



Deaflink North East

ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14



Deaflink

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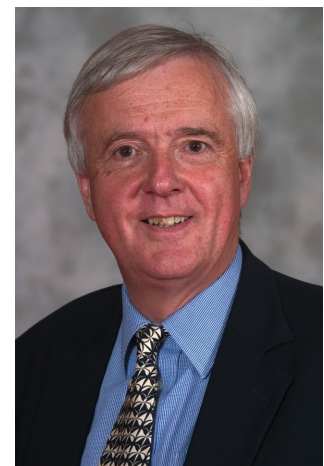
INTRODUCTION from Lord Shipley, Patron

I am delighted to have been invited to serve as Patron of Deaflink. I have been enormously impressed by the work it does and the support it provides for so many people.

Voluntary organisations and charities are the lifeblood of an inclusive society. They fill gaps when state providers can't do as much as we might like and they provide information, services and support to individuals who need it.

In its work to help D/deaf, Deafblind, Hard-of-Hearing and Deafened people and their families across the North East, Deaflink makes an enormous contribution. Its success derives from all the individual contributions of staff and volunteers who together make such a difference.

I wish Deaflink every success in its vital role as a campaigner on behalf of deaf people. It does an excellent job and long may it continue!



JOHN SHIPLEY

Diverse Deafness
Energy
Advocacy
Friendship
Language
Individuality
Networking
Resources

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 employment, education, health, 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

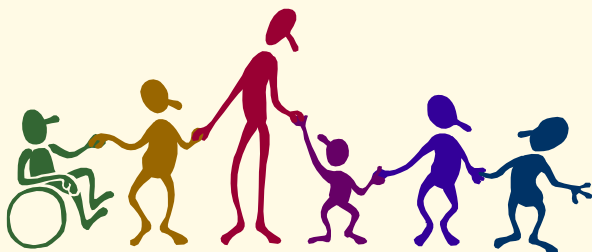
Board of Trustees

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.



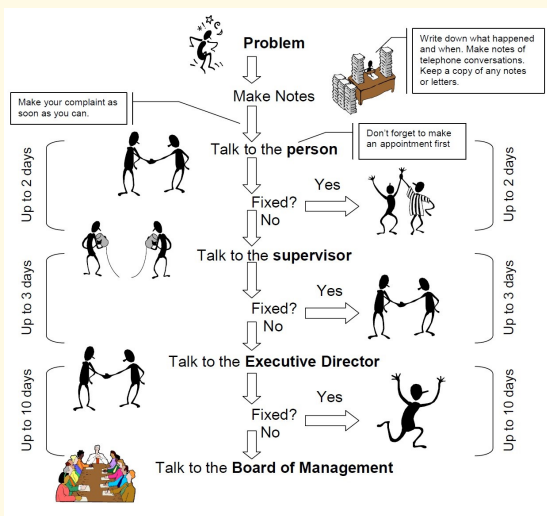
Deaflink will ensure that all staff concerned with the provision and delivery of services does so in accordance with Deaflink's equality and diversity policies and the law. To achieve our aims we will:

- 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

In the last report, we made a commitment to monitor various situations affecting deaf people locally, regionally and nationally. This is still ongoing and continue to gather information to produce evidence of failures by service providers at various levels.

Services will not change unless complaints are made, which is something that is missing formally in the deaf community. Complaints systems generally do not take into consideration various methods of complaint procedures that are accessible to a wider group of people.



An example of a 'hearing' orientated complaints procedure - don't forget to book the interpreter!!

The deaf community often find it nigh on impossible to make a formal complaint directly to services and therefore rely on organisations like Deaflink to gather complaints and put them to services.

This reminded me of a time where I encouraged deaf people to come in, film them signing their complaint onto a

DVD and sending it off in the post with a note attached saying 'complaint-please respond'. It was then up to the services to sort out an interpreter to get a transcript of the complaint. Remember the procedures have time scales! Perhaps we should be pushing this to happen more?!

One of our concerns last year was the cut of sensory services social workers with deaf people. Our concerns were founded to be true, Deaflink were and indeed are receiving more referrals from Social Services simply because the person is deaf. They are not referring the deaf person to the right service linked to their actual issue. Deaflink are not a generic organisation with the ability to cover all aspects of life and so we often end up, quite rightly, referring to the correct service. This clearly means a delay in resolving their issue, causes added stress, and most importantly, shows a lack of understanding and responsibility by Social Services.

Historically Deaflink and the Social Work Team for Deaf people worked closely which meant deaf people were getting a more holistic support. Sadly, those days are long gone.

As always, none of this is possible without the excellent support from our Trustees and Community Action Group (CAG) members.

Jo Nicolls



TRUSTEES REPORT

What did Deaflink do in the last year

Deaflink North East Achievements and Challenges of 2013/2014

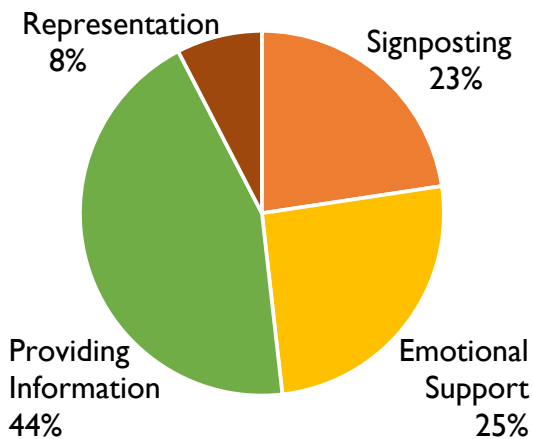
SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

Since April 2013 Deaflink have provided support to 370 'new cases' - people coming to us with new issues or problems. We continued to support people with longer term issues from the previous year.

In total Deaflink provided 899 meetings to these individuals. And following those meetings we carried out 1483 actions - phone calls, letters or emails.

The chart below shows what level of service or support that we gave to our clients.

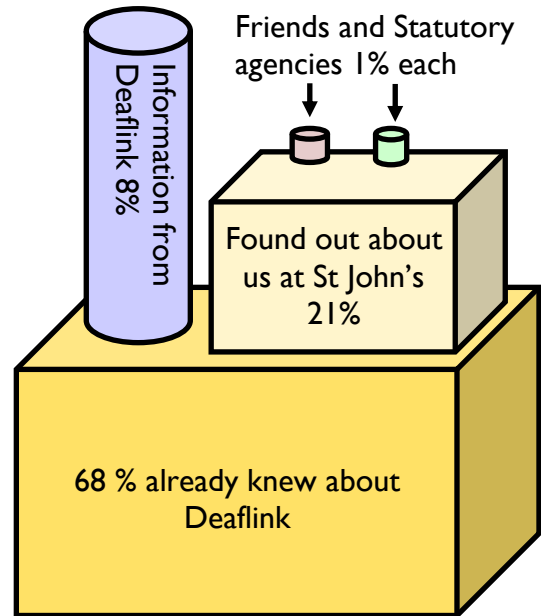
WHAT WE DID



HOW WERE PEOPLE REFERRED TO US?

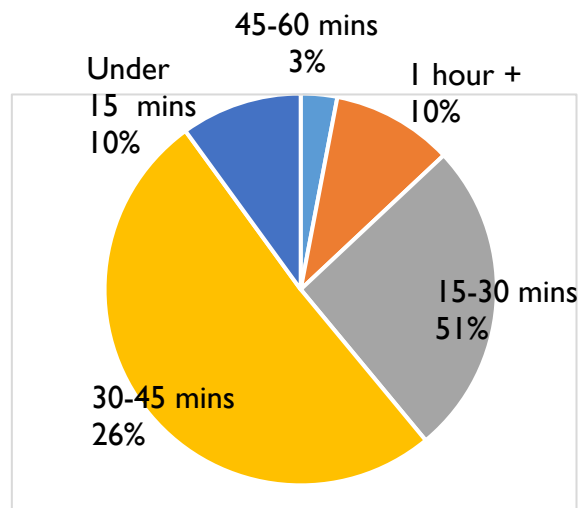
93% of the new cases already knew about Deaflink and referred themselves. Of the remaining clients 57% were referred by family and friends, 23% by another deaf organisation. Interestingly no health professional or school/college referred a deaf person to us.

HOW DID PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT US?



TIME SPENT

We record how long we spend providing support to people. This is not a measure of quality only monitoring.



No health professional - GP, nurse etc. referred a deaf person to Deaflink

What did Deaflink do in the last year

GOVERNANCE

We have spent a lot of time looking at Deaflink as an organisation and how we are developing and whether we are meeting the needs of the communities.

In November the Board of Trustees held a strategic planning day and started the work towards a 3 year Action Plan.

Staff have spent considerable time working with our Community Action Group to create an induction pack and training programme to ensure that all of our members understand their roles and responsibilities

For the first time ever Deaflink has a Patron and we are happy to welcome Lord John Shipley to the team and we look forward to developing our relationship with him.

It's early days but it's going well

INTERAGENCY WORK

We have been able to attend several local forums—to understand what other agencies are doing and how it affects the deaf communities.

We have also established a Sensory Issues Group, bringing together other agencies in Newcastle who work in this area. It's early days but it's going well.

TRAINING & DEAF AWARENESS

Deaflink has spent time reviewing our current ways of working and we have identified a clear strategy for the future. In the last year we have continued to provide training and awareness sessions to Educational and Health organisations.

ACCESS ISSUES

We have been working hard to raise concerns with Clinical Commissioning Groups, Hospital Trusts and Councils in Newcastle and North Tyneside regarding their systems and procedures in providing BSL interpreters in their organisations.

This will be ongoing!

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

We work in partnership with local mental health professionals to provide support and social opportunities for deaf people experiencing related issues. It is a closed group.

SATURDAY FORUMS

In this year we had 5 forums and on average we had 55– 60 people attending. We had 2 forums looking at benefits and the impact of the 'bedroom tax' and universal benefits.

The 3 others gave the following feedback:

	Booking Interpreters	Healthy Minds and Safeguarding	Access to interpreters and health services
Useful	94%	86%	87%
Enjoyed	98%	88%	92%

Comments included: "Good Information" "To be assertive and firm and get my right!" "every section good, but a lot to take in"

TRUSTEES REPORT

Summary of Accounts April 2013– March2014

	2013-14	2012-13
Total Income	£87,471	£118,394
Total Expenditure	£76,697	£ 66,502
Total Funds carried forward	£10,774	£ 51,892

Balance sheet as at 31st March 2014

Fixed Assets:	-	-
Current Assets:		
Debtors:	£106	£ 2,291
Cash at Bank and in hand:	£64,914	£50,639
Total Current Assets	£65,020	£52,930
Creditors: falling due within one year:	(£2,354)	(£1,038)
Total Assets		
Unrestricted Funds:	£18,014	£17,340
Designated Funds:	£7,412	£ 5,128
Restricted Funds:	£37,240	£29,424
Total Charity Funds	£62,666	£51,892

For a full copy of our 2013-14 accounts please contact Heidi Jobling on 0191 281 2314 or email: heidi@deaflink.org.uk or look online at Charity Commission website.

Thanks to our Funders and contributors: Newcastle Clinical Commissioning Groups; Newcastle Fund and many others who have contributed 'in kind'.

In particular many thanks to Clare Brown at Proctor and Gamble for their very generous donation and to the great number of you who saved the tokens for the Chronicle Wish campaign.

Over the last year deaf people's access to interpreters has been getting harder, especially for people using Doctors and Hospitals. Deaflink held a forum last autumn to ask if people were having access difficulties and over the last few months we have had face to face meetings with people, as well as using Facebook for further intelligence. We have also had an opportunity to explore situations with several interpreters. We have been told a variety of things that have gone wrong or not worked properly.

The key issues from our consultations are:

- The interpreter was not booked
- Too many interpreters turn up
- Family or friends pressurised to act as interpreters
- Patients try to communicate via lip-reading and writing notes
- Health professionals refusing to accept the need for an interpreter
- Lack of Deaf Cultural awareness.
- No choice of interpreter – for example gender matching
- Use of unqualified interpreters
- Lack of communication or consultation regarding interpreting service changes

The real experiences and feedback of our members in the last 12 months is worrying. They speak of ignorance by health professionals; feeling powerless; feeling like '2nd class citizens'. People are asking for BSL interpreters and their requests being ignored. Family members are being told that if they don't interpret then the operation will be cancelled.

Significant resources are being spent on

the development and implementation of health policies such as 'A call to Action' and 'Transforming participation in Health and Care' yet small steps to ensure communication with the patient are not being taken!

This is a silent problem and often ignored. The services are not aware of the problems, they state that they have not received many complaints.

What can deaf people do?

- Insist on having an interpreter
- Complain
- Don't accept poor service—stop making do!

What can service providers do?

Consider and review what your organisation does to communicate with D/deaf people, for example do you have online booking systems or SMS contact?

Ask deaf people how they want to communicate and have a system for identifying this choice on their file.

Stop expecting their friends or family to interpret (must be deaf person's choice).

Understand that writing notes or using untrained family members is not an acceptable way of communicating with your client.

Book double length appointments to allow for interpreting time.

If you can't get 'face to face' interpreter, look at alternatives.

Deaf Awareness and Communication skills training to staff.

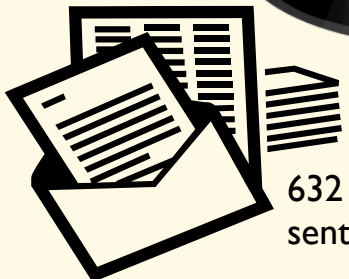
Make complaints procedures better

Deaflink provides the opportunity for people to meet, learn and share their experiences.

This year we had a range of external speakers to provide information on topics to our groups SHHH and Deaf Men's Health Forum. We also had monthly healthy eating cookery classes with the introduction of a new teacher.

The administration to support these groups totalled

3,614 sent



632 sent

Topics include:

- ◇ Fire Safety in the Home,
- ◇ Coping with hearing loss,
- ◇ Equipment,
- ◇ Communication,
- ◇ Wealth,
- ◇ Stress/anxiety,
- ◇ Theatre performances,
- ◇ Newcastle Hospitals,
- ◇ Health Check MOTs,
- ◇ Safeguarding Adults,
- ◇ Counselling,
- ◇ Mental health,
- ◇ Tinnitus,
- ◇ Loop systems,
- ◇ NUFC tour and EatWell plate etc.

Deaflink provided Information Stalls at:

- Newcastle Society for the Blind Visual Impaired World event
- Time to Change event
- Newcastle College Christmas event
- Action on Hearing Loss job fair
- Hearing Link rehab programme
- Transition Day with Freeman hospital and schools

“The people attending the sessions have come together to help each other and welcome new faces to the sessions, it is a lovely transformation to witness” Sarah Eaglestone (Tutor)

GROUPS



Healthy Eating Cookery Class
December 2013

Deaf Men's Health Forum, St James Park, September 2013

NUFC substitutes bench - Deaflink are ready to offer help for next season!!!



“Lovely to be with other similarly HOH, Deafened and Deaf folk in such a friendly, well organised and very informative meetings. Makes me feel much less isolated and alone, and that there is understanding and help to be obtained. A big thank you to all involved.”



Shhh Group December 2013

GROUPS

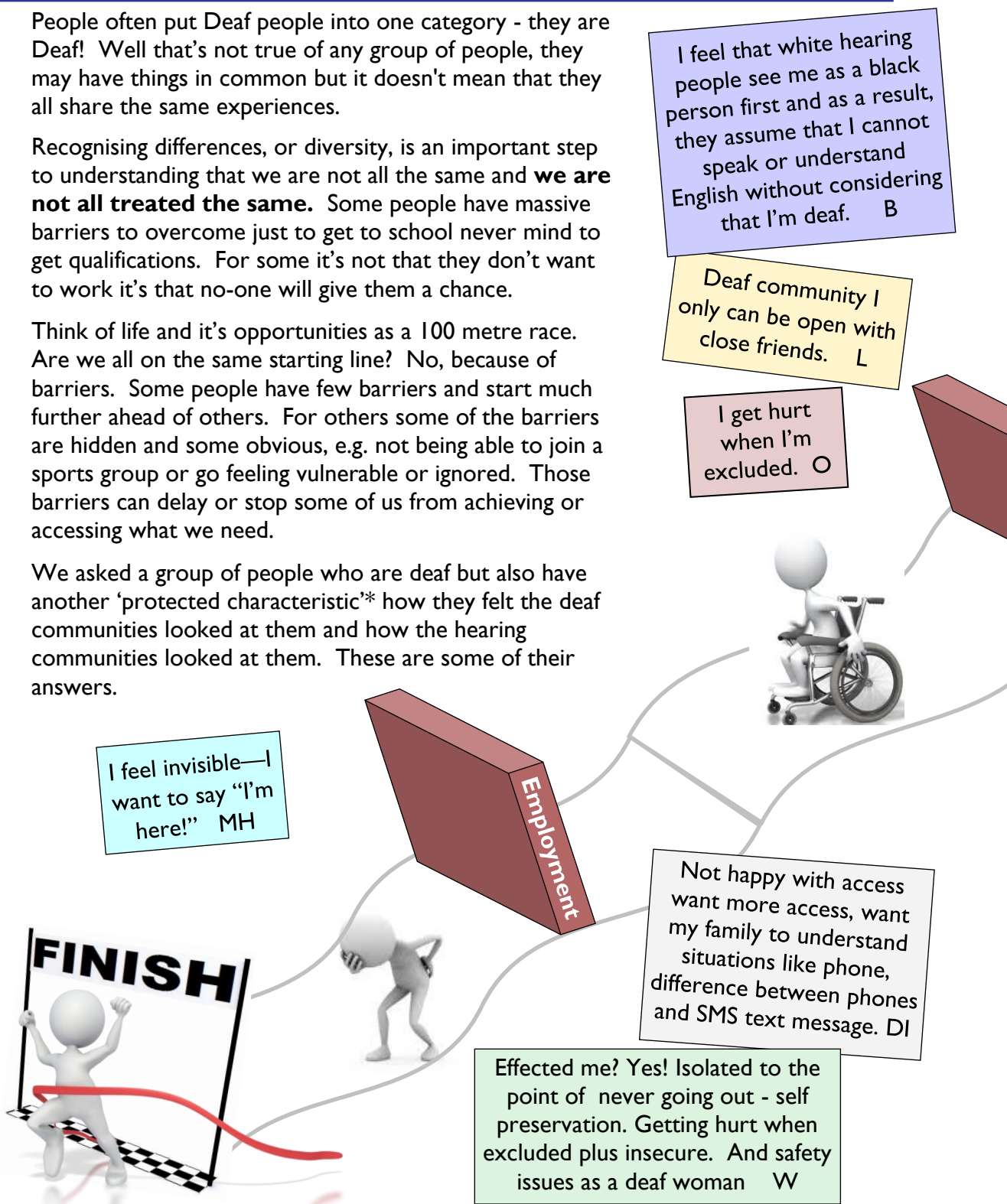
DEAFNESS AND DIVERSITY

People often put Deaf people into one category - they are Deaf! Well that's not true of any group of people, they may have things in common but it doesn't mean that they all share the same experiences.

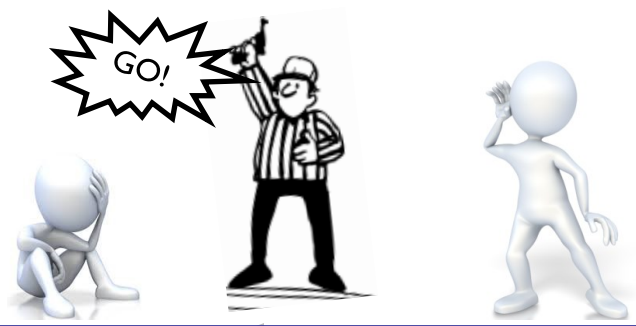
Recognising differences, or diversity, is an important step to understanding that we are not all the same and **we are not all treated the same**. Some people have massive barriers to overcome just to get to school never mind to get qualifications. For some it's not that they don't want to work it's that no-one will give them a chance.

Think of life and it's opportunities as a 100 metre race. Are we all on the same starting line? No, because of barriers. Some people have few barriers and start much further ahead of others. For others some of the barriers are hidden and some obvious, e.g. not being able to join a sports group or go feeling vulnerable or ignored. Those barriers can delay or stop some of us from achieving or accessing what we need.

We asked a group of people who are deaf but also have another 'protected characteristic'* how they felt the deaf communities looked at them and how the hearing communities looked at them. These are some of their answers.



* **Protected characteristic**- defined by the Equalities Act 2010 recognising that these groups face discrimination and barriers, includes - Age; Disability; Gender; Sexuality; Ethnicity; Marriage Status; Pregnancy; Religion and Beliefs.



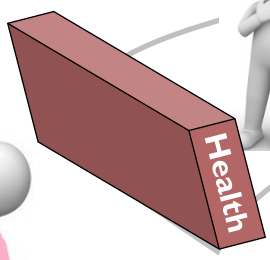
DEAFNESS AND DIVERSITY

S@#R> HERE (START!!)



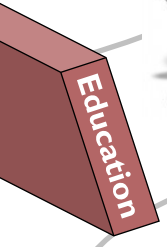
With hearing women I feel lost, they start trying to communicate but give up. W

Stop - you're not allowed here



I find my identity very confusing as I am a deaf person living in a hearing world, acting as a hearing person and also being treat as a hearing person. But at the end of the day I am profoundly deaf. CI

Lesbian community fine but deaf community smaller then deaf gay smaller! I feel isolation. L



As I get older I'm excluded from birthday do's, not invited anymore by the 60 years olds! O

Some deaf more understanding mean more caring, follow me slowly or help but I don't want over the top helping me. I felt a bit angry I want to do myself. Good for them to help me but too much, I like myself manage. DI

The deaf community - they ask my husband's opinion Not me! W

In pubs I feel left out because I am deaf and use BSL sign to communicate and the hearing gay people use gesture and talking and it go over my head. L

Deaf community don't understand what mental health means. MH

There are some that can be narrow-minded and patronising because of my deafness, as sometimes I may not understand them, which makes me feel annoyed, frustrated and stupid. B

People know me know my signs but other deaf people not sure. D

I honestly don't think that people understand the extent of my deafness which is profoundly, as I manage it so well. As I get older I am finding it harder to carry off or I am just wising up and letting others see how hard my every day to day life is. CI

Glossary

- All the people above are deaf and
- W = Woman
 - O = Older
 - CI = Cochlear Implant
 - B = Black
 - L = Gay or Lesbian
 - MH= Mental Health

Rhona Stanbury

My background of growing up in a Deaf family, working as an Interpreter and then as a Social Worker with deaf children, gave me the grounding to take on the role of being the Development worker for Deaflink in 2002 -2009. Now as Strategic Coordinator I face the biggest challenge that in March 2015 I will retire from my work with Deaflink.

It is hard not to reflect over a lifetime of being in the Deaf world on the changes that I have seen. From the days of the Missioners who did everything for Deaf people, through to the Social Workers who did everything for Deaf people, to the recognition of BSL as a language in its own right and Interpreters becoming a separate profession, we are now at the stage where Deaf people are taking control in determining their future. I have been part of this journey as a professional working with a diverse range of Deaf people for the last forty years. Here though I want to focus on the work I have done with Deaflink over the last twelve years. There have been many new successes and at times difficult challenges over these years, which have had an impact on the Deaf community in the North-east as well as a personal impact on my own growth and development.

I am proud of what we have achieved over the years; the protest march of the Hardest Hit Campaign and Sound Off, the busy forums, the many groups, the changes we see in individual lives, where people have become empowered when they feel they are heard and a problem is solved. Through its many forums and events Deaflink has created a platform for deaf people, where they are consulted, informed and then mobilised, for example sending letters of protest over Welfare cuts to their MPs. Instead of being patronised we are

gradually seeing deaf people becoming politicised. As an organisation we are seeing an increasing number of deaf people coming forward with complaints over services which are not accessible. They are taking control and power back into their own hands. Small steps maybe, but meaningful steps, which are making a real difference.

Yet barriers are still out there. In the age of advancing technology we have the internet, SMS and Skype and Facetime in the office. Yet when we ask an important agency to improve access to their systems, suggesting the use of SMS, the age old attitudinal barriers rise up.

When we saw the closure of the Sensory Support Team due to Council cuts, where did the Council expect these people to go? Deaf people weren't consulted, their views were not even considered until after the closure. This left the vulnerable more disillusioned, and increasingly excluded by those who have the authority to change life for the better. In an era of continuing funding and welfare cuts, the role of Deaflink in supporting Deaf people to fight these battles is more important now than ever.

It has been a privilege to have played a part in such valuable campaigning work over my years at Deaflink and I want to say a big thank you for all the support and encouragement I have received from those people who have worked alongside me through the hard and good times. I am sure that the good reputation that Deaflink has achieved in the region; and the vision it has for greater equality for deaf people; will continue through the many challenges ahead.

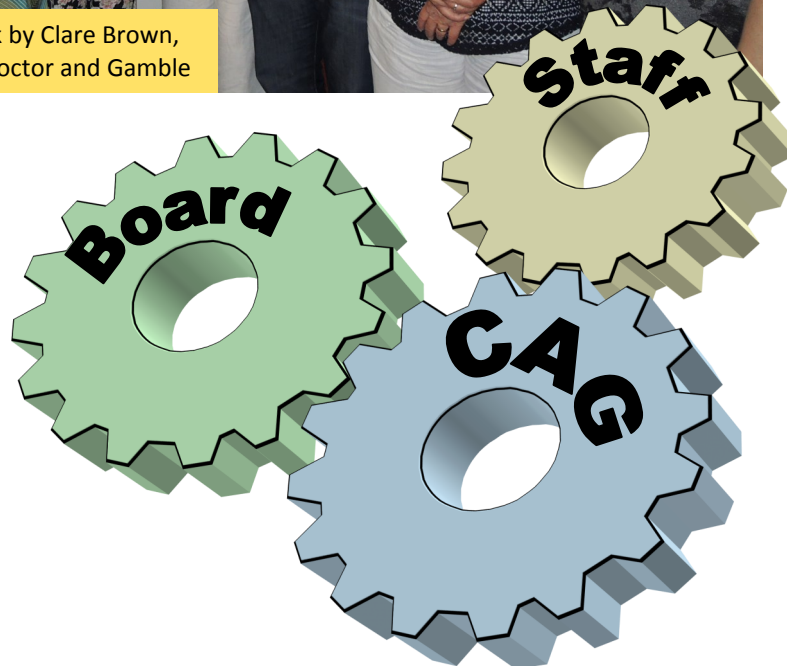


RHONA



The cheque presented to Deaflink by Clare Brown, Customer Services Manager at Proctor and Gamble

Thank you



Board of Trustees

- ◆ Jo Nicolls (Chair)
- ◆ Bob Weiner
- ◆ Joyce Pennington
- ◆ Tracey Sharp
- ◆ Dr Philip Matthews
- ◆ Jeff Morgan (resigned Aug 2013)
- ◆ Joanne Fortune (Co-opted)

Staff

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

Community Action Group (CAG)

- ◆ Mark Patterson
- ◆ Alex Redpath (Left Feb 2014)
- ◆ Fahmi Syeda
- ◆ Dolly Francis
- ◆ Maggie Taylor
- ◆ Emma Ashie-Neequaye
- ◆ Kristel Jobling
- ◆ Charlotte Venus
- ◆ Nichola Barcoe (Left Sept 2013)
- ◆ David Lennard
- ◆ Xirong He

PERSONNEL

HOW TO CONTACT US

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**(Over the road from Northern Counties School and
5/10 minutes walk from Jesmond / West Jesmond
Metro Station)**

This report is available in large print and on our website please contact us at the above address for a paper copy.