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Top tips from parents and professionals for unwinding after school



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Asserting your child's rights at school in every nation



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Deaf young people tell us how teachers can be deaf aware



National Deaf Children's Society

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Sybil's school essentials



She does get very tired, so routine is important.

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My deafness didn't stop me...

...becoming a fitness influencer

By Caity Dalby



While travelling the world to overcome heartbreak, India Morse (30) rediscovered her one true love, fitness. “I fell in love with the way training makes me feel,” says India, who’s profoundly deaf. “I found that the gym is my therapy, which made me want to use it to help others.”

However, when she started out in the fitness world, India, who communicates using British Sign Language (BSL) and speech, faced accessibility challenge after challenge with gyms and instructors using loud music and spoken instructions in classes. “There was nothing written down or accessible at all,” India explains. “I’d be trying hard to keep up with what was coming next, and would end up feeling lost and completely useless and go home crying.”

Even at industry events, little would be done to make them accessible. “The events and networking aspect of the fitness world was one of the hardest parts, because everyone’s in a group talking,” India remembers. “Often, I just had to nod along. It got to a point where I decided that enough was enough, I was going to ask for support and take accessibility further.”

While India faced these barriers alone, she realised that she wasn’t alone in experiencing a lack of accessibility in fitness. And she wanted to change that. “If so many deaf people struggle with this, why can’t I do something to make them feel good in themselves, and communicate in the same language as them?”

This led to the creation of You Lean Me Up, India’s deaf-friendly online coaching and fitness business. India has even partnered with Joe Wicks. “We’ve recorded a deaf-friendly series for his YouTube channel,” India explains. “I thought it would be a great opportunity as the deaf community needs this so much!”

“It feels really nice that my hard work is paying off. Hopefully the videos with Joe will reach a wide audience. I just want to keep on improving accessibility in the fitness industry.”



I decided that enough was enough, I was going to ask for support and take accessibility further.



Find out more about India at www.youleanmeup.fit and watch her accessible workouts with Joe Wicks on his YouTube channel **The Body Coach**.



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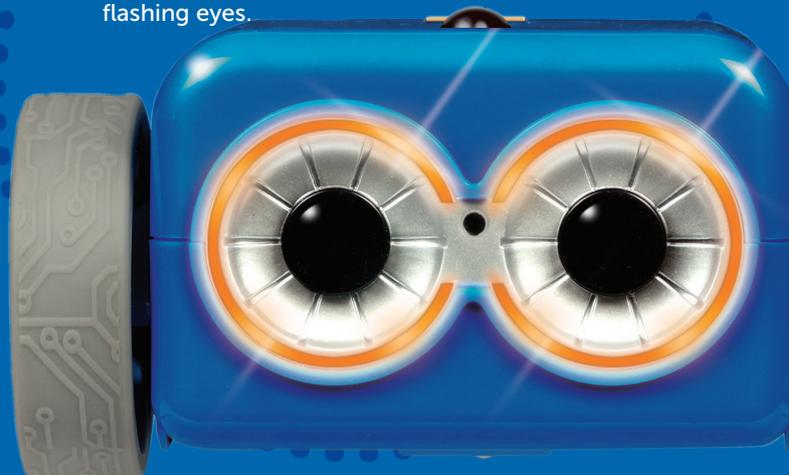
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Hello

It's time to head back to school, and we're all keeping our fingers crossed that we'll finally have a normal school year without any disruption.

It's important to make sure your child gets a great start to the year with all the adaptations they need, and are entitled to, to access their education.

This issue is full of articles to make going back to school as happy and successful for your child as possible. Look out for the 'back to school' banner for all our articles on this theme.

In our cover story on page 14, Holly explains how concentration fatigue affected her daughter Sybil (5) when she started school. The family has used a routine at home and a number of small adaptations at school to make sure she can enjoy the day.

Our amazing Young People's Advisory Board (YAB) has launched a new campaign to improve the deaf awareness of teachers at secondary school; Siena tells us more about her experience on page 16. Then, on page 36, four members of the YAB give their tips to young people who don't find their schools deaf-friendly.

I hope you all have a positive start to the school year!

Kerrina

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

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

families

✉ Get in touch

Families magazine, Ground Floor South, Castle House, 37-45 Paul Street, London EC2A 4LS

Telephone: **020 7490 8656** (v&t)

Fax: **020 7251 5020**

Email: magazine@ndcs.org.uk

Website: www.ndcs.org.uk

Freephone Helpline: **0808 800 8880** (v&t)

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Lamin-Phoenix's story

how mum Chrysanthi is navigating life as a single parent



Siena's story

why she moved to mainstream school



Kirsty's story

how she chose the right university for her



Ed's story

how he's using technology to excel in his apprenticeship

Editor Kerrina Gray
Designer Philippa Bell
Distribution Maria Piazza
Production Manager Frankie Jones
Advertising sales: Mark Toland at Bourne Media
Telephone: 01202 757646 | Mobile: 07771 881251
Email: mark@bourne-media.co.uk

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STAND OUT

The Met Police are making a change

Two deaf students, Samit (14) and Rayyan (13), have inspired over 50 Metropolitan Police officers and staff by teaching them how to be deaf-friendly. In May, the pupils from Lister Community School delivered a presentation to the police alongside our Roadshow team.

Samit, Rayann and other deaf students from their school applied for our Make a Change Fund so they could improve the lives of deaf people in their area. They decided to help local services, including fire, ambulance and public transport, become deaf aware by creating videos and delivering presentations.

Anne-Marie Bullivant, from the Met Police, was keen for her fellow officers to learn about deafness. "Having been supported by the National Deaf Children's Society since we learnt of my son's hearing loss, it was a pleasure to invite the Roadshow team to our Deaf Awareness at Work event," she says. "Their overview of communication tips and deafness was really useful. We also got to hear about the amazing initiative Samit and Rayyan have been working on to make services more accessible. Their project is inspiring, and we're so grateful for their contribution."

"Samit and Rayyan shared their aims with the police officers and received glowing feedback," says Claire Randall, Head of Deaf Support at Lister Community School. "They pointed out everyday things they find difficult, such as not being able to hear the card reader beep on the bus. They found it nerve-wracking, but they were empowered by the experience."

You can find out more, and young people can apply for our Make a Change Fund at www.ndcs.org.uk/makeachange.



Our award-winning animation!

Our animation *Ninja Phoenix and DJ and the Gloopy Glop* has won a gold EVCOM Clarion award in the Education and Training category. Based on a short story written by Dylan (9), a deaf child who has glue ear, it follows the Deaf Ninja Team as they rescue a child during a glue ear emergency, helping him to understand more about the condition and how it can be treated. If you've not already seen it, you can watch it at www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear.



Our autumn superstar!

Last February, Callum (10) embarked on a virtual cycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats to fundraise for the National Deaf Children's Society. That's an amazing 1,084 miles! Callum was born partially deaf and took on this challenge to help other children with hearing loss. So far, he's raised an amazing £719 of his £1,084 fundraising target. Dad Mark said: "We couldn't be more proud!"



Connect with other families

We know that connecting with other families with deaf children, and sharing your experiences, can be invaluable. Our Connecting Families team provides opportunities for you to connect with other families in lots of different ways, whether it's via digital spaces such as Your Community – a safe, online forum where you can ask questions, share experiences and chat with others, or through our social media channels. Face-to-face support and activities are also on offer through our local deaf children's societies, and less formally structured parent and family groups.

Check out our online forum, Your Community, at www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community. You can also discover your local deaf children's society at www.ndcs.org.uk/findalocalgroup.



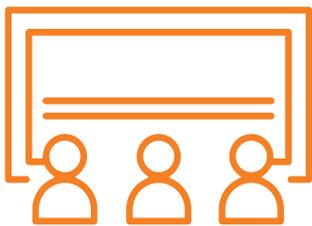
Signs of change in Northern Ireland

Deaf young people in Northern Ireland told our focus groups that they can't wait for the promised Sign Language Act to be passed – whether it's their first language or not.

Young people were excited about the prospect of sign language being taught in schools to both hearing and deaf pupils, as well as free classes for families with deaf children. They explained it will make them feel more confident and independent and can break down barriers, improve everyday communication, make mainstream education a better experience and lead to a more inclusive society. They also stressed it could have a positive impact on public transport, healthcare, shops and the police.

Their fantastic ideas were fed back to the civil servants working on the new law, which is hoped to be in place by the end of 2022. To find out more visit www.ndcs.org.uk/niconsultation2021.

Campaigning for captioned cinemas



As cinemas opened again over the summer, your child may have struggled to find subtitled screenings of one of the most popular releases, *A Quiet Place Part II*, which saw deaf actress Millicent Simmonds return as deaf character Regan. Only 41% of UK cinemas offered subtitled showings during the film's opening week. Around half of these were before 6pm, with just a handful at the weekend. As a charity,

we're calling for cinemas to stop letting deaf customers down and offer a cinema experience that is accessible for everyone.

Our Lights, Camera, Captions campaign challenges cinemas to do better for deaf children and young people. If you want to go to the cinema and see a subtitled film, download our action pack before you do so at www.ndcs.org.uk/lights-camera-captions. You can also find subtitled screenings for the latest cinema releases by visiting www.yourlocalcinema.com.

Parents know best

You and your child might not have been to a birthday party or a big family gathering for a couple of years, and while this autumn will hopefully be full of great occasions, as parents you might be a bit worried about how your child is going to cope.

To help, we've updated the Parenting and Family Life section of our website, so it's now full of tips for re-emerging into this post-lockdown world. This new web section is for parents and by parents; it contains stories and videos from those who are raising deaf children too. Find it all at:

www.ndcs.org.uk/parenting-and-family-life.

The Family Relationships section provides information for siblings, grandparents, childminders, single-parent families and foster parents. Our Hobbies section includes more information than ever before on subjects such as adapting team sports, swimming, cycling, social and musical groups, to enable your child to have access to them all. We've talked to parents who celebrate everything from Hanukkah to Eid and they've told us how they adapt family gatherings in our Celebrations section. In Enjoying Leisure Time, we have information about preparing your child for school trips, returning to the cinema and going on holiday. Finally, in our Parenting section, we cover parenting a young child – managing anger, routines, tiredness and sleep – and parenting a deaf teenager – learning to drive, approaching sex education, managing money and moving out. We hope you'll find everything you need there, but let us know if you think something's missing by emailing families@ndcs.org.uk. I hope you find this new section really useful and look forward to hearing your suggestions.

Susan

Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive



Sign of the season



Firework

Did you know?

Over 2,000 athletes compete in the Deaflympics, the Olympic Games for deaf people. The UK has won four times!

Words: Lydia Hextell

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Maggie, Lincolnshire

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Izzy, Yorkshire

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Billy, Cambridgeshire

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Top tips...

Helping your child relax and unwind

After a busy day in the classroom, your deaf child might come home tired and frustrated. Our experts share their ideas for how your child can relax and recharge so that they feel refreshed the next day.

Key ● Early years settings and primary school ● Secondary school ● Further education settings and university

1 Always have a snack ready and try to have a quiet environment when your child gets home; it will have been overwhelming listening to the constant hubbub of noise all day.
Nicky, mum to Isabelle (3). Both are profoundly deaf.



2 Build quiet time into your child's home routine. An activity they can do on their own, like colouring, Lego or jigsaws, is good. Avoiding background noise or talking will give your child a much-needed break from listening.
Helen Latka, Teacher of the Deaf.



3 My daughter likes a drink, something to eat and a rest. She doesn't like the days when we rush to an after-school club, so we have cut them out.
Hannah, mum to Elodie (6), who has a moderate hearing loss.



4 After school, play with pets or chill in the garden to refuel for evening chats and homework. Save some club activities till weekends.
Josie, mum to Maia (15), who has Treacher Collins syndrome and moderate to severe hearing loss.



5 Switch off – have coffee with family or play Xbox. Do something you enjoy, like dancing or listening to music – it'll take your mind off anything stressful. Remove your hearing device for some downtime.
A deaf young person on the Buzz (buzz.org.uk).



6 After school, if you have listening fatigue, you may want to take off hearing aids or cochlear implants and watch TV or play games. Or you may want to play outside or go to deaf-friendly after-school clubs.
Alison, Deaf mum to three children, two of whom are Deaf.



7 Study or do coursework at a set time in the evenings or on weekends, then stop and do something you enjoy. Don't work for hours, you'll end up exhausted and frustrated that you can't concentrate.
Martin McLean, Post-14 Education Policy Lead.



8 You might be tired from lip-reading or communicating, so be kind to yourself. It's important to relax so you're recharged for the next day. Don't compare your productivity to other people's.
Kirsty (18) who is moderately deaf.



➔ For more tips, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/learning-to-relax and www.ndcs.org.uk/tired.



Sara Says

Beating back to school bad behaviour



Sara is mum to Sam (13), Matthew (11), Oliver (9) and Charlotte (7). Charlotte's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

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

“
Offering praise, attention and affection can often give better results.”

Often, parents see an increase in negative behaviour at home when the kids go back to school. You might even be approached by a teacher about undesirable behaviour in school too. If you're like me, the thought that my child might have hurt another, physically or emotionally, is really upsetting and the guilt builds inside me. However, we're not alone – this is a common issue for children, regardless of if they're deaf or not.

So why does it happen? You've had this little angel at the end of the summer term, then spent a lovely summer together, and all of a sudden you have to deal with tantrums and tears.

Maybe your child is exhausted. Going back to school after the summer break is a huge change in routine – early mornings, allocated times for leaving the house, school patterns, formal eating and communication. Deaf children might find the concentration involved in listening and getting back into the school routine very draining. You could help by allowing some relaxation time when they get home from school to recharge before homework and dinner. My daughter likes to take her cochlear implants off when she's tired, to allow her to relax while still awake. Some deaf children benefit from taking listening breaks in school too; this helps reduce auditory stimulation for a while.

Secondly, you're their safe place. Coming home to those who love you most feels comforting, but sometimes overwhelming, especially for a child who has been anxious while separated from you. They can demonstrate an outpouring of emotions when they're

reunited with you again, but the emotions might be inappropriate if they're an overflow of what's been building inside them throughout the day.

Sometimes children can misbehave due to a lack of confidence in their abilities, or a feeling of failure as they've tried to conform but are unable to. Taking time to investigate the circumstances around the negative behaviour could help you identify if a child needs help to understand what you've asked them to do, how to behave in the way you want, or to identify a gap in their knowledge or ability. Playing together at home, reading stories or using role play can help teach your child how to behave appropriately.

As parents, it can be easier to jump straight to punishments in response to negative behaviour, but actually offering praise, attention and affection can often give better results. Remember, you're not alone: there will be lots of us going through the same thing this term.



For more tips, visit our new webpage about managing anger and tantrums at www.ndcs.org.uk/managing-anger. For more information about concentration fatigue, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/tired.

There's more information on positive reinforcement in our Raising a Deaf Child programme. Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

Zahra's Zone

How to settle in at a new school



Zahra (19) is our new young person's columnist. She's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

“
By normalising my deafness, it has helped me feel more comfortable with my identity.

I've grown up in three different continents, five cities and attended seven different schools. With each change the unknown became slightly less daunting, and the two top tips I've learnt from this journey would be to always make the first move and be proactive in asking for help.

Make the first move. Although it sounds strange, I find it easier to assume that a stranger is my friend. By being more open and chattier, starting small with, "Hey, what's your name?" conceals my initial awkwardness.

If I don't understand someone, I say, "Excuse me, I'm deaf so please could you say that louder?" Inevitably, here comes the surprised, widened eyes, as deafness is a hidden disability and my cochlear implants are camouflaged by my thick hair. But by being open and honest, and encouraging questions from others, it helps me feel more at ease. In my last few years of school, I gained the confidence to do an assembly on deafness, create a sign language club, and write articles for newsletters. By normalising my deafness, it has helped me feel more comfortable with my identity.

Be proactive in asking for help. My mum has always empowered me to solve any problems I face. If I was struggling in class, I learnt to speak to the teacher alone, created personalised sheets with deaf awareness tips, and raised my hand – despite, initially, being terrified to do this! If I needed more support, I approached the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and, if none of this worked, I then escalated

the situation to involve my mum. Of course I could easily have (and did several times) just sat in classes for weeks, understanding nothing, saying nothing. But that has never helped my education or mental wellbeing. During my GCSEs, I was struggling to understand my teachers in History and Physics, but I was reluctant to get a notetaker because I felt it was my fault for not listening hard enough. I always considered myself an independent person. Eventually, I gave in to giving it a try. I was surprised by what I felt – complete relief. I didn't even realise how stressed and exhausted I was before.

I may appear a confident person – but I promise you I'm the opposite! I overthink everything, I'm shy inside but, once I feel more comfortable, I'm bubbly and chatty. Classmates usually see me as the quiet, polite, geeky girl in the front of the class, but my friends know the real spirited me. At some schools I've felt like I fitted in immediately, but at others it's taken time. Stick with it and you'll get there eventually!



For deaf awareness tips that can be shared with others, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/deaffriendlyteens.

For information about moving to a new school, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforsecondary.



Going it alone

By Kerrina Gray

It's been a very different journey for Chrysanthi and her son Lamin-Phoenix, who was born just before lockdown. Becoming a single parent in the midst of it all has been a challenge, but the family is now looking forward to the future...



Lamin-Phoenix's story

• **Being told your baby is deaf can be a difficult and emotional time for any parent, but it was even harder during lockdown last year as many were left to go it alone, with less support from professionals and family and friends.**

• “Over Zoom, the Teacher for Children with Hearing Impairment [or Teacher of the Deaf] would ask me whether Lamin-Phoenix understands or responds to things and I would say ‘I just don’t know,’” explains his mum, Chrysanthi. “Without her seeing him face to face, I feel I can’t know for sure if he’s actually meeting milestones or understanding me when I talk. It’s very frustrating at times.”

• Lamin-Phoenix (now 1) was identified as moderately to severely deaf in one ear and moderately to profoundly deaf in the other, following his newborn hearing screening.

• “I didn’t expect it,” Chrysanthi says. “My husband disbelieved it more than me though; he told me maybe they’re wrong. But I could tell there was something going on, I noticed he was clingier than my daughter and he had trouble going to sleep if I wasn’t holding him.”

• Chrysanthi’s older daughter Mariam-Iris had speech delay and behavioural issues. “She has been

diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum around the same time.”

It was a difficult time for the family. “I went through postpartum depression and had issues with my husband,” Chrysanthi explains. “He wouldn’t accept the diagnoses our children had.”

The relationship ended, and as lockdown began, Chrysanthi found herself feeling quite alone. “My husband left me when Lamin-Phoenix was very young. I was really anxious to be dealing with this all on my own. Therapy and antidepressants were useful to me. My way out was trying to learn more about both of my children’s diagnoses.

“My family are back home in Greece. I have kept in touch with them but it’s been difficult to visit due to the travel restrictions.

“So, I turned to events from the National Deaf Children’s Society – online groups for mums, parental support, talking therapies, whatever I could do to keep my mind off of things. These groups have all been really supportive, though you can’t really compare it to the actual support you would normally receive from your husband. It’s hard being a single parent.”

Lamin-Phoenix was fitted with hearing aids at a young age but, since then, it has been difficult for Chrysanthi



I would tell other single parents to be patient, don't hold things inside, reach out.

to see professionals regularly. "With the pandemic, I didn't have regular appointments for my son after he was born," she says. "I had to guess that he was doing OK because I'd experienced it with my first one. It was particularly difficult when he kept losing his hearing aids; there would be long periods where he didn't have any to wear.

"He's having more tantrums now. If I put the hearing aids in and he doesn't want to wear them, he'll just throw them away. My Teacher for Children with Hearing Impairment said the best thing to do is not to put too much attention or focus on it. I've also learnt to go for colourful hearing aids so they're easier to locate!

"I did some online events with the National Deaf Children's Society about behaviour and emotions; I find it helpful just listening to other parents and hearing their experiences. Getting some advice is always good – knowing that what I'm doing is OK. It's very reassuring attending those sessions."

Now the children are a little older, Chrysanthi has realised she has lots of decisions to make about their future.

"I'm not sure what form of communication Lamin-Phoenix will use when he's older, he hasn't even started saying 'Mummy' yet," says Chrysanthi. "We tried Zoom sessions on sign language, but I think he was too young; he couldn't focus on them. He struggles with video and focusing on the screen. His main way of communicating with me is gestures at the moment.

"My family try and convince me to teach the kids Greek too, but for me it's not a rush, I don't see the urgency.

"I try to teach them to communicate at home myself, mostly by trying to get them to interact with each other. They've started playing with playdough



and kinetic sands, they like dancing together. I have a ball pit at home and they like playing with the balls, with blankets, and foil. It's a lot of sensory play, using rattling toys and the xylophone. We have party lights in the house; they love those. We do a lot of activities; I'm exhausted most of the time!

"I'm worried about Lamin-Phoenix not speaking at all but, other than that, I'm not worried. I've read up about all the amazing things deaf people go on to do and the support he can get at school. My main worry right now is that he doesn't lose another set of hearing aids! With the support of the Teacher for Children with Hearing Impairment we changed his hearing aids to a better model and started trialling an Oticon EduMic to prepare him for nursery."

Chrysanthi also has some great advice for other parents who are on this journey on their own. "I would tell other single parents to be patient, don't hold things inside, reach out to other people that can help and give you advice. It's not going to be easy but join groups and ask lots of questions."



For more advice for single parents, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/single-parents. We also have information about protecting your own mental health at www.ndcs.org.uk/parentmentalhealth.

You can find top tips from other parents on keeping hearing technology on at www.ndcs.org.uk/keep-hearing-tech-on.

EARLY YEARS



Your autumn checklist

✓ Hearing aid care

If your child becomes reluctant to wear their hearing aids, it could be a sign that something is wrong with the hearing aid or earmould. Our in-house audiologist has put together her advice to help you care for your child's hearing aids at home.

www.ndcs.org.uk/hacareathome



✓ Your Community

Becoming a parent can feel isolating at times, especially if you're on your own. Your Community is our online forum especially for parents of deaf children, where you can talk to other parents about any worries you might have, or just have a chat.

www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community

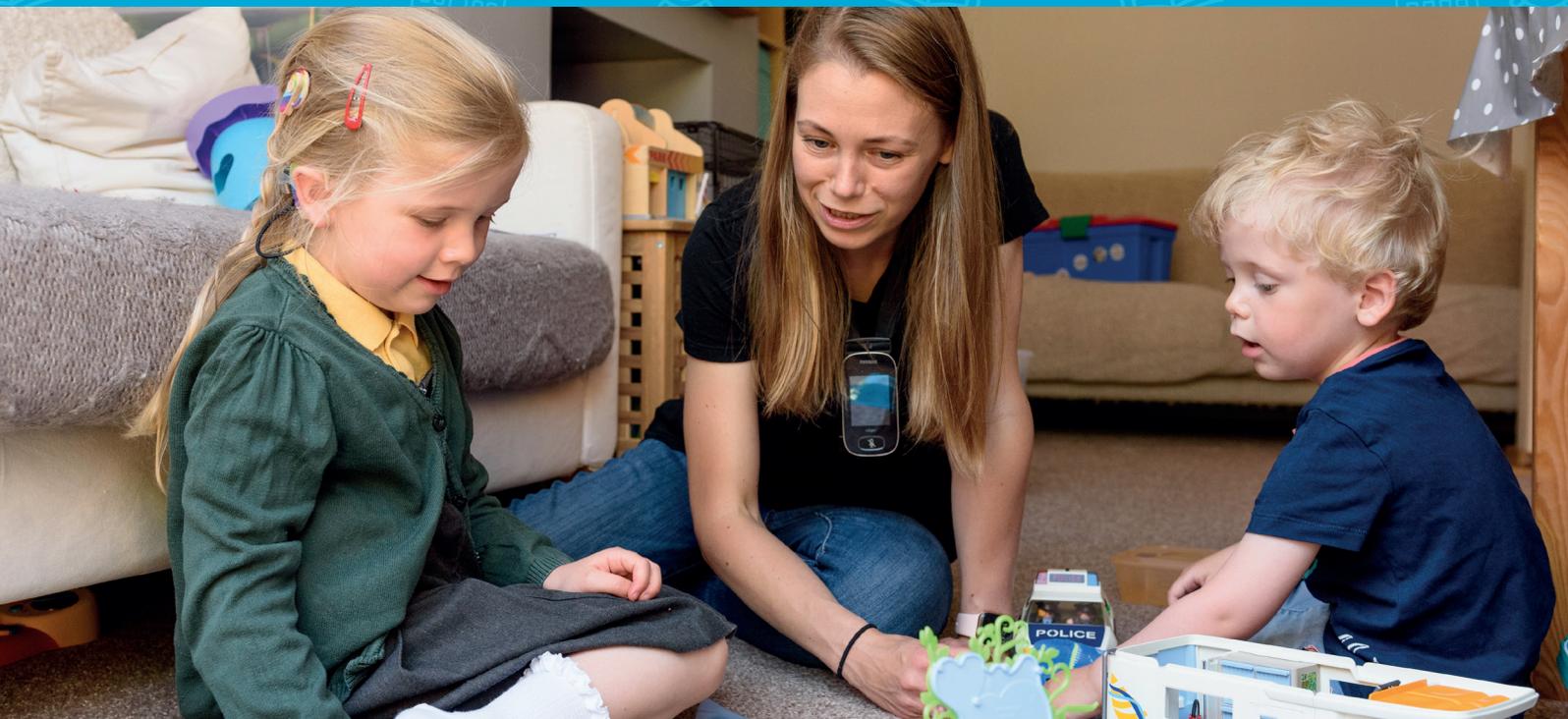


✓ Choosing childcare

Finding and choosing childcare that works for you and your child can be a challenge, especially if you've not used childcare before. Our webpage has lots of tips and a checklist to help you feel more confident about choosing the right childcare for your child.

www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare





Sybil's school routine

By Caity Dalby

Listening fatigue affects Sybil (5), who is profoundly deaf, every day, so the family makes sure that she has the routine and support she needs to succeed at school.



Sybil's story

• **Participating in her mainstream school Reception class was sometimes a little tricky for Sybil and took a lot more concentration than it did for her hearing classmates.**

• “She’s always been happy with school,” says mum Holly. “She always wants to go. If she ever doesn’t, it’s usually just because she’s shattered. Her main problem is concentration fatigue. She does get very tired, because she listens so well all day at school.”

• For Sybil, who wears cochlear implants, the level of concentration she requires to listen in noisy classroom and playground environments is often exhausting.

• “It’s hard to explain to people, because all children get overtired and all children have tantrums when they’re tired. But it’s this brokenness that she gets that’s heartbreaking,” explains Holly.

• Maintaining a good routine to help Sybil succeed at school shapes their daily lives. “Routine is so important, especially for her, because she really does need to be asleep quite early to be able to manage the next day,” Holly says. “So when she gets home from school, she gets changed, plays with something quiet like Lego, watches TV or looks at books, and then has her tea. Then she has some stories, a bath and bed.”

“It’s super boring but we need to do it that way. If there’s any change to our normal routine, she gets so upset because she’s so tired, and it has a knock-on effect the next morning. She doesn’t want to get dressed, she won’t have her processors put on, and when we do manage to get them on, she screams because everything’s too loud and keeps taking them off. It can take a very long time to coax them back on and that kind of tiredness impedes her school day.”

Managing Sybil’s listening fatigue is, however, something that Holly feels they’re getting more of a handle on as Sybil gets older. “We’re constantly assessing what she can and can’t do after school, because it can be too much,” explains Holly.

“You can’t be afraid to be the bad guy and say, ‘No, we can’t go to someone’s house,’ or, ‘We can’t go to the playground tonight.’ I can see where it will lead and it’s not going to be good for her.”

Navigating Sybil’s relationship with her hearing little brother, Francis, can also be a challenge. “We’re learning as we go,” says Holly. “Our son’s two-and-a-half and you never quite know how to explain her tiredness to him. At the moment, a lot goes over his head.”

“I think it’s knowing when to separate them, because there are times when Sybil can’t handle how loud he is. They do play really nicely together, they’ve got a lovely relationship, but there are times when you can’t have them together because he’s being too loud and it’s horrible for her.”

Knowing how tired Sybil gets after a long day of concentrating, the family were also determined to make sure that she had as much support at school as possible. “I think the most important thing is that she has access to what’s being taught in the classroom, and she feels included and doesn’t get left behind,” Holly says.

With an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan in place, Sybil benefits from a teaching assistant, deaf aware teachers, a soundfield system, a radio aid, and adaptations to the classroom to improve acoustics.

“Everything was already set up for her which meant that, even though she’s very tired and does struggle a lot with concentration fatigue, it affects her much less than it could,” says Holly. “It’s made it as easy as possible for her.”

Having a plan in place for Sybil at school wasn’t the only challenge the family faced this year. Like many other children, Sybil’s transition from pre-school and her Reception year were disrupted by school closures and periods of self-isolation due to the pandemic.

“The home schooling materials we got from the school were good, but it was a lot of videos and she couldn’t hear them very well,” Holly says. “In the end I just watched all the videos beforehand and explained to her what she needed to do.”



Sybil’s EHC plan meant that, for the most part, she continued going into school. “It was obviously a much smaller group, so it was a lot easier for her listening-wise and she did enjoy it,” says Holly.

Sybil takes her deafness in her stride at school. “She has a confidence and pride in herself supported by the teachers teaching the other children about deafness,” Holly explains. “You can’t expect five-year-olds to read between the lines of what somebody needs in terms of deaf awareness, you have to be really clear, and children at that age are really accepting of things.”

The ways in which Sybil’s listening fatigue impacts her will change as she gets older, and managing it will continue to be a challenge for the family. But for Holly and dad Adam, being proactive in providing the right environment for Sybil, both at home and at school, is their top priority.

“You know your child. If you can see them struggling don’t be afraid to have those conversations with the school or at home to work out what you need to put in place to make life easier for them,” says Adam.

“Routine is so important... she really does need to be asleep quite early to be able to manage the next day.”



For more information and tips about managing tiredness, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/tired. To find out more about EHC plans, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/EHC.

Search ‘Advocating for Sybil’ on our website to read Holly’s blog about applying for Sybil’s EHC plan. To read other blogs, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/familyblogs.



Your autumn checklist

✔ Helping your child sleep

Deaf children often struggle to get to sleep, and this may become more of an issue when your child is trying to get back into a routine after the summer holidays. We asked four parents for their tips to help everyone get a good night’s kip.

www.ndcs.org.uk/helpmychildsleep



✔ Deaf-friendly teaching

If your child has a new teacher this year, our resource *Deaf-friendly Teaching: For primary school staff* could help them understand how to support your child in the classroom. It provides useful advice for teachers and other education professionals who might work with your child.

www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-friendly-primary



✔ Family blogs

As one of our family bloggers, Holly writes regular posts about different aspects of life as the parent of a deaf child, including communication techniques, genetic testing and being an advocate for Sybil. You can read blogs from Holly and other parents on our website.

www.ndcs.org.uk/familyblogs





Siena knows best

By Kerrina Gray

Feeling like she wasn't being listened to, Siena didn't enjoy school. Then she moved to mainstream and, though it's not perfect, she's a lot happier.



Siena's story

• **Until Year 8, Siena (15), who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants, attended mainstream schools with attached deaf units.**

• While the schools were generally deaf aware, she felt isolated from her peers. "At primary school, the teachers were very deaf aware and every year they'd have massive assemblies about being deaf-friendly," Siena explains. "They'd teach the whole school sign language."

• "That was great, but school was still quite difficult; I spent most of my time in the deaf unit. I felt isolated from the rest of the school and it was hard to make hearing friends."

• After turning 11, Siena moved on to a mainstream secondary school, also with a deaf unit. It wasn't her first choice, but professionals advised it would be the best way for her to learn. "The move was very bumpy," says Siena. "I became really self-conscious about wearing my radio aid, and I didn't wear it because it reminded me that I was different from everyone else."

• "The separation from mainstream became more apparent and it became difficult for her to build new bonds," adds Siena's mum Jodie. "She felt she was being held back from doing all the things she knew she could do. There was a breakdown between her and the

support staff; the support they said she needed, she said she didn't, and they were unwilling to compromise."

• Siena became increasingly frustrated that staff at the school wouldn't allow her to make her own choices. "I was advised not to take a modern foreign language, even though I really wanted to," says Siena. "I was put in the bottom



It got to the point where I said her happiness and wellbeing are more important to me than her academic achievement.

set for everything and I knew I didn't belong in those sets. Although I eventually got moved up, they made me sit right at the front with the support staff so I was separated from my peers."

From there, things continued to go downhill. Siena felt like she was in a constant battle to be heard. "It affected my friendships and relationships with my parents and siblings," she says. "I also ended up in trouble which nearly led to an exclusion from school."

Jodie put the wheels in motion for Siena to make a move, and midway through Year 8, she moved to the local mainstream school. "The interventions we'd put in place hadn't worked," Jodie explains. "The set-up was effective for some deaf children but it really wasn't for Siena and they weren't willing to adapt. It got to the point where I said her happiness and wellbeing are more important to me than her academic achievement. I shouldn't have had to choose."

Before she joined the new school, they contacted Siena to ask what adaptations she needed in the classroom. She had extra support in lessons she struggled with, like maths, and when the other students did language classes, she had one-to-one support. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) also did a talk to her form group about deaf awareness.

"It made such a difference to have independence," Siena says. "I was mostly in charge of my own support which I really liked and appreciated. I was also nervous to make friends, but I had nothing to worry about. Everyone was so welcoming and understanding of my deafness; the first day was one of my best ever days!"

"The deaf awareness at my current school is mostly good. I wear my hair up so my cochlear implants remind people to keep being deaf aware. They agreed I didn't have to wear the radio aid anymore – which was an immense relief for me! I didn't like the robotic voice and I was much more comfortable learning without it."

Although Siena is much happier at this school, there are still bumps in the road. "My school is very loud," says Siena. "Sometimes they teach over the class noise which does make it difficult. There's a real difference between different teachers – some give me extra resources before or during lessons and others forget I'm even deaf!"



"I can tell she feels much happier," Jodie adds. "Teenage life is hard, but a level of anxiety got taken away when she moved school. It felt like she could be more like everyone else and it helped develop her as an all-round person."

"There are still things they could improve on. Last year, for example, teachers refused to take their masks down to speak to her, and they wouldn't record their lessons on Teams. Sometimes learning was really tough for her and there were simple things that could have been done to help."

Now Siena has completed her GCSEs and is preparing to do A-levels. She's even moving school again. "I really want to do my A-levels at deaf school Mary Hare, if I'm able to get funding, or at a local Sixth Form," Siena says. "I would be moving schools again, but either way, I'm a bit nervous and excited for the next phase of my life!"

"I would say to any parents worried about their child at school, have confidence that you know your child," Jodie adds. "Siena's got developmental verbal dyspraxia too so there's been lots of people involved in her care. I was young when I had her and conditioned to think that experts, or people who are older, know better. But you've brought up your child, you know them best."

"Everyone was very focused on education and attainment, but we were interested in developing a well-rounded happy person who is productive in society."



Siena is a member of our Young People's Advisory Board, which is campaigning for better deaf awareness in teachers. Turn to pages 36 and 37 to read more about their campaign.

SECONDARY YEARS



Your autumn checklist

✓ Medical appointments

Deaf children often have to miss school for audiology or other medical appointments, especially as after-school appointments aren't always an option. Our webpage explains how your child's absences should be recorded and what to do if your child is penalised when schools reward 100% attendance. www.ndcs.org.uk/absence



✓ Deaf-friendly teaching

If your child has moved school this year, our resource *Deaf-friendly Teaching: For secondary school staff* could help their new teachers understand how to support your child in the classroom. It provides useful advice for teachers or other education professionals who might work with your child. www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-friendly-secondary



✓ Safety on public transport

Letting your kids travel to school on their own is a big step towards independence, but it's important that they know how to keep themselves safe. The Buzz contains helpful tips for deaf young people about staying safe when walking, cycling or using public transport. buzz.org.uk/articles/staying-safe-using-public-transport-secondary





Kirsty chooses her path

By Lydia Hextell

When applying for university, Kirsty (18) was determined that her deafness and the COVID-19 pandemic wouldn't stop her from studying her dream course.



Kirsty's story

• **Kirsty had almost given up on receiving good news from her favourite university, when it finally confirmed she had a conditional offer to study there.** After spending months preparing her application, it was reassuring to be one step closer to her goal. "It was such a relief," she says. "It was nice to know the ball was back in my court and I could choose where to go."

• Kirsty's deafness didn't hold her back when she was first deciding about her options after Sixth Form. She discovered she was moderately deaf as a teenager and now wears two hearing aids. "When I was younger, I wouldn't speak up," she explains. "I'd just sit there while my teacher had the radio aid on wrong. Now, I don't do that. You have to be confident."

• From the get-go, her teachers and parents were supportive of her going to university. "Throughout Sixth Form I've spoken up for myself when there have been issues," she says. "I'm not going to lose that when I go to university, and that reassures me."

• Kirsty started by creating a list of universities and looking at courses

related to sustainability and development. "I looked at a variety of things when selecting a university, but I'm going to university for the course, so I tried to keep that in the forefront of my mind," she says. "I enjoyed all of my A-levels, so the course I've chosen is a way of blending them."

• Another factor Kirsty considered was disability support. She did some research by speaking to older deaf friends and contacting universities. "My Teacher of the Deaf advised me to send an email to the Disability Services teams at each of the universities I was considering, asking about the different types of support they offered to see how clued up they were about deafness," she says. "One of them didn't reply, which didn't fill me with confidence, but the others did with varying information."

• But she didn't want to focus on support alone. "There's more to me and my experience of university than being deaf, so I didn't want to make a decision based solely on that," she explains.

• Kirsty also attended online open days. "Some weren't very accessible so that worried me," she says. "I made

sure I got in touch with universities about my communication needs ahead of open days and I used a transcription app on my phone during talks.”

After making her choices, Kirsty was ready to complete her application through UCAS, the online application system for university. She stated she was deaf on her form. “There’s a section where you say whether you have any disabilities, so I said I was deaf, but I’d already got in touch with the universities because I wanted it to come from me, not a box on a form,” she explains.

When writing her personal statement, Kirsty’s teachers helped. Although she linked her statement to her course, she also included activities she’s done because of her deafness. “You want it to be your words and to keep the focus on the subject, because universities want to know why you’re interested in studying it,” she says. “I didn’t explicitly say I was deaf, but I talked about things I’d done with the National Deaf Children’s Society. You shouldn’t hide it, but if it doesn’t fit, you don’t have to include it. If there’s a way to mention your deafness positively and show something unique about you, I think that’s good.”

A few months after submitting her application Kirsty received offers from all of her university choices, including her favourite, the University of Warwick. She confirmed her first and second choices and the next step involved applying for student finance. Kirsty had to complete a separate form for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA), but struggled to get help with this at first. “I told my school I wanted help with my DSA application but they didn’t know much about it,” says Kirsty. “Instead, I attended an online event run by the National Deaf Children’s Society and Thomas Pocklington Trust. It gave me an idea of how to prepare. I found out I could apply before confirming my university place. Applying early gave me confidence. I received a radio aid and microphone and I’ve now got time



There isn’t always going to be someone asking what support you need. You have to ask for it.

to figure out how my equipment works before I start.

“I also contacted the National Deaf Children’s Society’s Helpline. They advised me to find a DSA needs assessor who worked with deaf students. My assessor was deaf aware and this made the process smoother. When I talked about communication needs and technology, he got it.”

Kirsty’s looking forward to going to university and has big ambitions for her future. “I’m excited to meet new people who have had different experiences, and I can’t wait to study a course because I like the subject, not because I have to,” she says. “Eventually, I’d like to work for a non-government organisation or work in policy in the Civil Service.

“My advice to other deaf young people is don’t exclude university as an option. Your family may not have gone, but that doesn’t mean you can’t! It’s also important not to feel pressured if it’s not right for you.

“Your education must be accessible. There isn’t always going to be someone asking what support you need. You have to ask for it, but that means you’ll get the right support, not what someone else thinks is best.”



For more information about higher education, parents can visit www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation. If you’re a deaf young person, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/university.

To find out more about DSA, see www.ndcs.org.uk/dsa.



YOUNG PEOPLE
16+

Your autumn checklist

✓ Exam arrangements

If your child is at school or college and is due to take exams this year, it’s important to make sure their access arrangements are in place early. Contact your child’s Special Educational Needs Coordinator or Teacher of the Deaf to discuss their needs.

www.ndcs.org.uk/exams



✓ Learning to drive

There’s no reason why your deaf child can’t learn to drive. However, they may need to ask their instructor to make some simple adjustments to the lessons and to the theory and practical tests. We asked three deaf young people for their top tips for learning to drive.

www.ndcs.org.uk/driving



✓ Technology Test Drive

Our Technology Test Drive service offers deaf young people the chance to borrow a range of products to try out at home, such as alarm clocks, doorbells and specialist smoke alarms. This technology can be expensive so it’s a good idea to try before you buy.

www.ndcs.org.uk/test-drive



Deaf works in accountancy



Ed's accountancy apprenticeship

By Abbi Brown

Armed with his new Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids, Ed's set for success in his career as an accountant.



Ed's story

As Ed (20) discusses his plans for the next five years, it's clear he knows exactly what he wants from his career. But it hasn't always been so straightforward. Although Ed, who's severely to profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids, knew he wanted to become an accountant, his school pushed him to apply for university.

"During our A-levels, we had PSHE sessions every fortnight and they were all about going to university," Ed recalls. "I don't remember anything specific about apprenticeships."

Ed applied to university and got offers from all five of his choices, but by then, he'd learned about the option to do an apprenticeship in accountancy. "I realised that if I wanted to study accountancy at university, I'd have to do the course I'm doing now afterwards anyway. It was quicker to do the apprenticeship and get paid while I'm learning. It was a no-brainer!"

Ed used his experience of applying to university to help with his apprenticeship application, although he wasn't sure whether to mention his deafness.

"I felt universities would be obliged to help me out with my deafness, whereas apprenticeship employers might not be as understanding," he explains. "It was definitely a worry. But my mum said they'd find out at some point, and it would be better to be upfront about it."

In his application, Ed decided to frame his deafness in a positive light, by mentioning his experience of mentoring a deaf student at school in his CV. Although he didn't ask for any adjustments for his interview, it was held in a quiet room with one other person.

"My parents were ecstatic when I got the apprenticeship," he says. "They supported me all the way."

When he first started the apprenticeship, Ed struggled to use the phone. "Being on the telephone is quite a big part of my job," he says. "I have to use the phone with people I don't know in other offices. Later down the line, I'll have to talk to clients on the phone, too."

Ed moved to a different audiology service and was fitted with new Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids. "They're great," he laughs. "If your parents are



My advice to another young person starting a job would be to be confident in yourself and your ability.

having a go at you, you just whip out your phone and play music through your hearing aids. Can't hear a thing!"

As well as helping him listen to music, Ed's new hearing aids allow him to use the phone.

"The IT department connected my desk phone to my mobile, so I can do all my work calls through my mobile which then connects straight to my hearing aids," he explains.

"I used to be terrified of using the phone. All my life I've never really used it. But since I got these hearing aids, I feel like I can use the phone to talk to people. I prefer to lip-read though, so since we started working from home, my preference is Zoom."

As well as making the phone work for him, Ed also had to adapt to working in an office environment and socialising with his colleagues. "Working while trying to hear people is really difficult because I can't work and listen to someone talking at the same time," says Ed. "I have to stop what I'm doing, turn around and look at them to lip-read."

"I don't feel insecure about my deafness, but on a practical level, my deafness makes it difficult to do two things at once without getting tired. I've explained that to my manager, who's very understanding. She's got better at stopping what she's doing, making eye contact and letting me see her lips before she speaks."

"For example, there's a partition board between my desk and my manager's, so when she talks I can't see her lips. I just ask her to move so that I can lip-read."

"It goes both ways. I'm still getting used to working in an office environment, and my colleagues are still getting used to working with someone who needs a bit of additional assistance."



There are still some scenarios where Ed struggles to communicate, such as in the pub after work. "Because of COVID-19, I've only been to the pub after work once. It was difficult. Talking in a busy pub is hard enough with my friends, let alone with people who I didn't really know!"

However, after getting to know his team and becoming more comfortable at work, Ed thinks he'll find it easier in future. "I'm more confident in myself now," he says. "If we went to the pub now, I'd feel confident saying, 'I'll be honest, I can't hear you in here, is there any chance we could move outside?' Or I'd just try to speak to one person at a time."

"My advice to another young person starting a job would be to be confident in yourself and your ability. If you're struggling, talk to someone. The chances are they can help you. Most people in this world will help you up if you're down."

"Be honest about your hearing and ask for adaptations if you need them. It'll make your life much easier, and make your employer's life easier too!"

Looking back now, Ed's glad he chose to do an apprenticeship instead of going to university. "I do think about what would have happened if I went to uni, and the social life I might have had. But I'd like to think I've got enough of that within our team. I'm part of the team now."



To get deaf-specific careers advice and find out more about your rights in job-seeking and in the workplace, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/workandcareers.

You can also join our campaign Deaf Works Everywhere at www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere.

YOUNG PEOPLE: CAREER JOURNEYS



Your autumn checklist

✓ Finding a job

For deaf young people who have recently left education, it might seem like a particularly challenging time to be joining the world of work. Our website contains lots of information about starting work, including tips on applying for jobs and managing communication needs in the workplace.

www.ndcs.org.uk/findajob



✓ Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP is a disability benefit for people over 16. It replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA) from the age of 16. PIP isn't affected by any other money your child may be earning and can be claimed regardless of whether they're working, studying or receiving other benefits.

www.ndcs.org.uk/PIP



✓ Access to Work

Some deaf people need communication support or assistive technology to do their jobs. This support can be funded by a government-run scheme called Access to Work. We have information about how to apply for Access to Work and what it can fund.

www.ndcs.org.uk/accesstowork



How do I...

assert my child's rights at school?

Although the support your child receives will vary depending on where you live, all UK schools have a legal duty to provide equal access to education for deaf children. Here, four parents across the UK share their experiences.



Isaac

Emma is mum to Isaac (5), who is severely deaf and wears a hearing aid.

I found out about Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans through Isaac's Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). His nursery didn't initially think he needed one, but I applied myself. It was a huge relief when he was given a plan of support for school.

The EHC plan means that Isaac has a teaching assistant who's reactive to his needs. It also details classroom adjustments, such as where he sits and the technology they use. Isaac's teaching assistants use a variety of

communication methods. They've been working hard to improve his social skills and to manage his emotions, helping him build relationships with his peers. The EHC plan breaks down how teaching methods should be adjusted to help Isaac hear, understand and process what he's being taught.

Isaac's school have been great and have already adjusted targets in his first annual review. If you feel your child needs support to access education then it's worth fighting for an EHC plan. Document everything and take your time with the application.



Alexander

Natalia is mum to Alexander (8), who is profoundly deaf on one side and moderately deaf on the other. He uses a cochlear implant and a hearing aid.

We found out about statements when we lived in Shetland. Alexander's ToD thought starting nursery early might support his social, language and emotional development, and he needed a statement to do that. An educational psychologist assessed Alexander at home. She was excellent.

The statementing process is quite long as you have to make appointments with all the relevant specialists to get your child assessed and then gather the reports and written evidence. It took a lot of phone calls to chase everything up but Alexander was given a statement and started nursery a year early.

When we moved back to Northern

Ireland, we found the system less comprehensive than in Shetland and struggled to get Alexander's school to follow his statement. We now have a communication book where Alexander's teaching assistant records different activities and social interactions through the day. It gives us a better understanding of what Alexander's school day is like and if he's getting the support he needs.

My advice to other parents would be to do your research and make sure your child feels included in important decisions. To reduce the risk of conflict with the school, go through your ToD as they're a third party who can help the school understand where they're varying from the statement. Communication is key. The implementation of the statement is a dynamic process that has to evolve with your child's development.

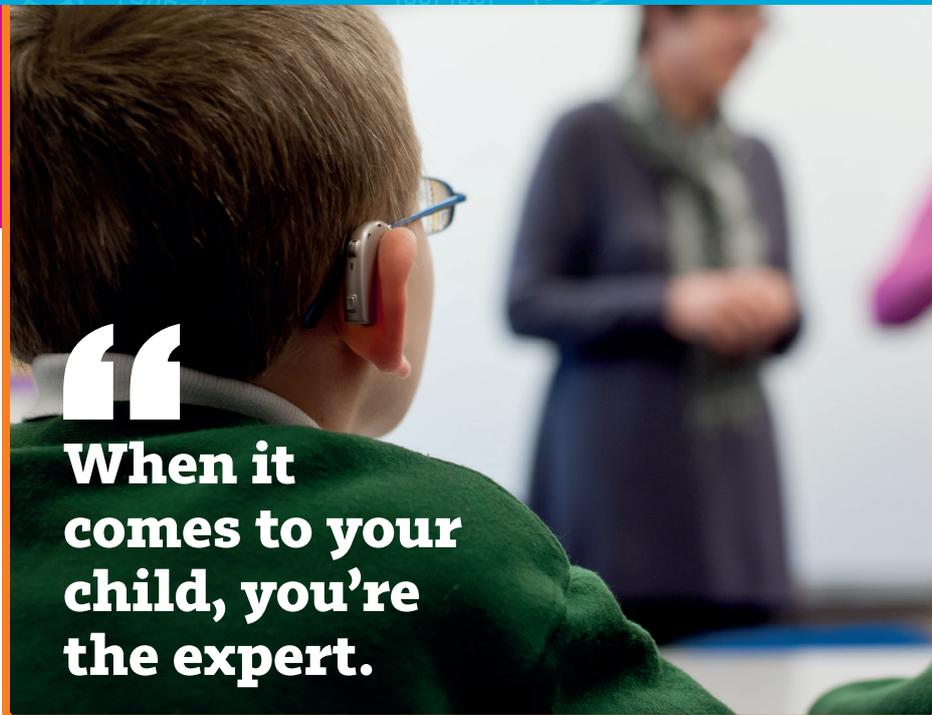


For more information about asserting your child's rights in school, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/additionalsupport.

Our Expert Parent Programme covers many of the issues raised here, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/expert-parent-programme to find out more.



When it comes to your child, you're the expert.



Shamim is mum to Aqsa (17), who is moderately to severely deaf and wears hearing aids.

We came to the UK from Pakistan when Aqsa was eight years old. Aqsa was born with a cleft palate. She was fitted with hearing aids when she was nine. When Aqsa started school, she struggled to progress. We contacted the National Deaf Children's Society's Helpline and were put in touch with an Advice and Guidance Officer, Jamie. Jamie helped us to apply for a statement of special educational needs (SEN). The application was successful.

We didn't have any problems getting the school to follow the statement because Jamie sorted everything.

When Aqsa was in Year 10, we decided to move to Cardiff as we have friends and family here. Jamie helped us to apply for a place at Aqsa's new school. Thanks to Jamie, Aqsa is doing pretty well at school now. My advice to other families of deaf children who are having trouble getting the support they need at school would be to contact the National Deaf Children's Society for support.



Aqsa

Sam is mum to Niamdh (12), who is moderately to severely deaf and wears hearing aids.

Niamdh transitioned to secondary school during the COVID-19 pandemic, and since then, I've had to fight to make sure provisions are in place to support her learning. She had an Integrated Support Plan (ISP) at primary school, but since moving to high school, the plan hasn't been updated.

Face masks have been horrendous for Niamdh and really knocked her confidence. Moving school meant she didn't have an established peer group who understood her needs. Niamdh developed a presentation to explain the challenges of being deaf, which she presented to her class. I was amazed at how maturely she tackled this, and disappointed when her school initially

refused to provide clear face masks for teachers. I challenged the local authority on this, gaining support from Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and local media until clear face masks were provided for every deaf child in Fife.

Even after clear masks were provided, we faced discrimination from one teacher who refused to wear one or the microphone for Niamdh's radio aid, completely isolating Niamdh and denying her access to her learning. I complained and eventually that staff member left the school.

My advice to other parents would be to educate yourself on your child's rights and get everything in writing. You know your child's needs better than anyone. Don't be afraid to challenge professionals; you're your child's voice.



Niamdh

Scribble

Tear out these pages, give them to your friends and let them show their creativity!

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

Dot-to-dot



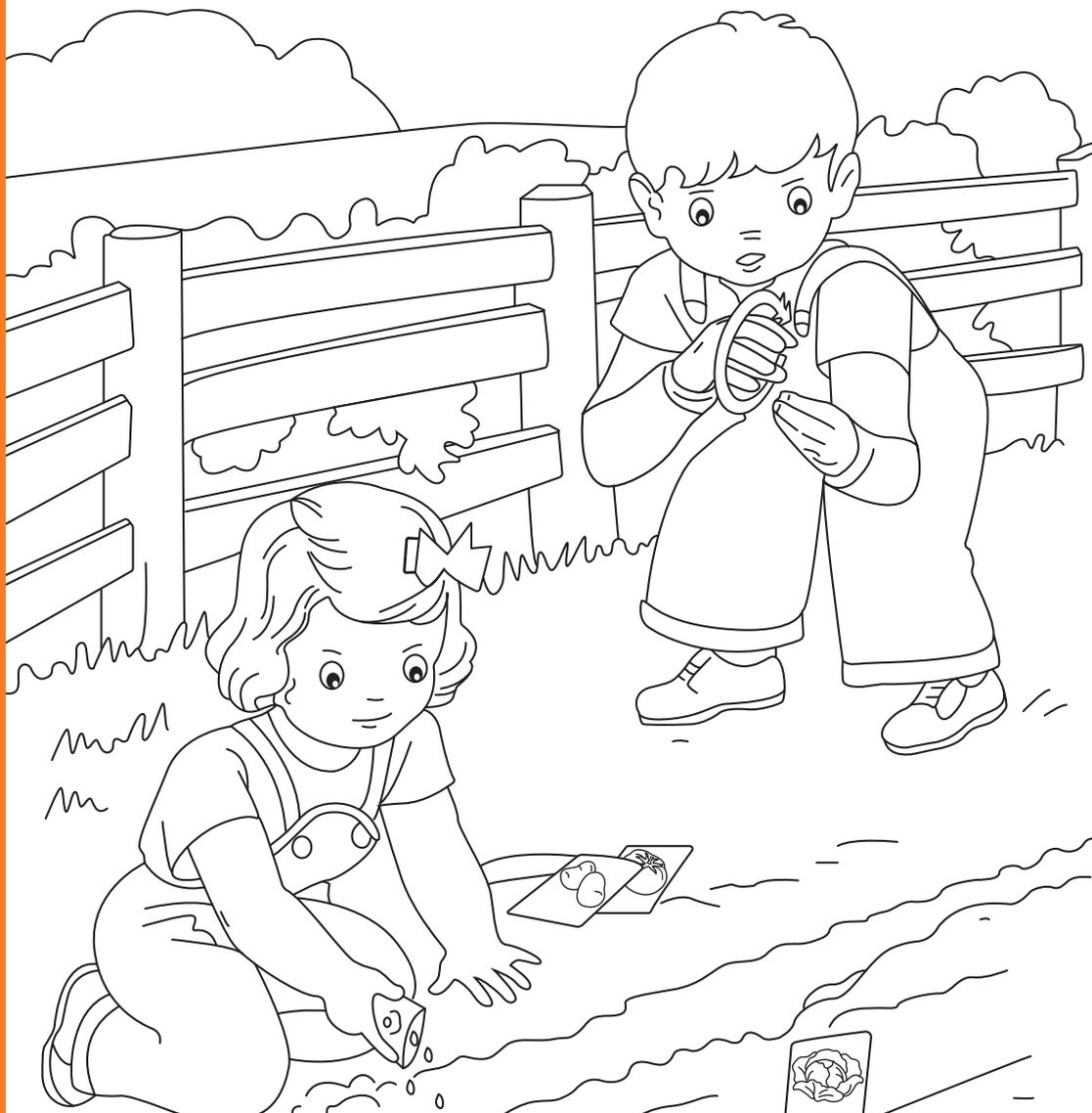
It's bonfire night on 5 November and these three children are enjoying an amazing fireworks display! Can you join the dots to see what shape the firework is? Then you can colour the picture in and light up the night sky!

le Club

hem to your child and let
y run wild!

Colour in

tomato



In autumn, we celebrate the harvest. These children are planting some seeds. Can you see what they're sowing? Colour in the picture and practise signing 'tomato'. Can you learn some other vegetable signs too?

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Doncaster School for the Deaf

Established 1829

Leger Way, Doncaster DN2 6AY

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

01302 386733

Ask the expert

Each issue, a professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time, Rebecca, a nursery worker at an academy with fully integrated enhanced provision for deaf children, shares her thoughts.



**Rebecca,
nursery
worker**

What can parents expect from you when you're working with their child?

Parents can expect a good level of communication from any member of staff working with their child. They should also expect personalised provision and access to a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD). At Reigate Park Academy, we believe all parents should have a good understanding of the importance of encouraging communication and developing language skills with their child.

What different methods do you use to communicate with deaf children at the nursery?

We use a mixture. Our ToDs are all qualified to at least British Sign Language (BSL) Level 3, we work very closely with an NHS speech and language therapist and a number of implant centres. We also have regular contact with audiology services. We're currently working alongside the National Deaf Children's Society and Signature to develop a whole-school BSL curriculum which will be taught to all pupils, both hearing and deaf, from nursery.

What are the biggest benefits for a deaf child going to your nursery?

The biggest benefit of going to nursery from an early age is that they're supported to develop their BSL and/or spoken language skills. It also helps to develop a child's social skills, as well as giving children access to deaf peers and deaf adult role models.

What are some of the biggest challenges deaf children face at nursery?

One of the biggest challenges for some deaf children is the time between joining nursery and developing their communication skills to a level which enables them to communicate effectively with their peers. We overcome any communication challenges through our BSL teaching, speech and language therapy and good communication with parents.

What advice would you give to parents currently looking for an early years setting for their child?

Parents should initially look at the nursery's website; it should have a section on special educational needs. This will help parents to make an informed decision. Parents should then contact the nursery to arrange a visit or virtual discussion. They should ask them a range of questions about what provision will be provided for their child.

What are your favourite and most challenging parts of your job?

We pride ourselves on working hard to overcome the challenge of children who enter school without any language. We focus on developing a child's skills to support their life-long learning, and the best way we can do this is by supporting our children to learn as many modes of communication as possible – this is the favourite part of my role. I also really enjoy encouraging parents to take an active role in their child's learning journey.

Parents should ask a nursery about what provision will be provided for their child.



For more information about choosing the right childcare for your child, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare.

Education & learning

Communication in the early years

By Emma Fraser (Teacher of the Deaf)

Is your child's school or childcare setting deaf-friendly and is your child's teacher a good communicator? Children spend up to 1,365 hours in education every year, so it's important we make sure deaf children are getting the best possible communication at nursery, with a childminder or at their primary school.

We use communication and language every day to learn, make friends and share our lives.

Communication is everything we do from the words we say and the signs we make, to our facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice. Making sure everyone who spends time with your child knows how to communicate with them will make all the difference. Communication passports are a great way to start this conversation. You can learn what to include in one at www.ndcs.org.uk/passports.

Communication begins at birth.

Between birth and five years old our brains are programmed to learn everything about communication and language. Babies are especially sensitive to the communication environment as they begin to build the foundations of language.

Childcare providers play a key role in giving deaf children the best start on their communication journey. Simple actions like making sure their face can be seen, using lots of gesture and an interesting voice, and playing games like copying facial expressions or noises will give your little one the best possible start. We have lots more information about early communication at www.ndcs.org.uk/successfromthestart.

Communication is a two-way process.

When communication is successful, information travels freely between the receiver and the sender with no barriers. Everyone experiences communication barriers, for example, noisy environments, unfamiliar words, phrases or signs, or unclear speech. Encourage your child's teacher to check in with your child, repeat and clarify information, and encourage your child to say when they need help to understand.

Learning depends on good communication.

Deaf children learn best when teachers know about their language level and use lots of different ways of presenting information. Encourage your child's teacher to talk to the professionals who support your child to find out about teaching and learning interventions that might help.



Hearing technology gives deaf children access to spoken language and sound, but it doesn't restore hearing.

Sometimes school staff forget that deaf children may need extra help, because they have a hearing device. Remind your child's teacher of all the important ways they can support your child's language and communication, as well as using all the available technology. We have lots more information about hearing technology on our website at www.ndcs.org.uk/technology.



Being able to see language is as important as being able to hear it.

We carry lots of information in our faces, on our lips and through our bodies. Your child's teacher can make a big improvement to their communication by getting down to your child's level when talking to them, making sure they have a good seating position and getting their attention before delivering information.

A good listening environment is key to understanding.

We all know how difficult it can be to think and listen properly when it's noisy. For deaf children, schools can be a barrage of noise. Not only is this exhausting, but they will have to work extra hard to hear what is said by the teacher and how it's being said. We have more information about how to manage noise in your child's nursery or school at www.ndcs.org.uk/acoustics. It's important at the beginning of the school year to have a think about your child's new classroom and speak to the teacher to make sure their listening environment is as helpful as it possibly can be.

Deaf children need time to think before they can respond.

Too much language presented too quickly or asking a child to do two things at once, such as listen and take notes, can be very challenging for a deaf child. Splitting information into smaller, more manageable chunks, pausing before expecting a response and allowing children time to listen and then record can all make a big difference.

Group work can be challenging.

Children learn from one another, not just from teachers. Working in groups, sharing information with classmates and joint problem-solving are all great ways to help children learn and retain information, but there are also many communication challenges. It's important your child's teacher helps classmates understand how to fully include deaf children in group conversations, such as only talking one at a time, signalling before speaking and moving to a quieter area.

Communication happens everywhere at school.

Don't forget, children will be learning how to communicate in the playground, at after-school clubs and when chatting with their friend in the canteen too. You can't make every environment deaf-friendly, but you can encourage your child's school to make sure that everyone in school is deaf aware.

Supporting your child's education this autumn

✓ Help with home learning

Our home learning resources have lots of tips and activities to help your child get back into education at home this autumn. They may have a bit of catching up to do after a disrupted year, but it's important also to make sure they have time to relax.

www.ndcs.org.uk/homelearning

✓ How do you feel?

Going back to school can trigger all sorts of feelings and emotions for your child. It's important to check in with them, and our resource *What are you Feeling?* is a great way to start a conversation about a new situation or to explore emotions.

www.ndcs.org.uk/whatareyoufeeling

✓ Pragmatics

Using language socially in lots of different situations is the key to making friends and forming relationships. This is something deaf children can struggle with if they haven't had the same amount of incidental learning as a hearing child.

www.ndcs.org.uk/pragmatics



Our deaf-friendly resources are a great way to help teachers understand how best to support your child at school. Why not share them with your child's new teacher? Visit www.ndcs.org.uk/deaffriendly to find out more.

For tips on communication in secondary school, turn to page 36.

Technology



Technology to take you from nursery to university

Deaf children and young people face extra barriers in the nursery playroom, classroom and lecture hall, but there's plenty of technology which can help make things easier. Here, we've picked out a few products you might not have heard of.

Nursery

The Damson Cisor wireless vibration speaker is a great piece of technology for nursery. It's a rechargeable portable speaker that sends vibrations through the surface it's placed on, amplifying the sound and also allowing children to experience music through vibrations. It can allow deaf children to join in with sing-and-sign sessions or enjoy music that other children are listening to. Go to www.damsonglobal.com for more information.

Tom, dad to Charlie (3), who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants, used the speaker at his local group for deaf children.

"At the group, they had a vibration speaker which they made more accessible for all the children by placing it in an empty plastic bin. The vibration through the bin was so powerful and varied that our son properly got to enjoy music for the first time.

Charlie has always been interested in facial and visual cues but the vibration speaker really awoke his sense of touch."



Primary school

When your child starts primary school, they'll be thinking about making all sorts of steps in the direction of independence. One of those might be staying in their bed all night or waking up for school at the right time. Spending all day in a noisy environment at school may lead to your child's sleep becoming disrupted. The Groclock Sleep Trainer can be a useful way to help deaf children stay in bed all night and wake themselves up at the right time.

The clock's sun and star display will show your child when it's time to wake up, with the stars disappearing one by one as it gets closer to the morning. When it's time to get up, the screen will change from blue to yellow and a sun appears. It's common for deaf children not to hear other family members getting up so they may find it hard to know when it's time to give up on sleep, or may lie feeling anxious or wake up too early. This clock could help with that. Find out more at www.gro.co.uk/product/gro-clock. Read mum Nicky's review of the clock on page 32.





Secondary school

Conversor's digital microphone streams voices directly to a person's hearing device via a loop receiver worn around the neck. It's similar to a radio aid, but the equipment actively cancels out background sounds to help students hear more clearly in noisy classrooms. They also produce Script products – portable tablets which convert speech heard by the microphone automatically into text.

In practice, this means the teacher will wear the wireless microphone, their voice will be transmitted to the user's hearing device via the neck loop, and at the same time the Script will convert their speech into text so the student can follow what's being said in real time. They can also be connected to a projector or electronic whiteboard so the live captions benefit everyone in the room. Visit www.conversorproducts.com for more information.

Toby (15), who is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants, used the Conversor Script 10 at school.



"I loved the ease of charging the receivers. Their charging ports double as a microphone jack, and the charging cable could charge two receivers at once with fast charging times.

In school, the transcript has been great. My only negatives are the Wi-Fi and accuracy of the transcript. Using it for a couple of weeks has meant that voices have started to be recognised and picked up though, so the negative does turn into a positive. Without Wi-Fi, you can't use the transcript which means that bringing it to places where there is bad Wi-Fi won't be very useful! I have struggled using the receivers as much as the Script as I prefer the audio quality on my Roger radio aid. For people who have hearing aids or someone younger, the receivers would suit them better."



Further education

Speech-to-text technology has improved and increased in popularity in recent years. While it's straightforward to download a speech-to-text app to do this, for the lecture hall these might not always provide an accurate enough transcription.

Note Taking Express have worked towards a solution to this. They've designed an in-class smart camera which captures and streams lecture content to remote notetakers and students at the same time. Captions come back in real time and are around 97 to 98% accurate. The service can also generate transcripts and summary notes of short concise bullet points for the deaf young person to refer to later, without having to read through pages of transcribed speech. At the moment it's primarily being used in the US but is gradually being introduced to the UK. To find out more, visit www.notetakingexpress.com.



To learn more about these products and others, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/technology.

Reviews

Books and products for deaf children – tell us what you think!

Key

This resource is most suitable for the following ages:

0-4

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25

Parents



We're always looking for more reviewers, email magazine@ndcs.org.uk if you'd like to join the team.



Isabelle

Tommee Tippee Groclock Sleep Trainer

Available from Amazon, Tommee Tippee and toyshops.
Price: £34.99 RRP

0-4

5-10



Jenny and Alex

Technomask

Available from Royal Association for Deaf People at www.royaldeaf.org.uk/technomask.
Price: £16.50

0-4

5-10

11-14

15-18

19-25

Parents



Elodie

Lizzie and Lizzie: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies

Written by Megan Rix
Illustrated by Tim Budgen
Available from bookshops.
Price: £6.99

5-10



During the sleep deprivation days of early parenthood, we were ready to try anything to stop our daughter getting up at 5am. We'd tried varying bedtimes, routines and reward charts, but nothing was making a difference. Someone suggested we try the Groclock, a visual clock for children that clearly shows them when it's night-time and when it's morning. Parents can set the clock to the wake-up time they decide on in the morning, and the clock face switches from blue stars to a yellow sunshine. It's easy to programme, with options

to switch off the light overnight for those who prefer to sleep in darkness. We started using this with our daughter when she was two, setting it just 15 minutes later than she naturally woke to set her up for success, before gradually setting the time later. If she woke before the clock changed, we'd take her back to her room and resettle her. It probably took around six to eight months for her to get the hang of it, but now she's three, it works perfectly. She's very excited to come into our room shouting, "The sun is up!"

If she does wake earlier and see the stars, nine times out of 10 she will close her eyes again. I think it's particularly good for deaf children because it's so visual, allowing our daughter to quickly assess if it's time to get up yet without needing to ask. A word of warning: pop it somewhere out of reach, because it's quite easy for little fingers to manipulate!
Nicky is mum to Isabelle (3) who's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants. Nicky is severely deaf and wears a hearing aid.

Alex was fitted with cochlear implants in October 2020. We knew he wouldn't be able to wear his hearing aids after the operation, so for about four weeks before the implants were switched on he'd be living in a silent world again. In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, where everyone was having to wear masks, the Technomask was an absolute must for us. He could still see my face and read my lips alongside using British Sign Language (BSL).

At first I was concerned about the mask misting up, but a small amount of washing up liquid rubbed on and then wiped off with a soft lint-free cloth keeps it clear all day long. It's easily cleaned with warm water and dries without any streaks. The masks come in different sizes to suit adults and children and are easily measured from the website's instructions. In my role as a customer service assistant it's also proved invaluable, as being able to see a friendly smile helps many customers feel at ease.

I feel that many people are appreciative of clear facial coverings as it's been hard for everybody over the past 18 months. The Technomask has eased that stress for Alex and many others like him. People often rely on facial expressions and lip-reading without realising. The Technomask offers a clear, helpful solution to a problem that affects so many.
Jenny is mum to Alex (3) who's severely to profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

This book is about a girl called Lizzie who wants a dog and manages to save a dog who someone has stolen. Lizzie is deaf and her parents are deaf too. Lizzie's friend is hearing and they communicate through a mixture of sign and lip-reading. The story is really about the mystery that Lizzie is solving though. It was an exciting story – I liked how Lizzie saved the cute dog. I was worried when the thief's van parked up with the dogs inside, but at the end all the dogs were saved, phew! It's the first chapter book that

I've read and it was nice to listen to my mum read it to me. Mum Hannah adds: *Lucky and Lizzie* is short enough to read to a child in a few sittings, or for a young reader to read themselves. I'd say it's most suitable for children aged 5 to 7. Apart from the picture of Lizzie wearing hearing aids on the front cover, there weren't many similarities between my daughter's experience of deafness and Lizzie's, however it was easy to read and we still enjoyed it.
Elodie (6) is moderately deaf and wears hearing aids.

Competition time!

Megan Rix is offering one lucky reader a free copy of *Lucky and Lizzie: The Mystery of the Missing Puppies!* Email magazine@ndcs.org.uk with the subject line 'Megan Rix competition'. The winner will be chosen at random. Good luck!



Words: Abbi Brown

Resources

What's new

Deaf-friendly Teaching: For staff in special schools



What type of information is it?

An updated printed booklet available to download from www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-friendly-special-schools.

Who's it for? This information guide is for anyone who works with deaf pupils in a special school.

What's it about? This guide will help professionals to improve outcomes and progress for deaf children by understanding deafness and how it impacts on a child's ability to access teaching and learning. You might want to share it with professionals who work in your child's school.

You might also like: This guide is part of our information for professionals who work with deaf children and young people, whether in education, health or social care. You can find this at www.ndcs.org.uk/professionals.

Information for Grandparents



What type of information is it?

An updated webpage available to read online, or print to read later, at www.ndcs.org.uk/grandparents.

Who's it for? This webpage is for grandparents of children who have been identified as deaf.

What's it about? The webpage includes practical information about how you can support your children as new parents, as well as your grandchildren. There are also tips for grandparents who provide childcare.

You might also like: This information is part of a wider update of our webpages on family relationships. We also have information for siblings, foster parents, childminders and single parents of deaf children. Find them online at www.ndcs.org.uk/familyrelationships.

How Technology Can Help: For deaf young people 19-25



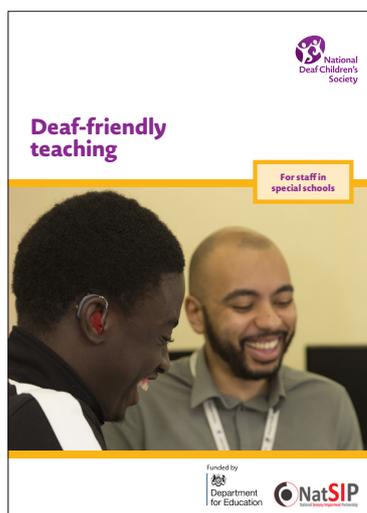
What type of information is it?

An updated printed booklet available to download from www.ndcs.org.uk/tech-guide-young-people.

Who's it for? This information guide is for families of deaf young people between the ages of 19 and 25.

What's it about? The guide introduces a wide range of products and technologies that might be helpful to young people at home, at school, socialising with friends or communicating online.

You might also like: This guide is part of a series of technology booklets covering different age groups. The other guides in this series cover technology for children between 0 to 5 and 6 to 18. You can download these from www.ndcs.org.uk/resources.



Helpline



📞 Freephone 0808 800 8880
✉️ helpline@ndcs.org.uk
🌐 www.ndcs.org.uk/helpline



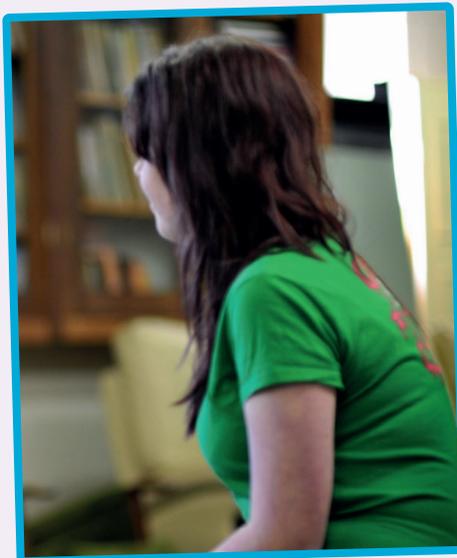
Recently my daughter was diagnosed with a hearing loss. She's 14 and they've said it will likely get worse as she gets older. She's just got her hearing aids and may need cochlear implants in the future. The last year has been a struggle going back and forth to the GP. I'd hoped things would be better once we had the diagnosis but it feels like we're just beginning. Do you have any advice for us now restrictions have lifted?

It sounds like it's taken a lot to get to this stage and it hasn't been easy for you or your daughter. Recognising your feelings and talking about it is a good place to start. You're not alone and there's lots of support available. We have information for when your child is diagnosed, whatever their age, on our website at www.ndcs.org.uk/childhearingloss.

Now your daughter has been diagnosed and has received hearing aids, she'll continue to have regular audiology appointments to check her hearing and ears and make any adjustments to her aids. These appointments should keep track of any changes and provide further advice and support. Find information about what to expect from audiology services online at www.ndcs.org.uk/audiologyservices. If your daughter is offered implants in the future, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/cochlearimplants to find out more.

Your daughter has hopefully been referred to a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD).

They will be a key person for her going forward to make sure adjustments and support are in place at school. Visit www.ndcs.org.uk/educationservices to learn more about their role. We have information about support for deaf children at secondary school too at www.ndcs.org.uk/secondary.



You may also want to speak to the ToD about a radio aid. This equipment connects to her hearing aids to help her hear teachers, cutting out background noise. Go to www.ndcs.org.uk/streamers to find out more.

It may take your daughter some time to process and accept her hearing loss. When she's ready, it may be helpful for her to meet other deaf young people. We have lots of content created by deaf young people at buzz.org.uk and a range of events for young people at www.ndcs.org.uk/youthevents. We also have videos on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/NationalDeafChildrensSociety, including one from Dan who became deaf as a teenager.

You may also find it useful to talk to other parents of deaf children. We have events for parents and families at www.ndcs.org.uk/familyevents and you can browse the conversations or start your own on our online forum at www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community.



Join Your Community

- We have a parents' forum where you can chat to other parents of deaf children about anything you like! To get started go to www.ndcs.org.uk/your-community and create a new account.



We have lots more information booklets and factsheets available for download on our website. Go to www.ndcs.org.uk/resources to find out more.

Campaigns

Tackling teachers' poor deaf awareness

Our Young People's Advisory Board (YAB) have decided on their campaign focus for the next year: they want to improve deaf awareness in classrooms up and down the country. Here, they tell you why it's so important and what they plan to do about it...

In 2019 the National Deaf Children's Society found that deaf children in England were falling a whole grade behind their hearing classmates at GCSE level, even though deafness is not a learning disability. However, this isn't a surprise when you hear that a YouGov poll of teachers in the same year showed that 44% of secondary school teachers had received no information, advice or support when teaching a deaf child. On top of that, 82% of teachers didn't feel their teacher training provided them with sufficient information on how to meet the needs of a deaf child. With home learning and the compulsory use of face masks over the last year, things only seem to have got worse. So the YAB plans to reach out to other deaf young people and identify solutions based on their experiences in schools.

Four YAB members tell us why this campaign means so much to them and, while they're working on longer-term solutions, give tips for any deaf young person who feels deaf awareness is bad in their own classroom.

44%

of secondary school teachers had received no information, advice or support.

82%

of teachers didn't feel their training provided them with sufficient information.



I felt like a burden within the class.





**“
You have a right to access your education.”**

Dinah (17) is moderately to severely deaf.

“There’s already a big divide between the outcomes of deaf and hearing students. It’s really important this doesn’t widen further. I’ve had a couple of teachers that have been awkward about wearing my radio aid, which made me feel quite embarrassed and that I was a burden within the class. I also struggle with understanding my classmates if they’re covering their mouth, facing away or mumbling.

It’s really important deaf young people tell their teacher when they cannot access the teaching, even small comments, for example if you misheard or there’s a video with no subtitles. You have a right to access your education the same as a hearing person. If you don’t feel confident or comfortable to mention this in the middle of the lesson, let your teacher know after the lesson so they’re aware for the future. They can also give you some of their time to help you understand the content you missed. Most of the time you will get positive responses from your teachers, who will be more than happy to accommodate you. They probably didn’t realise they weren’t being deaf aware. If your teacher has consistent poor deaf awareness, speak to the school’s Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or your Teacher of the Deaf who will support you to get it sorted.”

**“
It would be great for teachers to have compulsory training in deaf awareness.”**

Maia (15) is moderately to severely deaf.

“The main aim of the YAB is to improve the lives of deaf children and, through campaigning to help improve the education system, we can help deaf children massively.

There’s a lot of improvements needed to make a deaf child’s day less tiring and stressful. I’ve had situations when I wasn’t accessing learning well in class and I didn’t tell the teacher. It may seem scary to tell your teacher what’s wrong but it’s important that deaf students get the same access to education as their hearing friends. This can start to happen once teachers become aware of the problems deaf children may face. It would be great for teachers to have compulsory training in deaf awareness.

If your teachers have poor deaf awareness, don’t give up! You can try to teach them about what you’re struggling with and how they can make the situation better for you.”



**“
It’s crucial to be able to say when things aren’t going right.”**

Polly (16) is severely to profoundly deaf.

“When a video without subtitles is played in lessons, my teachers often try to come up with a solution themselves. But these solutions are often inappropriate to my needs, for example a teacher once decided to hang my radio aid in front of the interactive whiteboard’s speaker which made the sound really distorted. I felt frustrated that my teacher failed to provide accessible resources and didn’t listen when I politely explained why their solution didn’t work for me.

I’d say keep reminding your teachers, no matter how many times they get it wrong. It’s crucial to be able to say when things aren’t going right. Remember, you have a right to access your education.”



**“
It’s very important to tell teachers when you cannot access teaching.”**

Miriam (15) is mildly deaf.

“I think that some schools don’t know how to be accessible to deaf young people and it’s important that they do know how to help us.

I go to a Welsh mainstream school and I depend a lot on my friends to get through the school day and to understand my classes. Sometimes I feel like a second thought to my teachers and they don’t always do simple things which take a few seconds, like turning on captions when we’re watching a video. This affects my learning quite a bit because I miss out on a lot of information.

It’s very important to tell teachers when you cannot access teaching; it makes them aware of the mistakes they’re making so they can change for you and for future deaf students they teach.

I think teachers need resources about how to accommodate deaf students so they can improve their deaf awareness. Doing this campaign will be very beneficial, not just for me, but for many deaf young people all over the UK.”



To read one deaf student’s experience of deaf awareness in the classroom, turn back to page 16 for Siena’s story.

Roadshow

Did you know...?

Did you know?

If you're 16 or over, you can claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) even if you're a full-time student. It doesn't matter if you're in education, working or unemployed.



Did you know?

There are lots of apps that are able to give you lyrics to your favourite song or tell you the name and the artist of any song. If you like listening to music but you're not always able to hear the lyrics, try downloading Shazam. Just search for it in your app store.



Did you know?

You can use Access to Work to pay for communication support, technology that may help you in your job or even deaf awareness training for your whole organisation. In the And You webinars, you can hear from other deaf young people about what it was like at college or university and how they used Access to Work in different career paths.



The Roadshow team will be running And You webinars every month for deaf young people, with lots of essential tips to help you live independently and make decisions about your future. During each one you'll have an opportunity to hear from some amazing deaf role models too.



Your cameras and mic are turned off during the session but you can chat to the team and ask questions in the chat box if you'd like to. Each session has British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters, on-screen captions and Welsh translation. To find out what's coming up next and book your place, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/and-you-webinars.



If you'd like to find out more about our digital workshops or register your interest, visit our website www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow or email us on roadshow@ndcs.org.uk.

Local groups

Meeting your heroes



Archie and Tom

Joining a local group isn't just about meeting other deaf children your child's age, it's also great for parents and children to see deaf teenagers who can be brilliant role models. Twins Archie and Tomasz (14), who have Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder, recently won an award for their contribution to the Lancaster and Morecambe Deaf Children's Society.

What was joining your local deaf children's society like?

Mum Melanie: We went to our first meeting when the boys were about three. Up until that point we'd been muddling through life with twins. I was apprehensive about joining, but it turned out to be one of the best things we did. The professionals you encounter are great, but only parents understand the ups and downs of everyday life.

What have you gained from the group?

Tom (who is severely deaf): I've developed the confidence to communicate. There's less pressure here than when I'm talking to my hearing peers, everyone understands so it's just easier.

Archie (who is mildly deaf): If I wasn't in the group, I'd have missed out on getting to know other people who understand what I'm going through.

Tell us about helping out at the group.

Tom: I like helping out the younger children and seeing them gain

confidence. It makes me feel like I've achieved something important.

Archie: I went when I was younger and I had great role models to look up to so I'd like to do the same for the children who are there now.

Melanie: As time went by, the boys became the oldest in the group. Instead of moving on, we all decided to get more involved. Tom and Archie helped me lead craft sessions and they interacted so well with the young children.

What's your advice to other deaf children?

Archie: Don't be embarrassed of your hearing aids, they're part of what makes you who you are.

Tom: Give yourself a break! Trying to listen all day every day is exhausting. Remove your hearing aids and just chill, but not when you're at school!

Why do you think the boys make such great role models?

Melanie: Archie and Tom take each day in their stride and are both happy young people. We're so proud of the way they

navigate life with a hearing loss. They show other deaf young people that it's OK to be a little bit different and that it shouldn't hold you back.

Emily, a committee member, explains why she nominated Archie and Tomasz for an award.

"They have inner confidence and know how important it is for them to be involved in activities which are predominately focused around the younger children. They're great role models and lighten the atmosphere with their infectious energy and fun nature."



To find a group in your area, check out our map at www.ndcs.org.uk/findlocalgroup.

Groups run online activities and keep in touch with each other via Facebook, as well as arranging activities and events when safe to do so. If you'd like to know more, get in touch with the team on connecting.families@ndcs.org.uk.

Events



Matilda and family

Our online events for parents, carers and families

All our events are interactive and offer information, support and the opportunity to share experiences with other parents and carers. We're currently offering the below events online.

- Navigating Benefits
- Supporting Parents New to Hearing Loss
- Technology
- Choosing the Right School for my Child
- Baby and Toddler Coffee Mornings
- Building your Child's Self Esteem
- Hearing Care at Home
- School Holiday Activity Sessions – for children and families in October half-term
- Real-life Experiences – hear from our amazing volunteers
- Raising a Deaf Child: Including sleep, behaviour, communication and staying safe online
- Family Sign Language: For families with deaf children aged 0 to 11
- Expert Parent Programme: Getting the best outcomes for my child
- Parents as Partners

Getting a new perspective on learning

Karen, mum to Matilda (7), who has severe to profound deafness and wears cochlear implants, joined our Home Learning event to learn some useful tips to help Matilda learn at home.

“I was completely comfortable with attending an online event. It was on Zoom and was easy to register for.

I have two children and I put myself under tremendous pressure during the lockdown to make sure they were doing their school work at home. I felt this particularly with Matilda, knowing the high level of support she received when she was actually in school. I didn't want her to get behind and would find myself getting really stressed.

It was reassuring, at the event, to learn that I wasn't alone in feeling this way about my deaf child, and it was reassuring to be told that my child would be learning just by being with me.

Upon reflection, Matilda made great strides while she was at home, particularly in terms of her language development. Having that time with me, and with her dad and brother also, was really beneficial.

It was also really interesting to learn how hearing fatigue can be intensified by online learning. As a hearing person, virtual calls and meetings are tiring, but for Matilda this would be greatly increased. She coped really well doing virtual learning but it was something I was mindful of.

There was a section around returning to school, which I found useful from a safety perspective. They explained how to clean equipment during this time and what the protocol should be. This was also useful as I could then relay that to the school for it to be added to her care plan when she went back. Matilda attends a mainstream primary school.

Having the event online made it fully accessible without the need to travel. Sometimes online events can be a bit daunting, but the organisers made you feel really at ease and there were lots of chances to ask questions. I would really recommend attending one; the support was invaluable, and it helped me look at things in a different way.”



The support was invaluable and it helped me look at things in a different way.

Stephen makes friends online

Stephen (10), who is profoundly deaf and has cochlear implants, attended our Online Social where he had fun chatting and playing games with other deaf young people.

“I applied to join the Online Social to meet some other deaf young people. I haven’t been able to speak to many children during lockdown and the Social was really the first time I had spoken to other deaf children.

There were eight of us taking part, and the staff made sure everyone was able to speak without being interrupted. The interpreters were awesome too.

We played a scavenger hunt where we had to go and find certain items in our homes and be the first one back to the screen. We also had a superhero quiz and made superhero costumes from newspaper. It was really good fun. My favourite bit was when I got one of the questions right, so I won a 10-second head start in making my costume!

I was nervous about joining the event, so the staff arranged a video chat with me before the social. I wasn’t anxious after that – I was excited. The staff were friendly and really helped me to relax.

It was cool getting to meet some new people, and my mum was able to get some of their contact details after so we can email each other via our parents. It was nice to see other children like me and now I don’t feel

quite so different. It’s great to have a place where I can chat to other kids who understand my world.”

Stephen’s mum, Tracy, also saw the positives of joining the online session.

“It was emotional seeing Stephen’s face as he saw eight other children wearing hearing aids or cochlear implants. It was beneficial for him to meet other deaf children and realise he’s not the only one.

If you get the opportunity to take part in one of these events, do it. Not only do the children get so much out of it, it’s a great opportunity for parents to make links with other parents travelling a similar journey.”



It’s great to have a place where I can chat to other kids.



Stephen

Our events for children and young people

We have a range of fun events and activities for deaf children and young people to get involved with. They’re a great way to meet other deaf children and young people, make friends, learn new skills and grow in confidence. Some of the events we’re currently offering are listed below.

- Online Social
- Creative Writing
- Yoga Workshop
- Get Informed: Dealing with tiredness
- Get Informed: Being independent and travelling about
- Get Informed: Troubleshooting problems at school
- Family Escape Room
- Bullet Journaling

If you have an idea for an event you’d like us to offer, please email enable@ndcs.org.uk.



All of our online events are free, with closed captioning and British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. Places are limited, so booking is essential. For full details of our events and to book your place, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/events or call our Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880.



Where every voice is celebrated



100% of leavers at St John's Catholic Specialist School leave with not only a wide range of meaningful qualifications, they also move on to positive destinations in further education, training or employment. Headteacher Ann Bradbury tells us more.

"The St John's Sixth Form has always been an extremely vibrant and positive place and, over the years, we've been so very proud of the outcomes our young people achieve.

"A shining example of what they can achieve with the right support in place"

"In our school, our children and young people often have faced significant challenges – challenges including deafness or hearing loss, communication difficulties, social, emotional and mental health difficulties, autism, a learning disability, ADHD, attachment disorder or trauma. Their educational journeys often include failed placements and extremely negative experiences. These aren't solid building blocks for success in learning – especially exams.

"But succeeding in their own terms and within the context of their own lives and aspirations, is something our young people most certainly do, as our destinations data this year, and every year, shows.

"While few of our young people might gain 11 GCSEs, 100% of them will leave in Year 11 with meaningful qualifications:

GCSEs, BTECs or entry levels. They'll have had a grounding in the key subjects of maths, English and Science and most importantly, they'll have learned the range of skills needed for the next part of their educational pathway.

"100% of Year 11 leavers go on to positive destinations, many of them staying on for Sixth Form at St Johns."

"In our Sixth Form, while some of the young people have been pupils at St John's since they were in primary school, others have come purely for Sixth Form. Regardless of their learning background, what is wonderful is that they all achieve so brilliantly.

"We recently held our Sixth Form leavers event, which is always an emotional and inspirational time. This year it was a double celebration as we invited back our Class of '20 as they were, due to COVID-19, unable to celebrate properly last year.

"It's a chance to reflect on just how far these young people have come. At this year's celebration we heard the story of one young man who, before coming to St

John's was a school refuser. He's entirely engaged in his learning now and is on track to achieve a Grade 8 in his English, one of the highest we've ever seen at the school.

"For those leaving Sixth Form, they have spent the last two years, and in some cases three years, learning both at York College or Askham Bryan College three days a week, and spending the other two at the school's Sixth Form.

"The courses they have completed are as diverse as engineering and information technology through to painting and decorating, carpentry, construction and catering. We've had students undertake media, business, barbering and computer science courses, equine, animal studies and many, many more.

"This year it was a double celebration and a chance to reflect on just how far these young people have come"

"It was so lovely to welcome last year's leavers back to St John's and hear all about their achievements since moving on from the school.



“Each of these achievements and destinations for these young people is a shining example of what they can achieve with the right support in place. Too often, these young people have felt and believed that they’d never achieve, that they’d never amount to anything.

“We don’t believe that, and neither should the young people. With the right environment, the right teaching and support and, of course, the right attitude and commitment from them, then anything is possible. With all of these things in place, these young people can gain the skills, and qualifications, they need to thrive and take those next positive steps into training and work.

“Success is not just a set of qualifications. We look at where the young person started before we measure how far they have come. Learning at St John’s helps them secure positive destinations ready for successful adulthood.

“At times, their futures looked and felt very uncertain but with a clear route planned for their next steps in education, work or training, the way ahead starts to look brighter and achievable. These are young people who have, even through adversity, shown they are worth investing in, that they are resilient, willing and able to learn and can exceed expectations. They are people employers want to employ, that teachers enjoy teaching. We wish them all the very best in their next steps.

“I can’t put it any better than one of our young people who, at our Leaver’s Ceremony, said: ‘I am really grateful for this school who helped me through bad times, right from when I was a child. I thought I couldn’t speak or do work properly, but with the right support, the right teachers and good friends, they all got me through it. Thank you for helping me be the person I wanted to be.’”



To find out more about St John’s Catholic Specialist School visit stjohns.org.uk

GET IN CONTACT:

info@stjohns.org.uk

01937 842144

www.stjohns.org.uk

[stjohns4thedeaf](https://twitter.com/stjohns4thedeaf)

[stjohnsschoolforthe deaf](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsschoolforthe deaf)

Sparkles

or

Sweats

What's your choice of challenge?



It's Time to Shine!

Celebrate our birthday on 15 December by getting your best sparkles on and donating £5 to support our vital work. It's so easy to join in – just put on your Sunday best and text **SHINE** to **70480** to donate £5.*

However you sparkle, you'll be shining for deaf children! Spread the word by nominating friends and family on social media as well. We want to see everyone sparkling! **#TimeToShine**

*Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £5 but don't wish to receive marketing communications, text **SHINENOINFO** to **70480**.



Take on the iconic London Marathon on 24 April 2022 with #TeamNDCS

With your help we can stride towards a world without barriers for deaf children – and you'll be able to join the exclusive London Marathon finishers' club too!

Clive, **#TeamNDCS** London Marathon runner, said, "I've never felt as personally proud as when I completed the London Marathon – especially as it was for such a worthy and special charity."

Apply for your place now at www.ndcs.org.uk/london-marathon.

Fundraising

Who do you know?

Sometimes it can feel difficult or awkward to ask people to get involved in your fundraising, but there are lots of different ways to go about it. Here, one of our supporters Luke explains how he used his network to raise money for us.

Meet Luke Buckmaster, a recruitment consultant from Hertfordshire. Luke recently took part in the Virtual Royal Parks Half Marathon in support of the National Deaf Children's Society. But this is only the first half of his efforts; he's soon to run the non-virtual one for us too!

"The National Deaf Children's Society is a charity that's always played on my heartstrings," says Luke. "I've always thought sign language should be more widely taught in schools. When I heard about the charity's Right to Sign campaign which aims to get British Sign Language (BSL) included on the national curriculum, I knew I had to dedicate my fundraising to this special cause."

So we asked Luke, who do you know? There are so many people in your world who might be able to help us fundraise. It turned out Luke knew the Senior Marketing Executive for the company he works for, TFS Healthcare, a healthcare recruitment company based in London Bridge. Luke put us in touch with him and the company is now planning on fundraising for us in the future.

Luke has so far raised £650 and looks set to hit £1,000 by the time he completes his second half marathon. His introduction to TFS Healthcare will help to raise even more.

"It's been great dealing with the team at the National Deaf Children's Society; they've been very informative and kept me updated throughout the process," adds Luke. "I'm looking forward to the next half marathon in October. I



Luke Buckmaster

enjoyed the virtual run in April but it will be great to run at a live event with crowds."

So, who do you know? Can you connect us with decision makers in your business so that we can start a conversation?

If you can't connect us, then why not fundraise for us? There are hundreds of ways you can get involved, from cake bakes to marathons and even sky dives! Contact us for more information by emailing community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk.

I knew I had to dedicate my fundraising to this special cause.

When I'm a grown-up

DEAF WORKS EVERYWHERE

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 a nursery nurse because...

I'm passionate about working with children and seeing them find joy in the simplest things.

I studied Childcare and Education CACHE BTEC Level 3. As I'm profoundly deaf and wear a cochlear implant, I used a radio aid so I could hear the teacher and had a notetaker so I could look at the notes afterwards.

At work, I don't use any special equipment. I make sure the staff speak clearly so that I can hear what they're saying over background noise, as I like to build my listening skills. I've taught my colleagues some deaf awareness and I show the children my cochlear implant and explain that I can hear them when it's on. I also teach them some sign language.

When an opportunity came up as Deputy Room Leader in the toddler's room, I applied and got it. I felt such pride.

Away from work, horse riding has helped me, especially with my sense of balance. My next goal is to work with deaf children as a classroom assistant.

It's important to remain positive, believe in yourself and never give up. Hard work pays off!

Kristina Elkins



I'm a British Sign Language (BSL) translator because...

I love making communication accessible. I'm profoundly deaf due to Waardenburg syndrome. I work for the Royal Association for Deaf People and am also a freelance translator. You need two qualifications, an NVQ Level 6 in BSL and an NVQ Level 6 in BSL Translation, to qualify as a BSL translator.

Every day is different. I translate lots of interesting topics for different organisations and for all types of media. I usually work in a studio with a team to manage all the equipment, but with the pandemic I've had to work from home and do it all myself. I'm part of a peer group of other BSL translators, so we can support each other and not feel isolated.

Language, words and signs are always changing – so every year I attend training courses to stay up to date. I'm incredibly proud of my contribution to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I made sure that everything – from graphic designs in posters to adverts in the sports venues – was as accessible as possible.

Opportunities are like doors on your life journey. Focus on the present and be open to where life takes you.

Radha Starr



I'm a dentist because...

I love providing a rewarding service to the public.

I was born profoundly deaf with bilateral hearing loss and have a cochlear implant. I had planned to study medicine, but after discussions with people in the profession, decided that dentistry might be more appropriate for me.

I owe a lot to my university tutors and the head of the School of Dentistry. They employed a dedicated notetaker who was also studying dentistry. That meant they understood all the terminology when writing down important information and I could lip-read during lectures. When my studies became more clinical-based, I was designated a nurse/support worker to help with communication issues, but I never needed them. Now, at work, I just allocate the right amount of time to speak to patients, without any extra support.

I'm pretty proud that I recently completed an MSc in Endodontology (root canal treatment). It's technically challenging, requires fine motor skills and, most importantly, has taught me critical thinking – a skill I can apply to other aspects of my life.

I believe you should take whatever help you can get and learn how to invest the money you earn!

Andrew Winters



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

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



Phonak Sky Marvel. Combining world's first technological innovations to bring love at first sound to children with hearing loss.

Connects to smartphones, TVs, Roger and more

Sky Marvel is the world's first paediatric hearing aid that connects directly to most smartphone and Bluetooth™ enabled devices. In a world where modern devices can be a central part of a child's life, Sky Marvel enables intuitive access and quality streaming for speech, apps, music, e-books and much more!

Full day of hearing

With a 3-hour charge time, Sky M-PR provides a full day of hearing including 10 hours of Roger or streaming media. Parents and children can enjoy peace of mind knowing the hearing aids will stay powered on from morning to bedtime.

24% better speech understanding in noise

Phonak Sky Marvel features Autosense Sky OS, designed to adapt throughout a child's day giving children clear, rich sound even in the noisiest of situations.

Sky Marvel and Roger

The Phonak Sky Marvel seamlessly connects to Roger devices without the need to attach external receivers. Your child can now wear 42% smaller and 32% lighter hearing aids, making for a more comfortable experience at home and in school.

To find out more please email sales@phonak.co.uk or visit www.phonak.co.uk

Sky Marvel offers:



Clear, rich sound



Connects to smartphones, Roger™ mics and more



Rechargeable



Child-specific design



Looking forward...

- to opening our new primary school in Autumn 2022
- to offering a first class specialist education to even more young deaf children

Are you looking forwards to finding a school for your young deaf child?
Then get in touch to find out more.

W: www.maryhare.org.uk/admissions/arrange-visit

E: admissions@maryhare.org.uk

T: 01635 244215



Securing the future of deaf children and young people