

**Deaflink North East**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2012-13**



**Deaflink**

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**D**iverse Deafness  
**E**nergy  
**A**dvocacy  
**F**riendship  
**L**anguage  
**I**ndividuality  
**N**etworking  
**R**esources

Deaflink is an open, inclusive and supportive voice to empower and improve the quality of life of deaf people.

We are the only organisation within Newcastle that works with D/deaf (with a capital 'D' referring to British Sign Language users), hard-of-hearing and deafblind people.

The aim of Deaflink is to:

- Improve access to health, education, employment, leisure and social opportunities for all D/deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing people in Newcastle and the North East
- To raise awareness of the needs of these excluded groups to statutory and voluntary/private organisations and agencies
- To act as a consultative group offering training support and advocacy

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

# Equality and Diversity Statement

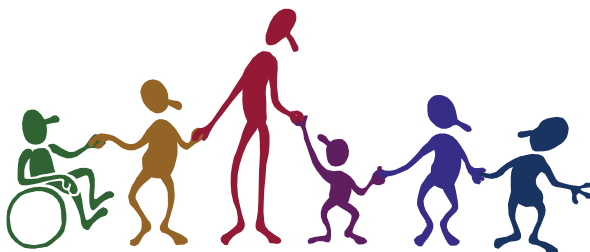
## Board of Trustees

# AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Deaflink is committed to a positive policy of equal opportunity in the delivery of its services and employment.

Deaflink will actively oppose all forms of discrimination carried out on the grounds of gender, colour, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, social background, age, marital status, those with HIV status, and discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

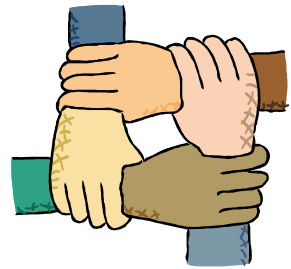
Deaflink is determined that the principles of equality of opportunity and embracing diversity will underpin all service provision. Services will aim to be accessible to those who need or want them. Within the framework of collective provision there will be recognition of difference and individual choice.



In all aspects of employment, Deaflink will operate a positive equality and diversity framework from recruitment and selection through training and development, employment procedures, consultation and participation and appraisal.

Direct and indirect discrimination will be eliminated and positive measures will be introduced to redress imbalances, including the use of positive action provisions within the law.

Applications for jobs are considered on merit and equal opportunities will exist for all facing disadvantage and possible discrimination.



Deaflink will ensure that all staff concerned with the provision and delivery of services does so in accordance with Deaflink's equality and diversity policies and the law. To achieve our aims we will:

- Promote equal opportunities and ensure that it is integrated throughout the organisation.
- Design our services to meet the needs of our community.
- Combat discrimination wherever it occurs and, in particular, discrimination against the groups in the scope of this statement.
- Provide training and guidance to all staffs to ensure Deaflink commitment to equal opportunities is known and understood.
- Review all systems and procedures in the provision of service to ensure equality of opportunity, responsiveness, sensitivity and accessibility.
- Give active support to the community to enable participation in service development and decision making.
- Performance will be constantly monitored and evaluated against equal opportunities objectives.
- Challenge acts of harassment

Jo Nicolls

After being a project for 10 years under Newcastle Healthy City, Deaflink became a registered charity in its own right in April 2012.

It has been a year of change, change and more change. Finding our feet and taking those first toddler steps, learning new legislations and regulations to ensure we establish ourselves with a strong foundation.

I am proud to have been asked to be the new independent Deaflink's first Chair. Our Community Action Group and our Board of Trustees have worked hard to make sure that Deaflink continues and builds upon the fantastic work of past staff and volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the people who have given their time and energy to helping Deaflink get to where it is today.

I am all too aware of how difficult it can be to manage a charity in today's economic challenges. One of the key issues we face is how can we plan ahead when we don't know what funding we will have. This year we have received 3 years funding from the Newcastle Fund, a grant from the council and this gives us some confidence in the future.

Deaflink is important to Newcastle and the North East because we work to inform individuals and communities of planned changes to how services are delivered or new rules. We gather information, or feedback from the communities and use this to tell the policy makers if they are getting it right!

I have seen with great sadness and, to some extent, anger of the affects on

people lives with the changes to the welfare benefit system and we will continue to monitor this.

I also have concerns about cuts to council services such as specialist support teams and communication support and I'm sure that Deaflink will continue to monitor this.

For the first time we have been gathering information about how many people use our service and who they are? This information tells us that the demand upon our service is increasing and we will do everything we can to meet this demand, but we must increase resources. Fundraising is a priority for 2013-14.

Deaflink in the past predominantly dealt with health issues under Newcastle Healthy City—now we expand to cover a wider range of topics including advocacy.



Jo Nicolls

## The staff team

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2012 is the first year of an independent Deaflink (in terms of a legal body). This has led to us moving office and setting up in a new location, We have had to create new policies and procedures and identifying ways of working together for the new team and the governance. We have tried to establish transparent, accountable and systems and we are working towards achieving a PQASSO quality mark soon.

During this period we have been able to continue to deliver services such as our health forums, Hard of Hearing groups, cookery classes, deaf awareness sessions etc.

"Deaflink helped me sort out my benefits when the government changed it. Was very worried, but they helped me stay calm"

We have risen to the challenge of developing an accessible website and ours can be found at [www.deaflink.org.uk](http://www.deaflink.org.uk). And we've started using Twitter, please follow us at Deaflink\_NE.

We continue to provide support to individuals and have developed a recording and monitoring system and this will help us identify trends and changes in future years.

A clear priority for this year has been to build links with commissioners of services for both the local council and the clinical commissioning groups with a view to being funded over the long term.

Unfortunately this was the final year of funding for Deaflink to provide the very popular Healthy Deaf Minds forum which stopped at the end of March. We hope to find funding to support this important forum soon.

### Deaflink North East Achievements and Challenges of 2012/2013

- Organised a regional event for deafened people with over 75 people attending.
- Using social/media networks to provide information.
- Involvement in the Physical Disabilities and Sensory Issues Strategic Board, part of the Newcastle Wellbeing for Life Partnership in developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the Council.
- Successfully lobbied the Council for funding of Lip Reading class teacher. Classes now running from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013.
- Provided 9 Deaf Awareness Taster sessions for the Newcastle Hospital Trust, GP's Time Out events and other agencies—attended by 128 people.

"Very informative – made me more aware of deafness and how to help people in my job and outside of work!"

- Participated in the "Hardest Hit Campaign" marches.
- Affiliated with Hearing Link who work with Deafened People.

# Service Summary

## The staff team

- May 2012 we celebrated Deaf Awareness Week with events in and around Newcastle.
- Supported Deaf people from North Tyneside at consultation meetings with 4 NT Area forums.
- Continue to provide valuable group information and support through Healthy Deaf Minds and individual support through Mental Health and Deafness Service.
- 2 newsletters distributed to over 500 people.
- Supported D/deaf people in consultation events with Newcastle City Council for example the changes to the Sensory Support Team.

### Analysis of work

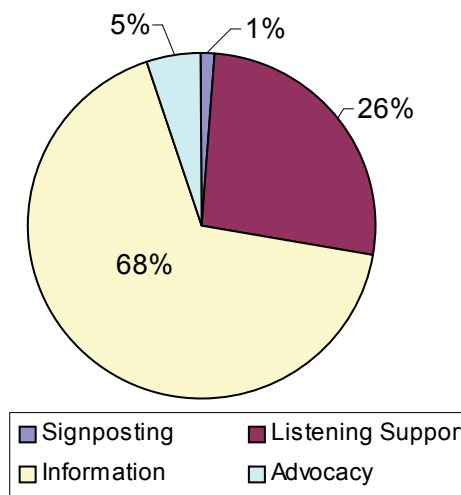
From June 2012 we started to record information about who was contacting Deafink and how we were helping them. This has offered some very interesting information:

Between June 2012 and end of March 2013 (9 months):

- 1004 individuals contact Deafink for assistance.

- 201 of these people needed more than one visit or contact to address their issue.
- These contacts led to us making 25 phone calls; 3,177 text messages; 68 letters and 9,295 emails to address the issues.

The pie chart below shows what level of support we provided for individuals—showing well over 90% of our work is providing support and information.



On top of the work with individuals we had 675 requests and enquiries from other agencies for asking for assistance, information, training etc.



This was our first year of being an independent organisation and therefore we do not have any previous years to compare figures. We must also note that Deaflink benefitted from a generous start up contribution from Newcastle Healthy City to help us on our way to independence.

## Summary of Accounts April 2012– March2013

Total Income	£118,394
Total Expenditure	£ 66,502
Total Funds carried forward	<u>£ 51,892</u>

## Balance sheet as at 31st March 2013

Fixed Assets:	-
Current Assets:	
Debtors:	£ 2,291
Cash at Bank and in hand:	£50,639
Total Current Assets	<u>£52,930</u>
Creditors: falling due within one year:	£ 1,038

## Total Assets

Unrestricted Funds:	£17,340
Designated Funds:	£ 5,128
Restricted Funds:	£29,424
Total Charity Funds	<u>£51,892</u>

Thanks to our Funders and contributors: Newcastle Primary Care Trust; Newcastle Fund; Newcastle Healthy City; Sheila Campbell; Dame Allans School; Elizabeth Chisholm and many others who have contributed 'in kind'.

For a full copy of our 2012-13 accounts please contact Heidi Jobling on 0191 281 2314 or email: [heidi@deaflink.org.uk](mailto:heidi@deaflink.org.uk)

## A greater understanding

Deaflink works with a wide range of people. From this we know that there is a lack of understanding of deafness in society which creates barriers that need to be challenged. Not one person experiences deafness the same way and we all need a greater understanding of how our behaviour affects others.

### Are you aware?

- ◆ 1 in 7 of us have a hearing loss – it's the second largest disability in the UK.
- ◆ There are nearly 450,000 Deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the North East.
- ◆ Over 40,000 Hard of hearing people live in Newcastle.
- ◆ There are 3,200 Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users in the North East.
- ◆ 10,000 people in the UK have cochlear implants.
- ◆ 2 million people in the UK wear hearing aids.
- ◆ There are 15,000 – 18,000 hearing aid users in Newcastle.
- ◆ 840 babies are born deaf every year.
- ◆ 90% of deaf children have hearing parents.
- ◆ Many Deaf people's first language is not English – it's British Sign Language.
- ◆ 23,000 deafblind people in the UK – 449 registered in Newcastle upon Tyne.
- ◆ Deaf people can have various systems such as pager alarms and flashing lights to alert them to their front doorbell, phone ringing, smoke alarm and baby alarm.
- ◆ Someone walking with a white cane with red tape indicates dual sensory

loss.

- ◆ Hearing loss can be gradual, if you notice you can't hear the television go for a hearing test.
- ◆ Some people feel embarrassed within their family because they have become hard of hearing.
- ◆ Hearing parents often don't know how to cope with their deaf child and do not have access to free BSL (Signing) classes.
- ◆ People who have a cochlear implant can find it difficult to know which world they belong to.
- ◆ There is an Access to Work Scheme to help people who are deaf retain and gain employment.
- ◆ Not all people with hearing loss are suitable for a cochlear implant.
- ◆ "Hate" crime against people with disabilities has increased.

There are different levels of Deafness - not all deaf people can lip-read, not all deaf people understand BSL; not all people with dual sensory loss use Braille. Also, shouting doesn't help!

We have used the next part of our report to highlight the differences in individuals experiences.



DEAF AWARENESS

Kristel Jobling

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Kristel Jobling

My name is Kristel and I am a young deafblind woman living in North Tyneside.

I am going to talk you through the simplest of tasks that we all have to complete every day and you'll get an impression of the ways that people with many different kinds of **Deafness cope with life** and deal with what can be some really funny and frustrating events.

I wake at 6.30 every day with my mobile phone squawking on its loudest setting (*sorry to my neighbours*) and I switch the alarm off really quick. I also have a vibrating cushion alarm but this alone often means that I can easily have 15-45 minutes extra sleep!

I wear **two digital hearing aids** every day and they sit inside my ear canal. They're great and really **improve my communication** in phenomenal ways but they are just a tool and just as the analogue aids can be temperamental and challenged so too can the digital aids.

There are times when my aids can be in danger inside of my ear. They could be damaged by too much sweat on a hot day or exercise at my gym. And if I develop an ear infection or even ear ache the pain is magnified because my ear canal is already filled by the aid. Both ear canals are very different in shape and you'll just have to believe me when I tell you that my left hearing aid is much longer and twisted than the right one!

Walking around **with deafness** is itself challenging and I have to be very aware of my surroundings, myself and others around me. My **white cane does help** to identify my needs but sometimes I do feel a little too vulnerable carrying it.

**Outside of the house in daily life, deafness poses many problems which tire all people with deafness and those with other sensory impairments. Speaking to people through Perspex screens is tough if you can't see them well enough to lip-read, talking to professionals whilst they have their heads tilted down to a computer screen can be a nightmare, service in bars and cafes and some of the simplest transactions can become a stressful juggling act of twisting and turning, lip-reading and separating spoken words from background noise, weather sounds and just life!**

**I would like to see sensory awareness training for those in a professional environment that is refreshed regularly.**

DEAF AWARENESS

# Deaf Awareness

## Maggie Taylor and Dolly Francis

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Maggie is unsure whether she was born deaf or whether she had pneumonia which caused deafness. When she was young Maggie's family did not learn sign language and found it hard to accept her deafness and any attempts at communicating with them seem to fail. Finally, she was fostered by another family and went to Boarding School only going home at holiday time.

It is still difficult for Maggie to communicate with the hearing community as her first language is British Sign Language but she has persevered and finds that there is improved deaf awareness now in the shops that she visits. That hasn't always been the case.



Maggie Taylor

**Dolly's story:** Dolly became profoundly deaf after her mother contracted the measles when she was pregnant, but her two brothers and niece are also deaf. Her mother and father were hearing. Dolly's first language, like Maggie's is British Sign Language and to communicate with hearing people who can't sign Dolly tries writing things down for them. In Dolly's family her mother communicates by using "family signs" but her father does not use sign language.

Dolly has experienced lack of deaf

awareness in shops where the staff tried to help when she requested assistance by asking her to use a microphone and shouted louder and louder, which is no use at all to profoundly deaf people.



Dolly Francis

***She found that some shops display the EAR symbol but the staff are not sure how to help a deaf person because they have had no deaf awareness training.*** On another occasion, at the doctor's surgery, a receptionist had laughed when she said she was deaf. That left Dolly feeling hurt and upset. Even worse, when her mother died an interpreter could not be booked and this made a very stressful and sad time worse for Dolly.

**Now that Dolly is an older person she worries about being in a Care Home where there is no deaf awareness or British Sign Language users. Dolly says "Deaf people don't wasn't to be lonely or left out, whatever their age." Most statutory Residential Homes and other services do not give equal access to their services for the Deaf Community.**

DEAF AWARENESS

Bob Weiner

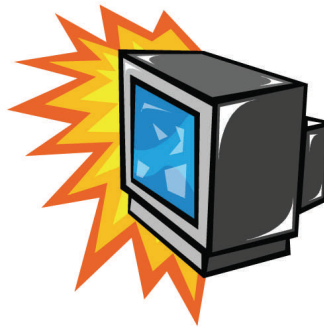


Bob Weiner

“Robert, I’ve shouted three times now for you to come and have your tea”.  
“Dad, the whole street will be able to benefit, you’ve got the TV on so loud”

This went on for at least 5 years before I got the message that I had become hard of hearing. I eventually psyched myself up to see our GP, who made an appointment for me to have a hearing test at the Freeman and about three months later my hearing aids arrived.

That was about 5 years ago and now I consider myself “an old hand” at the hearing loss game. I look for the T-bar sign to take advantage of loop systems where they are fitted; I’ve been to several lip reading classes and I’ve joined a hard of hearing self help group (SHHH!) This latter, organised by Deaflink, has been particularly helpful, as I’ve been able to exchange information with many other hard of hearing people. Deaflink also organise various specialist speakers to come to the group and



these have provided information on such things as equipment and services available for people with hearing loss.

As a result of all this support, I now make a point of telling people I’m hard of hearing (they don’t seem to notice my hearing aids), I have an alarm clock that I don’t sleep through, I have an extra loud phone and a loop fitted to keep volume levels down on the television.

**Hearing loss is not a life enhancing experience but I’ve found that dealing with it certainly has been.**



An induction loop system is designed to work with the T (telecoil) setting on many hearing aids to provide a clearer hearing option for the Hard of Hearing (HOH) or deaf person to switch to T input only - cutting out background noise and having. A Induction Loop System consists of:

1. An induction loop amplifier.
2. Wire coming from the amplifier, looped around the area it is intended for use in, so around a room, section of a room, or a reception desk.
3. Input into the system, so the television, or a microphone for the speaker

DEAF AWARENESS

# Cochlear Implant Awareness

Sarah Eaglestone

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Hi my name is Sarah Eaglestone. I am 38yrs old married with two sons. I am a Senior Community Health Trainer for HealthWORKS Newcastle. My husband and my sons are hearing. I live in a hearing world and I am treated as a hearing person. This is not always a good thing and it can be difficult at times to keep up as a hearing person, but I have known no different, so just get on with.

I was about 12 years old when I was first fitted with **hearing aids**. It was said that my hearing had been deteriorating since birth, but because I had taught myself to **lip read** so well, my hearing loss had not been detected until my teenage years. I did not learn to sign as I have good speech. Doctors and teachers said that my speech would be affected if I was to sign as I would not use it as much.

I have had my **cochlear implant** for nearly 15 years now and it is improving all the time. I have recently been fitted with a processor that can be made waterproof so no more struggling when I'm on holiday or at the swimming pools.

**Having a cochlear implant has been one of the best things ever. It has changed my world and given my loads of confidence. It has enabled me to move forward in my life and made it possible for me to find a job that I love. Before my implant I was beginning to withdraw into myself, as I could not communicate well with hearing people and because I had not learnt to sign I could not communicate with people from the deaf community. It has given me a second chance.**

**Deaflink** has been a very good support network . A few years back I had a very tough time as there had been some technical and medical problems with my implant. I realised that there was nowhere to go to for the support I needed or help from people that have experienced what I was going through at the time. This was the toughest time I have ever had during my time as a cochlear implant user, but with help and support from my friends, family, the organisation I work for **and especially Deaflink** I managed to pull myself back together and I am now back to my old self again.

So a big thank you to them all. At the time It would of been nice to have someone to say “yeah, I understand, I've been there” but I had no way of doing this. **Deaflink introduced me to another cochlear implant user which was really helpful.**



Sarah Eaglestone

DEAF AWARENESS

Jenny Wright

## DEAF AWARENESS

Questions and Answers

**How do you deal with your hearing loss in a normal day?** As best I can, with my hearing aids always on (except when in a noisy train!). I try to remember to switch to the most appropriate setting, and (more difficult), remember to switch back afterwards. I always carry replacement batteries with me, and a 'blue' flexi thing to clear out any blockage.

**What are your communication methods?** Listen and talk, often asking for a repeat of the question/statement. If it is important I always write it down in my diary, to ensure I have it correctly and to aid an increasingly failing memory!

**Can you lip-read?** A little, but am wanting to learn more.

**How does your hearing loss impact on your life?** When with friends it doesn't matter, because they know to speak clearly, or are used to me asking 'what are you talking about?', but with strangers or acquaintances I find it hard work, and am never sure whether I've heard correctly. I always tell people when I encounter them that I'm hard-of-hearing, and ask them please to excuse me if I answer oddly because I've not heard correctly.

**How do you know your grandchild is crying in the cot upstairs when you are downstairs or asleep?** If downstairs I used to use a baby alarm (grandchildren now 9 and 5). Now, I sleep on my right side with my left hearing aid in, and the doors open.

**Do you watch subtitles or use loop system while watching the TV?** Yes I watch subtitles, and have Sennheiser RS 120 II headphone (which isn't perfect because the house electrics interferes with it).

**Are there any aids or equipments that made a big difference to your life?**

Yes, a special cordless telephone (BT Aura), and in the kitchen, wall mounted, a BT

Relate 3000. I am still undecided which mobile phone to buy to replace a very old Samsung, that I can't hear unless I'm in a quiet room. I also have two especially loud door bells with a different ring tone for front and back door.

**How did you become hard-of-hearing?**

I think I must always have been a little deaf, because my Mum had German measles while she was pregnant with me, and I was very slow in learning to talk. Also, we went out to South Africa shortly after I was born, so I probably missed the usual health visitor routine checks.

I had a very bad squint as a child (also possibly due to the German measles), and was a very noisy little girl (possibly to compensate for being HOH).

**Any positive stories?** I always sleep like a log, because noises, of any sort, never keep me awake because I can't hear them!

**Any barriers with the**

**communication?** I struggle to hear and decipher what my grandchildren are saying. I retired early from nursery school teaching because I couldn't hear or understand what the children were telling/asking me.

**Anything is upsetting or worrying you?** I don't like getting old!!





### Board of Trustees

- ◆ Jo Nicolls (Chair)
- ◆ Bob Weiner
- ◆ Joyce Pennington
- ◆ Tracey Sharp
- ◆ Dr Philip Matthews
- ◆ Maureen McGarrity (resigned Dec 2012)
- ◆ Jeff Morgan

### Staff

- ◆ Katie Dewar (Development Worker)
- ◆ Rhona Stanbury (Strategic Development Co-ordinator)
- ◆ Heidi Jobling (Manager)

### Community Action Group (CAG)

- ◆ Mark Patterson
- ◆ Alex Redpath
- ◆ Fahmi Syeda
- ◆ Gabrielle Hall (left Jan 2013)
- ◆ Dolly Francis
- ◆ Maggie Taylor
- ◆ Emma Ashie-Neequaye
- ◆ Kristel Jobling
- ◆ Charlotte Venus
- ◆ Nichola Barcoe
- ◆ David Lennard
- ◆ Xirong He

PERSONNEL

# HOW TO CONTACT US

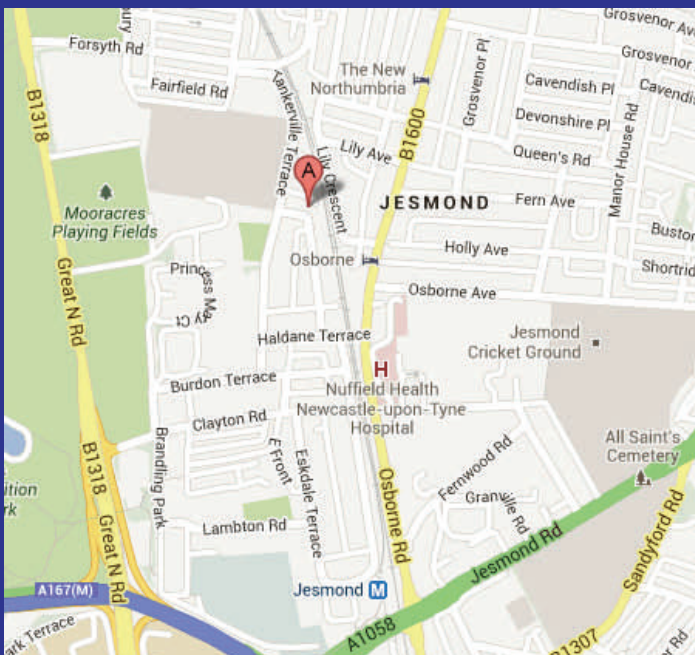
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**Website:** [www.deaflink.org.uk](http://www.deaflink.org.uk)  
**Twitter:** Deaflink\_NE

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5/10 minutes walk from Jesmond / West Jesmond  
Metro Station)**



This report is available in large print, please contact us at the above address for a copy.