

National Deaf Children's Society

The National Deaf Children's Society: who are we?

We are the leading charity for deaf children and young people. We are dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

We give expert support on childhood deafness, raise awareness, and campaign for deaf children and young people's rights, so they have the same opportunities as their hearing peers.

Our team works across the UK to develop partnerships with organisations to support them to create accessible opportunities for deaf young people aged 14 to 25, through volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships and employment.

Why are partnerships needed?

Our current campaign is called [Deaf Works Everywhere](#). The drive of the campaign is to get more deaf young people into work – and into jobs that inspire them. We're fighting for better career support, more work experience and volunteering opportunities, and challenging expectations of what deaf young people can achieve.

A report created for the campaign highlights that deaf young people felt that aspirations around their future careers were lower than those for their hearing peers.

Inevitably, some deaf young people had low aspirations themselves about what they could achieve.

Often deaf young people feel that they cannot work within certain industries. In the report, a young person was asked – Can a deaf person be a midwife? The response was - No. When asked why, the young person replied: "Because we are deaf, it would be too noisy."

Deaf people can be midwives, and that's why Deaf Works Everywhere is so important.

Without increased opportunities for deaf young people to build skills that support transition to adulthood, and without the chance to work in volunteering roles, in which they can gain confidence and experience, we cannot raise deaf young people's aspirations to be able to go for the job they dream of.

That is where partnerships come in. We help organisations, like yours, to offer accessible and inclusive opportunities to deaf young people. This not only opens pathways to deaf young people, but also gives you access to a talented young workforce who may not have had the chance to engage with your programmes, previously.

Our offer to organisations that partner with us

How can we help you to break down barriers for deaf young people?

Partner organisations will receive access to the following free training and guidance from our team of experts:

Deaf awareness

- Easily accessible recording, to fit around your staff's busy schedules.
- A comprehensive introduction to deaf awareness for all staff – from those in recruitment to those working directly with volunteers and everyone in between.
- Topics covered include:
 - what is deafness: facts and statistics
 - different types of deafness
 - how deaf young people communicate
 - communication top tips
 - technology that deaf young people may use
- Access to short videos teaching basic sign language.

Additional Training

We also offer tailored training for your staff, depending on their role, to include:

- Equality Act 2010 and your legal responsibilities
- barriers for deaf young people - what changes can be made, technology used, booking and working with interpreters, and communication support.
- how to create an inclusive environment
- how to ensure application and interview processes are accessible
- risk assessments and Health and Safety responsibilities
- understanding the impact of deafness and poor communication.

Deaf-friendly Standard

You can sign up to our [Deaf-friendly Standard](#) and work through the three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Standard supports organisations on how to behave and demonstrate that they are deaf-friendly and inclusive. As you achieve each level you will be awarded a logo that you can use, making it easier for deaf young people to identify accessible organisations and opportunities in their area.

As you work towards your Silver Deaf-friendly Standard, you can explore how our Young Inspectors can help you achieve your Gold Award. Our Young Inspectors are deaf young people working to improve the lives of deaf children and young people by influencing and improving the way organisations operate. For example, they might look at your website, resources, or the journey of a volunteer searching and applying for an opportunity within your organisation. We will discuss all possible options with you and agree what our Young Inspectors will do for you.

Interested in partnering with us?

Contact us at youngfutures@ndcs.org.uk to arrange a meeting.

We look forward to working with you and creating lots of exciting accessible opportunities for deaf young people.

www.ndcs.org.uk

Summary information from webinar delivered on 22 July for you to include on website as required:

Top tips directly from our deaf role models:

- Deaf young people need work experience to support university applications.
- Be open-minded and just ask them what their communication needs are.
- Contacting by phone isn't always appropriate, have the option of email or text.
- If you have worries or concerns about how to include a deaf young person or what support to provide, talk to the young person, deaf people are the best people to give you solutions.
- Have captions set up on video calls.
- Explain tasks clearly before starting.
- The doctor explained medical conditions to me afterwards and wrote the names down so that I could research more in my own time.
- The application process was made more accessible for me. Instead of a phone interview I had a video call and could use the captions and be able to lipread.
- Flexibility is important, if you know you are going to have a deaf person come and volunteer in your trust, have a talk to them, ask them what works for them. Don't assume that every deaf person is the same. Maybe ask about strengths and weaknesses, interests and then agree which role would be the most suitable.
- Make sure all staff working with the deaf young person are aware of communication needs or any technology they might use. Ask the young person what they would like shared.

Question and answers from the webinar

Q: How can we make our youth board more accessible to show deaf young people that we are keen to have them on board?

A: Creating opportunities for deaf young people is an area that can be covered in a partnership with the National Deaf Children's Society. We would work with you to make sure your processes and opportunities are accessible. Staff who run our Youth Advisory Board will also share top tips with you.

Feedback from deaf role model: "I am on a Youth Board and our meetings are virtual. They add captions so it's accessible to me and can also provide a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter if needed.

Q: I am trying to put together a Deaf Awareness Course for my volunteers. Do you have any resources available to help with this, or any tips?

A: There are lots of top tips on our website here – [Communication top tips](#). If you create a partnership with us, the deaf awareness training would be available to your volunteers, and there is also an option to book paid-for training here [Deaf Awareness Training](#).

Q: Question for deaf role model who applied to be an NHS volunteer – When you applied, how was the recruitment process for you? Anything you wish could have been done differently to accommodate your needs?

A: The interview process was going to be by phone and that wasn't accessible for me. I asked if it could do it via video call and they were happy to do that instead and I used the automatic captions. The induction and training were done over video call as well, and the auto captions can be a bit scrambled

so it was good that I could ask for notes and PowerPoints to be shared to cover anything that I might have missed. Having written information as well can make it easier.

Q: Question for deaf role model - What is the biggest challenge in your current role, and how did you overcome this?

A: We have a massive team. There are a lot of people who come and go, so trying to let people know about my communication needs, such as: Please stand in a semi-circle so I can lip-read you, can be difficult. I have a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, because when I'm in charge, we have to go to every patient, so it is quite tiring to lip-read all the time.

Q: Can you recommend any training our Volunteer team can do to learn sign language? Any free webinars?

A: As part of working towards the Deaf-friendly Standard, your team would have the opportunity to access our video clips to learn some very basic British Sign Language (BSL). There are also many providers of BSL courses:

- Local colleges
- Private businesses
- Charities
- Voluntary groups

It is worth spending time investigating who offers courses in your area to see which provider is most suitable in terms of cost, location, speed of learning and course times. A good place to search for courses is [Signature's website](#). They don't give you dates and times of courses but will tell you where you can find them. It is also a good idea to look up local colleges online and find out what BSL courses they offer.

Q: Hearing people (wrongly) assume all deaf people speak British Sign Language (BSL), but I am aware that is not the case. Is this the same situation for deaf young people or do the trends change?

A: In Britain there are over 70,000 deaf people whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language.

64% of severely or profoundly deaf children communicate using spoken English or Welsh only in school or other education settings. 9% use British or Irish Sign Language. 22% use sign language alongside spoken English or Welsh.

(Consortium for Research in Deaf Education, 2019 UK-wide summary)

Personal experience of deaf speaker: "As I was growing up, a lot of people spoke to me, so I didn't learn British Sign Language until I was 19. It really does depend on the person. You meet a lot of people who can adapt their communication styles, and that's why it's so important to ask about communication needs, as people may use different communication depending on the environment.

Q: I learned BSL in college, and I used to attend the local deaf club to practise my conversation skills. Is there a list of deaf clubs nationally that we could approach to let them know about our opportunities?

A: Each region will generally have deaf clubs, groups or centres with contact details online.

Q: We typically advertise for specific roles (eg patient befriender). Would it come across as 'patronising' or offensive if we were to advertise a special volunteer role specifically for young deaf volunteers?

A: If roles are available to young volunteers already, it would be best practice to offer those same roles to deaf young volunteers and have a conversation with them to agree which would be the best option for them. Specific roles would not need to be created, although there may be certain roles that need to have reasonable adjustments put in place for a deaf young person, and you would need to ask that person what they would need to be able to do that role. If you create a partnership with us, our training will help you recognise any adjustments that you may need to consider.