



2016-17

ANNUAL REPORT



Contents

Aims and Principles	Page 2-3
Equality Statement	Page 4
Chairs Statement	Page 5
What we have done:	
Statistics	Page 6-7
Groups	Page 8-9
Hard of Hearing Project	Page 10
Summary of issues	Page 11
Accessible Newcastle Hospitals	Page 12-13
The team	Page 14
The finances	Page 15
Contact details	Page 16

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

We work with D/deaf (with a capital 'D' referring to British Sign Language users and culturally deaf), Hard-of-Hearing, people with cochlear implants and those who are deafblind.

Deaflink Values and Purpose



Support

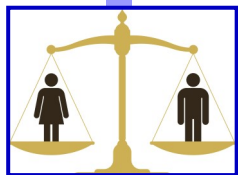
Training

Advocacy

Information

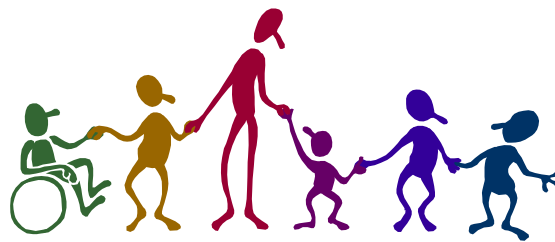
Opportunity

Equality



We will not discriminate or judge anyone because of their:

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



We respect and accept that we are all individuals and all of us have a right to not be judged. We will recognise and embrace difference and encourage individual choice.

INFORMATION IS POWER, but only if people are able to:

- ◆ Access
- ◆ Understand
- ◆ Apply it

CHAIRS REPORT

Jo Nicolls, Chair of Deaflink Board of Trustees

Information is power. I've written before about this, several times over the years of my career actually. I still maintain this to be true. Without information, you cannot progress effectively.

Limited access to information has always been a problem within the deaf community, mainly due to the original information being catered for the hearing world. Debates on radios, discussions on TV with subtitles either lacking or incorrect, and a shortage of programmes with sign language options.

My bugbear is the one where it says 'should you require an interpreter, please ring this number', followed very closely with a list of options to access letters in a variety of ways, but none in British Sign Language (BSL). People suggest using Braille options for deaf people...errr hello?!

The deaf community has a wealth of information about the barriers it faces. We try and share with the hearing community to give them an understanding of what they can do to support us. Sometimes it gets through, and other times it 'falls on deaf ears' and services just don't get it.

In this day and age, with so much technology, it angers me when I see blatant discrimination taking place. For example, some people will ask 'can the deaf people make a noise to prove they are there on the other end of the telephone'. How disgraceful and insulting to have to be asked to do this in order to progress with your benefit claim?!

I think the deaf and hard of hearing community have a greater amount of patience for the hearing community, for having to put up with such ignorance and stupidity at times!

The Hard of hearing community now has its own dedicated worker at Deaflink. Technology gives so much to this group of people, again many of whom didn't know about the possibilities until they came across Deaflink. For example, Loop systems, subtitles on TV, or Stagertext in theatre along with educating families on how best to communicate with the individual who has lost their hearing. This reduces frustration and isolation for someone who's life has had an impact due to no longer hearing as well as they used to.

As always, I thank the dedicated team of staff, trustees and CAG members for all their hard work throughout the year. We are very lucky to have such a good group of people who are passionate about improving the quality of deaf, and hard of hearing people's lives.

TOPICS

Information
Accessible
Hearing
Health
Arthritis
attitudes
Violence
Domestic
Sign
implants
British
Language
people
Social
Hate
Bereavement
Perspectives
mental
Bullying
roles
Worker
deafblind
deaf
of
Hard
cochlear
Sexual
crime
Gender

863 people
at 53 events (see page 8-9)

“First day we knew nothing and now we have learnt a lot of new things”

“Learnt what we need to know when we leave College, like how to look after money and how to be responsible, safety, health, interpreter booking, mental health and abuses etc.”

“I felt confidence now and when leave college“

“I know how to response and will remember how to do things.”

“I want to learn more new things (PIP/DLA, Sexual health, bills etc.) that we never know and learn to be more independent.”

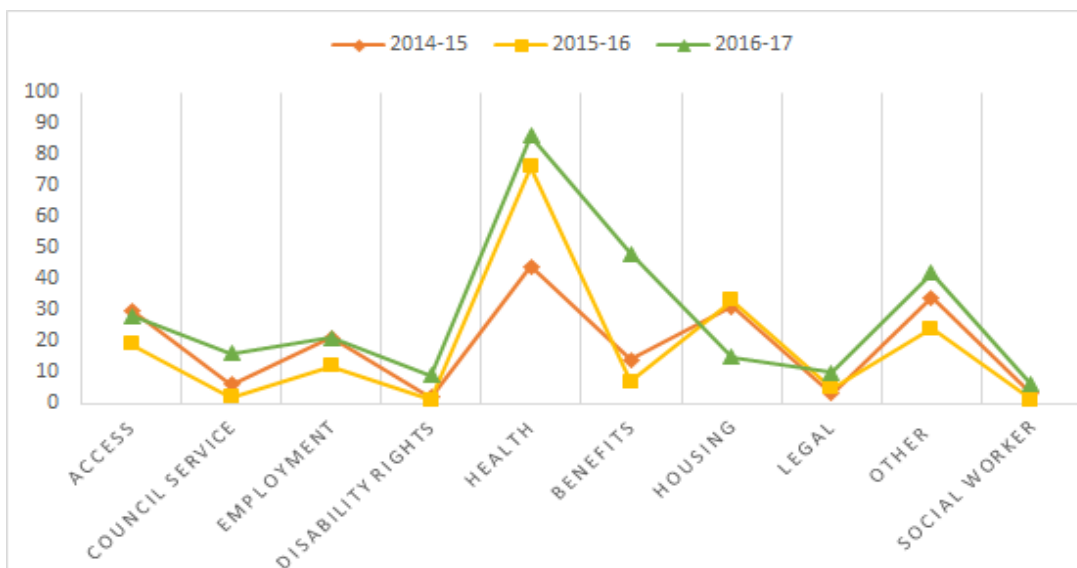
Deaf students at Newcastle College

415

people receiving
our ebulletins

268

one to one support meetings
11% increase on last year
2% increase in representation
biggest increase is help with Benefits



These were the things the 268 people wanted support and information about.

Our groups

Katie Dewar, Information Worker

It's been another successful year for our groups and information forums. The front cover of this report shows James Clarke, the runner, and the audience from our March 2017 forum. What an inspiration, no more excuses for not getting fit!



Saturday Forum

Shhh Group

Healthy Deaf Minds

Deaf Men's Group

Newcastle College



Jo Milne gave a wonderful presentation on her experiences as a deafblind woman.



We learnt a bit about how to manage stress.



We had to say goodbye to our fantastic speech to text professional, supporter and friend - Izzy. Best wishes for the future.



The Deaf men's group were out and about—looking at the Guildhall, a skinless bear and getting 'hands on' health and safety training.



The Shhh Group enjoyed tours of the BBC and the Laing Art Gallery



HARD OF HEARING PROJECT

Louise Borrell; Involvement Worker

The Hard of Hearing (HoH) project began in January 2017, almost with a blank sheet of paper. The initial months have focussed on making contacts and generally finding out what is out there for people with an acquired hearing loss.

A core part of our work is the continued provision of the Shhh Group, our support group for the Hard of Hearing. We will look at ways to expand on the success of this group and hopefully find additional ways to extend this work.

Information gathered from existing service users has highlighted the use of technology and provision of lip reading as key areas for development. We are also aware of the significant isolation that HoH communities can face and the lack of knowledge of services available to them.

We have been able to link with the Online Today Campaign from Action on Hearing Loss who have provided very informative sessions about technology and how it can help.

Partnership links have now been made with Newcastle's Digital Inclusion Officer and as a result the Shhh group now has a new home,



free of charge, in Newcastle City Library for the next six months. This is in anticipation of the group integrating some technology into their sessions.

As part of this partnership, Deaflink will provide some Awareness training for volunteers of the Digital Inclusion project so that service users who wish to access Techy Tea Parties, offered in Newcastle Libraries, will be reassured that volunteers will have the skills to support them.



A lip reading class has also been scheduled to start at Deaflink in the near future.

We have also continued the very successful Loop Project. We had previously visited a number of venues through Newcastle to 'audit' the Loop Induction systems. The results of this audit showed that many loop systems did not work and staff were often untrained in how to use them. Some of the original volunteers agreed to revisit a sample of the original venues for a further audit. We have identified areas of improvement and this will be addressed with the relevant venue contacts.

We have lots of plans to develop opportunities for people who are Hard of Hearing to learn and feel supported. We will be hard at work gathering evidence that this is a much needed project and how it improves quality of life.

Deaf Awareness

Are hearing people more deaf aware than a hundred years ago? I'm not too sure. We have all this technology, training, standards and laws but the same mistakes are made over and over. The hearing community genuinely do not understand the issues affecting D/deaf people and D/deaf people don't or can't complain.

"we don't need an interpreter, we can manage"

"it's ok, his son will help interpret"

"I'll give them this leaflet and that'll be fine"

"can you get them to make a sound on the phone, just to prove they're there"

Can we change things? Yes, Newcastle Hospitals have worked hard to understand the problems and have started a video relay interpreting service—you can now contact the hospitals direct on video. Read more on pages 12-13.



It's hard but we must continue complaining. I know some people think it's not worth it, 'they

just ignore it' but the only way things will change is if we let people know where and when things are not right.

We must support each other to do this. Please let us know if we can help.

BSL week

Another great year, we worked with schools to raise awareness of D/deaf. We also created a video with local D/deaf people signing why they think BSL is important. Find the link on our website.

Other Agencies

We have been happy to work with Carers Centre Newcastle, Healthwatch and Information Now to look at how they promote their services to the D/deaf community.

Developing life skills.

Katie has been working with students at Newcastle College. See page 6-7 for more information

Personal Independence Payments

We are identifying inconsistent and unfair assessments. If you are turned down or a small amount awarded it is worth thinking about appealing.

Accessible Information

It's really important—if your GP or Dentist haven't asked you about communication needs e.g. do you need an interpreter, please tell them as soon as possible.

End of Life Research

Last year we asked people to tell us about their experiences of looking after people who were told they were dying.

The research showed lots of problems that D/deaf people face at such a difficult time.

Hospitals, GP's and care homes were providing great medical care but didn't always remember the communication needs of the patient or their family. Communication is so important—if you get it wrong it has a long lasting affect on the family.

Another result of the research was that not enough people talk to their families about what they want at the end of their life. So do they want to be kept alive on machines? Do they want to donate parts of their bodies? Do they want to be buried? All of these things are difficult to think about, but it's better to do it before it's too late.

A report was written summarising all of the research and it is available on our website or NewcastleGateshead CCG.

Heidi Jobling, Manager

Andy Pike Head of Patient Experience, NUTH

The Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has worked in partnership with DeafLink over a number of years to understand and address the issues that Deaf people face when accessing healthcare services. It is known that, compared to the hearing population, Deaf people experience poorer health and that unsatisfactory communication can result in lack of understanding of chronic conditions meaning that the adoption of changes in lifestyle and adherence to treatment can be compromised.

The Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust undertook a survey in 2015 to understand the specific issues faced by Deaf people when using BSL Interpreting within the Trust. This demonstrated that Deaf people had very variable experiences communicating within the Trust. DeafLink have supported the Trust in the development of initiatives to meet the needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and to ensure that these are communicated to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. The Head of Patient Experience, Mr Andy Pike, and Trust Equality and Diversity Lead, Mrs Lucy Hall, attended DeafLink Forums enabling them to hear directly from Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and describe some of the initiatives being undertaken to address their issues and challenges.

There have been many straightforward, yet important, changes made to improve the experience of Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients such as placing the BSL version of the complaints procedure more prominently on the web page. Other services have taken longer to develop and deliver, such as



British Sign Language by Video By Remote Interpreting

The implementation of this system, which enables patients who communicate in BSL to communicate when a face to face interpreter is not available, was approximately a year in development. It was launched in May 2017 and will be piloted for 12 months. So far the service has been well received by patients and staff and a full evaluation will be completed as part of the pilot.

British Sign Language by Video Remote Service

This service was introduced in April 2017 to enable British Sign Language Users to contact Trust Services from home using an online BSL Interpreter who will relay a telephone call to staff. Information about the service can now be viewed on:

<http://www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk/patient-guides/sign-language-interpreter.aspx>

Complaints Process

Feedback from the Deaf community highlighted that there are often challenges for them in making complaints to hospitals and other organisations due to inaccessible systems. To address this within the Trust, flexible processes are offered to meet individual needs such as facilitating meetings for Deaf complainants (supported by a BSL interpreter) with the Patient Relations Team to detail their concerns and initiate the investigation and complaint process. The Trust response is subsequently delivered in the complainant's preferred format, including the offer of a further face-to-face meeting with an interpreter present.



Statutory Accessible Information Standard (AIS)

Information, resources and a training animation video have been produced to support the introduction of the Standard. There has been development of the Trust information technology systems, both in the hospital and community, to flag patient information and communication needs. This is to ensure that the needs can be identified and met. Work towards achieving the AIS was undertaken in partnership with several charitable and third sector organisations in the region including Deaflink.



Supporting patients who are Hard of Hearing

The League of Friends have funded the purchase of 90 Digital Listening Devices to support patients who are hard of hearing when using Trust services. These will be sent out to wards and departments in May / June 2017.



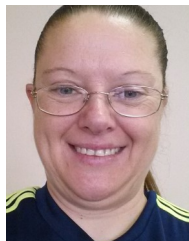
People who make Deaflink work

To our Board of Trustees

Many Thanks

This group of people give up their time every month to make sure that Deaflink is managed properly and the staff are delivering the right services. They all are from the D/deaf community or work with this community, bringing their invaluable knowledge and experience. We could not exist without them. A special mention to our Chair Jo, who does a fantastic job of keeping us all focused but with her own unique humour.

Jo Fortune



Bob Weiner



Carol Bradley



Jenny Wright



Rachel Ross



Debbie Ratton



Dr Phillip Matthews



Joyce Pennington

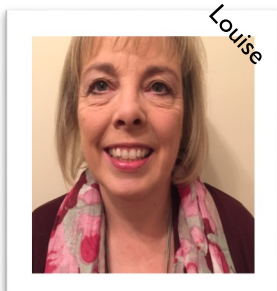


Jo Nicolls

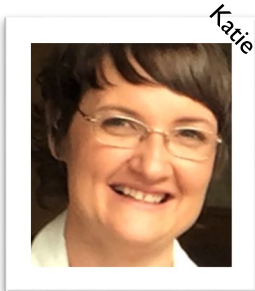


Staff

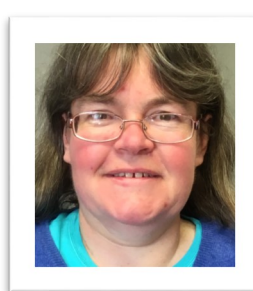
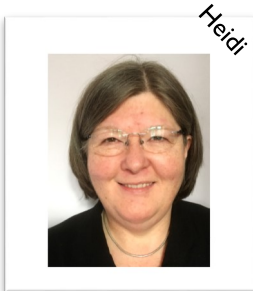
Louise



Katie



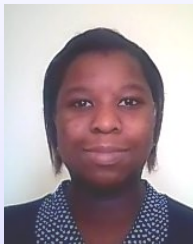
Heidi



Joining us soon - Diane Murphy

Community Action Group (CAG) Members 2016-17

Emma Ashie-Nequaye



Mark Patterson



David Lennard



Fahmi Syeda



Charlotte Venus



Ravina Begum



Stephen Barnett



Fahin Syeda



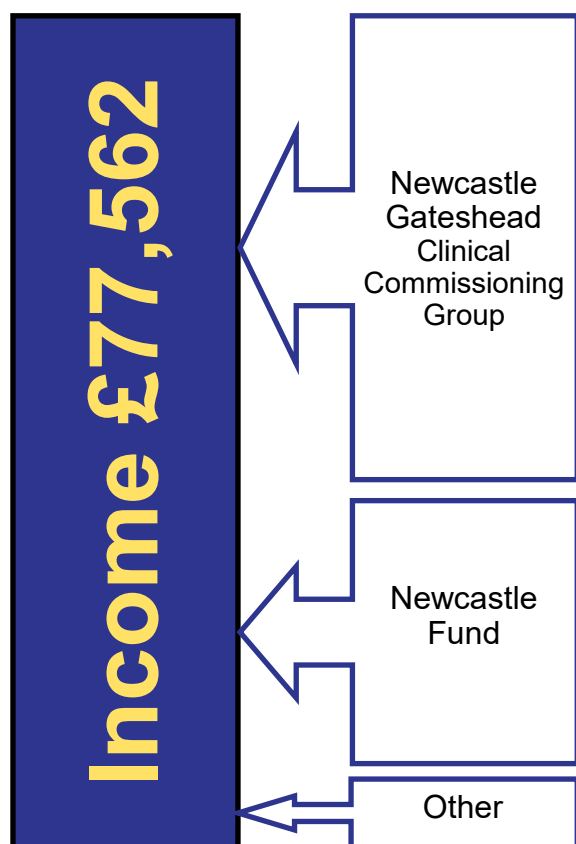
Jean Kyle



Left this year—Kristel Jobling, Xirong He and Karen Bell.

Finance

For a full copy of our 2016-17 accounts please contact Heidi Jobling on 0191 281 2314 or email: heidi@deaflink.org.uk or look online at Charity Commission website.



This year we spent
£66,726



86%

of this was paying
staff wages.

Thanks to our Funders and contributors: NewcastleGateshead Clinical Commissioning Group; Newcastle Fund and many others who have contributed 'in kind'. To the staff and students at Newcastle College, thank you again for their continued generous support of Deaflink.

Also a big THANKYOU for the wonderful donations from Strawberry Nicolls, Luke Watkins and Keith Pimm.



HOW TO CONTACT US



admin@deaflink.org.uk



(0191) 281 2314



07897 329 359

(0191) 212 0300



facebook

www.facebook.com/deaflink

twitter

[Deaflink_NE](#)

Website

www.deaflink.org.uk



**11 Tankerville Place,
Newcastle Upon Tyne,
NE2 3AT**

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