

Deaflink North East

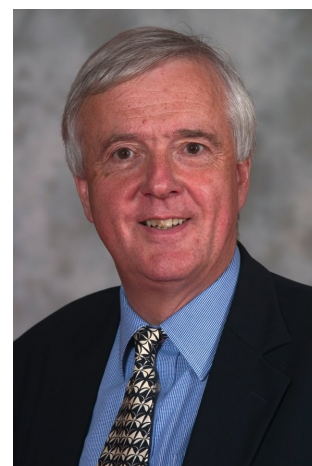


Deaflink

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**Lord John Shipley,
Patron**



Diverse Deafness
Energy
Advocacy
Friendship
Language
Individuality
Networking
Resources

Deaflink is an open, inclusive and supportive organisation working 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 for all D/deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing people in Newcastle and the North East

To raise awareness of the needs of the D/deaf communities.

We do this through:













AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Equality and Diversity Statement

Board of Trustees

The law says that we should treat everyone fairly and Deaflink is very committed to doing this. We will not discriminate or oppress anyone because of their:

-  **Gender** (Women/Men/Transgender)
-  **Colour** (Black/White/Freckly)
-  **Creed** (Religion)
-  **Ethnic or national origin** (e.g. Welsh)
-  **Disability** (e.g. Deaf/Diabetic/Heart problems)
-  **Social background** (e.g Class/ poor/ where they live))
-  **Age** (Old and young)
-  **Marital status** (Single/ co-habiting/ married)
-  **People with HIV status**
-  **Sexuality** (gay, lesbian or bisexual)



AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

We are determined that the principles of equality of opportunity and embracing diversity will underpin all service provision. For example, services will aim to be accessible to those who need or want them. In all aspects of employment, Deaflink will operate a positive equality and diversity framework

Does this mean that we all have to be happy and love each other? Not really! but it does mean that we should respect and accept that we are all individuals and have a right to not be judged. We will recognise and embrace difference and encourage individual choice.



To achieve our aims we will:

- **Promote** equal opportunities
- Design our services to **meet the needs** of our community
- **Combat** discrimination wherever it occurs and, in particular, discrimination against the groups mentioned above
- Provide **training** and guidance to all staff
- **Review** all systems and procedures in the provision of service to ensure equality of opportunity
- Give **support** to the community to enable participation in service development and decision making
- **Challenge** acts of harassment

Jo Nicolls

TRUSTEES REPORT

The last year was yet another year of new and old challenges which we thrive on tackling, although it would be nice from time to time to have a perfect experience and feel that as a deaf person, we are not a 'burden' in society.

As always communication is our biggest barrier and with modern technology, there are still gaps and missed opportunities with how to relay information in sign language. For example, I attended a meeting with the Manager, Heidi, which was Equality and Diversity Cabinet meeting looking at how accessible was Newcastle City itself. A wide variety of representation from all walks of life were there. Much discussion as were many meetings of this kind is always about the physical aspect of accessing the town by public transport, private transport, cyclist pathways rather than focus on the actual communication within shops for example. How to approach a security member of staff on the metro for help if you're deaf? There are more and more electronic billboards around the town, why are we not seeing any of them in sign language or subtitles?

Many companies use social media, where video clips are sent out, again very few are subtitled, even less in sign language. I queried one who were submitting video news regularly and there were no subtitles nor transcript of what was said. The response was they would have to employ such a person to put subtitles on and there are no funds....

Public meetings held throughout the year should be what they say they are, public. Deaf people are part of the public domain too. And yet, very few would actually provide communication support. Why? If it's a public meeting, surely those meetings

should be made accessible regardless of whether or not a deaf person turns up? Many deaf people will have experienced the guilt of not turning up for a meeting because they were informed "An interpreter has been booked for you". If a hearing person decided not to attend a public meeting, a phone call giving apologies is enough! Isn't this indirect discrimination?

The lack of understanding how an interpreter works, undermines their profession, their skills and ultimately undermines the deaf person.

Whilst I've focussed on BSL users, I also acknowledge Hard of Hearing people also have their own struggles. Do loop systems work? Many companies now are contactable by telephone only. Do events have speech to text translation provisions? Reflective glass barriers between yourself and the person you are dealing with, for safety reasons, but not for the convenience of hard of hearing person! Theatres are using Stagertext for a few of their productions throughout the year, but not every single production. The seats required to be able to see the subtitles clearly are usually the most expensive ones in the house and are not always available unless you book six months in advance.

Finally I turn my attention to the support provided by Trustees and CAG members. Their support is invaluable and I thank each one of them for their input.

Jo Nicolls



Accessible Learning and Greater Understanding

Deaflink provides the opportunity for people to meet, learn and share their experiences. In this year we have been able to support people through the Cookery Class, the Deaf Men's Group and the Shhh Group (Hard of Hearing).

We know that these groups enable greater understanding because all of the information is in an accessible format. We also know that people enjoy coming to them and provide support and encouragement to each other. This reduces isolation and helps build communities.



Cookery Class

"it is possible to cope with hearing loss no matter how severe it is"

"Don't let hearing loss stop you from living an interesting life"

OUR GROUPS



Trip to Sunderland National Glass Centre

**“good information,
clear and I know
more “**



Shhh Group

Deaf Men's Group

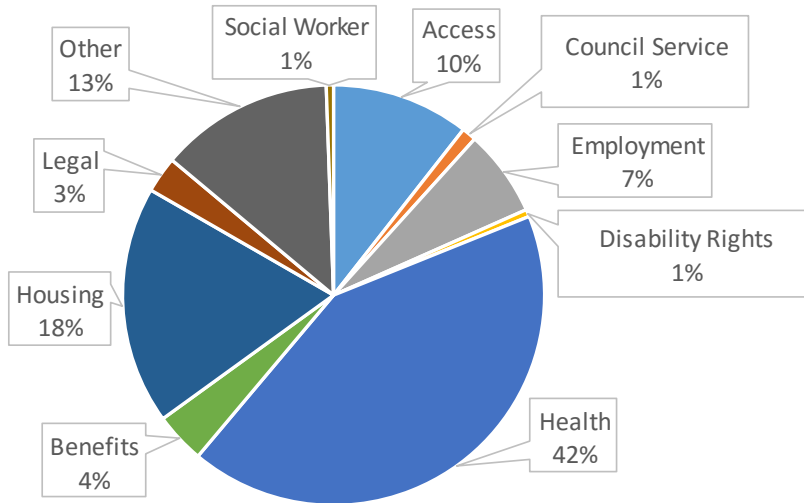


**OUR
GROUPS**

What did Deaflink do in the last year

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

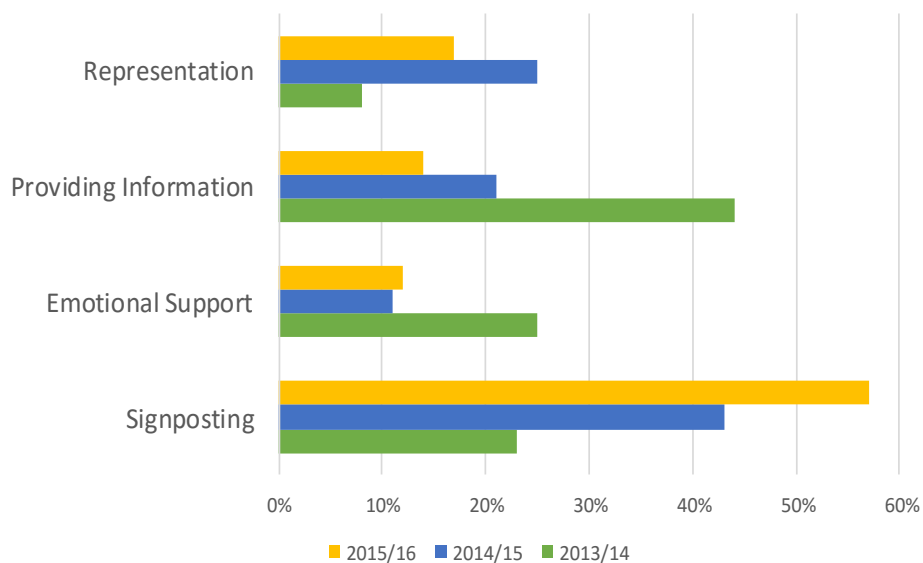
Between April 2015 and March 2016 Deaflink provided support to 239 'new cases' - people coming to us with new issues or problems, about 80 lower than last year.



This pie chart shows the areas of concern and support requested. This ranged from people wanting to know how to volunteer, how to communicate with their insurance company through to what their rights were. Interesting to note that there was a 19% increase in people asking about Health issues. These were complaints (GP and Hospitals), access to appropriate interpreters, understanding letters and how to register for 999 sms service.

TRUSTEES REPORT

This chart shows the different levels of support we gave put into the 4 areas ranging from Signposting (informing people where they can go to get the service they need), through to Representation (negotiating on their behalf). The figures show this year we have had a significant increase in signposting. This would reflect the changes in personnel and focus of our work in this year.



What did Deaflink do in the last year

“We are in 21st Century and time for a change to improve for the Deaf community it's our life/ health/ education.”



SATURDAY FORUMS

In this year we had 6 forums and consistently had an average of 50 people attending. Without D/deaf people taking the time to come, gather information and share their views and experiences then nothing will improve. We know that providing accessible information gives a better understanding for both the D/deaf and the Hearing Communities.

A common theme throughout this year was **if you don't take the time to communicate with us how can you know what we are feeling or experiencing?** For example, in one of the forums it was pointed out that OFSTED, who monitor schools performance, do not have any BSL using staff in their audits. How do they assess the teaching standards to deaf children? Apparently they do this by asking the hearing teacher!



“Good presentation to fight for Deaf people's right”

TOPICS

National Deaf Children's Society

Sign Video

National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind people

NEXUS (Metro and Bus problems)

Open debate on Issues affecting Deaf communities

North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto



TRUSTEES REPORT

What interesting and challenging times we are living in and the next few years will be more so.

Our work over the last 16 years has been focussed on trying to get accessible information to the D/deaf communities. For far too long public organisations and services have made a half hearted attempt at communicating with British Sign Language (BSL) Users. We know this because many deaf people come to us and they don't know how to vote or what healthy eating is. Many don't feel comfortable using public transport - how many Metro/Bus Stations have staff who can sign? What if there was an emergency - how would the D/deaf person know? Even if they wanted to get a bus to Morpeth, how can they communicate with the driver? These are things that the hearing community take for granted every day. And nothing changes because D/deaf people cannot complain - not least because the process is not accessible!!

The few concessions to equal access e.g. some Banks and Insurance companies introducing video interpreting have been motivated by European Human Rights law. If we are going to lose this champion of discriminated people it makes it that much more important that D/deaf people start making complaints, do not just accept it!

There are some new developments that we need to support and encourage.

Accessible Information Guidelines

From the end of July 2016, all NHS and social care services should be fully accessible and available to anyone who has communication or information support needs. All providers must make

sure that all people can access their services appropriately and independently.

Health and Social Care services must:

Identify need e.g. BSL interpreter

Record need - BSL user on file

Alert - when file is accessed it flags up need

Share information - your GP should inform the hospital, your social worker etc. of your communication need.

Act - make sure that your need is met.

These guidelines means that if you are a BSL user then all visits to GP/hospital must have qualified interpreter. All communication must be in BSL, no more letters asking you to phone the hospital in the future!

Video Relay Pilot at the RVI and Freeman Hospitals.

This will allow medical staff to use an interpreter on a screen to communicate with a patient in BSL. This will not replace an interpreter at an appointment but will be used at A&E, maternity and places where you visit was not planned and they need emergency communication. It is hoped that the pilot will allow the communication device to follow the patient so if you are admitted to a ward you can communicate with nursing staff. More news at the September Forum.

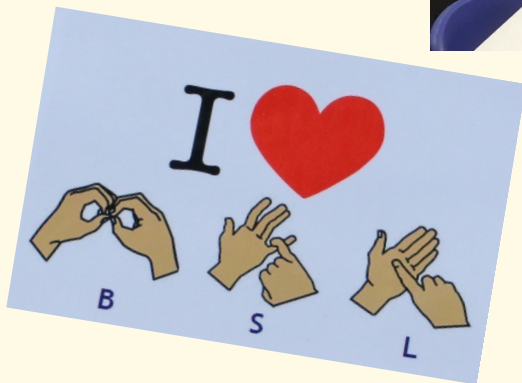


The NRCPD are going separate from Signature.

This means that Signature to focus on the BSL qualifications and the NRCPD will focus on monitoring and standards.

BSL WEEK March 2016

For British Sign Language Awareness week this year we focus on 2 themes. The first was Educating the Young. We are very grateful to Linta Toor who is at Newcastle College. She came with us to 3 schools (7classes) sharing her experiences as a young deaf person. We got fantastic feedback and hopefully raised awareness in a few youngsters.



Our 2nd focus was on providing an event that allowed D/deaf BSL users to have a bit of fun and shared pride in the community. We had about 55 people attend, young and old. The quiz was fantastically organised by Simon and had a very entertaining 'what happened next?' section. The bingo was provided very generously by the expert Ron Reid and we are very grateful for his help. And again to Newcastle College for their hosting this event.

At the end of the evening everyone left wanting more



FEEDBACK (APR 15-MAR 16)

NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group are committed to active community engagement to ensure that we fully understand the issues that affect our patients. Deaflink are a key involvement partner to enable us to achieve this. Heidi and the team engage with their community or our behalf to gather experiences, views and comments on the services we provide or plan to improve. During 2015/16 this has included Speech and Language Therapy, Deciding Together and Expanding Minds, Improving Lives



Alison Thompson
Patient Experience Lead
Newcastle Gateshead
CCG

Loop Checkers

We're more determined than ever to develop this project. We are looking for resources to employ someone to focus on the work with Hard of Hearing people and the loop system audits. Next year we hope to report real progress.

Consultation Events

Whilst this year had several wonderful events with full participation there were some where the organisers had clearly never engaged with D/deaf people before. We can only thank the D/deaf communities in this area for their continued patience and generous spirit. It's small compensation but we know that for every conversation we have about "why do you need that many interpreters" or "can they not do the online questionnaire" people are learning ... we hope!

Health Services are paying attention

After several years of raising concerns about D/deaf access to health services we are starting to see some progress. The hospital pilot scheme (pg 10) and a good working relationship with Newcastle Gateshead and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups should make sure that progress continues.

'supporters'

You helped us by volunteering, by attending our events, providing information and telling us what has affected you and needs improving—and what is working ok!

COMMUNICATION!

With every engagement exercise we identify the same barrier time and time again. We will continue to highlight the lack of understanding of the need for all services to be able to communicate with their patient/client/tenant/customer etc.....

I am pleased my office and Northumbria Police facilitated a focus group with members of Deaflink to better understand the needs of deaf people and to ensure future service provision and engagement with the deaf community is responsive to their needs. It was a very useful meeting which will help shape Northumbria Police's policies on inclusion.



VERA BAIRD
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Board of Trustees

- ◆ Jo Nicolls (Chair)
- ◆ Bob Weiner
- ◆ Joyce Pennington
- ◆ Dr Philip Matthews
- ◆ Joanne Fortune
- ◆ Jenny Wright
- ◆ Rachel Ross
- ◆ Debbie Rotton (Feb 2016)

Staff

- ◆ Katie Dewar
(Information Worker)
- ◆ Simon Herdman
(Involvement Officer)
- ◆ Heidi Jobling
(Manager)



Community Action Group (CAG) Members 2015-16

Emma Ashie-Neequaye



“You don't have to have qualifications or gained experiences/skills to become a CAG members. Your motivation and your involvement toward Deaf people will be enough.” *Emma*

Jean Kyle



Karen Bell



Mark Patterson



Fahmi Syeda



Kristel Jobling



Xirong He



Stephen Barnett



PERSONNEL

David Lennard



Summary of Accounts April 2015– March 2016

	2015-16	2014-15
Total Income	£83,885	£85,611
Total Expenditure	£81,080	£86,754
Total Funds carried forward	£2,805	(£1,143)

Balance sheet as at 31st March 2014

Fixed Assets:		-
Current Assets:		
Debtors:	£0	£2,874
Cash at Bank and in hand:	£65,925	£61,223
Total Current Assets	£64,329	£64,096
Creditors: falling due within one year:	(1,596)	(£2,573)

Total Assets

Unrestricted Funds:	£23,003	£20,691
Designated Funds:	£29,641	£7,412
Restricted Funds:	£11,685	£33,421
Total Charity Funds	£64,329	£61,523

For a full copy of our 2015-16 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 the staff and students at Newcastle College for their continued generous support of Deaflink. Also a big THANKYOU for the wonderful donations from Mrs M. B. Lant, Bailey Nicolls and Keith Pimm.



“It doesn’t matter I’ll tell you later!!!”

Heidi Jobling

What is audism?

Well some say it’s not needed because it’s lumped all together in Disability Discrimination definitions and it will just be another ...ism that we need to remember.

When you recognise it and know what it’s about then you will hopefully agree that audism does need a clearer understanding and awareness.

I found this definition on the internet

Audism is :

- ◆ A belief that hearing person is superior to a deaf person
- ◆ It is a system of advantage based on hearing
- ◆ Values that have human identity linked with speech

We asked deaf people on Twitter - what’s the thing that hearing people say/ do that annoys you most. The majority said when you missed something and want it repeated and they say “It doesn’t matter I’ll tell you later!!!” To hearing person this is just a comment, to a deaf person this is saying ‘you are not important enough for me to stop what I’m doing and make myself clearer to you’. That’s audism.

So is when the doctor says “Bad News, I’m sorry your child is Deaf” - why is that bad news? Or someone comments “You are not really deaf not like proper deaf you can talk “ - this shows a complete ignorance of deaf culture and deafness, reinforcing negativity.

So is when you want to attend a public meeting but there are no interpreters (see page 5).

The world we live in puts a greater value on hearing. Why do hearing professionals make judgements about what is best for the deaf child? teach them to speak, encourage the family not to sign and the belief the child will develop oral skills quicker! What about the needs of the child?

The same article where I found the definition also suggests that deaf people can be audist. They can judge other deaf people because they are not deaf enough, they had a cochlear implant, they are from deaf family with several generations of deafness or they are part of the ‘deaf elite’.

Why is there such a general acceptance of ignoring deafness or audism? Why is it ok to say that we can’t provide interpreters because we don’t have the budget!

There is a general lack of awareness of deafness and its culture. Many hearing people are unaware of the difficulties in understanding written English or the exhaustion from trying to lip read. It’s not deliberate, it’s ignorance and that’s harder to address because they don’t know that they don’t know!

So how do we change it?

- ◆ Training, improve understanding
- ◆ Education systems and policies change
- ◆ Media – we need more role models, when was the last time you saw a deaf person in Eastenders?
- ◆ Individual responsibility

PRIDE IN DEAF IDENTITY



AUDISM?

HOW TO CONTACT US

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Email: admin@deaflink.org.uk
Website: www.deaflink.org.uk
Twitter: [Deaflink_NE](#)

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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.