER THIS YEAR RHODRI (14) HAD A NIGHTMARE TRAIN JOURNEY BACK FROM LONDON. After a two-hour delay, he had to swap from one train to another. But luckily he wasn't fazed. With careful planning in place, Rhodri is now happy enough to travel independently.

It wasn't until Rhodri was nine years old, and after he'd moved school, that his teacher suggested he might have a hearing problem. "We'd noticed we'd have to shout a bit louder to get his attention," dad Gareth explains. "But we just thought he was engrossed in what he was doing."

They took Rhodri for a hearing test and he was diagnosed with a mild hearing loss and given hearing aids. "I was worried about going into my new school with hearing aids," Rhodri says. "But I could hear a lot more, so people couldn't talk behind my back anymore. I noticed a huge difference immediately, I could hear birds tweeting which I'd never heard before."

"I felt awful," Gareth says. "I felt like I'd really let him down for not noticing."

Rhodri's grades immediately began to improve and getting the hearing aids began to improve his confidence too. He'd suffered with a stammer since he was little and finally found it getting better. "I could barely talk for a couple of years when I was six and seven," Rhodri says.

"It's still there," Gareth adds. "But over the last few years, especially since his diagnosis, his confidence has improved immensely."

Rhodri's hearing has declined slightly and he's now classed as moderately deaf. At secondary school he uses a Roger Pen radio aid which has made a huge difference to his learning. "I love the sciences at school," he says.

Two years ago, Rhodri joined our Young People's Advisory Board (YAB), a group of deaf young people who attend

I feel invincible now and like I can tackle any journey.

residential weekends together and plan their own campaigns.

"That's also massively improved his confidence," says Gareth.

"I felt like I was the only one who'd lost my hearing," Rhodri explains. "The YAB was reassurance that I'm not the only one going through this." He attended the first residential weekend with his dad.

"He came out after the first day exhilarated," Gareth explains. "He'd found a group of friendly people who he gelled with straightaway."

"I loved the atmosphere," Rhodri adds. "And the older members gave me advice, like how to do my GCSEs being deaf."

The YAB and making friends with older deaf children allowed Rhodri to feel brave enough to start asking for more help. "They said they were allocated extra time in exams so I went and asked the school to arrange it for me," he says. "I did my own research and also realised I could get my own room for exams and a live speaker for listening tests. It made a big difference and my scores have improved."

"I've noticed it as well in his general demeanour," says Gareth. "There's been a few hiccups on the way but that's being a teenager and there's no escaping that! It's just been an amazing boost. For example, he's up for the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award at the moment and I'm not sure he would have had the confidence to do that without the YAB."

"I've always said 'No I can't do that, I'm not good enough.' That's changed," says Rhodri.

And another big change for the family is Rhodri's willingness to now travel independently on public transport, a huge challenge initially for him.

"It was about midway through the YAB, I decided to start travelling by myself to residential," Rhodri explains. "I was afraid, but a lot of the young people were doing it and I wanted to try." Rhodri's first journey alone was down to London, it was a simple trip with Gareth dropping him at Darlington station and a straight train to London with no changes. Someone met Rhodri at the other end to help him navigate the Tube.

"I panicked a little bit when I was on the train without my dad," Rhodri says. "I thought, 'Oh dear, what have I done? What if the train stops? What if I can't hear what's going on?' But around an hour into the journey, I settled in.

"Before going, I talked to my dad and went through the journey step-by-step, it was helpful that London was the last stop and I was just staying on until then."


The next journey for Rhodri was to Leeds, it was a short journey but he had to get off at a station that wasn't at the end of the line. "I packed up about 15 minutes early," Rhodri says. "I was just sitting there thinking 'What if I miss it?' I looked out for signs for the stops."

With two journeys under his belt, he feels he could now tackle any challenge when travelling. "I follow the Trainline app so I know which line I'm going to," he says. "It tells me which platform I need. I used it on previous journeys with my dad so I'm familiar with it.

"I feel invincible now and like I can tackle any journey. And I'm applying for more things. I love cars so now I've joined a slot car club and I compete too. In the future I want to do something involving cars, maybe chemical engineering."

And Rhodri can't wait to do his DofE. "Before this, I might have thought, 'What if I get lost?' but I look at it in a more logical way now."

"I think socially he gets on with people a lot better now," Gareth says. "He's more confident interacting with others and making friends. He worries less what people think of him."

"I've finally found my voice," Rhodri adds. 



This interview took place before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please check current government advice before planning to travel.

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



SECONDARY YEARS

Your summer checklist

✓ Preparing to start secondary school

Changing schools is a challenge for any child, but for deaf children, it can feel overwhelming. If your child is moving to a new school in September, there are lots of things you can do to help them to prepare, such as practising the journey to school. Visit our webpages for further advice and support. www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforsecondary



✓ Parasport

Although many deaf people enjoy training with mainstream sports clubs and activities, joining a dedicated deaf sports team can be a great way to meet other deaf young people and maintain a positive deaf identity. To find a deaf sports club in your area, use the filters to search for deaf-friendly clubs, events and activities at www.parasport.org.uk.



✓ Emotional health and wellbeing

As your children become teenagers, they can retreat to their rooms and begin to want more privacy. This is completely normal but it makes it harder to tell if they're struggling with their own mental health. We have information on our website to help you talk to your teenager about their feelings, including tips from other parents and deaf young people. Visit www.ndcs.org.uk/teenmentalhealth.



You can find out more about the DofE award at www.dofe.org.



Navigating the party scene

By Rosie Vare

Cam (16) loves socialising with his friends but, as a deaf young person, how does he get on at parties with loud music and lots of people?



Cam's story
how he enjoys going to parties as a deaf young person



CAM WAS 11 YEARS OLD WHEN HE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE HEARING LOSS IN BOTH EARS. He explains that his family had known something wasn't right since primary school. He had grommets three or four times, and the scarring from these operations is what ultimately left him deaf.

Cam's 16 now and certainly doesn't let his hearing loss get in the way of making the most of being a teenager. A keen musician, he enjoys playing the guitar and has had a lot of support from the music department at his mainstream school. "The music department obviously knew that I was deaf and I told them I was going to need some extra support," Cam explains. "I said, 'I can't hear half the stuff you're playing on the speakers.' So, in lessons when they play things through speakers, they'll play it to the class and then they play it to me separately using my ComPilot streamer. This means I get to experience the same sound extremes as the rest of my class.

"Because of that understanding, I have a bit of a stronger relationship with my music teachers. Now they both say, 'Just come in for the lunch hour if you want.' So I go in and play my guitar!"

It's not just playing music that Cam loves, as with a lot of teenagers, parties are a big part of his social life. Whether they're inside or outside, during summer or winter, Cam loves getting out and socialising with his friends. He explains how his deafness comes into play in these notoriously busy, loud and sometimes overwhelming situations.

"It's usually loud music and loads of flashing lights," Cam says. But having his friends with him for these occasions is clearly important to Cam and, as he explains, he's lucky to have really supportive friends.

Make sure you have a good time!

“There’s usually loud music and loads of flashing lights.

“If I get invited somewhere I’ll ask if I can bring some of my mates and they always say yes,” Cam says.

Meeting new people can be difficult for everybody, but when you have to explain your hearing loss another element is added. “The main reason I bring people with me is because it’s easier to explain my deafness to someone new if there are lots of people around,” Cam says. “I’ll say to my friends, ‘We need to tell such and such person because I fancy a conversation with them.’ So we’ll go and tell them, ‘I need to be outside to speak with you, are you all right with that?’ Then we’ll go outside and have a conversation there and then go back in.

“I never used to be a fan of meeting new people but now I find it quite easy to get a conversation going with someone. Bolton, where I live, isn’t massive so most of the parties I go to, people know who I am. They know I have additional needs and that I need to go outside to have a conversation or at least upstairs, wherever there’s less music. They just see it as the norm now.

“I’m glad that I’ve got a mix of deaf mates and hearing friends because it’s different speaking to somebody who’s deaf to speaking to somebody who’s hearing.

“I think for my mates from school, it was hard at first, remembering ‘Oh yeah, he’s deaf.’ I’ve grown up with everyone around me being hearing so I can see it from that side too.”

While he’s more confident in these situations now, Cam has also come up with some really useful top tips for other deaf young people heading out to parties. “Firstly I’d say, make sure there’s at least five people you know going,” Cam explains. “Well, five people who you’re close enough to that they know your needs.

“Next I’d say, get people outside so you’ve got the best chance of hearing what they’re saying. I’d also say don’t go into too much detail. Give them enough information so they know


what you need and then if they have any more questions they can ask them there and then.

“Be confident, that’s always a big one. If you’re nervous, people might turn away because they think it’s a bit uncomfortable.

“But remember people hardly ever say no. So if you ask, ‘Can you turn the music down?’ they won’t say no. I know you might not be confident but if you need it turning down, you need it turning down, just ask. It’s about going about it in the right way. Remember they won’t say no.

“Lastly, make sure you have a good time!”

For Cam, dealing with different environments and new people at parties is par for the course, but if he could tailor an event to exactly what he likes, what would his ideal party be? “It would be outside, preferably in winter, because we could get these big lights outside so you can still see and lip-read. I prefer parties in winter because I like getting wrapped up! There’s still going to be music but because it’s outside it’s not as loud and there will still be flashing lights but it’s outside so they’re not as vibrant or as in your face.”

So, what’s next for the partygoer? “I’m going to a concert tonight and tomorrow night. Tonight we’re watching a tribute to Linkin Park and then tomorrow we’re watching one of my mates because he’s got a band!” 

“Be confident, that’s always a big one.



This interview took place before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please check government advice before planning large gatherings.

If you want to find more tips and advice on leisure, hobbies and celebrations, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/leisure.

For deaf awareness tips for teenagers, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/deaffriendlyteens.



Your summer checklist

✓ Work experience

If your child is interested in exploring the world of work, an internship or work experience placement could help them to develop skills, build confidence and make decisions about what they’d like to do in the future. Visit our website for tips and ideas at www.ndcs.org.uk/workexperience.



✓ Personal profiles

The summer holiday is a good time for your child to consider updating their personal profile. If you’ve not written one before, a personal profile (sometimes called a personal passport) is a summary document of the support and adaptations a deaf child or young person needs. The document can be shared with anyone they work with, such as teachers, sports coaches or doctors. www.ndcs.org.uk/profiles



✓ Listening to music

Does your child love music but can’t always work out the lyrics? Shazam is an app which can recognise music and show you the name of the song, the artist and the lyrics within seconds, allowing deaf young people to keep up with the latest music trends and sing along with time-synced lyrics. Shazam is available on both Apple and Android devices. www.shazam.com





Sarah's successful PIP claim

By Abbi Brown

Applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) helped Sarah gain confidence and live a more independent life.



Sarah's story
how she successfully claimed PIP



I went in expecting the worst, but for me it was not that bad at all.

WHEN SARAH (20) FIRST APPLIED FOR PIP, SHE WAS NERVOUS. "You hear all these horror stories about PIP," says Sarah. "You hear about people who were denied it the first time and had awful experiences applying and getting assessed."

PIP is a benefit for people aged 16-65 who have a disability that means they have difficulty with daily living or getting around. Some find the PIP application process difficult, and this can put deaf young people off applying.

Sarah, who is severely deaf and wears two hearing aids, attended mainstream school. Deafness runs in the family; Sarah's grandparents, mum and two brothers are all deaf too. She thinks coming from a deaf family made life easier when she was growing up, but at school Sarah didn't have a lot of support or any deaf friends. "I was lucky to have understanding friends, and I still do, but I felt like I missed out on a lot," she says.

After school, Sarah went straight to college, where she completed the Prince's Trust Team programme, and then began a nursing course. Unfortunately, chronic pain following an operation on her tailbone meant she had to leave the course.

"She was really down," says Sarah's mum, Jane. "She was spending all her time in her room, but then she got a grip on things and said, 'It's not going to beat me.' It was onwards and upwards from there."

Sarah hadn't previously received any other disability benefits. It was her audiologist who put her in touch with Marie, a Children and Families' Support Officer at the National Deaf Children's Society. Marie helped Sarah to apply for PIP as well as the Independent Living Fund (ILF), an

PIP helps me with daily life.

additional benefit for disabled people living in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

“Marie was brilliant,” says Sarah. “She helped me fill out the form properly. There are things I forget that I struggle with. For example, when I’m asleep or in the bath I can’t hear things like the fire alarm. She made me aware of everyday situations like that, which really helped.”

As part of the application process, Sarah then had to attend an assessment. “It was really nerve-wracking,” she says. “A lot of people say PIP assessors aren’t the kindest but mine was lovely. She was very understanding and very accommodating of my needs.” Because of Sarah’s chronic pain, the assessor came to her home. “I’d say if you can get a home visit, definitely go for that because it’s a lot more relaxed.”

Sarah’s aunt was also in the room to help if Sarah had any problems communicating, but she found the assessor clear enough to understand. “The assessor was a good laugh,” says Sarah. “She was a former nurse and she put everybody at ease.”

Sarah answered all the assessor’s questions honestly and two weeks later she was happy to learn that her application was successful. “It was a huge relief,” says Sarah. “I’d been told to prepare for the worst.”

Sarah’s boyfriend, Jude, who isn’t deaf but has haemophilia, struggled to get PIP and had to appeal the decision several times which had made Sarah nervous about her application. “I think having to appeal the decision would have been really difficult,” says Sarah. “But you just have to keep on going. You have to persevere. You’ll get there eventually.”

Since her successful application, Sarah is enjoying her independence. She has a part-time job in a local shop and volunteers for the National Deaf Children’s Society. “I don’t like having to rely on anyone,” she says. “I don’t like having to ask for help, so having PIP helped me feel more independent.”

Sarah has used her PIP and ILF contributions to fund a Roger radio aid, driving lessons, and college courses in British Sign Language

(BSL). Sarah enjoys signing so much that she’s now set up an after-school club at her old high school, teaching basic BSL to pupils and teachers. She’s keen for other deaf students who are currently studying at the school to have better support. And when a deaf couple came into the shop where she works, Sarah was able to sign with them.


Sarah also enjoys drawing, painting and working on digital artworks. “It’s a way for me to wind down, relax and kind of put everything else on pause,” she says. “It gives me my own wee world for a while.”

Now, Sarah is hopeful about the future. “I’ve honestly no clue what I want to do at college right now apart from sign language,” she says. “I’d like to go to university in the future. I’d like to work with deaf children and deaf people.”

Sarah’s positive experience of applying for PIP has made her feel more confident about applying for other types of support further down the line, such as Disabled Students’ Allowances. “When you hear all the stories about PIP, you go in expecting the worst,” Sarah adds. “But for me it was not that bad at all and I encourage any deaf young person to apply if they think it will benefit them.

“It’s easier said than done, but don’t expect the worst. Answer honestly and if you need them to do something to meet your needs then just ask.”

“It’s given her independence,” says Jane. “She’s quite stubborn, but sometimes she just needs that bit of extra help. Me and her dad are both very proud of her, except when she asks for a lift 20 minutes before she needs to be somewhere!”

Sarah laughs. “It won’t be like that once I can drive!” 



For information about applying for PIP, including tips for filling in the form, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/pip.

If your child currently receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and is about to turn 16, you don’t need to do anything until the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) asks you to apply for PIP.



YOUNG PEOPLE 19-25

Your summer checklist

✔ Disabled Students’ Allowances

If your deaf child is planning to start higher education in the autumn, they may be eligible for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs). DSAs can provide equipment and support such as radio aids, notetakers or interpreters to help deaf students achieve their full potential while studying. The sooner you apply for DSAs, the sooner support can be put in place. Visit our website to learn more at www.ndcs.org.uk/dsa.

✔ Deaf Works Everywhere

With the right support, deaf people can work anywhere they want. That’s why we’ve launched Deaf Works Everywhere, our new campaign to inspire young people, encourage employers and inform parents how to help more deaf young people into work. Watch our videos to find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere.



✔ Learning sign language

Your child may have some extra spare time this summer and fancy learning a new skill. Anwyn learnt British Sign Language (BSL) as a teenager and found it improved her confidence and helped her to develop a deaf identity. Read Anwyn’s story at www.ndcs.org.uk/anwyn.





How do I...

learn at home with my child?

In 2020 we've all spent a lot longer than normal at home. With schools being shut earlier this year and the long summer holiday coming up, we've asked parents to tell us their top tips for learning with their child at home. Remember you're not your child's teacher and your child will be learning even when they're just hanging out, communicating and playing with you. You have all the skills you need to help your child to learn.

Isaac will only happily engage in learning about things which interest him.



Esme is mum to Isaac (4) who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

We always keep background noise low at home in order for Isaac to hear as well as possible, so we rarely have the TV or radio on unless we're all watching something together. Isaac will only happily engage in learning about things which interest him, mainly vehicles, hospitals and space. We look at lots of books, talking about what we can see on the pages. Isaac also loves reading and happily reads his school book to me every night.

We spend a lot of time outside.



Isaac

We did a scavenger hunt on a walk recently which Isaac really enjoyed, he had to look for different textures and colours. It helped encourage him to walk all the way round our village. When in the garden, I always ask him what he can hear to help him differentiate between different sounds.

Isaac has an iPad and, as long as it's used in moderation and wisely, it's really beneficial to his learning. His favourite game is My Town which lets him wander about in a world with a hospital, police station and school. This helps him learn about everyday objects and how the world works.

Rachael is mum to Elijah (7) who is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

I'm a mum of two and we've been home educating for three years now. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, I tried to keep to our normal routine as much as possible to help the children feel secure, while enjoying a whole host of new material which is available online.

We did Joe Wicks' PE class for 30 minutes every weekday on YouTube, which we found was an excellent way to start the day energised and positive. It's easy to follow, even with no sound.

We also used Science with Maddie Moat on YouTube, Dad Lab on Facebook and the National Geographic Kids UK website. 3D Google animals and BBC



Elijah

documentaries, which can be found on BBC iPlayer and Netflix, have so many science ideas, using things you have at home or free printable resources. I find watching a short video will spark my children's interests to further research a topic and create a fact file, poster, newspaper or video report. Their grandparents love me sending pictures or videos, especially while social distancing, and the children feel a real sense of achievement creating something. Topic work like this can cover literacy, geography, history and religious studies.

There's also a range of worksheets and resources online, Twinkl (which has British Sign Language resources) and Reading Eggs/Maths Seeds.

Cooking together, board games and even playing with dice are an easy way to add maths into the day too.

Maria is mum to Alex (4) who is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

Due to his hearing loss, Alex has delayed speech. He's working really hard with his Speech Therapist on his sounds, to improve his speech ready for when he starts Reception in September. This means we have homework set to work on his sounds. We try to make this into games Alex will enjoy, for example making a silly story using all of his sounds. We also have little competitions with his big sister, where I show them a picture and they have to say the word with the correct sound. If there's a day when Alex isn't feeling very cooperative, the promise of a chocolate button always smooths the process!

During the coronavirus lockdown, Alex had his speech therapy sessions delivered by video link. These sessions seemed to work well, as Alex was given control of the screen and was able to draw and interact in the session. Making learning fun and interactive really helps to engage him, but there are times where I have to recognise he really doesn't want to do it! It can sometimes be a fine balance between encouraging and knowing when to try at a later time.



Alex

Josie is mum to Maia (14) who has Treacher Collins syndrome and wears a bone-anchored hearing aid.

Since Maia started secondary school she's been encouraged to work as independently as possible. This is just as well for us parents, as the work is increasingly complex and we would fear confusing her – or in teenage speak 'interfering'!

Maia has a planner where she notes her homework, and she also receives tasks via school email. She seems to cope with the responsibility of it all, and her teachers and friends are very supportive and quick to clarify anything she is unsure of. Maia and her friends use their smartphones for sharing pictures of notes, making voice memos and texting deadline reminders to each other. To support her learning, Maia also refers to CGP revision books and various websites and apps such as BBC



Maia

Bitesize, Linguascope, MyMaths and Quizlet. She also finds making visual aids like flashcards helpful, as well as motivational treats like novelty highlighters!

Of course, we parents are allowed to help out sometimes. Maia has always enjoyed talking to us about what she's learning at school and this does seem to benefit her understanding.

She often mispronounces new words and this chat time provides a good opportunity to iron out some mistakes. She has recently begun using the audio pronunciation tool in online dictionaries to help with this too.

Sometimes, if she's found a lesson particularly confusing, she'll ask us to go over the content with her so she feels more secure. She'll also seek us out to quiz her if she has an upcoming test.



You can find more tips about learning at home with your child at www.ndcs.org.uk/learningathometips and www.ndcs.org.uk/education.

If you'd like to attend one of our online events about learning at home, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/onlineevents.



Next time in *Families* magazine: How do I... help my child settle back into school?

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

Scribble

Tear out these pages, give them to your

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

Colour in



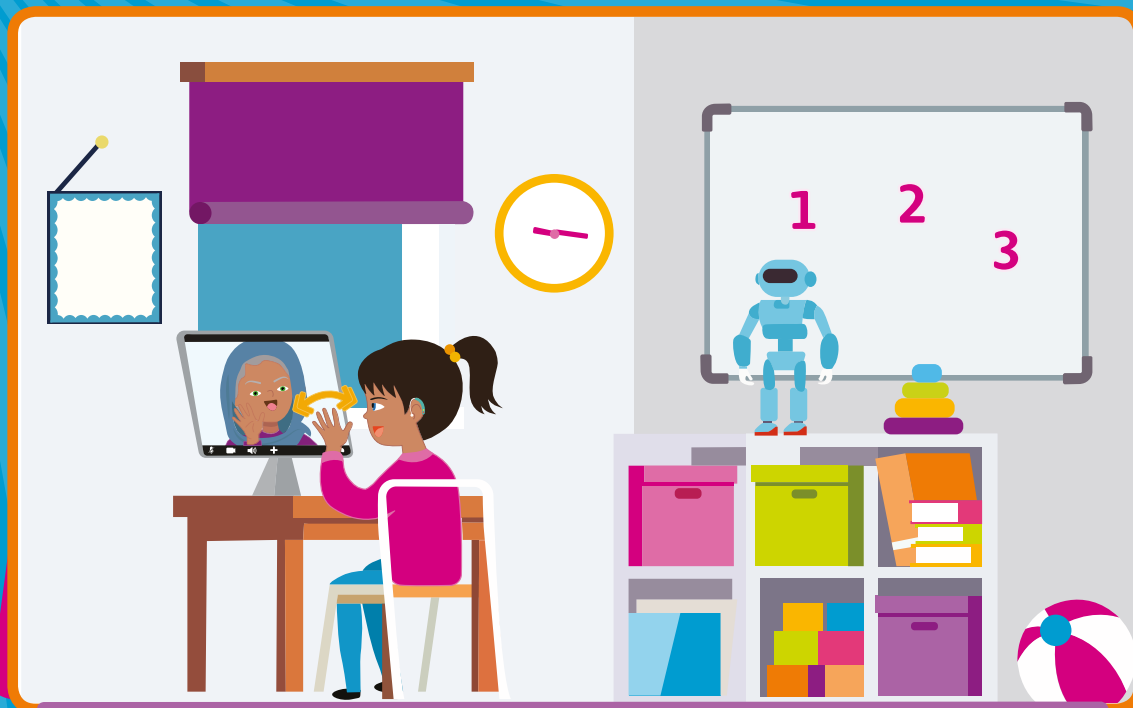
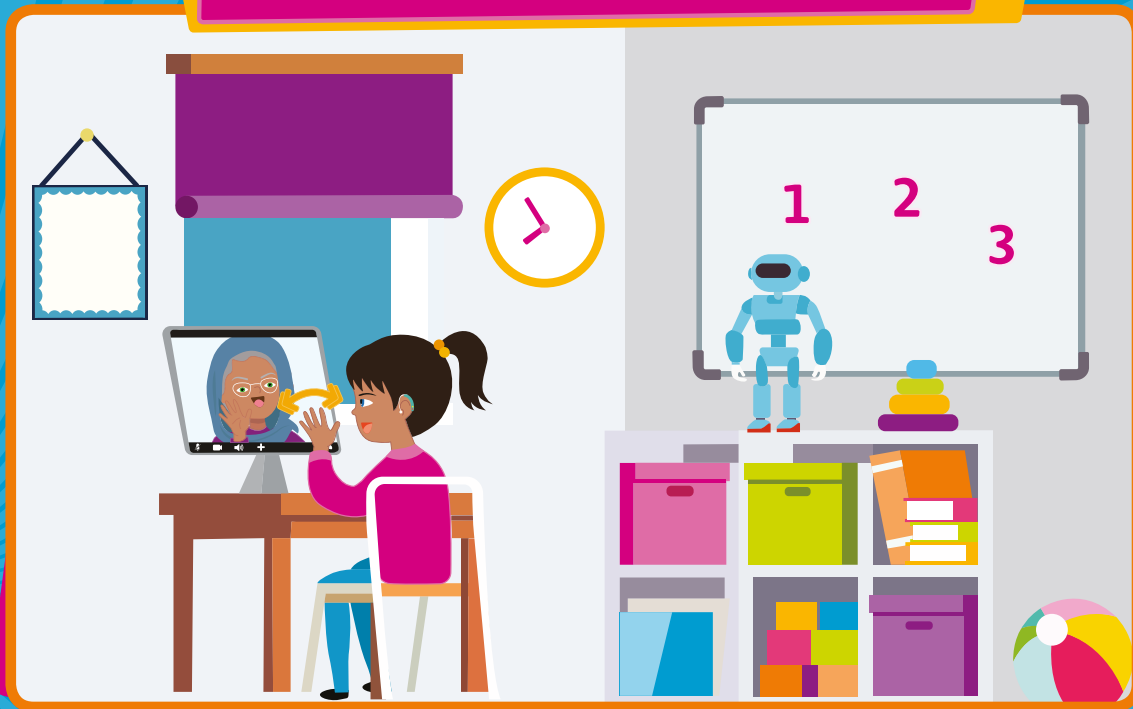
These siblings are making the most of the nice weather by getting out in the garden. Can you count all the apples in this picture? How many can you see?* Don't forget to colour it in too!

*There are nine apples in the picture.

le Club

our child and let their creativity run wild!

Spot the difference



These people aren't in the same room but they're still talking to each other using the computer! What do you think they're talking about? We've hidden five differences in these two pictures – can you spot them all?

'Is this the cleverest game ever invented?'

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"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

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.



Available in the UK from

the Happy Puzzle Company

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quote ref. BND2A to receive your 20% discount.

or visit www.happypuzzle.co.uk/genius

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BND2A

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HPCGNS	2 x 'The Genius Square' SAVE £8.80!		£33.98	£27.18	
HPCGNS	3 x 'The Genius Square' SAVE £10.20!		£50.97	£40.77	
	Standard Delivery (approx. 3 to 5 days) Please note that offer code also discounts delivery charge by 20% (regular p and p £4.95)			£3.95	
	Orders over £50 have FREE Standard UK delivery				
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Angela and Dasher

Ask the expert

Each issue, a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Angela Davies, a Family Sign Language (FSL) tutor, shares her insights.

Seeing a Deaf person smile when a hearing person is using sign language to communicate is something special.

What is FSL?

The National Deaf Children's Society offers FSL to parents of deaf children who want to learn sign language. This interactive and fun course is available in different formats, including weekends, group sessions over a number of weeks, or a one-to-one session with an FSL tutor both online and in person. What is offered will depend on which part of the UK you live in. In the sessions, a qualified tutor will deliver sign language lessons to parents or the whole family. In most cases families have no previous experience of deafness or sign language.

What are the differences between FSL and British Sign Language (BSL)?

They are similar but FSL is aimed at family and friends who are communicating with a deaf child at home. It's also similar to Makaton, mainly using single words such as toys, food and items in the house. There's no exam at the end of the sessions. BSL classes are usually delivered at colleges and you will learn sentences and take an exam.

What happens in an FSL session?

Before I start the sessions, I create lesson plans and try and keep to them. But I'm flexible if the families want to learn specific signs that are helpful to them. A typical session could be about toys in the house. I would ask the family to collect the toys and I would show them the signs for them. I have been lucky to have worked with deaf children for many years and now I have someone special who assists me with this task, his name is Dasher and he's my hearing dog. The children love him!



How can families practise between sessions?

It's important families keep practising so that it becomes normal for the deaf child to see, understand and use the signs that have been learnt. I suggest they look up signs that may help them on YouTube or Signworld. This also helps me identify what they need to learn in future sessions.

For families considering FSL, what advice can you give?

Do it! It can only be of benefit for the deaf child in your family. People forget the isolation that a child can feel. As a profoundly Deaf person myself, I've gone through this. I had a hearing family that I love to bits but they didn't know how to communicate with me for many years.

What are the most rewarding and most challenging parts of teaching?

Seeing families and students embrace the teaching and use the skills they've learnt is so rewarding. Seeing a Deaf person smile when a hearing person is using sign language to communicate is something special. My challenge is to get more people involved in learning sign language so that they can communicate with the Deaf Community. That's my aim for the future!



To find FSL online or near you visit www.ndcs.org.uk/familysignlanguagecourse and www.ndcs.org.uk/events. Learn more about FSL at www.ndcs.org.uk/familysignlanguage.

To learn about the professionals you may meet, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/people.



Making the most of the summer holiday

By Emma Fraser (Teacher of the Deaf)

The summer holidays may be a little different this year but they're still a great time for rest, relaxation and fun. They're also the perfect learning opportunity as your child may try new experiences and develop their confidence and independence in the wider world.

Developing life skills

We know that developing life skills is an important part of a child's learning experience and helps them with self-confidence, taking responsibility, and self-assertiveness. Learning a new life skill might be as simple as encouraging a young child to ask for their own ice cream from the van on the beach or an older child buying a ticket for the train for the first time. But these skills all have to be learnt and practised in a safe environment. The more your child practises these skills, the more successful and independent they will be. The summer holidays may be the perfect time to start introducing these ideas. Don't worry if things go wrong the first time, just encourage your child to try again.

Just as important as life skills are social skills. Your child may be noisy and confident at home and with their friends, but quiet and shy in new and unfamiliar settings. Lots of children and adults are the same, and there's nothing wrong with taking time to work out a new social situation and thinking about how you want to act. But sometimes your child may need support with reaching out to a friend or speaking to the adult in charge in the right way. Deaf children may worry about not knowing the right word or missing out on important information. Social skills only develop with practice. If your child is socially comfortable in familiar situations then they may just need some support transferring the skills to unfamiliar situations.

If your child struggles to communicate with others, then you may want to start practising these skills before the summer holidays. Some schools run social skills groups or you can speak to your Teacher of the Deaf or Speech and Language Therapist about ways to practise over the holidays. Don't worry! Your child won't be the only one who's finding social skills a challenge, particularly at this time when they've had a break from school and seeing friends.



Solo trips and activities

Many children may be spending some of their time in holiday camps this summer if the lockdown is lifted. If it's the first time they've been away from you, it can be scary thinking about all the things that could go wrong. There's no reason why your child can't have a great time, but you may need to do some preparation before they go. Think about what you need to do for your child, such as making sure that activity leaders are deaf aware or that hearing equipment is being used correctly. Then decide which of those things you are going to do and what your child can do for themselves.

The How do I section of our website gives lots of information and tips from other parents on topics such as helping your child to take part in activities, making new friends and travelling independently.

Visit www.ndcs.org.uk/howdoi to find out more.

Working life

Older children may do work experience, volunteer or get a part-time job in the holidays if the lockdown is lifted. All of these are important life experiences and will allow them to meet new people, gain new skills and, of course, be independent. But this can also be a stressful time, especially when deafness is thrown into the mix. If your child has communication needs, talk to them about how they're going to let others know about the support they need and discuss back-up plans if hearing devices are lost or broken.

Your child may need reasonable adjustments or communication support put in place for part-time work or work experience. The law says employers must make reasonable adjustments.

We have stories from lots of deaf people who do all kinds of jobs at www.ndcs.org.uk/role-models. You can find out more about work experience, including your rights and the support available, by visiting www.ndcs.org.uk/workexperience.



Our summer holiday top tips

- Talk to your child about when and where they're going and what they're doing, well ahead of their holiday, activity camp or work placement.
- Allow them to be a part of the planning process. What do they need to take? How are they going to get there? How and what are they going to tell new people about their hearing loss?
- Role-play and rehearse new situations such as ordering food in a restaurant or asking where the toilet is.
- Meet with the activity leader or encourage your child to meet with the employer in advance and talk through what they need to know to make sure everyone is deaf aware. We have lots of information on how to make activities and environments deaf-friendly at www.ndcs.org.uk/bedeaffriendly.
- Don't let your child be put off applying for work experience or a volunteer placement because they're worried they won't be able to cope. There are several different schemes which support deaf young people in the workplace. To find out more, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/workandcareers.
- Think about sending your child to one of our events. These range from one-day events to a week-long summer residential and include water activities, sports, arts and crafts, dance, drama, music and lots more. Although our events have been paused during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, you can check our website to see when they will be back up and running. Find out more on page 40.



Supporting your child's education this summer

✓ Childcare choices

Are you thinking about going back to work or do you want more information about the childcare choices available to you? Our webpage has lots of information on the different options out there and some of the things that you may want to consider. www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare



✓ Starting school

Is your child starting primary school this autumn? If so, we have lots of tips and ideas about helping them and you to feel ready and confident for the new school year at www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforprimary.



✓ Applying for PIP

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a disability benefit for people aged 16-65. Your child can claim PIP regardless of whether they're working or studying, and it's not affected by how much they earn or the level of savings they have. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/pip or see page 20 for one young person's experience of applying.



➔ This article was mostly written before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please follow the latest government advice before planning summer activities.

For more information about developing social skills, including things you can do at home, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics.

We have handy deaf awareness tips for you to share with activity leaders, you can find them at www.ndcs.org.uk/communicationtips.

If your child is doing work experience or entering the world of work this summer, you might want to take a look at our campaign Deaf Works Everywhere. Visit www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere for more information.



Bone conduction hearing technology

By Kim Hagen (Technology Research Officer)

Bone conduction hearing devices (BCHDs, also commonly called BAHAs) are fast becoming a popular option for deaf children and young people. In this article we explain the technology and which products work well with a BCHD.

Not all deaf children can use standard behind-the-ear hearing aids. They may have a conductive hearing loss, meaning the outer and middle ear don't send the sound correctly into the inner ear. This can be because, for example, they have regular ear infections, their outer ear is not completely formed (microtia), they have no ear canal (atresia), or they have very tiny ear canals, often seen in children with Down's syndrome.

If this is the case for your child, they might benefit from bone conduction hearing devices (BCHD). These types of hearing aids send sound vibrations directly to the inner ear through the bones of the skull. They can be fitted through surgery or can be worn on a sticker or headband.

If fitted surgically, your child would either get an abutment or magnet implanted which the BCHD attaches to. It's then sometimes also called a bone conduction hearing implant (BCHI) or bone anchored hearing implant (BAHI).

Regardless of how the aid is fitted, many modern BCHDs can connect wirelessly to other technology products so your child can hear phone calls, music, or a person speaking into a microphone straight into their hearing devices. If your child has a BCHD, there are a range of streaming products available for this, and what works for your child depends on what kind of BCHD they have.



Bone conduction technology is not only for BCHD users, there are also mainstream technology products that use bone conduction, such as bone conduction headphones. In this article, Belle has wireless bone conduction headphones and wears them instead of her BAHAs to listen to music or watch YouTube videos on her iPad or iPhone.

We have the Aftershokz Trekz Titanium Mini bone conduction headphones to borrow on our Technology Test Drive loan service. These Bluetooth headphones were originally designed for hearing people who like to run, as the headphones leave their ears open so they can still hear sounds around them, such as traffic. But these headphones can also be great for some deaf children. We think they might be particularly useful for children with temporary conductive hearing loss, such as glue ear, to listen to music or hear their teacher better if they wear a Bluetooth microphone which can be paired with the headphones.

Jake

Jake (15) has two Ponto 3s on abutments. These are a type of BCHD made by Oticon Medical. He uses the Oticon Medical streamer (which only works with Oticon Medical BCHD). Jake wears the streamer around his neck and connects it wirelessly to the Oticon ConnectLine TV adapter, which plugs into the TV, to send the TV's sound directly to his BCHD. He also uses the streamer without the TV adapter to connect wirelessly to his iPad to listen to music and play games.

“ Before, Jake struggled with the noises around him and he always needed to turn things up very loud. Since having the streamer he can have his iPad or TV at a volume that suits him without disturbing other family members, as all sounds are streamed directly to his BCHDs and everyone is happy.

Natalie is mum to Jake (15) who is moderately to severely deaf.



Mya

There are other companies that make BCHD, such as Med-El or Cochlear. Each have their own accessory products. Mya uses one Cochlear Baha 5 which hasn't been fitted surgically, she wears it on a softband around her head. She uses the Cochlear Mini Mic 2+ with this. This is a small microphone that connects wirelessly to her Baha so the speaker's voice is sent straight to it, over a distance of up to 25m.

“ In school Mya gives her Mini Mic 2+ to the speaker when there's lots of background noise. Speakers also wear it in assembly when she might not be close to them or in an optimal seating position with her good ear facing the speaker and might not be close enough to lip-read. Out of school she uses her Mini Mic 2+ for gymnastics and trampolining lessons. This allows her to hear her teacher even when she's not looking at them. The Mini Mic 2+ allows Mya to feel confident as she doesn't have the embarrassment of having to tell the teacher that she couldn't hear them. Without it, she would really struggle.

Claire is mum to Mya (8) who is severely deaf in one ear.



Belle

Belle wears two Cochlear Baha 5s but she has hers fitted surgically on abutments. She also uses the Cochlear Mini Mic 2+ in school.

“ The teachers are new to deaf technology but they're now all getting used to it. The school is brilliant and checks if Belle's Mini Mic 2+ is working every morning. Having the Mini Mic 2+ helps her to concentrate in class without straining. It also means she doesn't miss out in IT lessons when they wear headphones, as she can plug the Mini Mic 2+ into the speaker port on the laptop and stream the sound directly to her Bahas.

Sue is mum to Belle (12) who is profoundly deaf.



Poppy

Like Jake, Poppy also has the Oticon Medical BCHD and has recently been upgraded from the Oticon Ponto 3 to the Ponto 4. The Ponto 4 is an internet-connected BCHD. It works with the Oticon ON app, which gives you notifications on your BCHD's battery level, lets you control some settings remotely and helps you find it if it's lost!

“ I love my Ponto 4 and its added accessories, especially the Oticon ON app for my phone. I love how I can turn the volume up and down myself and I get messages when I need a new battery so I can then change it myself!

Poppy (9) who is profoundly deaf in one ear.



Read more about how Poppy and her mum Amy use their technology on page 33.

To find out more about technology that could help your child, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/technology. To borrow the headphones mentioned in this article, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive. The Technology Test Drive is temporarily closed due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, check our website for more information.

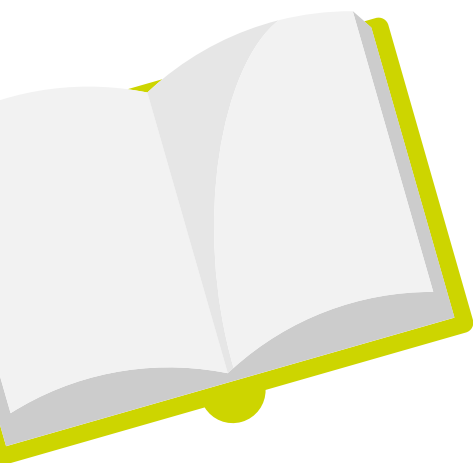
You can also watch our video about products to listen to music with (which features the bone conduction headphones) by searching 'headphones' at www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam.



Reviews



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



Harriet Versus the Galaxy

Written by Samantha Baines

Available from **Amazon**

£9.56 (hardback)

£6.99 (paperback)

5-10

11-14

I was very lucky to receive a signed copy of the fantastic book *Harriet Versus the Galaxy* from a competition my Dad entered for me on the National Deaf Children's Society Northern Ireland Facebook page.

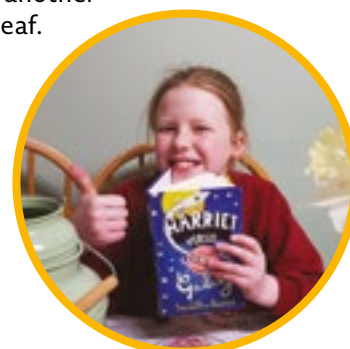
Just like me, Harriet is deaf and 10 years old. She wears hearing aids to listen to the sounds of the world around her, though I have cochlear implants.

In the story, Harriet's hearing aids don't just hear everyday sounds but also let her translate an alien language when she discovers an alien hiding under her bed. She learns that her granny is part of a secret organisation that is protecting the galaxy from the Muncha Aliens and, with her hearing aids, Harriet's the only one who can understand them.

The book was easy to read with a great story and lots of cool pictures. It was also great to read about another deaf girl and how she deals with being deaf.

I liked how, at the end of every chapter, the book describes all the different planets in the universe. The story was easy to understand and would suit boys or girls from ages 7-11. I would like to read more stories about Harriet's adventures and how she's getting on with her new friends.

Cerys (10) is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.



Cerys



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

→ Key

This resource could be most suitable for the following ages:

0-4

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25

Parents





Where is the Bird?

Written by Victoria Forrest, *Where is the Bird?* is an augmented reality book that encourages families to learn British Sign Language (BSL) via the accompanying app, Baby BSL. Pictures on each page of the board book can be scanned to open an animation video showing you how to sign the name of the object.

Available from **Waterstones**

📱 **£8.99**

0-4



Ioan loves books and was happy to flick through *Where is the Bird?* The images are in black and white but he enjoyed looking at them. So far, Ioan has picked up the signs for 'bird' and 'where'.

The main issue I had with Ioan was his attention span. Possibly due to his age, he likes to take over and open and close the pages himself, making it hard to concentrate on one image and sign. I found the best way to read it with him was to sit directly opposite and hold the book towards him. That way he was already looking in my direction so I could show him the corresponding BSL sign.

I found the app easy to download and very easy to use, which was great. The moving images are bold and colourful so they draw your attention.

However, to use the app and book together, as well as teaching the sign, I needed Ioan to focus on different objects, then back to me. Typically, when he saw the colourful image appear on my phone, he just wanted to play with that and the book was dropped. I think for his age, the book and app are easier to use separately, as otherwise there is just too much going on. It could also be that he's a very busy baby and always on the move!

I would recommend *Where is the Bird?* to families with slightly older children who are learning to sign. The app might also be more effective on a larger screen, such as a tablet. I'll continue to use the book and app, and hope Ioan will get to grips with it as he gets a bit older.

Isabelle is mum to Ioan (13 months) who has suspected moderate hearing loss and wears hearing aids.



Ioan

Oticon Medical Ponto 4 and ConnectClip

The Oticon Medical Ponto 4 is a bone conduction hearing device (BCHD) that can be connected to the internet. It can also be used with the Oticon ConnectClip microphone. The ConnectClip is available to borrow from our Technology Test Drive (www.ndcs.org.uk/techdrive) or buy from Connevens (www.connevens.co.uk).

📱 **Around £149 for ConnectClip (£179 inc VAT)**

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

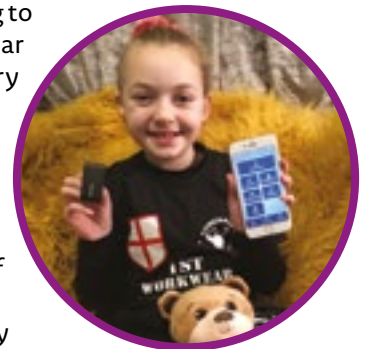
Poppy wears an Oticon Medical Ponto 4. She previously trialled wearing a BCHD on a softband but she didn't find it comfortable so chose to have an operation. She now wears the BCHD on an abutment anchored to her head. Poppy is very proud of it and shows it off as much as she can!

The Ponto 4 works with the Oticon ON app, which Poppy has downloaded onto all the family's phones. She uses the app for things like checking the Ponto's battery level, finding it when it's lost, and adjusting her volume. She can also stream music or phone calls straight to her Ponto via the app. She absolutely loves this and it saves us listening to her music! I love that I get a message to tell me when her battery is low, so I'm always prepared for a battery change.

Poppy was also given the Oticon ConnectClip, a streamer which connects to her Ponto. Poppy can stream music straight from the clip or use it as a remote microphone. It's extremely useful, especially when out riding her bike or in her kickboxing classes. Whoever is talking to her wears it and she can hear instructions clearly. It's very small and stylish.

Poppy feels very special with her accessories and we feel lucky that Poppy has these tools to give her the best possible quality of hearing. She tells us all the time that we're the unlucky ones because we don't have special hearing powers like she does!

Amy is mum to Poppy (9) who is profoundly deaf in one ear.



Poppy



Resources



Helpline

“ My nine-month-old son was diagnosed with moderate hearing loss in both ears following his newborn hearing screening and has now been given two hearing aids. I’ve never claimed benefits but I met another mum recently who said I should be able to get some extra money for him. Is this right?



Many deaf children in the UK receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to help cover additional costs associated with having a disability. DLA is a benefit for disabled children or those with long-term illness under the age of 16. It isn’t means tested, so the amount of money you receive doesn’t depend on your family’s income, but is based on your child’s care and supervision needs. If your son is given DLA, it may mean you’re entitled to other benefits too, such as Carer’s Allowance.

For your son to receive DLA, you would need to make a claim through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). On the claim form you need to show that because your son is deaf, his needs are significantly greater than a child of the same age without a disability or illness. As all babies need a lot of attention, it can sometimes be difficult to show why babies who are deaf need additional care and supervision. However, it’s likely there are lots of additional things you’re doing to support your son’s development because he is deaf, particularly around communication. Also he will need constant supervision when he wears his hearing aids, as they could be a choking hazard and the batteries inside would be toxic if he were to swallow one.

The claim form asks for a lot of detail but not all of the questions will be relevant to your son. It can help to prepare plenty of examples of the extra things you do because he’s deaf. Before filling in the form it can help to keep a diary for a few days, recording how often you need to do things and how long they take. You can also include the diary with the claim as supporting evidence.

Including supporting evidence will help to strengthen his claim. As well as a diary, you could include supportive letters from you, his Teacher of the Deaf and other people who know him. These can help build a picture for the DWP decision maker assessing his claim so they understand how his diagnosis affects him day-to-day.

The DLA process can feel quite involved and it may be upsetting to think about how your son differs to a hearing baby. If you need support to complete the form, please let us know as we’re always here to help.

For more information about DLA, including guidance on completing the claim form, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/dla. We also have information and advice on supporting evidence and suggestions of people you could ask to write letters at www.ndcs.org.uk/supportingevidence.

What’s new?

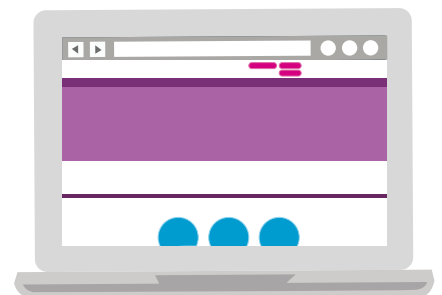
Emotional health and wellbeing

What type of information is it? Web content which can be found at www.ndcs.org.uk/wellbeing.

Who’s it for? Parents of deaf children and young people.

What’s it about? The aim of this section is to offer advice to parents of deaf children and young people on how to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of their child, whatever their age, and themselves.

You might also like: *What Are You Feeling?* is a PDF guide to help deaf children understand and identify their emotions. You can download this resource at www.ndcs.org.uk/whatareyoufeeling.





Information for deaf young people

What type of information is it?

Web content which can be found at www.ndcs.org.uk/infodeafyoungpeople.

Who's it for? Deaf young people looking for support and guidance with education, money, their rights, and work and careers.

What's it about?

Understanding their rights and what support is available can make a big difference to deaf young people and help them succeed in whatever they want to do.



You might also like: Our information on The Buzz website about the future, including real-life stories from fellow deaf young people about what they've done since leaving education. www.buzz.org.uk

British Sign Language (BSL) videos

What type of information is it? Videos teaching you new BSL signs are uploaded weekly on our Facebook page. You can find the previous videos at www.facebook.com/NDCS.UK/videos.

Who's it for? Everyone! Deaf young people, parents, family members, friends and professionals working with deaf children may find these videos useful.

What's it about? We've created a series of short videos explaining how to sign some basic words using BSL. So far we've covered topics including the weather, transport, time and numbers.

You might also like: Our colourful fingerspelling postcards which can be downloaded or ordered on our website www.ndcs.org.uk/fingerspellingpostcard.



JOIN SOUND OUT AND HELP MAKE OUR INFORMATION EVEN BETTER

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

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

Freephone 0808 800 8880
 ✉ helpline@ndcs.org.uk
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In your area

Having fun with our local groups

We haven't been able to get out and about much recently, but when normal life resumes, our local groups are there to support you with fun activities and plenty of advice. We take a look at what a few of our groups get up to when the sun is shining and we're free to mix outside.

"We're affectionately nicknamed the Biscuit Club!"

"Our Saturday Club is for kids aged 0–12 years old. It's a safe, fun and understanding environment where deaf children and their siblings can play. There's always a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, so the club is enjoyable for everyone.

When we're able to, we do lots of arts, crafts, games, visit museums, go to the cinema, have themed days and lots more! We're also affectionately nicknamed the Biscuit Club, because the children have an incredible ability to demolish a whole packet of custard creams! The kids who come make new, lifelong friends and, with the majority in mainstream schools, it's important they get to spend quality time with other children with hearing technology or those who use BSL."

Iain, Resource Worker for the West Scotland Deaf Children's Society.

"Even the very shy children came out of their shells."

"We usually run a summer school. It's a lot of fun, but it's also really important to get the kids together.

Our goal last year was to make every day something new, exciting and adventurous. We ran drama workshops on the theme of adventure – even the

very shy children came out of their shells. The workshop leader used BSL and speech so that all the children could take part. Another highlight was our cookery morning where children made chocolate and lemon mousse. This was great fun though incredibly messy – the grown-ups were relieved they didn't have to do any of the washing up!

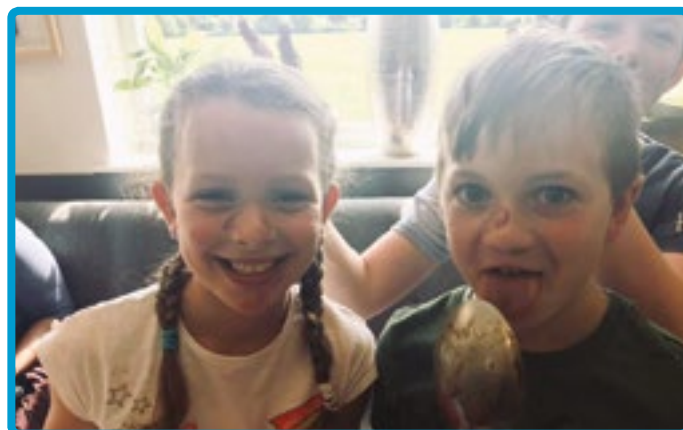
We also got sporty during summer school with a mini Olympics and a climbing wall session – the youngest child was three years old, she was so brave!"

Amy, Chair of Peterborough and District Deaf Children's Society.

"The residential is a chance to ask questions without feeling self-conscious."

"The aim of our three-night residential is to create balance; we have some events that are super enjoyable and fun and some which are serious providing support and advice.

Usually, Friday night is a time for getting to know each other and having a swim in the hotel pool. Then over the weekend we run parent sessions, for example, advocacy training or protecting our children's mental health, and family activities. A highlight last year was a visit from the local Fire Brigade where the children got to try out the uniforms and hoses!



The residential is a chance to share experiences, develop friendships and ask questions without feeling self-conscious. Often the informal chats, which arise during evening discos or around the lunch table, raise issues which are causing problems for one family but have already been solved by another."

Sara, a member of Sound Friends Deaf Children's Society in Northern Ireland

To find out more about Sara, read her new column on page 10.



To find a group in your area, check out our map at www.ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup. If you're stuck inside this summer, you can click on the map to find out what groups near you are doing online. Most have Facebook pages where you can connect with other families and see what's going on.

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.

Create, Play & Learn

10% OFF KIDS CRAFT

Make the most of precious family time by getting creative together! Whether you're looking for complete craft kits to enjoy with your kids or arts and crafts supplies such as paper and glue, we're here to help create moments that matter.



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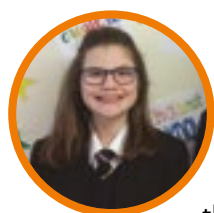
Shop now at:

createandcraft.com/kids

In your area

“Things at school are better now than before.”

A visit from our Roadshow bus earlier in the year helped Scarlett (12), who is profoundly deaf, and her hearing friends to communicate better.



Scarlett

“My name is Scarlett and I’ve got two cochlear implants. I like being deaf, it’s very unique. Before the Roadshow bus visited my school, it was difficult to

communicate. My friends did make an effort to talk to me but not in a perfect way and I think they weren’t sure what they should do. I was used to it but at the same time I wanted it to be better.

It was really cool to see the Roadshow’s massive purple bus and I was interested to see what would happen on the day. On the bus we played some games, for example a version of Chinese Whispers. My friends realised it was really difficult to pass on the same information just through lip-reading. We found the best way to do it is to show hand gestures, facial expressions and use body language too. My hearing friends learnt that deaf people can do anything.

I also really enjoyed the deaf awareness sessions as my friends learnt how to communicate with me in the most effective way, for example

to face me when they talk, make eye contact and talk normally.

After the bus left, people understood and communicated with me a lot better than before which really shocked me. Things at school are better now than before, as my friends who went on the bus have told their friends about it and this has really helped too.”



Katie

Katie (12), who is hearing and went on our Roadshow bus with Scarlett, tells us how the day was for her.

“My name is Katie and Scarlett is my best friend forever. I learnt so many

things from the Roadshow bus. I learnt about different ways of communicating with deaf people and I know now that I need to maintain good eye contact with Scarlett. This has made me think about different ways I can communicate with her such as using hand gestures or writing things down so she has a bit of a break.

Not only that, but I also found learning sign language really good. It will help me to communicate with Scarlett and anyone else who is deaf.”



Our Roadshow visits had to stop during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic but we’re hoping to get them back up and running as soon as possible. We’re also currently running some of our Roadshow workshops digitally. If you or your school are interested in joining one of these workshops, contact us on roadshow@ndcs.org.uk. To find out more and to check when our face-to-face services are back up and running, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow.

If your child is aged 8–25 and having to spend lots of time at home this summer, you might want to show them our Make a Change fund. They can apply for up to £500 funding to make their idea a reality. Visit www.ndcs.org.uk/makeachange for more information.

In your area

A virtual world of support

We haven't been able to run our face-to-face events recently, but we've continued to offer free online sessions with vital information and support for your child. Here you can find out more about our easy-to-use online events.

What do the sessions cover?

Topics include:

- learning at home
- boosting your child's self-esteem and wellbeing
- technology
- making the most of your child's hearing at home
- supporting parents new to hearing loss.

How do they work?

The sessions will be like joining a normal online chat, where an expert will share information with you through a presentation. You can join in with our online chat room, and you'll have a chance to ask our experts questions and chat to other parents. You can type any questions to the speaker or use your microphone or video. Feel free to join in as much or as little as you like.

How long do they last?

Sessions last for an hour with a mix of chat and presentations. There is plenty of time to ask questions.

What do families think?

Here's some feedback from parents from one of our recent sessions about benefits:

"A great webinar, the hardest part of my DLA [Disability Living Allowance]

application was questioning if we were really entitled... All of the care you give your children is second nature so it was great to pinpoint the specifics that qualify."

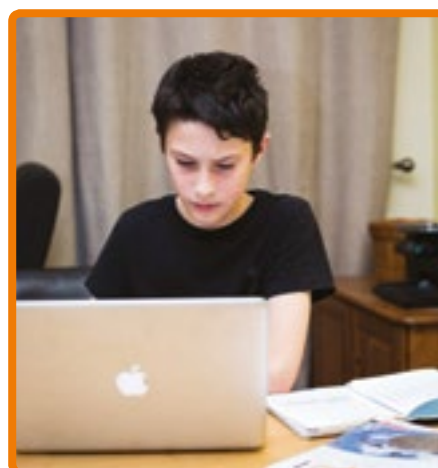
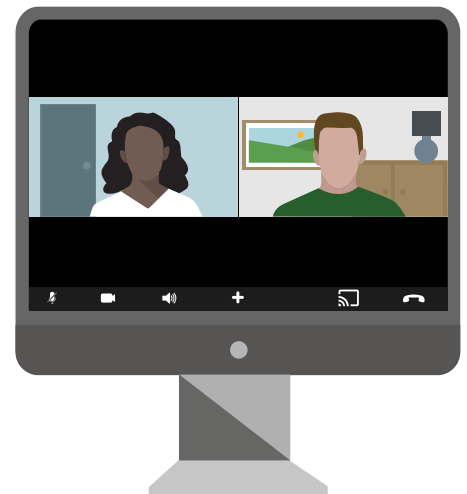
"The seminar was so, so helpful and I am delighted to confirm that with the information gathered I successfully took my son's DLA application to tribunal and won!"

What will happen in the future?

These sessions will continue to be available alongside our relaunched face-to-face events, for anyone who's unable to travel to a session or doesn't have the time to attend a longer, more intensive event. They're a great way to get a quick burst of information from the comfort of your own home.

How do I find out more?

Find out about our full range of online sessions and how to sign up at www.ndcs.org.uk/onlineevents.



We hold many more free events all over the UK for deaf children, young people and their families. At present our face-to-face events, including those for young people and our family programme, are on hold due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please check our website for more information about if and when events will be running this summer. You can download our events calendar, which will be continually updated, from www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

Working towards a happy future

Keighley, mum to Leo (5), attended our Happy Futures event to find out how she can best support her son with his emotional wellbeing as he gets older. Both Leo and Keighley are profoundly deaf and wear cochlear implants.



“Having suffered with mental health issues because of my deafness, my first concern when Leo was diagnosed was helping him with his emotions. I also wanted to find out why deaf children experience more mental health issues than their hearing peers, so when I heard about the Happy Futures event I really wanted to attend.

The day started with a welcome talk, then we had talks from Deaf CAMHS (Children and Adult Mental Health Services), SignHealth (a charity working to improve the health and wellbeing of people who are deaf), Safety Net (a children’s safety and wellbeing charity), the National Deaf Children’s Society’s Young People’s Advisory Board and staff, and other parents.

During lunch we had the chance to chat to each other and to visit the information stalls. Hearing other people sharing the same concerns as me was so reassuring; it made me feel like I wasn’t alone and I’m not worrying too much!

After lunch, we split into groups and could pick two out of four possible workshops. I was particularly interested in the one called Little People, Big Feelings because the title felt like it defined our life currently.



The most powerful message I took away with me was about a little boy of five. He didn’t realise that when his mum opened the front door it was because she’d heard the doorbell. He couldn’t hear the doorbell and whenever he opened the door there was no one there. He felt broken inside.

This story had a real impact on me as it made me think about how I parent Leo. It taught me that deaf children need access to technology

“It’s never too early to think about your child’s mental health.”

as young as possible. It’s vital for their development so they can learn about cause and effect and become independent. Hearing about this boy made me look at our house and make changes to give Leo access to the same experiences that his hearing brothers have.

I found Happy Futures such a helpful event. Not only did I have the chance to hear from experts in childhood deafness, but I also learnt things about myself which I didn’t know were related to my deafness. I’d encourage anyone with deaf children to go along. It’s never too early to think about your child’s mental health.”



Happy Futures: Transforming deaf children’s mental health is a new event for parents of deaf children who want to learn more about supporting their child’s emotional health and wellbeing. Keep an eye on our website for further event dates and locations: www.ndcs.org.uk/happyfutures.



Get involved

Lights, Camera, Captions!

Deaf children are missing out on a key part of childhood due to a lack of subtitles – we want to change this.

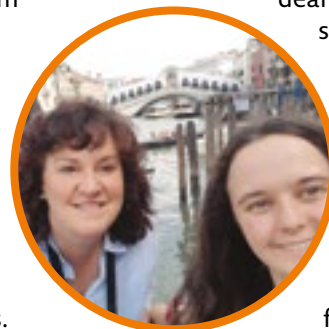


85% of parents of deaf children say that a lack of subtitled film showings is stopping their children from enjoying the cinema. Most cinemas only put on one subtitled screening for each new release and often these are shown at times that are inconvenient for families.

One young person who understands this all too well is Holly (18) from Thaxted, Essex. She is severely to profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids.

“Where I live, there aren’t many deaf people. Maybe that’s why accessibility is so bad at the cinema. My family and I rarely go now, we just wait for the DVD to come out. By then, the surprise of the plot is already ruined.

I’ve had lots of bad experiences at the cinema. Once, I went to see a subtitled showing of a new *Star Wars* film, but when it started, there were



Holly

no subtitles. The audience was full of deaf people as it was the first subtitled screening of the film. Everybody was so upset they got up and left in protest.

A cinema near me has started making sure they put on at least one subtitled screening a month of a popular film and it’s made a huge difference. They also asked if I would test out captioned glasses, of course I said yes. It’s just a shame this is so unusual.

More subtitled performances would be helpful. There are often films that I want to see, but I miss out because there are so few and often at awkward times of the day.”

Due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), this campaign has been paused. If you want to be get involved when it restarts please join our campaigns network at www.ndcs.org.uk/campaignsnetwork.

How to enforce your rights at the cinema

- Under the Equality Act 2010, organisations (including cinemas) are required to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.
- Reasonable adjustments are easy, inexpensive and straightforward changes that can be made so disabled people have equal access. We feel that subtitled films should be seen as a reasonable adjustment.
- If a cinema tells you they can’t show a film with subtitles, you should ask them to explain why. Try and get this in writing if you can.
- If this happens to you and you’d like more advice, please get in touch with campaigns@ndcs.org.uk.

Please note that the Equality Act 2010 doesn’t apply in Northern Ireland. However, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 contains similar provisions which apply to cinemas in Northern Ireland. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/rightsnireland.

➔ To find a subtitled screening at a cinema near you, visit www.yourlocalcinema.com for listings.
This article was written before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please follow current government advice before attending the cinema.

Hearing aid pride

Taylor (26), who is severely deaf, wants to encourage deaf young people to personalise their hearing aids and cochlear implants and to wear them with pride. She's urging the NHS to increase access to coloured hearing aids and ear moulds for deaf young people.

Taylor's Hearing Aid Pride campaign was inspired by her own experience. "Growing up I was often bullied for wearing my hearing aids," she explains. "By the time I reached secondary school, I stopped wearing them to stop the bullying and I struggled through with lip-reading instead.

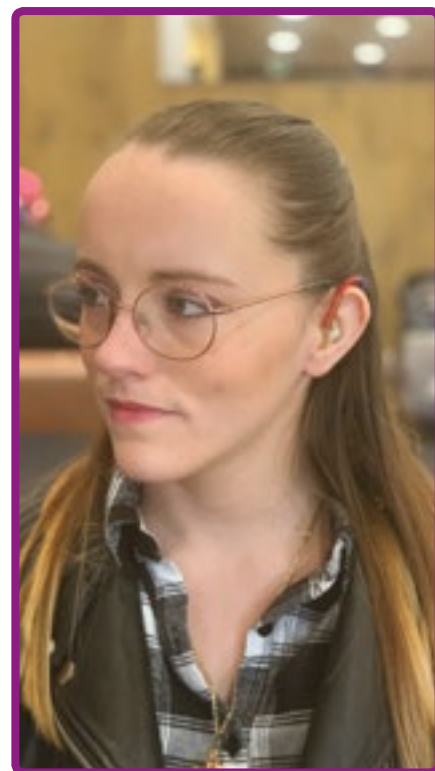
"After leaving school, I started working as a Learning Support Assistant at a school with a hearing resource base. This inspired me to wear my hearing aids regularly again, to take pride in them to be a good role model to the pupils. It was then that I started 'pimping' my hearing aids to help the children be proud of theirs



too. I often use coloured stickers or nail stickers on the actual aid and then tube twists from Etsy to cover the tubing. I have also used small charms to hang on the tubing like earrings. Through personalising my hearing aids, I became more confident wearing them and I started to feel proud of them. However, at this vital turning point I was switched over to an adult audiology service."

Deaf children are encouraged to get coloured hearing aids and ear moulds but these options mostly disappear in adult audiology services. Deaf young people move services between 16 and 21 years old. "My adult audiology service told me numerous times that coloured ear moulds and hearing aids were only for children," says Taylor. "I didn't want to lose my new found confidence and pride in my aids so I began the long journey to getting both coloured ear moulds and hearing aids on the NHS."

During her battle for coloured aids, implants and moulds, Taylor found an online community of other deaf people who were fighting a similar fight and who also 'pimped' their aids. "The lovely feedback I got from supporters who were showing their hearing aid pride motivated me to keep fighting to make a difference. But seeing so many deaf adults struggling to get the aids they want and the unfairness within the NHS adult audiology service also really saddened me," Taylor explains.



Taylor

Taylor can't imagine wanting to hide her hearing aids now and hopes that her campaign will help deaf people to feel more comfortable and accepted in society. She wants to show the world hearing aids and cochlear implants are not something that need to be hidden and can be as bold, bright or neutral as each individual wants them to be – they can be a part of your own style. After all, if glasses can be an aid and a fashion statement, then why can't the same be true for hearing aids and cochlear implants?



You can follow Hearing Aid Pride's progress on Facebook by searching [hearingaidpride](#).



Finger spellathon



Spell out a brighter future for deaf children!

Teach yourself a new skill or brush up on the basics this summer with the Fingerspellathon! Get sponsored as a family to learn how to fingerspell words correctly – improve your child's spelling and deaf awareness while raising funds for us! Are you a fingerspelling pro? Take on our Fingerspellathon challenge and fingerspell **supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!** Get sponsored, film yourself and don't forget to share it on social media too.

Evie (7) was diagnosed with mild to moderate hearing loss just before her fifth birthday. She conquered our Fingerspellathon challenge to raise awareness of childhood deafness and raised over £2,200!

Evie said:

"I wanted to take part in the Fingerspellathon to say thank you to my Teacher of the Deaf, Martine Monksfield, and raise money so other children can have the same help as me. I felt very happy that I was doing the Fingerspellathon. I really like the amount of money that I raised!"

Evie's mum Jane said:

"We are so unbelievably proud of her, she isn't the most confident child and doing this has brought her out of her shell."



Sign up
today for our
Fingerspellathon
pack, complete
with fun activities
and video tutorials
to help you on
your way.



Evie

Happy birthday to us!

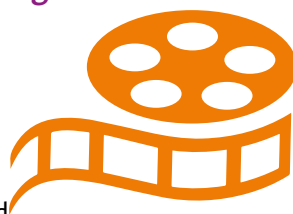
2020 is the National Deaf Children's Society's 75th year and we want all of our supporters to help us celebrate by raising over £75 each to support us. Every penny will go towards breaking down barriers for deaf children across the UK and beyond.

Take a look at some of our favourite summer fundraising ideas, all of which can be done from the comfort of your own home!



M – Movie night

Lights, camera, action! Hold a movie night online with your friends and family and ask them to donate to join the fun. Using an online film streaming service like Netflix, you and your friends can watch a film together with subtitles – even when you're in separate houses. Then you can arrange competitions and your guests donate to join in or donate every time their favourite character says a certain catchphrase.



S – Special skill

Summer is a great time for your child to perfect their own party trick! Maybe they're really good at keepie-uppies or fantastic at hula-hooping? Get practising and friends and family can sponsor them per keepie-uppie, 10 seconds of hula – or whatever their special skill is!

U – Up we go!

You don't have to leave the house to find great exercises you can do to keep fit and fundraise for us! Why not get sponsored to virtually climb the Shard? There are 306 flights of stairs in the iconic London building so all you need to do is climb your own stairs 306 times. A perfect challenge to take on over a week!



M – Make music

Whether you have the voice of an angel or usually stick to shower singing, holding an online concert or a signed karaoke performance will get people dancing and donating!



E – eBay fundraising

Many of us have had plenty of time to spring clean this year, so why not sell your unwanted items on eBay and donate all or part of your profits to us? It's easy to do, you can even set it up so your donation will wing its way to us automatically. Ta da!



R – Raffle

Holding a raffle is a tried and tested way of raising funds for charity and it's easy to do online – you can collect ticket sales through www.justgiving.com. Get in touch with our team on community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk and we can give you our top tips and a helpful resource pack to get you started!



Whatever you're up to, we want to help you raise as much money as possible to help deaf children. Sign up for your free fundraising pack at www.ndcs.org.uk/fundraising-pack or contact our team on community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk.

When I'm a

grown-up

Do you ever wonder what your deaf child will do when they grow up?**Deaf people share their experiences of the world of work, including how their employers and colleagues adapt to their needs.****I'm the director of a social enterprise because...**

I'm passionate about seeing individuals thrive and transform themselves. I wanted to use my own experiences to benefit others. I run personal development workshops for everyone, from community groups to senior managers. There's no greater feeling than when people I've worked with do well and are happier. I've had a diverse career path as an editor,

diplomat, musician, English as a Foreign Language teacher and lecturer, and I've been on the board of several charities.

I'm profoundly deaf and without hearing aids I can hear almost nothing. When I work with people I don't know, I use lip-speakers who repeat silently and clearly what people say and the way they say it. Despite my deafness I still play in an amateur orchestra and love it!

Be aware of the strengths that deafness can give you – patience, clear communication skills, an ability to understand and read people. Stay open. Keep learning. Let your natural style shine through.

Jane Cordell**I'm a primary school teacher because...**

I love making lessons engaging and visual to give children good memories.

In my first job at a special needs school, being profoundly deaf helped me find alternative ways to communicate with severely autistic children.

For my Teaching and Learning degree, I did my training in a mainstream school, which has a hearing impaired resource base. The communication support workers could sign and the children learnt British Sign Language as part of the curriculum.

I feel very supported at school; my colleagues know my needs and help with behaviour management (as I don't hear the children's whispers!).

My mum instilled in me the need to fight harder than hearing friends to achieve whatever I wanted. It might take a bit longer, but never give up on your dreams. Ask for help and keep a positive outlook.

Alysha Allen**I'm the director of my own captioning company because...**

I wanted to provide a high quality service to other deaf people like me, who need live captioning or transcription of meetings and teleconference calls at work. I'm profoundly deaf and started my own company to tackle the lack of deaf

awareness among hearing colleagues.

Although my cochlear implants are amazing, I still need to lip-read. Through Access to Work, I have access to lip-speakers and speech-to-text reporters. I also have a personal assistant for phone calls, and a hearing dog.

I have a degree in Business with Japanese and trained as a deaf awareness trainer. I'm also a mentor to deaf people who are trying to get into the workplace.

Working for myself was the best decision I ever made. Not only have I removed a lot of the barriers I faced, but I'm able to help other deaf people overcome theirs as well.

Tina Lannin

Be inspired by other deaf people at work in our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign video at www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere.

Read more about Tina in our Technology at Work case studies, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/techcasestudies.

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

St John's

Catholic School for the Deaf



150th Anniversary Year

Why join the St John's family?

We've been supporting deaf children and young people and those with complex communication difficulties for almost 150 years.

Our school offers:

- A friendly and welcoming learning environment, where children build relationships and thrive
- A place where aspiration for children is high, and outcomes are positive
- An autism-friendly setting
- Flexible day and weekly boarding options
- A thriving and effective sixth-form
- In-house audiology, speech and language and Teachers of the Deaf



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

**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

Get in contact:



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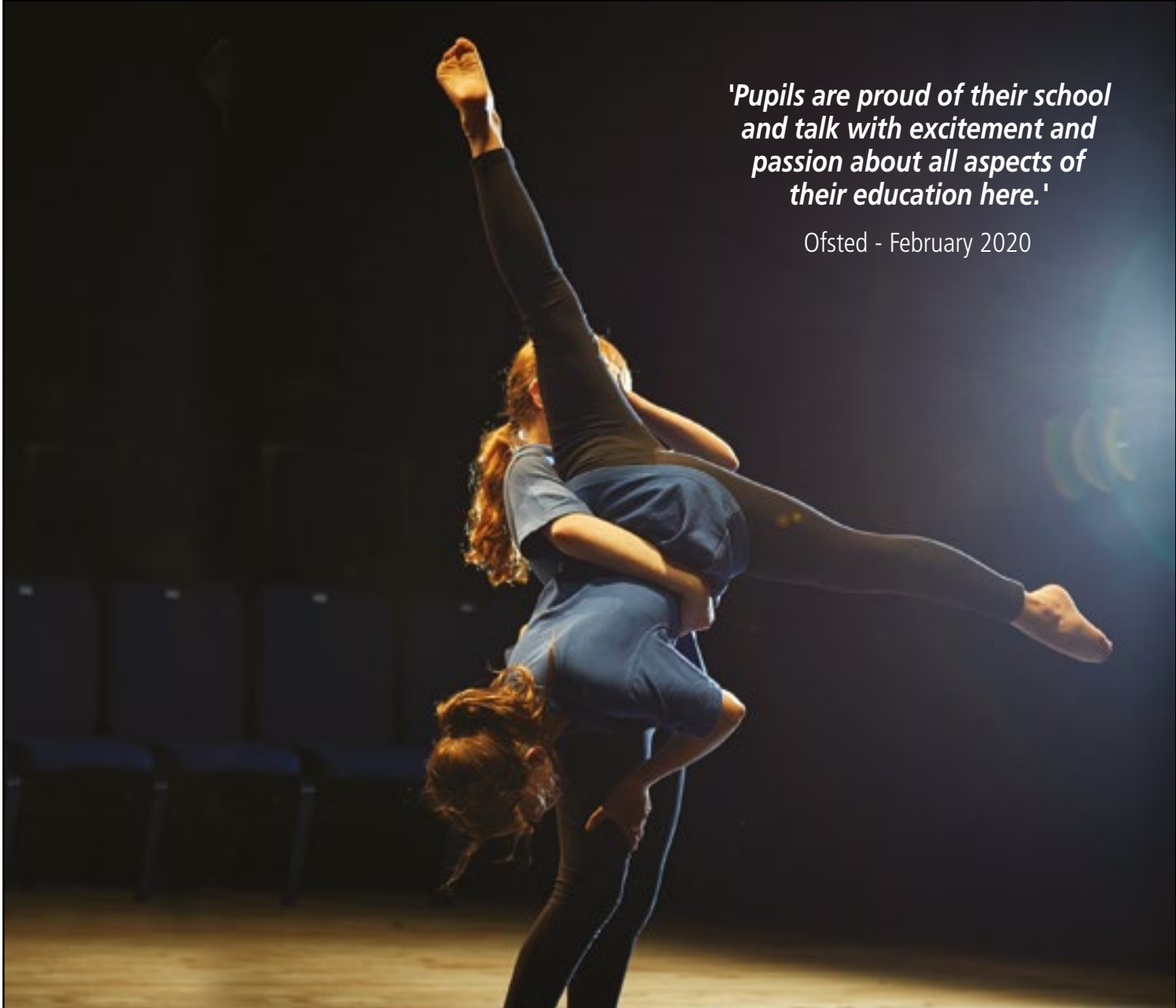
www.stjohns.org.uk



stjohns4thedeaf



stjohnsschoolforthe deaf



*'Pupils are proud of their school
and talk with excitement and
passion about all aspects of
their education here.'*

Ofsted - February 2020

#confidence

We are committed to giving our students the education they deserve and the confidence they need, for the future they desire.

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- A broad range of GCSEs, A Levels, BTECs and vocational courses
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- Technology to enable every child to hear each other and the teacher
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- A large Speech and Language team

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

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call **01635 244215**

or visit our website **www.maryhare.org.uk**



Securing the future of deaf children and young people