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My deafness didn't stop me...

...becoming a competitive snowboarder

By Caity Dalby

At the age of four, Spencer Faithfull, who was born profoundly deaf and has cochlear implants, knew he wanted to snowboard. Little did he know, though, that at 23 he would be a competitive snowboarder, with the Deaflympics in his sights.

"It's always been my dream to become a snowboarder, but we couldn't afford it when I was younger," says Spencer. "So when I got my first job, I started hitting my local indoor slopes every two weeks."

Spencer has now snowboarded in France, Austria, Italy, Holland and the Czech Republic. And despite the challenges, Spencer's dedication to snowboarding, and his sponsorship with Rebel Square, even qualified him for the 2019 Winter Deaflympics in Italy.

However, he has faced accessibility challenges along the way. "It's a catch-22 choosing between wearing my cochlear implants and being able to hear on the slopes, or being safe and wearing a helmet comfortably without it messing with my implants!"

Communication on the slopes and in the winter sports community can be a challenge. "The two hardest aspects of communicating when snowboarding are talking and listening to other skiers and snowboarders without my cochlear implants; I have to rely on lip-reading,"



Spencer

Spencer explains. "And communicating with my sponsors and the Great Britain Deaf team on the phone. I find it hard to catch every word."

"I competed in the 2019 English Indoor Slopestyle Championships in Manchester, against all ages and levels of snowboarders, placing ninth out of 23 snowboarders," Spencer recalls. "But taking part is the most important thing; even losing is great experience!"

With the next Winter Deaflympics taking place in Canada in January 2023, Spencer isn't sure he'll make it, but he'll continue to train hard at his local indoor slopes. "The National Deaf Children's Society has helped me pay for my snowboard slope passes to keep my skills going and expand my learning."



Find out more about making sport accessible for your deaf child at www.ndcs.org.uk/hobbies.



Taking part is the most important thing; even losing is great experience!



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Hello

Welcome to your winter Families magazine! We're very excited that from this issue we've moved to paper packaging, taking over 20,000 plastic wraps out of circulation each quarter. To celebrate, Ida (16) is giving us tips throughout the magazine about how we can go further to help tackle climate change. I'm looking forward to giving them all a go; please join me!

This month, we're talking about finding a Deaf identity. As the parent of a deaf child, it can be hard to know how to help your child discover this important part of themselves. Have a read of Zahra's column on page 11 and Ellie and Holly's story on page 18; these three amazing deaf young people explain how they discovered their Deaf identities and what being Deaf means to them. They're really important reads.

Do also keep an eye out for Write Now!, our young people's zine. We're very pleased to be including this in Families magazine. Eight children have written stories, poems and essays about being deaf. Make sure you give it to your child to have a read.

I hope you enjoy this issue and I wish you all a very merry Christmas and happy new 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

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how her dad Matt chose the right toddler groups and nursery for her



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Ellie and Holly's story
how they discovered their Deaf identities

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

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

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STARTERS



We've switched to paper packaging for *Families* as we want to reduce our use of plastic. To celebrate, Ida (16), who is moderately deaf, gives us some top environmental tips throughout the magazine. Look out for these green tips and see how many you can put into practice as we go into 2022! As Ida says, "It's important to remember that lots of little steps are often more important than one huge change!"

Does your teenager want to change the world?

We recently launched our new Changemaker groups for deaf young people aged 13 to 18. These groups will equip and empower them with the skills, knowledge and experience to solve social problems for themselves.

It's an exciting opportunity to meet other deaf young people, learn new skills and make a difference. The groups meet every month and plan their own sessions about important issues. This could be improving access to subtitles at the cinema, making changes in education or anything else that matters to them.

Visit buzz.org.uk/events/make-a-difference-and-join-a-changemaker-group or email cyp@ndcs.org.uk for more information.



Online workshops for your child

We believe deaf children can do anything, and we know access to the right information is vital. That's why we run our Get Informed workshops. These online events are for deaf children aged 8 to 14 and cover a range of topics. In the last year, we've looked at troubleshooting problems at school, useful technology, managing emotions and dealing with tiredness. For information on upcoming workshops, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/getinformed or contact our Freephone Helpline on **0808 800 8880**.

Our winter superstar!



When Laura began home educating her son Zak (5) during lockdown last year, his Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) at the time, Ms Thomas, went above and beyond to help. Not only did she send worksheets, certificates and stickers, she also gave weekly feedback on his learning. Laura said: "Zak has a wonderful relationship with Ms Thomas. He's been thriving with home learning due to her encouragement – we wouldn't have gotten through it without her." Thank you Ms Thomas for being a superstar ToD!

New emotional wellbeing support in Northern Ireland

A new pilot service is offering specialist help to deaf young people who are struggling with their emotional and mental wellbeing. It's open to children and young people with all levels of deafness, from anywhere in Northern Ireland. They can use any communication method, including sign language.

Following assessment by an experienced consultant psychiatrist, a young person will get ongoing support from either a psychiatrist, project worker or community organisation.

If you think your child could benefit, contact your Teacher of the Deaf, audiologist or GP for a referral. You can also email CAMHS.SPOC@northerntrust.hscni.net for more information.

Boost in disability employment advisors

Earlier this year, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced a large increase in the number of Disability Employment Advisors across the UK – from just 315 to 1,115. These advisors work in job centres and provide disabled people with specialist advice and support to find work.

This was something we, and other members of the Youth Employment Group, had been campaigning for. It's now more likely that a deaf young person applying for the Government's Kickstart Scheme, which offers six-month paid work placements for young people aged 16 to 24 currently claiming Universal Credit, can receive more specialist support. For more information about Kickstart, visit kickstart.campaign.gov.uk.

Bright Start support in the early years

The first few years of life are vital for a child's development. Early relationships and experiences lay the foundations for future development and emotional wellbeing. As parents and carers, you are your child's best educator, communication champion and closest playmate.

Our Bright Start team is here to help you during your child's early years, so that your family can feel confident, happy and learn together.

Our online, interactive sessions cover a range of play-based topics, communication top tips and lively singing and storytelling activities to join in with and try at home.

We're also here to support your child's early years setting, such as their nursery, so they can be deaf aware and ready for your child to start their educational journey.

Check out our upcoming events and come and join us in building a Bright Start for your child at www.ndcs.org.uk/baby-toddler-sessions.



Find out about our new Educational Membership

Helping families secure support for their children at school remains a key focus of our work. In the UK, 78% of deaf children are in mainstream education, but we know that on average they achieve an entire grade less than their hearing peers at GCSE. Deafness isn't a learning disability; with the right support, there's no reason why deaf children shouldn't achieve as much as their peers.

Therefore, we want to do more to create lasting partnerships with childcare settings, schools and colleges across the UK. So we're delighted to introduce our Educational Membership scheme – a new type of membership from us, designed especially for mainstream and specialist early years providers, schools, and further education settings.

Your child's nursery, school or post-16 establishment can access the benefits of Educational Membership from just £15 per academic year, depending on the size of the setting. As an Educational Member, your child's setting will receive a host of benefits, including one free deaf awareness inset training session per year, regular tailored updates on education policies that affect deaf children in their setting, discounts on our tailored training and events for professionals, a certificate to demonstrate their commitment to supporting deaf children, and much more!

Full details can be found at: www.ndcs.org.uk/educational-membership.

So, if you're a parent of a deaf child, please do tell your child's education setting about our new Educational Membership scheme and encourage it to become one of our first members.

Susan

Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive



Sign of the season



Did you know?

There are nearly 1,000 hearing dogs supporting deaf people in the UK.

Words: Lydia Hextell



Did you know that you can watch award winning BSL Zone programmes on Film4 and Together TV every Monday?

Prefer watching TV online? You can easily watch at any time on www.bslzone.co.uk, or on our app, which is available as a free download!

Our programmes all have English subtitles. They're packed full of deaf role models, with fun educational stuff, comedy, short films and even a dedicated children's section...what are you waiting for?



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Top tips...



Ida's tips

"I went vegetarian a year ago. Eating less meat and having a more plant-based diet reduces your carbon footprint."

Helping your child join in with after-school activities

It's important that deaf children do things they enjoy after a hard day of concentrating at school. They may want to chat to friends and do sports or play games, or they might prefer a quieter environment.

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

1 My daughter's just started nursery. After spending all day in a noisy environment, she may have hearing fatigue, so when she comes home she has free play with her toys with minimal background noise.

Nicky, mum to Isabelle (3). Both are profoundly deaf.



2 Support your child's friendships by finding out which activities their friends do. Get information from local Children's Centres and libraries too. Ask your local deaf children's society about activities for deaf children and families.

Helen Latka, Teacher of the Deaf.



3 Children benefit from finding both a physical activity and a creative activity that they enjoy. Try new things and keep their options open until you find what they're passionate about.

Hannah, mum to Elodie (6) who has a moderate hearing loss.



4 Our daughter enjoys drama. She meets children from outside school, it's confidence building, allows her to escape into another character's world and supports her speech and language.

Josie, mum to Maia (16), who has Treacher Collins syndrome and moderate to severe hearing loss.

5 Radio aids are fairly resilient. Your child can use them to take part in activities, particularly in noisy surroundings. Give the people leading these sessions clear instructions on how they work and when they're useful.

Gavin Songer, Technology Research Officer.



6 Feeling sociable? Join a Deaf football, golf or running group, play board games or age-appropriate online games with friends. Prefer alone time? Get ideas from magazines and online, join your library or go for a walk.

Jacqueline Barnes-Jones, National Deaf Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

7 Deaf young people can participate in almost anything. Before enrolling, talk to group leaders about adjustments that can be made. A deaf young person has a legal right to reasonable adjustments.

Martin McLean, Senior Policy Advisor.



8 Don't be put off by preconceptions about what a deaf person can or can't do. The most important thing is that there's good communication. It's OK to try different things to see what you might enjoy.

Kirsty (18) who is moderately deaf.



➔ For more tips, visit our new activities section at www.ndcs.org.uk/hobbies. You can also find out how to meet other families with deaf children at www.ndcs.org.uk/localgroups.

Sara Says



Spreading Christmas cheer



Sara is mum to Sam (14), Matthew (11), Oliver (9) and Charlotte (7). Charlotte's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants.

📌 www.facebook.com/DeafPrincessNI
🐦 @deafprincessni

“
Christmas includes lots of socialising involving food (and people talking with food in their mouths).

Christmas is such an exciting time in our house. We're a family who love to decorate the house inside and out for the whole month of December. The excitement builds all month; we love to socialise, party and celebrate in every way possible. However, Christmas with a deaf child in the house needs a little adaptation to make sure that everyone can join in the excitement.

As you know from my columns and blogs, we endeavour each day to make sure that Charlotte can access everything and is able to fulfil her potential. It's a challenge at Christmas as the month tends to be jam-packed, so we try to plan ahead.

It's always useful to explain in advance to your child about any festival or event – this gives time to introduce vocabulary, ask and answer questions, and maybe play new games for practice. In the past, I've found myself in situations where I've realised that Charlotte didn't understand what was going on. This is common, as deaf children aren't always able to overhear information about events they haven't been to before and might not have been exposed to the necessary vocabulary.

When writing letters to Santa, we realised that often Charlotte didn't know what toys were out there that she might want, so we started taking the kids to a big toy store for an afternoon before they wrote their letters. We took photos of them with the toys they liked, so they could review the photos when they came home, helping them to write their letters. It's good to practise the names of these toys and the possible games you might play with them, so

that when they chat about presents in school, your child is prepared.

Deaf children like Charlotte might also find parties or family gatherings difficult. This can be due to a combination of factors, for example the increased background noise, being in a crowded room, lots of socialising involving food (and people talking with food in their mouths), background music and exhaustion. To help, it might be useful to introduce listening breaks, encourage family and friends to use deaf awareness tips when you're all together and try to minimise background noise. It's also so important to make sure that your deaf child is able to keep up with the conversation. You might need to check their understanding, get people to repeat themselves or even use sign language to interpret for them.

All of us want to make sure everyone has an enjoyable Christmas and makes memories to share. Taking photographs and videos can be useful for reminding Charlotte about what happened last year or helping her describe events to family, friends or school staff.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas season and make many special memories to treasure.



For more tips about celebrating Christmas or other religious festivals, such as Hanukkah, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/celebrations.

Zahra's Zone

From deaf to Deaf



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



I'm proud to be a part of both the Deaf and hearing worlds.

At the age of 14, I had my first interaction with another deaf person.

I was volunteering in Kenya for Starkey Hearing Foundation, a charity that distributes subsidised hearing aids. I saw a young boy's eyes light up at the sight of my cochlear implant. He ran up to me and started to use sign language excitedly. I froze. I think he asked me my name, but embarrassed by my inability to communicate, I responded with an awkward smile. I watched him walk away deflated, leaving me feeling guilty and inadequate.

Growing up in a hearing world, I considered my cochlear implant a 'cure' to my deafness. It was a way to fit in with my family, friends and everyone around me. But in that moment, I felt out of place.

Although this boy might not remember our encounter, he unknowingly led me on a journey to learn British Sign Language (BSL). I started by completing an online BSL course and began seeking out opportunities to communicate with other deaf individuals. Now, as a proficient BSL user, I adore the language.

Soon after, I came across the National Deaf Children's Society's Raising the Bar event. Excited by the prospect of meeting other Deaf people interested in the arts, I sent in my application and was lucky to be selected. This weekend was instrumental in forming my Deaf identity, something I had never even considered before. A key moment was singing and signing lyrics from *The Greatest Showman*. I felt elated.

This led me to join Chickenshed Theatre, another space where I could collaborate with a diverse team with varying physical disabilities.

Over the last few years, my exploration of the Deaf community continued: fundraising with a family skydive for the National Deaf Children's Society, joining its campaign for equitable education, returning to Raising the Bar as a facilitator, taking part in a volunteering certificate, creating YouTube videos about deafness, and now writing this column. Volunteering with this charity has brought me immense joy by providing opportunities to interact with the Deaf community and educate others around me on hidden disabilities.

I'm proud to be a part of both the Deaf and hearing worlds. I often think back to how it all started – my failure to communicate with others through sign language. From my experience, I have learnt to embrace all aspects of my identity.



To read more about deaf young people discovering their Deaf identity, turn to page 18.

For tips on supporting your child to develop a deaf identity, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/build-deaf-identity.

If you're a deaf young person, go to buzz.org.uk/articles/deaf-culture-secondary.



From toddler groups to finding a nursery

By Caity Dalby

When choosing toddler groups and a nursery for Millie (4), who is profoundly deaf, dad Matt made sure that they'd help her confidence grow and personality shine.



Millie's story

• **Helping Millie, who wears cochlear implants, to be confident when she finds herself in new and noisy environments is a top priority for dad Matt.** This made choosing the right toddler groups and nursery, with leaders and teachers willing to build great bonds with her, important to Millie's development. "It's vital for teachers to bond with Millie and become a friendly face first, before they try to teach her. At nursery, she overcame any shyness she had very quickly because the teacher was focused on building that friendly relationship and embedding her in the class."

• With no history of deafness in the family, once Millie's deafness was identified by the newborn hearing screening, Matt knew that they had a lot of research to do. "After the initial shock, we started doing our research and looking for the right people to help and the resources for us to get our teeth stuck into," explains Matt. "Through our research we knew that songs were a great way to make sure that the full range of frequencies and decibel levels were practised, so we selected toddler groups that were music-focused. We combined that with other sensory activities, like using mini climbing frames and balance beams to help with Millie's balance."

"We're always thinking of the future and trying to be one or two steps ahead of how she's developing to prepare her for social interactions in noisy environments. We planned for her to have an activity going on every day of the week that stimulated her senses, to make sure she was used to being in complex sensory environments from an early age."

All the careful consideration that went into choosing and sticking with certain toddler groups paid off. "She got used to mixing well with everyone, and to see her respond and react in such a positive way to the group leaders, and the joy that she's getting from the sessions, has been great," says Matt. "A couple of months into the toddler groups, I was a little bit taken aback by how well she was able to not just cope with the sessions, but really get stuck in."

"I very quickly came to the realisation that this wasn't going to be as difficult as I had thought it would be. She's going to be able to take on a lot of these challenges and work a fair few of them out for herself. I'm not going to have to be quite as hands-on in sessions and at school as perhaps I thought I would need to be."

With Millie's personality shining through at her toddler groups, the



We're always thinking of the future and trying to be one or two steps ahead of where she's developing.

family knew that they had to get it just as right with their choice of nursery. "We explored a number of local nurseries and went a little bit further afield to ones that we'd heard were very good," Matt remembers. "We visited them, walked around and spoke to the people who were running the nurseries, spoke to the people that would be looking after her on a day-to-day basis, and got a good understanding of the disability support framework they had.

"Some of the things that we were looking at were the philosophy of the nursery and their goals, which helped us filter out a few. We were looking for environments that had an individual child focus rather than being results-orientated. Establishing the child's emotional needs, rather than focusing solely on achievements."

As with toddler groups, one of the most important things they looked for in prospective nurseries was a willingness to accommodate Millie's needs. "We wanted them to be collaborative and open to working with us, to take new ideas on board, be adaptive and provide regular feedback on her development," says Matt, "as well as actively wanting Millie in their classroom and being willing to make the necessary adaptations to make it a good environment for her."

For a brief period during lockdown the family moved Millie to a smaller, home-run nursery with her little sister, Eleanor (2). "We were extremely lucky that the woman who ran the nursery has a deaf daughter with cochlear implants," explains Matt. "Her daughter is currently doing her A-levels but took the time to hang out and become friends with Millie. We were very lucky in that regard, because it meant that the nursery was keenly aware of what Millie's needs were during such a difficult time for everyone."

The family decided, however, that consistency was one of the most important things to focus on in the long



term. "The current nursery setting that we've decided on for the long term allows her to stay in the same school, with the same group of peers all the way through to Year 11 if we choose. It was clearly one of the key advantages of that nursery and school, that we've got consistency with her peers and the teaching staff there."

Now Millie's settled into her mainstream nursery, the family feel as though they've definitely made the right choice for her. "She loves doing different things every day in such a loving and caring environment," says Matt. "Some of the teachers really invested in her emotionally and, as a consequence, her confidence has really grown, and with that, her ability to make friends."



For more information about choosing childcare, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/childcare. To find out more about baby and toddler sessions, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/baby-toddler-sessions.

We have more stories from our family bloggers on toddler groups and nursery, read them at www.ndcs.org.uk/familyblogs and select the Early Years category.



EARLY YEARS

Your winter checklist

✓ Applying to primary school

Choosing your child's first school can feel like a big decision. If your child is deaf, there will be extra things to consider, like acoustics, class sizes, and whether the school is set up to accommodate deaf students. Check out our guidance to help you choose a deaf-friendly school.

www.ndcs.org.uk/startingschool



✓ Christmas presents for deaf children

Looking for a Christmas gift for your deaf child? After struggling to find a teddy bear with hearing aids, parent blogger Joy wrote about some of her favourite representative toys, including tips on how to add hearing aids or cochlear implants to any doll or bear.

www.ndcs.org.uk/christmas-gift-ideas



✓ Glue ear animation

For young children, experiencing glue ear can be disorientating. To help children understand what glue ear is and the different ways it can be treated, we've animated a story all about glue ear, written by 10-year-old Dylan. The animation is signed and subtitled with English voiceover.

www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear





Getting additional support for Isaac

By Kerrina Gray

Because of his delayed speech and language, mum Emma knew that Isaac, who is severely to profoundly deaf, would need a plan in place for primary school, and she was willing to fight to get one.



Isaac's story

• **With additional support now in place, Isaac (6) is enjoying life in Year 1, but it's proving to be harder work for mum**

• **Emma.** "Isaac is very sensory, and the school embraces that. Now with hand sanitiser, for example, he'll put it on his hands then smear it on the windows. He loves paint too; he's already ruined two polo shirts this term!"

• Since finding out about Isaac's progressive hearing loss at the newborn hearing screening, Emma has thrown herself into learning more about deafness and advocating for her son. "We were devastated when we found out he was deaf," she says. "But we very quickly came round; as our firstborn, he was all we knew. Now we've made so many deaf friends, which has normalised wearing hearing aids for Isaac. He doesn't see himself as different yet."

• Isaac is very confident and sociable, so he's found coping strategies throughout his life. "Isaac is a performer," Emma says. "He loves an audience and he's all about music and dance. If he can sing and dance at you, he's great. The problem is having a conversation. His speech and language are quite delayed, so instead of talking to a stranger in soft play, he might walk up to them and dance. It's his way of communicating."

Emma knew, therefore, that Isaac would need extra support at school. She initially asked the nursery he attended if they could apply for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan for him, but they refused. "We had termly meetings with the nursery, and they were adamant his needs wouldn't meet the criteria for an EHC plan. I was shocked because I knew he wouldn't cope at school. I was worried he wouldn't be able to express his needs, even to say he needed to go to the toilet. So, I decided to apply on my own. At nursery they knew him very well so understood what his gestures meant. They'd assessed him incorrectly. Our Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) backed me up and sent in a supporting letter with the application.

"We got an assessment straight away. An educational psychologist came into nursery. I think Isaac was using coping strategies to get by; he'd copy the other children even if he didn't understand what a teacher was saying to him. His nursery and I disagreed in the meeting, but the assessment came back and they agreed with me. It was really nice to be heard as a parent."

The EHC plan came into place for Isaac in the June before he started primary school. It entitled Isaac to

a full-time one-to-one teaching assistant (TA), a radio aid and a soundfield system. “The TA is there to react to his needs. If he’s struggling, she’ll take him out of the classroom. She uses British Sign Language (BSL) signs with him and has a speech and language programme in place. He’s just about to start sensory circuits in the morning too. They do these things for a few weeks, then stop and assess them to see if it’s making a difference to his learning.

“Ever since starting school, his speech has come on so much. He’s gone from one word to being able to have a very short conversation with you to express his needs. When he started school, they re-assessed him and found he didn’t meet the early year foundation stage criteria the nursery had said he’d met. It was nice to have a fresh pair of eyes on that; they revised his targets down and suddenly they were achievable for him.”

Despite the additional support, it hasn’t been a completely smooth journey for Isaac. “Initially when he started school, he loved it,” Emma says. “He settled really well, but he became frustrated quite quickly. Towards the October half-term, he was starting to hit out and get quite cross, purely because the school staff couldn’t understand what he wanted. And he was tired, going in five days a week, so we got after-school meltdowns.

**“
My advice for
an EHC plan
application
would be to
document
everything.”**



EHC plans are for England only. To find out how to apply for one or for the equivalent in your nation (an Individual Educational Programme in Scotland, an Individual Development Plan in Wales or an Individual Education Plan in Northern Ireland), go to www.ndcs.org.uk/additionalsupport.

For more information about how to understand your child’s rights, try out our Expert Parent Programme. You can find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/expert-parent-programme.



“In his first year, he got sent home from school three times. I think it was sensory overload. The first time was at Christmas, there were lights, lots going on, he was really tired from the first full term; he just needed to come home.

“But the school has learnt how to manage him since then. He does sometimes need to go out of the classroom, go for a run around the field or even just do a quiet activity in the corridor. Then he’s fine.

“I think having one-to-one speech and language with his TA has really helped too. He’s starting to randomly come out with stuff. They’ve been studying dragons, for example, and he’s started to tell me about it when he wouldn’t before. He’s just started to ask ‘why’ questions too; I couldn’t wait for him to ask ‘why’ questions and now I’m starting to regret that!”

Emma feels that the additional support is essential for Isaac and is glad she fought for his EHC plan. “My advice for an EHC plan application would be to document everything,” she adds. “It’s evidence based so keep as much evidence as possible – every letter, report etc you receive. And get as many people to support your application as possible.”



Your winter checklist

✓ Children’s books

Our range of children’s picture books make the perfect gift for deaf children. This year, when you buy a book for your own child or grandchild, you can also choose to send another book to a deaf child in need. Turn to page 44 to find out more.

ndcs-bookshop.myshopify.com



✓ Making Christmas deaf-friendly

Christmas is an exciting time for children, but for deaf children, big family gatherings and changes to routine can be overwhelming. Visit our new Parenting and Family Life pages for tips to help you make Christmas deaf-friendly. Don’t forget to share with family and friends you’re celebrating with.

www.ndcs.org.uk/christmastips



✓ Dealing with bullying

For most children, the new school year is a chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones. Sadly, some children may also experience bullying. For deaf children, being bullied can be a particularly isolating experience, so it’s important to know how to recognise the signs. Visit our webpage for advice and support.

www.ndcs.org.uk/bullyingadvice





Growing up with glue ear

By Katy Blanchard

With neither grommets nor hearing aids proving to be the solution Sonny (12) needs to manage his glue ear, his family has explored other options to support his hearing in secondary school.



Sonny's story

When Sonny (then 9) attended his six-monthly audiology check, he and mum Lindsay were used to the result showing no improvement in his hearing.

Sonny's moderate hearing loss caused by glue ear – a build-up of fluid in the middle ear – had fluctuated for years. He was diagnosed with the condition, the result of repeated ear infections, aged three, but now, finally, a significant improvement was recorded.

"I'm sure it was due to spending so much time outdoors," Lindsay explains. "During the summer that year, we spent three-and-a-half weeks in the Lake District. We were in the fresh air all day and camped overnight. It was very shortly after that we saw a big improvement in his hearing."

For the first time, Sonny's hearing loss in both ears had changed from moderate to mild. The improvement, though, was short-lived. As winter followed, so did coughs and colds leading to more congestion and ear infections. A deterioration in his hearing soon came about.

"Winter always makes Sonny's glue ear worse," says Lindsay. "We know it happens, so we look out for signs that he might be struggling, like being especially tired after school if he's trying harder to hear everything."

Over the years, Sonny has worn hearing aids and tried grommets – tiny tubes fitted into the ear drum to allow air to pass through into the middle ear. Neither has ever been a perfect solution.

"Sonny first had grommets fitted aged five, and they made a difference immediately," Lindsay recalls. "We were overjoyed when he told us that he could hear the birds tweeting and people's footsteps as they walked – everyday sounds that, back then, we didn't realise he'd been missing."

The family felt hopeful that this was the start of a new chapter for Sonny. Within weeks, however, the grommets fell out. "It was heartbreaking," Lindsay says. "We knew that grommets wouldn't be a long-term solution, but it was disappointing that they fell out so soon. We'd come a long way since getting his hearing loss diagnosed, but that felt like we were back at the start."

Knowing that some natural improvement over time was possible as Sonny grew, the family opted for hearing aids over another immediate grommet operation. And, while wearing hearing aids meant he also got access to support such as a Teacher of the Deaf (ToD) and the use of a soundfield system in the classroom, they brought challenges too. "The hearing aids made



It's a fluctuating condition, so I hope the support remains in place for him through secondary school.

every scratch and movement much louder. Sometimes it was hard to make out the things I actually wanted to hear," Sonny explains.

Through perseverance, Sonny adapted to the hearing aids. But while they helped him hear, they weren't helping to improve the glue ear. Grommet operations, on the other hand, cleared much of the congestion but, both times Sonny had them fitted, they fell out within weeks.

After months of waiting, at Easter this year Sonny had an operation on one ear to repair his ear drum. The procedure is designed to improve his hearing and stop his middle ear from becoming infected.

While Sonny was used to operations, having had two previously to fit grommets, this was different. It would take up to three hours, with Sonny's whole head bandaged afterwards. "I felt nervous beforehand," says Sonny. "It was a big operation, and I wasn't sure if it would work because the grommets never did."

The pandemic meant only one parent could be in hospital with Sonny, making it an even more anxious time for the family. "It was very hard," Lindsay explains. "But Sonny's hearing has been recorded as within the normal range at each of his check-ups since, so it does seem to have made a difference."

Ongoing support for Sonny is now a big concern for the family. "Sonny's hearing has levelled at his last few audiology appointments," says Lindsay. "On the one hand that's great, but I worry that he may lose the support such as the ToD, which he still relies on. It's a fluctuating condition, so I hope the support remains in place for him through secondary school."

Getting the right support for Sonny is something the family has worked towards for many years, opting for a private assessment of his learning needs to help with an application for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan before he started secondary school.



"Sonny's primary school was really supportive but we knew that secondary school would be a very different environment," says Lindsay. "We received a grant to support with the cost of the assessment and I'm so glad we did it. We found out that Sonny is dyslexic, so it has given us a more complete picture of his needs. Hearing loss is just part of it."

While he's been through a lot, Sonny's always remained positive. "People often say to us, 'Sonny by name, sunny by nature'," says Lindsay. "And he really is. He's just joined the Air Cadets, he's learning how to play the guitar – he isn't letting everything he's been through hold him back."



For more information about glue ear, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear. We also have an animation on this webpage to explain the condition to children.



Your winter checklist

✓ Appealing a school placement

If your child wasn't given a place at the secondary school of your choice, it's not too late to appeal. The appeals process is slightly different in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Visit our website for advice about appealing a school placement where you live, or contact our Helpline for guidance. www.ndcs.org.uk/choosingaschool



✓ Cinema

Visiting the cinema this Christmas? Finding a subtitled screening of the film you want to watch can be difficult. Your Local Cinema lists subtitled film screenings across the UK. You can also use the site to watch subtitled trailers or sign up to their newsletter to get updates on subtitled screenings near you. www.yourlocalcinema.com



✓ Communication support at school

Starting secondary school is a big change, and deaf children may find they need more support than they did at primary school. If your child is struggling to follow lessons, they might benefit from communication support. The Buzz has age-appropriate information about the different types of support available. buzz.org.uk/articles/communication-support





Discovering a Deaf identity

By Lydia Hextell

Embracing her Deaf identity hasn't always been easy for Holly (18). After experiencing some setbacks, getting to know other deaf young people, like her mentor Ellie (23), has helped Holly reclaim her confidence at just the right time.



Holly's story

When Holly, who is severely to profoundly deaf, first got her hearing aids at six years old, she felt proud to be deaf. But her confidence was quickly knocked by comments from her classmates. "I liked my hearing aids, they were pretty and pink, but other children at school were mean about them," says Holly. "It really affected me. I didn't call myself deaf until I was 14 and rarely wore them."

Growing up, Holly went to mainstream primary school and didn't know any other deaf people her age. Holly's teachers lacked deaf awareness too. "I was put at the back of the class and the teachers were told to keep an eye on me because of my behaviour, when really, I was struggling to keep up with lessons because I was deaf," says Holly. "It didn't help that I thought deafness was an illness. I'd get really scared whenever my hearing dropped, and my mum realised we needed to chat about what being deaf means."

Talking about her deafness and meeting other deaf young people was a turning point in Holly's Deaf identity journey. "When I was 10, I met my childhood best friend who was also deaf," explains Holly. "We talked for hours about deafness. It was incredible.

It prompted my Deaf identity journey and my confidence grew as I went to secondary school."

However, unexpected challenges impacted Holly's newfound confidence. After her hearing aids and radio aid broke in Year 9, she felt she'd lost a part of her identity. "I thought I was no longer deaf, as if my disability was erased because I didn't have technology as a marker," she explains. "That's when I went to the Ear Foundation and met a group of deaf girls. We embraced Deaf humour by making up jokes. I started to see myself as different, rather than lesser or like I was lacking something."

Holly now identifies with the capital 'D' Deaf and explains what this means to her. "To me, the word 'Deaf', with a capital D, represents the Deaf community, whereas 'deaf' without a capital D relates to the audiological side of deafness," says Holly. "Before, I thought I wasn't part of the Deaf community because I can still hear a little. Since my Deaf identity has grown stronger, I feel more comfortable calling myself culturally Deaf. It makes me proud to be part of our lovely community."

Last year though, Holly experienced setbacks while studying for her A-levels and decided to take part in the National Deaf Children's Society's

online mentoring service. The service connects deaf young people, aged 14 to 18, with a deaf mentor. The programme runs remotely, and messages are monitored by staff. “I was confident with my Deaf identity, but lockdown badly affected this,” she says. “I didn’t have anyone to talk to and my grades dropped because of online lessons. I was starting to think negatively about my deafness again.”

Holly was matched with her mentor Ellie, who understood the importance of connecting with other deaf young people. Ellie discovered she had unilateral profound deafness at three years old. She also found it difficult to acknowledge her Deaf identity. “I first saw an audiologist when I was 16, so I didn’t have a Deaf identity until I was older and I felt trapped between the hearing and the Deaf world,” says Ellie. “It took moving to university and developing my independence to acknowledge that my hearing does impact me, and I have a right to identify as Deaf.”

Mentoring was a way for Ellie to make up for the help she didn’t get as a teenager. “I wanted to offer the support I wish I’d had when I was doing my A-levels. I had lots of questions about Deafness and nobody to ask. The first time I met anyone who was my age and Deaf was when training to be a National Deaf Children’s Society volunteer a few years ago. It was transformational,” she says.

Embracing her Deafness also played a part in helping her follow her dreams. “It’s important not to put limits on yourself or let anyone say you can’t do something,” says Ellie. “I was told I couldn’t do languages at university and I graduated with a first-class degree in Politics, International Relations and Spanish.”



Ellie



I started to see myself as different, rather than lesser.

Holly also hopes to study languages at university and appreciated the opportunity to find out about Ellie’s experience. “It was nice to have someone to send messages to who is Deaf and studied languages too. I realised that being Deaf doesn’t mean I can’t have the education I want.”

“My advice for other Deaf young people is that it doesn’t matter what level of hearing loss you have or if you’re the only Deaf person in your family,” adds Ellie. “You have a right to call yourself Deaf and you belong in the Deaf community.”

Ellie and Holly suggest focusing on the positives that come with being Deaf too. “You’re not broken and you don’t need fixing. As a Deaf person, you have enhanced communication and empathy skills. Your difference makes you stand out from the crowd in a good way, so own it,” says Ellie.

“There will be challenges but there are benefits too,” Holly adds. “You get to do things your own way. Don’t be afraid to tell people you’re Deaf and don’t let your Deafness or other people hold you back. To me, embracing my Deaf identity is about being myself and loving who I am.”



To find out more about our mentoring service, or to apply to become a mentor or mentee, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/mentoring.

For more information about Deaf identity, you can visit www.ndcs.org.uk/building-deaf-identity. If you’re a deaf young person, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/dyp-deaf-identity. For another young person’s experience, turn back to page 11.



YOUNG PEOPLE
16+

Your winter checklist

✓ Deaf identity

For many deaf young people, developing a positive Deaf identity is an important part of growing up – but as a hearing parent, it can be hard to know how to help. Visit our webpage for advice on how to support your child to learn more about Deaf culture and the Deaf community.

www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-identity-teens



✓ Learning a foreign language

If your child is keen to learn a new language at school, their deafness shouldn’t be a barrier. However, the school may need to make adjustments, such as providing a lipspeaker during oral examinations. Read Daniel’s story to find out about his experience of learning French at school.

www.ndcs.org.uk/daniel



✓ Applying to university

If your child is applying to university this year, they might have lots of questions about going to open days and writing a personal statement. The UCAS website offers videos answering many of these questions in British Sign Language (BSL). Search ‘BSL’ on the UCAS website to learn more.

wwwucas.com/connect/videos



Deaf works as a paramedic



With thanks to St. George's, University of London.

Holly's a hero paramedic

By Abbi Brown

Despite a difficult start at school, Holly's determined to make a difference as a paramedic.



Holly's story

• **When Holly (20) is asked what her favourite type of call-out was during her first placement as a paramedic, her eyes instantly light up.** "Oh, definitely major trauma!" she exclaims. "I've only been to one, but I loved it. Afterwards, they asked if I wanted counselling, but I said, 'I don't think I need it!'"

• Sitting on a sunny bench outside St. George's Hospital, it's easy to see why Holly, who's profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids, makes such a great paramedic. "I love helping people," she says. "Oh, and I love having the blue lights on and getting to drive on the wrong side of the road!"

• "Even on jobs where it's been really serious, it's rewarding to know you've made a difference. Even though you're a student, you know you've made a difference."

• Although Holly's always wanted to work in medicine, she hasn't always wanted to be a paramedic. "Growing up, I wanted to be a doctor," she explains. "As a child, I spent a lot of time in hospital with glue ear, adenoids and tonsillitis, as well as problems with my hip. I wanted to pay forward what the doctors did for me."

However, Holly – who was the only deaf student in her mainstream school and depends on lip-reading to communicate – struggled to learn from teachers who weren't deaf aware. "I had a hard time with the science teachers in secondary school in particular," she remembers. "One teacher would never face me while talking to the class or write anything on the board. Then, while the rest of the class went off in groups, she'd sit next to me and shout in my ear. My teaching assistant explained what support I needed, but it just didn't happen."

"I struggled with concentration fatigue too. In the end, they told me to take my textbook and go and learn by myself. I taught myself for the whole of Year 11. I still did well, but I didn't get the grades I needed to study the sciences at A-level."

When she started Sixth Form, Holly was determined to turn things around. A biology teacher who helped students apply for medical school talked to her about her options. "She explained that applying to medical school would be very difficult and take a long time," says



It's rewarding to know you've made a difference.

Holly. "Even then, I might not get in. It was a tough conversation, but she was so supportive. We talked about alternative medical careers, like nursing, midwifery or paramedic science."

With the help of her teacher, Holly applied to study paramedic science at St. George's Hospital and was thrilled when she was offered a place. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the teaching for Holly's first year was all online. Once again, she found herself struggling to follow lectures. Luckily, this time, she had a disability advisor to make sure her access needs were met.

When she started her first placement as a trainee paramedic, all Holly's hard work paid off.

"I absolutely loved my placement!" says Holly. "I was a bit nervous about going onto the ambulance during the pandemic, as everyone was wearing masks and PPE, but the ambulance service managed to schedule my first two shifts with Richard Webb-Stevens, who's London's first deaf paramedic.

"It was amazing. He had loads of advice about things, like how to set the ambulance radio system to vibrate and how to communicate with patients. For example, he taught me that if I'm not sure I've heard a patient properly, I should repeat their answer. They'll correct me if it's wrong.

"Richard also told me that if colleagues want to contact him, they say his name three times to get his attention. He was really helpful and gave me his number, so I can ask more questions if I need."

During her placement, Holly's colleagues found different ways to communicate with her, either by wearing her radio aid underneath their PPE or by briefly lowering their masks to let her lip-read. "Communication is still the hardest part of the job," explains Holly. "You could have all the knowledge, but when you get to



an intense scene, it's critical that you know what people are saying. Once colleagues know I'm deaf, they can lower their masks or use gestures to show what they need. It's hard, but it's something I can push past."

Holly's also found her deafness allows her to relate to deaf patients. "It's always comforting for the patient to be able to relate to the paramedic. And on a practical level, if a patient is having trouble hearing me, I know to get down to their level and lower my mask to let them lip-read.

"My advice for another deaf young person interested in working in healthcare would be to be proactive," says Holly. "Put yourself forward and offer to help your colleagues even when they haven't asked. They'll often return the favour by showing you how to perform a specific task.

"Be open about your deafness because people will help you. Apply for Disabled Students' Allowances early and ask for everything you might need. There's support available, you just have to ask."

Looking back, Holly is glad her teacher suggested becoming a paramedic instead of a doctor. "I love being practical, and on placement I saw that paramedics spend more time out in the field, getting stuck in. They see everything! It's definitely the job for me."



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 winter checklist

✓ Making a decision

Whether your child is starting to consider their options after education, applying for their first job or looking for something new after a previous choice didn't work out, making a decision can feel really difficult! Visit our webpage for advice to help deaf young people make decisions about the future.

www.ndcs.org.uk/options



✓ Travelling abroad

If your child is hoping to travel abroad next year, either for a holiday or as part of a gap year, there might be a few extra things to consider to assist with communication. Check out our webpage on gap years for advice about things like taking care of hearing technology abroad.

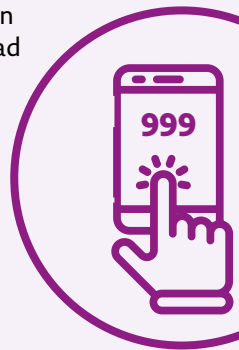
www.ndcs.org.uk/gap-year



✓ Using 999

Did you know that you can contact 999 by text instead of by phone? Available as an app or via SMS, Relay UK allows deaf people who don't use the phone to communicate with the emergency services through text. You'll need to register your phone with Relay UK before using the service.

www.relayuk.bt.com





support my family with deafness?

It's often said that it takes a village to raise a child, so we spoke to wider family and friends to find out how they adapted to having a deaf child or young person in the family.



Freya and Gail

Gail is aunt to Freya (10), who is profoundly deaf.

Freya was the first baby born into the family, much anticipated and much loved. Almost 11 years later, that feeling hasn't changed.

Like many families, we had no experience of deafness when Freya was born. It was a gradual process of learning over two years, from her initial screening to the diagnosis of a profound loss and being fitted with cochlear implants. During this time, my sister Lynn was given a lot of information to take in. It was important to me that I knew as much as possible to make sure I was best placed to

support, offer a different viewpoint or just be there to listen.

We started a family sign language course and from there I completed levels 1, 2 and 3 in British Sign Language (BSL), meeting some fabulous people along the way. My sister got involved with the local deaf children's society and we would all go along to fun days and outings, taking Freya's hearing cousins. Deaf awareness, radio aids, captions and sign language are part of our daily lives. In our case, three heads are better than one!

My niece is just incredible. I love every bit of her and I'm so proud to be her auntie.



India and Cilla

Cilla is grandmother to India (20), who is profoundly deaf.

It was a gradual process learning about India's deafness, as it wasn't picked up at birth. She had words and she babbled. She was, and still is, a brilliant communicator. Around three years old, it was becoming clear she might need some help as her speech development seemed delayed. A specialist assessment revealed she had never heard, due to congenital cochlear damage to both ears. It did come as a shock to her parents and, at first, we were at a bit of a loss as to how to help.

When she was a young girl, I supported India in lots of ways, no

differently from our other three grandchildren. For example, taking care of her when Mum and Dad worked, went out or just needed a break, being there for them and helping work through problems or difficulties, taking her to birthday parties and special events, having sleepovers, fun days and holidays. Of course, being deaf brings its own challenges, so lots of reading and research were needed to help find solutions to problems, including going along to her appointments to listen in so me and Mum could chat it out after.

I also attend a weekly BSL course to develop my own signing skills to better support her.



“ Deaf awareness, radio aids, captions and sign language are part of our daily lives.”



➔ For more information about supporting the deaf child or young person in your family, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/familyrelationships.

Isobel is the girlfriend of Ed (20), who is severely to profoundly deaf.

I met my boyfriend, Ed, at a party two years ago. We were both getting drinks at the bar when I smiled at him. We got chatting, and that was when Ed first told me he was deaf.

Since then, I've learnt more ways to support him with his hearing loss and have come to really understand and admire the effort that deaf people, like Ed, put into their everyday lives.

When we're at restaurants or out with friends, Ed can miss questions or parts of the conversation. He's an independent guy, so I know it's

important not to diminish that by answering questions for him or speaking on his behalf. Instead, I'll look at him so he can lip-read me, and repeat what was said so he can answer for himself. We also came up with some hand signals together.

My advice for anyone with a deaf partner would be: try to sit by the wall and away from speakers in restaurants, if you're out with friends, let your partner sit in the middle so they can see everyone's faces, and, if they wear hearing aids like Ed, always carry spare batteries! They will inevitably manage to run out right in the middle of the movie!



Ed and Isobel

Jon is grandpa to Lois (6), who is profoundly deaf.

When I first heard that my granddaughter, Lois, had been diagnosed with profound deafness, I felt completely devastated, broken-hearted, and concerned for her future. I just wanted to sort it out and make everything right, not only for her but for her parents as well. I wanted to be a protective grandpa.

I tried to support Lois's parents with their own despair by listening to their concerns and questions. I tried to help them rationalise the situation and stop the panic we all felt. Offering support was all I could do to help them, other than small things like looking after Lois

to enable them to attend information sessions, and joining them on open days to obtain as much information as possible.

The road to getting her implants was long and difficult. I listened to her parents and encouraged them to keep pushing forward to get the best outcome for Lois. It was important to remind them that they were making difficult decisions, but Lois was their motivation.

Since Lois's diagnosis, I have learnt some BSL and, through this, have met other families in the same situation as us. It's uplifted me to know that, although my beautiful granddaughter is deaf, her deafness doesn't define her, but it's part of her. Anything is possible.



Lois and Jon

Scribble

Tear out these pages,
child and let their cre

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

Colour in



These two children have decided to do a Christmas beach clean-up, picking up all of the litter they can spot by the sea. How many different pieces of litter can you see? It's really important to recycle where we can so that our beaches don't end up looking like rubbish tips.



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Ask the expert

Each issue, a different professional shares their expert advice and gives information to help you support your child. This time Joanne, a foster parent of a deaf child, shares her thoughts.

Why did you and your husband choose to become foster parents?

When I was six years old, the charity Barnardo's came to my primary school to give a talk about fostering. It's something I've wanted to do ever since. My husband, Kieran, and I have been fostering children and young people for five years. We also have two biological children, who understand the importance of fostering and support us with caring for the children in our care.

Did you have any experience of deafness before you fostered a deaf child?

My background is in working with children and adults with special educational needs and disabilities. One child I worked with as a teaching assistant had auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder (ANSD). We communicated using Makaton, so I had a little experience of signing but I hadn't used British Sign Language (BSL) before.

We've also fostered children with additional needs before, so we have lots of experience of caring for children who communicate in different ways.

How did you prepare for fostering a deaf child?

We were told that Jack, who's profoundly deaf and has cochlear implants, had been referred to us one month before he moved into our house. Jack only wears one of his processors and uses BSL. We signed up for a BSL course and downloaded BSL apps.

To help Jack get used to living with us, we met him in familiar surroundings

first, then he came to our house for short visits and then he stayed for dinner. He moved his belongings to our house gradually, each time he came to visit, and after a month, he moved in properly.

What are the most rewarding parts of being a foster parent to a deaf child?

It's brilliant to see Jack open up, become more confident, use BSL effectively and give his all to new experiences.

What are the most challenging parts of being a foster parent to a deaf child?

I sometimes worry that Jack's not able to communicate his worries and concerns with us.

What would be your advice to another family who is considering fostering a deaf child or young person?

Even if the deaf child or young person who's coming to live with you doesn't sign, it's still useful to learn a bit of BSL to help with communication when they have their hearing aids or cochlear implants out. I'd recommend signing up to a BSL course and downloading apps to support your learning. As with any foster placement, you need to take the time to get to know the child you're looking after. It might take a while for them to open up. Most importantly, encourage the child or young person to be proud of their deaf identity.



Joanne,
foster
parent



It's brilliant to see Jack open up, become more confident, use BSL effectively and give his all to new experiences.



Joanne fosters through the agency UK Fostering. To find out more, visit www.ukfostering.org.uk.

For advice about fostering or adopting a deaf child, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/fostering. To learn some family sign language, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/FSL.

Education & learning

Maths facts

By Emma Fraser (Teacher of the Deaf)

Some people have a natural ability to solve complex and abstract maths problems, but for others, their hearts sink when someone starts talking about formulae and percentages. The good news is, studies show that a positive attitude can improve maths performance. We have some tips so you can help your child enjoy this important subject.

.....



Here are some ideas to help you help your child find their inner mathematician.

Use mathematical language

Maths is all about vocabulary and language. The more mathematical vocabulary your child has, the more able they are to understand and communicate about maths. Right from the start, use maths in everyday conversations when you're cooking or playing simple games. Counting rhymes, songs and stories are a great way to use mathematical language. There are lots of ideas at www.mathsthroughstories.org.

As your child gets older, encourage them to use maths language to talk about what they're doing and how they've solved simple problems. For example, "How much do you think the shopping will cost?" or "Which train should we catch if we want to be in London for 12pm?"

Sometimes children may struggle to solve a word problem because they don't understand the vocabulary, not because they can't do the maths. There are lots of easy-to-understand maths definitions in English at www.theschoolrun.com/primary-numeracy-glossary-for-parents and in British Sign Language (BSL) at www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/BSL/maths.html.

Use physical objects

It's much easier to understand maths if you can see and do it. With young children, use real objects, such as fingers, blocks, counters or cubes, before moving on to representing the object with something more abstract.

As children get older, they can use diagrams, models and drawings to help represent the maths problem visually. Children who have delayed language may use real objects or visual information for longer. Here are some ideas for maths visuals: www.iseemaths.com/visual-supports.

Some things must be learnt by heart

There's some maths you must know by heart, for example times tables. This is sometimes called automaticity. Automaticity allows mental space for your child to process other information and apply their knowledge without struggling with basic number operations. Deaf children may have extra mental demands when working through complex maths problems. Use websites, like BBC Teach Super Movers, to help your child recall maths facts in a fun way.

Lip-reading can be difficult

Being able to say all the different numbers can be difficult for deaf children. Lip-reading some numbers, such as 50 and 15, and 40 and 14, is just about impossible! Use your voice to emphasise the difference between numbers, along with visuals or signs, to prevent misunderstandings.



We have lots more information about helping your child with maths at www.ndcs.org.uk/maths-help.

Fact 1

Research tells us that we're far more likely to label ourselves good or bad at maths than any other subject, even though learning, practice and preparation are as important in learning maths as natural ability.

Fact 2

Children who have good maths skills will also be good at other areas of learning. Children don't learn maths skills separately from other skills; maths learning is linked to language, reading, writing and knowledge about the world.

Fact 3

We're all born with the ability to solve everyday problems, make sense of information, understand patterns or sequence events, and make choices based on facts. From an early age, we can identify the bigger slice of pizza, work out when certain things happen and how to avoid them (for example, bedtime!) and we can make decisions involving shapes, colours and patterns. The more we practise these skills, the better we get at them.

Fact 4

Praising your child for their effort, even if the answer is wrong, will increase their confidence and make them want to learn more. We spend more time and effort doing things that we enjoy, and we enjoy things that we feel successful at. For children to be good at maths, they need to feel confident about giving it a go, even when it's hard.

Fact 5

Maths is developmental, and early maths skills are the foundation for later maths development. Children need to spend time learning, understanding and practising the basics before they can move on to the next stage.

Different skills will develop at different times, depending on your child's age and understanding.

Supporting your child's education this winter

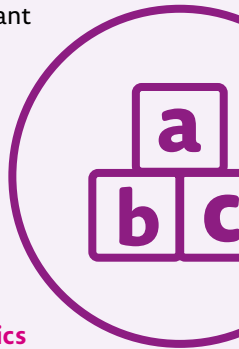
✓ Glue ear

Did you know 8 out of 10 children will experience glue ear before the age of 10, whether they're deaf or hearing. Glue ear, on top of your child's identified deafness, could reduce their ability to listen and learn. Look out for a drop in your child's hearing and let your child's GP and audiologist know. Our webpage provides lots more information. www.ndcs.org.uk/glueear



✓ Phonics fun

Phonics are really important in helping children to learn to read and write. Learn more about this essential skill and how you and your child's school can help your child to learn their phonics by sharing our phonics resource. www.ndcs.org.uk/phonics



✓ Moving on to secondary school

If you have a child who is due to start secondary school next September, it's never too early to start thinking about and planning for the transition. Our webpage has lots of tips to make the move successful. www.ndcs.org.uk/preparingforsecondary



Top maths tips

- Encourage your child to tell you what they think they're being asked. Use simple techniques like highlighting key information and checking they understand all the vocabulary.
- Ask them what learning or knowledge they could use to help them. Remind them of events, objects and experiences.
- Help them to plan for solving the problem. Real objects and visual information are really helpful.
- Discuss what kind of answer would be sensible. This will help them to reflect on what they would expect to find out.
- Evaluate how it went and what could have been done differently.

Technology

Planes, trains and independence

By Gavin Songer (Technology Research Officer)

There are a growing number of useful apps to help you travel around more independently. Here, deaf young people review a selection of free travel apps which help them to get around with confidence.



➔ Have you used an app that is useful for travelling independently? Our Technology team would love to hear about it – send us an email at technology@ndcs.org.uk.

Did you know?

If you meet certain criteria, you may be eligible for concessionary travel to use public transport for free or at a reduced price. The two most common schemes are:

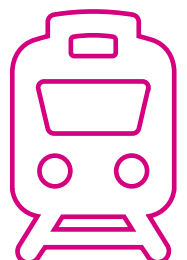
Concessionary bus passes

Contact your local council to apply for a travel card that allows you to travel on buses for free at certain times of the day. Northern Ireland has a similar scheme, offering half price travel fares. For further details:

- England: www.gov.uk
- Scotland: www.mygov.scot
- Wales: www.tfw.wales
- Northern Ireland: www.nidirect.gov.uk

Disabled Persons Railcard

From just £20 a year, you can get up to one third off rail fares for yourself and one companion at any time of the day. You can also download the Railcard app to store your railcard on your phone for easy access while travelling. For more information, visit www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk.





Flightview
Free on Android
and iOS



Airports often make spoken announcements to inform passengers of which gate to go to for boarding and of any delays to their flight. This app allows you to track your flight and displays updates in real-time, so you don't have to worry about missing any information, or your flight!

Features include:

- a map showing the live journey of your flight
- the weather forecast of the airports you are flying to and from
- the ability to save all your flight details to My Trips for easy reference
- the ability to view terminal, gate, and baggage claim information
- the ability to share your trip details via email or text message.

"The app allows the user to track their flight on a map. This shows exactly where on the route the aircraft is.



This will help the family to make sure their loved one gets to their destination. This app is suitable for deaf young people because there's no audio on the app, so they'll not be missing out on any information. However, there are other apps that provide the same or more information about the flights, and you can view them offline as well."

Daniel (16), who has a mild to moderate hearing loss.



National Rail Enquiries
Free on Android
and iOS



Train stations can be as overwhelming as airports, with announcements being made about delays, cancellations or platform changes. This app allows you to keep track of your planned journey and informs you of any disruptions along the way, so you can reach your destination with ease.

Features include:

- the ability to search for up-to-date train times to plan your journeys
- live departure and arrival times with real-time status updates
- notifications to inform you of delays or to avoid missing the station you need to get off at
- the ability to save your favourite journeys and stations for easy access
- the ability to purchase tickets directly from the app.

"This app contains the platform numbers, so it's very helpful as you know where you need to go. There's also information about the stations you're going to (for example, if there's Wi-Fi or an information centre). The app contains some information about the London Underground, so it's handy if you're going to London too. I don't like the graphics; the design looks outdated. I do think it's suitable for deaf young people, but I wouldn't recommend this app if you're looking for an app that's clear and visually comfortable."



Daniel (15), who is profoundly deaf.



UK Bus Checker
Free on Android
and iOS



Some bus stops in the UK have got out-of-date timetables or none at all. This app is a great way to get live tracking and scheduled bus times for all of Great Britain. With real-time updates, you can find out how long you'll need to wait for the next bus to arrive at your chosen bus stop.

Features include:

- a journey planner, so you can work out how to get from A to B with ease
- updates on any diversions, closures and cancellations of bus services
- 3D route maps, so you can see exactly where your bus is travelling
- stop alerts to inform you when your destination is approaching
- the ability to save your favourite stops, journeys and places for quick access.

"I found it really easy to use, once I got used to it. It works perfectly and is easy to understand. It shows you all the buses due around the time you're looking at, along with the bus numbers and routes. You can choose your date and departure time too. There's also a stop alert to notify you of your stop; I found this really helpful. The app informs you of any delays on your journey and the details were very clear. Overall, I think it's definitely suitable for deaf young people to use."



Kara (15), who is profoundly deaf.



➔ For more information on travelling independently, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/independent-travel. For further apps reviewed by deaf young people, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/app-reviews.

Reviews

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

Key

This resource is most suitable for the following ages:

0 to 4

5 to 10

11 to 14

15 to 18

19 to 25

Parents



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



Tiana

M19: The Beginning

Written by Adam Rood
Illustrated by Lesley Danson
Available from Microtia UK at
www.microtiauk.org/product/mi9-the-beginning
Price: £7.99

5 to 10

11 to 14



Maia

Future Girl

Written by Asphyxia
Available from bookshops
Price: £10.99 RRP

11 to 14

15 to 18



Jasmine

Big Feelings Pineapple

Available from Learning Resources at
www.learningresources.co.uk
Price: £12

0 to 4

5 to 10





MI9: *The Beginning* by Adam Rood is about a boy named Billy, who wears hearing aids because he has microtia. He also has a superhero power to read people's thoughts. I think the book is for newly confident readers.

My first reaction to the book was excitement. I found it easy to read by myself, though I did ask my mum for help with some of the words to understand them.

I have never ever read a book like this one in my life! I felt I had things in

common with the character Billy, as we both have green eyes and super hearing aids, although I was born with a unilateral hearing loss. I learned more about microtia and how it affected the shape of Billy's ear.

I would buy this book 100% and I recommend all children to read this book. This is one of my new favourite books!

Tiana (9) is profoundly deaf in one ear and wears a bone anchored hearing aid.



Ida's tips

"Social media and the internet have lots of information and ways to get involved in tackling climate change. Search for @chicksforclimate @ukscn @extinctionrebellion @surfersagainstsewage to name just a few."



Future Girl is an immersive book, styled as a journal, about a deaf teenager called Piper, who's struggling with her deaf identity. One day, she meets Marley, a hearing teenager who has a deaf mother. He teaches Piper to express her deafness by teaching her sign language. However, Marley is also struggling as he has trouble finding his place in the hearing world. Throughout the book, Piper discovers her artistic abilities and allows these, and her communication skills, to express her political beliefs. Teenagers, both deaf and hearing, will enjoy this book.

When I first received the book, I was in awe of its look. I understand that it's wrong to judge a book by its cover, but from looking at this front cover, I knew that the book would be very artistic. I couldn't wait to start reading it!

The first-person narrative allows the story to flow, so it's easy to read because you're involved with the events of Piper's life. I've never read anything like this, and that's a good thing! Not only does it have an original take on climate change, but this is also the first book I've read with a deaf protagonist and one to whom I could relate. I can identify

with Piper's struggles to lip-read and communicate in noisy situations. I believe my younger self would have related to her struggles with her deaf identity.

I learnt the importance of being proud of your deafness and not letting it stop you from expressing your beliefs and opinions. I'd recommend this to deaf teenagers and hearing people who want to learn about the deaf community.

Maia (16) is moderately to severely deaf and wears bone conduction hearing devices.

This is a toy with a purpose. The Big Feelings Pineapple (or Mr Pineapple as I call him), is here to help you teach your children about emotions and expressions.

Talking about feelings is something I started early on with my children. I wanted them to develop their emotional intelligence from a young age to help them understand their thoughts and feelings and to help regulate their emotions as they grow into adults. It won't always be easy, but Mr Pineapple is a practical start and can be a fun toy. It's interactive, which is more engaging

than simply looking at different expressions in a book.

Mr Pineapple is useful in facilitating conversations whether your child can hear or not. It comes with lots of little pieces which I found fiddly and overwhelming at first. However, the girls got stuck in straight away. I left him on the table and when I returned less than two minutes later, they were pushing pieces in all over it. Don't take this too seriously! Let them explore and play first.

The toy also comes with a detailed sheet of Mr Pineapple facial expressions. You can make two faces

on either side of the toy. We made opposite expressions and also tried to guess each other's faces. I asked them why Mr Pineapple felt the way he did and what we could do about it. I'd say it's good to use him in small bursts to label and discuss emotions so that you can develop the conversations over time. This is useful for children aged four and up.

Pamela is mum to twins, Jasmine (5), who's profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants, and Daya, who's an oncology patient.

Resources



Ida's tips

"Find out where your current interests cross paths with environmental activism, for example if you love animals, then you could grow a wildflower garden or build a bug hotel."



What's new

Parenting and family life: Celebrations



What type of information is it?

A new section on our website with tips for making celebrations deaf-friendly at www.ndcs.org.uk/celebrations.

Who's it for? This information is for the whole family, including wider family who you may celebrate with.

What's it about? Information providing simple adaptations for birthdays or religious celebrations so deaf children can fully join in the fun, with tips from other parents and deaf young people.

You might also like: This section is part of our Parenting and Family Life information at www.ndcs.org.uk/parenting-and-family-life.

Additional learning needs (ALN) in Wales



What type of information is it?

A webpage with information on the new additional learning needs (ALN) support in education in Wales www.ndcs.org.uk/ALN-Wales.

Who's it for? This webpage is for parents of deaf children in Wales.

What's it about? It provides a summary of the support available for children with ALN in Wales and outlines the new Individual Development Plans (IDPs).

You might also like: This webpage is accompanied by a downloadable guide at www.ndcs.org.uk/ALN-guide.

What are disability benefits?



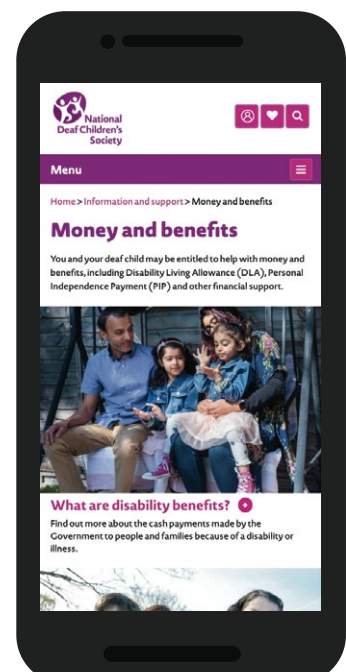
What type of information is it?

A new webpage explaining what disability benefits are and who can get them at www.ndcs.org.uk/disabilitybenefits.

Who's it for? This information is for families of deaf children and young people.

What's it about? It outlines what disability benefits are, why they're meant for deaf children and young people, and how to apply for them.

You might also like: This information is part of a new section of the website on the financial support available for deaf children, young people and their families at www.ndcs.org.uk/money-and-benefits.



Helpline



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



My granddaughter is profoundly deaf and hoping to go to university next year. She wears cochlear implants and has started to consider different university options, but we'd like to know more about choosing one and the types of support that will be available when she starts. I've also read about Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) and wondered if you have any advice on how and when to apply.

With so many different options available, choosing a university and course can feel overwhelming for young people. As a first step, your granddaughter might find it helpful to speak with a careers advisor at her college. She could also research different courses and universities to understand all the options available and the grades and subjects she may need. Prospects has guidance on how to choose the right degree at www.prospects.ac.uk/applying-for-university. UCAS also has written and British Sign Language (BSL) video guidance about choosing a course and making the most of open days at www.ucas.com.

It may be helpful for your granddaughter to think about her different interests and even make a pros and cons list for each option. We have tips for deaf young people making decisions about their future at www.ndcs.org.uk/options. You might also want to read one deaf young person's experience of choosing and applying to university at www.ndcs.org.uk/kirsty.

In terms of the support available, under the Equality Act 2010, all universities have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their services, so deaf and disabled students aren't disadvantaged. All universities have a student support or disability office where prospective students can go to talk about their individual needs. You can find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk/highereducation.

You're right that your granddaughter may be eligible for DSAs. DSAs are funds for disabled students to cover the costs of additional support and equipment, including interpreters, notetakers, radio aids, laptops and software. They aren't means-tested but based on need and don't need to be repaid. We have more information about DSAs at www.ndcs.org.uk/dsa.

Before applying, it can be helpful to contact a Student Disability Advisor at your granddaughter's chosen university to help with the application. It can take up to three months to arrange DSAs,

so it's advisable to apply as soon as possible. She doesn't need to wait for results day or for her course place to be confirmed.

Disability Rights UK also has a Disabled Students Helpline which you can contact at www.disabilityrightsuk.org.

I hope the process goes well for your granddaughter.



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.



Supporting children and young people

Creating an environment where children can achieve both within school and into their lives beyond is St John's Catholic Specialist School's focus. Headteacher Ann Bradbury explains:

"Here at St John's we often hear from former pupils and their stories are nothing short of inspiring. We hear how they have taken the foundations they built here and moved into the world, achieving their goals.

"Our aim is to prepare young people for that journey, to help students learn the skills they needed, coupled with the resilience to keep going when life is difficult.

"We are a specialist school providing education for children with sensory or communication needs. Often mainstream settings have been unable to support the young people who come to us, they have felt isolated from their peers and school was a frustrating place where they were not heard.

"We use an oral communication method and every child, no matter their difficulties, is supported to communicate. We have in-house speech and language and audiology support, small classrooms, peers within those classrooms along with specialist Teachers of the Deaf. There is also additional Deaf CAMHS support where required.

"This all combines to create an environment where every voice is heard, and every voice is celebrated.

"Pupils can come to us on a day basis or board with us weekly, travelling to us from all over the country. Ofsted rate our residential provision as "Outstanding" and said in their last inspection that children who we support residentially: "made excellent progress socially" and those who resided with us also gained confidence, increased life experience and saw their academic achievements improve.

"We believe in supporting the child entirely and holistically, which means protecting and enhancing their mental health and well-being as well as their educational, social and physical well-being.

"We're thrilled to have been awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools 'School Mental Health Award' – Gold Status.

"This prestigious accreditation recognises that St John's takes a whole school approach to mental health and work towards improving emotional health and wellbeing for both our staff and pupils which is essential in helping them achieve their goals."

We welcome visitors to St John's; to arrange to visit or find out more, email: referrals@stjohns.org.uk, call: 01937 842144 or visit: www.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)



Roadshow

So here it is, Merry Christmas

At this time of year, the Roadshow team likes nothing better than popping on a Santa hat or some reindeer ears and teaching some signed Christmas songs!

Last year, the team spent the festive period delivering digital workshops in schools and youth groups, combining great deaf awareness tips, and information about deafness, with learning Christmas songs for the whole class or group to enjoy. From *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* to *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*, the team got into the Christmas spirit and the young people taking part told us afterwards how much fun they'd had.



Here are some of our top Christmas tips:

- 1** Keep music on low or turn it off completely during conversation and mealtimes.
- 2** Allow deaf children to have plenty of breaks. Constant lip-reading may leave them very tired.
- 3** Have a bright lamp on when using fairy lights and candles.
- 4** Christmas may mean changes to routines. Let your child know what's happening in advance.
- 5** Father Christmas's beard can make it difficult to lip-read! Ask the manager of the venue to see if he can remove it. Alternatively, one of Santa's elves could repeat what he says.

And, of course, learn some signed Christmas songs!

The team is looking forward to lots more Christmas fun this year. If your school would like to get involved, please get in touch with us on roadshow@ndcs.org.uk or visit our webpage at www.ndcs.org.uk/roadshow.

BrightSign

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🌐 brightsignlove.com



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Your signs will be translated instantly into speech



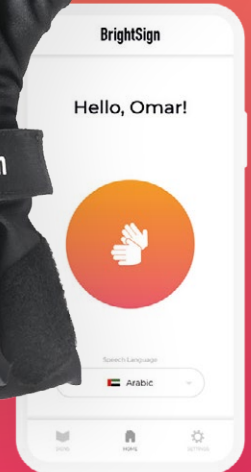
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Established 1829

Leger Way, Doncaster DN2 6AY

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

01302 386733

Local groups

A day in the life of a committee member

The Chesterfield Deaf Children's Society, also known as Hear Me Out, launched earlier this year. Chairperson, Phoebe, describes a day in her life as a local group volunteer...



Phoebe

8am
I wake up and check our group's Facebook page. Wow, 25 new likes overnight! The better the engagement with the Facebook page, the more people will learn about our group.



8.30am
I get up to feed our rabbits, the most important beings in this house! While eating breakfast, I receive an email from a committee member saying they've completed their DBS application [a safeguarding check].

1pm
It's time for a post-lunch stroll. We're arranging a picnic in the park for our members, so I carry out a risk assessment and check that the space we're using is accessible.



11.30am
An email comes through about a family whose newborn baby has just been diagnosed as deaf. They're hoping for some support and guidance from the group. I ask for volunteers through Facebook and the response is amazing; so many parents are happy to be put in touch with them.

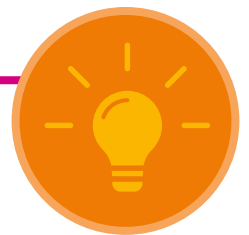


10am
I check in with my volunteers. One of the team has an idea about taking everyone bowling. Our Treasurer is going to ring local bowling alleys to work out some prices.

3pm
It's time to check the agenda for tonight's committee meeting. The aim of the meeting is to discuss how we could spend our annual grant from the National Deaf Children's Society. We have an interpreter at all of our committee meetings, so I check she has everything she needs.



7.30pm
Committee-meeting time! My favourite time as it's great to get the whole team together. We look at what's working well and any events that have happened. We then move on to planning activities and sorting out where our funding will go. I'm very lucky to be supported by a team with such great ideas!



➔ 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. Whether you want to join a group, become a volunteer or even set up your own group, we're here to help. If you'd like to know more, get in touch with the team on connecting.families@ndcs.org.uk.

Events



Joanna and Dieu

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
- Early Years Technology
- Education: Choosing the right school for my child, ensuring equality and inclusion
- Baby and Toddler Coffee Mornings
- Building your Child's Self Esteem
- Hearing Care at Home
- Real-Life Experiences: Hear from our amazing volunteers
- 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
- Early Learning and Early Communication
- Baby Sign
- Understanding your Child's Hearing Loss: Sessions on mild and unilateral deafness and glue ear

A steep learning curve

Dieu, mum to Joanna (1) who is moderately deaf, came to the UK from Vietnam speaking little English and with no knowledge of deafness. But with our support, she now feels more confident helping Joanna face the future.

"I was told Joanna was deaf in the hospital when she was born. But the doctor explained the problem so vaguely, it was beyond my ability to understand. In Vietnam, the general belief is that children born deaf can't speak. That was all I knew.

Then someone else at the hospital told me about the National Deaf Children's Society. I went online, because the pandemic had started, and, relying on Google Translate, I read as much as I could on their website. I understood about 70%!

I registered for all the events aimed at Joanna's age group – the ones which would be most useful to me.

At my first event, a member of staff asked me what help I needed when I said I couldn't understand. I asked if there was a Vietnamese interpreter and they found one called Hau, who has come to all the events with me.

I've now been to 31, and all of them have been useful. Everything is explained so clearly, I can understand it all. Meeting other parents of deaf children has been so helpful. Not only have I learnt about deafness, but I've also learnt how to look after my deaf child.

I'm so impressed with the level of knowledge at the National Deaf

Children's Society. When I go back to Vietnam, I hope I can spread the strength of care that I've learnt from the UK and contribute to something similar to the National Deaf Children's Society there.

Everyone at the events – the staff giving the talks and the other parents – understands the problems I face. Debbie [an Advice and Guidance Officer] helped me get government benefits for Joanna, something I'd never have managed by myself.

Through meeting so many others in the same situation, and hearing deaf children themselves speak, I feel confident for the future of my child. Mentally, my burden has been lightened, and now, I don't feel like I'm on my own."



I feel confident for the future of my child.

Izzy's writing boost

Izzy (10), who has unilateral deafness and uses a hearing aid, attended our Write Now writing course. You can read Izzy's writing in Write Now! included inside this magazine, created by deaf young people for deaf young people.

"I applied for the Write Now writing course because I enjoy writing and want to be an author when I grow up. I hadn't done anything like it before and liked the idea of putting in hard work to create something I was proud of, with other deaf children.

I had no idea what the Zoom calls would hold before I started them, but they were brilliant. I learned something new from each lesson, and I've gained inspiration, motivation, encouragement and confidence. From the script writing class, I learnt that instead of writing, you could draw pictures for inspiration. From the poetry lesson, I learnt useful tips on how to build the structure of the poetry. From the journalism class, I learnt how to interview somebody successfully. From the short stories lesson, I learnt to take time and care with my stories.

Everyone was supportive and encouraging, and I felt less and less embarrassed about reading out my writing. The instructors helped me to focus on finishing the paragraphs we wrote, which I'd always struggled with before. I feel more confident, because I always doubt myself and rub out what I write. Now I know that the first

draft doesn't have to be neat. It can be messy, and that's helped me progress through the stories I write. I'm hoping that my parents won't call me 'chapter one girl' any more!"

Izzy's dad, Tom, also saw the benefits of the course.

"Izzy came away from each session excited and motivated. The facilitators really helped put the children at ease.

Something that really stood out for me was how well the courses were run. The facilitators and presenters were so supportive and patient, ensuring every child felt comfortable.

If your child is a little nervous, for any reason, I would say these events are a good opportunity to join in, as they'll receive great support in a safe, friendly environment."



I've gained inspiration and confidence.



Izzy

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 are currently offering are listed below.

- Your Deafness
- Papier-Mâché
- Creative Writing
- Managing Money
- Dealing with Challenges at School
- Experiment with Science
- Pancake Day
- Working with Animals

If you'd like to tell us your thoughts on or 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. We can also organise other language interpreters if necessary. 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.

Campaigns

What will you do in 2022?

Do you like to see in the New Year with friends or snuggle up on the sofa watching the fireworks on TV? Are you a fan of New Year's resolutions or are they just too much like hard work?

Whatever your thoughts on the New Year, we'd love you to try something that will give deaf children a boost in 2022.

With over 10,000 campaigners across the UK, our Campaigns Network makes a big difference to the lives of deaf children, young people and their families. If you've never done any campaigning before, this is the place to start. Sign up now by visiting campaigns.ndcs.org.uk/join/network.

We make it really easy for you to join in, and you'll be the first to know if something is happening in your area, or nationally, that might affect deaf children.

One campaigner told us: "I love the ways the Campaigns team makes supporting a campaign simple for families – for example, the automated

letters to MPs are so easy to use."

We have Campaigns teams in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, so can offer specific knowledge and expertise relevant to each nation and your local area. Just email us on campaigns@ndcs.org.uk and we can direct you to the right person.

Not sure if campaigning is for you? Join our next Campaigns Curious session for an introduction to campaigning for the rights of deaf children. We'll meet on Zoom on Saturday 15 January 2022 for a chat about how campaigning works. You'll hear from other parent campaigners who have run successful campaigns in their area and have the chance to swap stories and ideas. No campaigns experience needed! Sign up at www.ndcs.org.uk/events.

Early next year we'll be launching a brand new map where you can compare the support available in your area with your neighbour's. It will also show trends over the years, for example, whether the numbers of Teachers of the Deaf are going up or down where you live. With easy actions to take, the map will be a powerful tool for you to drive change and improve things for deaf children where you live. Keep an eye out for this exciting update.

Words: Becky Forrow

Buy a book, give a book

We believe that every child deserves to see themselves represented in the stories they read. That's why, this Christmas, we're asking you to help us give a book about a deaf character to a deaf child in need.

When you buy a book from our online store this festive season, you'll have the chance to gift a book too. Simply go to ndcs-bookshop.myshopify.com, buy a book, and we'll send another copy to a deaf child in need.

You'll get a brilliant Christmas present for your deaf child as well, but don't just take our word for it. Here's what families and deaf children have said about our books...



Daisy and Ted's Awesome Adventures

"It's full of warmth and the characters they meet are all recognisable."

Mark is dad to Cerys (7), who is deaf.



Jake and Jasmine to the Rescue

"Summer completely related to the characters in the book... she wanted to read it again and again!"

Rachael is mum to Summer (6), who is deaf.



Elephant and the Lost Blanket

"The book is vibrant, colourful, exciting and packed full of illustrations that bring the story to life."

Stuart is dad to Lois (2), who is deaf.



The Quest for the Cockle Implant

"I love the use of sign language and that it raises awareness about people who are deaf."

Charlie (9), who has microtia.



To buy a book, give a book, go to ndcs-bookshop.myshopify.com.

To read the full terms and conditions, visit www.ndcs.org.uk/buy-a-book-give-a-book.

Fundraising

New year, new challenge



Ida's tips

"Get involved in the politics of climate change. Taking part in climate strikes or writing to your MP are really good ways to make both a local and international difference."



2021 has been another incredible year of fundraising, with amazing supporters from across the UK taking part in lots of different activities. To help inspire you for 2022, we're sharing five fun and easy ways you can get involved over the next 12 months.

1

Put your best foot forward. Join one of our walking challenges, which can be done in your local area. Hundreds of people joined our 50K in May and Big Step Forward campaigns in 2021, raising tens of thousands of pounds. We would love you to join us next year, so keep an eye on our social channels for the next challenge.



2

Celebrate your birthday by setting up a Facebook Fundraiser. Did you know you can quickly and easily create a fundraising page to celebrate your birthday on Facebook? Last year dozens of people did just that and raised thousands of pounds as part of their celebrations.



3

Nominate us as Charity of the Year at your workplace. We're proud to be working in partnership with some amazing companies, doing their bit to raise vital funds for deaf children. Our charity partnership with The Access Group all began with a nomination from one of our members and went on to raise over £370,000!



4

Take on something special for 2022. Looking for a bigger challenge in the new year? We have places in some of the UK's biggest and best running and cycling events, including the London Marathon, Brighton Cycle and the Royal Parks Half Marathon. As part of #TeamNDCS you will receive training tips, fundraising support and a free running vest.

5

Ready, Steady, Bake! Take part in our Big Cake Bake in 2022. Your Big Cake Bake can be as big or as small as you like. Whether it's at home, at your local club or at work, it's all about having fun with friends, family and colleagues, whilst raising dough for deaf children and young people. Sign up today to get your free Big Cake Bake Kit.



If you'd like more information on any of the above, or have some ideas on how you'd like to get involved in 2022, then you can get in touch with our friendly fundraising team at community.fundraising@ndcs.org.uk or visit www.ndcs.org.uk/get-involved.



Words: Tom Murtagh

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 was a fraud litigation lawyer because...

Courtroom advocacy and cross examination gave me satisfaction, as did working out what was true and what wasn't. Perseverance in questioning is a skill that comes naturally to someone who's deaf!

I started going deaf in my mid-teens and studied Psychology at university, then went on to study Law.

By concealing my deafness in interviews, before the days of 'diversity and inclusivity', I got a place in a small law firm. I then got a job at one of the 'Magic Circle' law firms and eventually became one of the only deaf partners in the city, specialising in international fraud.

By the noughties, people were having to write down telephone conversations for me, and around 2012, I required

a transcriber. I've used special equipment throughout my career, including induction loops and a portable microphone in court. Now I use the transcription facility on my Samsung Galaxy phone.

I set up City Disabilities (www.citydisabilities.org.uk), a charity to help disabled people working in the City. It's a challenging environment with a communication disability. I also lecture in cross-examination and interrogation and have a private pilot's licence – deaf people can fly!

Believe in yourself and play to your strengths. You're not a deaf lawyer, you're a lawyer.

Robert Hunter



I'm an actor because...

I love the variety. You never know what you'll be doing or who you'll be working with.

I enjoyed drama so much at school that when the Solar Bear theatre company visited and said they were looking for people for their summer project and weekly drama workshops, I went along.

They'd established the first Performance in British Sign Language (BSL) and English degree course for deaf people in the UK, in partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. I applied and was lucky to get in.

I've been profoundly deaf since birth and have hearing aids. At the Conservatoire, we had communication facilitators, small classes, and extra support from lecturers.

I've had a steady string of jobs, including as a BSL advisor in the BBC's *Two Doors Down*, *Casualty*, and most recently, *The Last Bus*. I always have a communication facilitator at work, as input from lots of people can make it hard to keep up.

You need a thick skin as an actor, but believe in yourself. If you have a skill no one else has, use it!

Connor Bryson



I'm an electrician because...

I was interested in the construction industry at school and enjoyed working with my hands.

After completing my Level 3 course in Electrical Installation, I applied for an apprenticeship scheme through a local council and was offered a place with Lovell London. I'm now fully qualified.

I'm profoundly deaf and BSL is my first language. I applied for an Access to Work grant and had interpreters on site. As my confidence grew, I only needed the support for meetings and training. There were a lot of health and safety checks on site before I could start, and an alarm system was fitted that could text my phone in case of emergency.

I got used to communicating with colleagues in various ways – lip-reading, notes and signing. At school and college, I'd always had communication support workers. Working on a construction site improved my communication skills with hearing people. During my apprenticeship, I was highly commended in the Young Builder of the Year awards 2019.

For a job like mine, look for opportunities with your local council and don't be afraid to follow your dream.

Sam Goodbody



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



Securing the future of deaf children and young people