



Staying Connected

Impact Report 2020/2021



We are the National Deaf Children's Society, the leading charity for deaf children. We support deaf children and their families and work with decision-makers and professionals to overcome the barriers that hold deaf children back.

Our vision is a world without barriers for every deaf child.

In 2020/2021 we focused on overcoming obstacles to:

- language and communication
- local and national services
- independence.



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Welcome

The pandemic has, of course, had a huge effect on us all, but it has brought extra challenges for deaf children and young people. Through national lockdowns, home-schooling and constantly changing restrictions, we've had to transform the way we provide our services so that deaf children are not left behind.

This report highlights some of the ways we've helped deaf children and their families to connect with others, and stay connected, in this difficult year. We moved our face-to-face events to Zoom workshops, allowing us to reach more families and professionals than ever before. Parents enjoyed learning Family Sign Language and coming to coffee mornings online. Home learning tips, mental health advice for deaf young people and sessions about how to apply for benefits were all enthusiastically welcomed too. Our Roadshow bus may have had to stay parked for the year, but our digital Roadshow workshops spread deaf awareness to schools across the country.

The launch of the Your Community forum was very timely. It gives parents a place to ask questions and share advice, even when they can't meet face-to-face or are not ready to do so. Our Pen Pals project gave deaf children and young people a new way to communicate with

each other too, at a time when they might have been feeling particularly isolated.

As restrictions ease, we know some things won't be quite the same. We will embrace what has worked well online to increase our impact and reach more deaf children and families in the future. And we look forward to resuming our face-to-face activities for families who find it harder to access our services online. We'll also learn from what didn't go so well during this time. The pandemic delayed progress on some of our projects and so we're eager to get these moving again.

We're proud of the way we've adapted in the face of the pandemic but we couldn't have done it without your wonderful support. Our ability to fundraise was severely limited at a time when our services were needed more than ever. Thanks to you, our amazing funders, we've continued to be there so deaf children don't miss out on the friendships and fun that should be part of every childhood.



Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive, National Deaf Children's Society



**“
We're proud
of the way
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How you helped deaf children stay connected



2,194
people attended
online family events

94%
success rate in education
and benefit appeals

29,000
views of our Family
Sign Language videos

1,004

deaf children and young people were supported in South Asia and East Africa



93%
of professionals rated our early years conference good or excellent

500

parents registered to the new Your Community forum

206

deaf children were matched together as pen pals



35,000

campaigners signed a petition about clear face masks by a member of our Young People's Advisory Board

Core services

When families find out their child is deaf, often the first thing they worry about is the future. But we know that with the right support, deaf children can do anything other children can do. We're here for families from the moment they find out their child is deaf, to help them give their child the support they need.



500 members registered to get parent-to-parent support on our new Your Community forum.

Our **Freephone Helpline** is often the first place families turn to for support. Last year we answered 3,290 enquiries through calls, emails and live chat. Of those who responded to our feedback survey, 91% felt the information or advice they received was helpful or very helpful.

Due to the pandemic, we quickly moved from face-to-face to **online family events**. The 104 events included sessions for families whose children had recently been diagnosed as deaf, to learn about the support available and connect and share experiences with other parents. We developed home learning and online education sessions to help families during lockdown and adapted them as the situation changed.

Holding our events online massively increased attendance from the previous year, with a total of 2,194 attendees from across the UK. There was also an increase in the number of Black, Asian, and other ethnic group families attending. We received positive feedback after all the events.

We gave families a great new way to connect by launching **Your Community**, our online forum for parents to get tips and ask questions from other parents and carers of deaf children and young people. Around 500 members have registered so far, creating a strong community of people ready to share their experiences to help others.



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Knowing I wasn't alone made me feel better.

Matilda's story



Karen is mum to Matilda (7), who has a severe to profound level of deafness with bilateral cochlear implants. She signed up for our online Home Learning event to gain some useful tips for home schooling during lockdown.

I was worried that not going to school during lockdown would impact Matilda's learning and social interactions, and whether she'd cope with online lessons and hearing fatigue. Matilda has a high level of specialist support at school, and I didn't want her to get behind. My biggest concern was letting her down.

I signed up for the online Home Learning event to learn some strategies to help with home schooling a child with a hearing loss.

Attending the event virtually was easy. The organisers made you feel really at ease and there were lots of chances to ask questions.

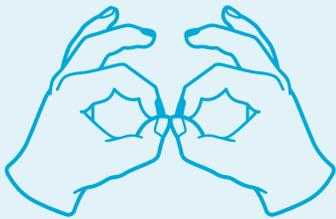
The advice from the professionals was so useful. I got a better understanding of hearing fatigue so I could articulate that to Matilda's teachers.

It was reassuring to listen to other parents in the same situation as me and to learn that I wasn't alone in feeling this way about my deaf child; other parents also felt guilt. Knowing I wasn't alone made me feel better.

Having the event online made it fully accessible without the need to travel. I'd really recommend attending one. The support was invaluable and helped me look at things in a different way. It made me realise that I was doing my best for Matilda.

Overcoming barriers to language and communication

Some deaf children speak, some use sign language and others use a mixture of the two. We believe families need clear and balanced information to make the decisions they feel are right for their child. Families who decide to use sign language with their child often have to pay thousands of pounds for classes. This means some can't afford to learn how to communicate in this way with their children.



Our Family Sign Language videos were viewed more than 29,000 times.

Our free **Family Sign Language (FSL)** courses are for families with deaf children who want to learn the signs and phrases they need for everyday family life. We moved our courses straight onto Zoom so that they could continue during the pandemic. Delivering the course online meant that extended family members such as grandparents could join in too. Every single one of the 53 families who took the FSL course gave positive feedback about how it had improved communication with their deaf child.

We also released a series of FSL videos on YouTube, covering signs for family, animals, colours, feelings and more. We made different versions for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect regional differences in British Sign Language (BSL). The videos were hugely popular, receiving over 29,000 views across the year.

We continued to support the **BSL Act** in Scotland, which aims to raise awareness of BSL. We contributed to a progress report and supported young people, families and professionals to implement the Act's commitments. In Wales, we advised the Welsh Government on the need for families of young deaf children to be offered opportunities to learn BSL. We also supported deaf young people to discuss this with the Children's Commissioner.



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It helped him to communicate more easily and embrace his deaf identity.

JJ's story



Laura is mum to JJ (10) who has moderate to severe bilateral hearing loss. Attending one of our online Family Sign Language (FSL) courses helped JJ to communicate more easily and stopped him feeling so isolated during the pandemic.

JJ wears a bone-anchored hearing aid on a soft band. His processors kept breaking and communication during the pandemic was difficult at times, so I thought it would be brilliant for him to learn FSL.

The prospect of doing an online course was initially daunting as he doesn't like Zoom but, as we'd be learning FSL and there wasn't an expectation to have to listen to speech, he was excited to give it a go.

During the course, over six Saturday afternoons, we learnt colours, animals and food – which was helpful because it means that JJ can sign what he would like in noisy supermarkets. We also learnt emotions, which is so useful as it allows JJ to communicate his feelings through sign. The course was really tailored for our family.

From spending a lot of time in his room and not interacting, the course has had a great impact on JJ's self-esteem. JJ saw the FSL tutor as a role model and this was so empowering; after the last session, he said that he wouldn't mind becoming a BSL Interpreter when he's older!

Learning FSL was an unforgettable experience for JJ as it helped him to communicate more easily and embrace his deaf identity.

Overcoming barriers to language and communication

When schools closed and online learning began, it had a huge impact on deaf children's education. Poor internet connections made lip-reading impossible, audio was often distorted, and lessons and educational videos were not subtitled.



We helped to make online learning more accessible for deaf children during lockdowns.

When schools moved to online learning last year, many deaf children found that **home learning** materials weren't accessible for them. We put together blogs and resources and kept them updated with the latest information for parents and professionals, including a popular checklist for teachers to make their remote learning deaf-friendly. Working with deaf young people, we developed a handy new guide that covers the basics of making content accessible.

Over the year, we achieved much greater awareness of the need for home learning resources to be accessible. We conducted and shared an audit of Department for Education resources and raised accessibility with governments across the UK, the BBC and Oak National Academy, which was set up to support schools with online learning. Thanks to our partnership, Oak National Academy's video lessons went from 0% subtitled to 100% subtitled.

We set up our **Young Inspectors** programme in response to inaccessible learning across the pandemic. Young Inspectors are deaf young people who work with organisations to check that they are delivering high quality, accessible and engaging services for deaf children and young people. Deaf young people influenced and informed CoppafFeel!, ChildLine's Deaf Zone and BBC's Newsround.



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Now when I sign up to volunteer, I'm no longer the shy person in the corner.

Amy's story



Amy (18) has moderate bilateral hearing loss. Taking part in the Young Inspectors programme helped build her confidence while making a difference for deaf children and young people.

I've attended many great National Deaf Children's Society events over the years, like weekends away, taking part in sports and theatre activities, and learning life skills. I wanted to get involved in a different way and was offered a place on the Young Inspectors programme, which was brilliant.

As part of the programme, I inspected the ChildLine website to see if it was deaf-friendly. It's really important for websites to be deaf-friendly so that everyone can access the information, no matter what their level of deafness. I checked that they

were using captions or an interpreter to sign alongside their videos. The subtitles on their videos run at a good speed to give you time to read them before they disappear, which doesn't always happen. We were also asked to come up with new ways the organisations could be more deaf-friendly, so we put together some ideas for how ChildLine's chat box should look and work.

I've enjoyed working as part of the Young Inspectors programme because you get to meet other deaf young people your age. The National Deaf Children's Society has helped me massively by taking me out of my comfort zone and helping me build my confidence. Now when I sign up to volunteer, I'm no longer the shy person in the corner. Young Inspectors was a great opportunity to further build my confidence and communication skills, and make a difference that will benefit others.

Overcoming barriers to services

Deafness isn't a learning disability, but many deaf children struggle at every stage of their education because they don't receive the specialist support they need to shine. Urgent action is needed to make sure they get the same opportunities as their hearing peers.



We supported 237 cases and had a 94% success rate in our education and benefits appeals.



Part of the problem is sweeping cuts to services that deaf children rely on. These include time with a Teacher of the Deaf, who has been specially trained to support deaf pupils, and access to essential technology like radio aids.

Losing such vital support can threaten deaf children's futures. We **campaigned** with local parents against significant budget and staffing cuts that would have huge impacts on their children's education. Our successful campaign in Tower Hamlets prevented funding reductions that would have affected over 350 deaf children.

We also provide one-to-one support for parents who are concerned about the support their child is getting. This can include helping families to appeal against decisions made about their child's education or the benefits they have been given. We supported 237 cases and had a fantastic 94% success rate in our **education and benefits appeals**, ensuring many more deaf children got the support they needed.

Children's Hearing Services Working Groups (CHSWGs) allow families and health, education and social care professionals to work together for the deaf children in their area. At the start of lockdown, we encouraged CHSWGs to start meeting virtually so that this valuable collaboration was not lost. We participated in meetings for all 115 active CHSWGs and increased the number of parents taking part.



Aayan's story

Nosira is mum to Aayan (11) who is profoundly deaf.

When her local council proposed reductions to services for deaf children in the area, Nosira got involved in our successful campaign to halt the cuts.

Aayan has had access to support through Tower Hamlets Council since he was born, including support from a Teacher of the Deaf in his primary school. This is helping him to reach his potential at school. He's good at maths, he likes drama and music, and he really enjoys doing things on the computer.

When we heard that Tower Hamlets Council was proposing budget cuts and staff reductions, I was worried about what this would mean for deaf children in the area. This is a vital service, and without it the schools

would struggle to give our deaf children the same opportunities as hearing children.

We campaigned locally to get the council to rethink their plans. I asked other parents to get involved and help us make some noise. The National Deaf Children's Society was a major help as they raised the profile of the campaign. They set up newspaper interviews, got the press release out and organised a meeting with Tower Hamlets MPs.

When the council said they were going back on their planned cuts, it was a huge relief. There were a lot of parents, especially with younger kids, who were really stressed that they wouldn't get the same level of professional help anymore.

We will always be ready to fight for our children to get the support they need, and I know the National Deaf Children's Society will be here to help us.

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Without this service, schools would struggle to give our deaf children the same opportunities as hearing children.

Overcoming barriers to services

When deaf children returned to school after lockdown, they faced a new barrier. Teachers and pupils wearing face coverings in the classroom had a huge effect on deaf children's ability to take part in lessons. Deaf children struggled to understand their teachers, get involved in classroom discussions or chat to their friends.



Over 35,000 campaigners signed a petition about the need for clear face masks in schools.



No matter what communication method they use, most deaf children face challenges with communication and isolation when they can't lip-read. From the early stages of **face masks** being introduced, we pushed for clear masks, to support the communication, education and wellbeing needs of deaf children and young people.

We kept our blog on clear masks and coverings up to date so that families and professionals had the information they needed. We also supported one of our Young People's Advisory Board (YAB) members, Dinah, with her petition about the use of face masks in school, which was signed by over 35,000 campaigners by the end of the year.

In England, we worked hard to ensure that the initial Department for Education (DfE) guidance on the use of face masks was amended to include face shields/visors as an alternative. In the devolved nations, our work on face masks led to guidance from governments that included references to deaf children.

We were also vocal about the need for clear masks in health care. We were involved with the NHS Supply Chain PPE group from the beginning, and were regularly invited to provide input, highlighting the needs of deaf children. We hope the use of transparent face masks will continue after the pandemic to help deaf patients and healthcare workers alike.

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I felt really happy when the Government finally changed its guidance on face masks.

Dinah's story



Dinah (18) is moderately to severely deaf. We supported Dinah's successful petition on transparent face coverings and other support for deaf students during the pandemic.

I felt worried and let down when the news came out that face masks would be introduced in classrooms. Luckily my school was very accepting and ensured that the students with hearing loss would be able to lip-read teachers. However, understanding my classmates (both in lessons and socially) was a big challenge.

I knew that not all students with hearing loss would have the same level of support from their schools, which led me to create a petition to the Government. After the challenges of online learning for deaf students, the decision that masks would be compulsory or recommended in the classroom felt like a big step back in terms of accessibility.

The National Deaf Children's Society was invaluable throughout the whole campaign. Firstly, without the confidence I've gained from being on their Young People's Advisory Board, I probably wouldn't have started the campaign at all. They supported me in everything from helping to phrase petition updates, to promoting the campaign on social media, providing support and captions during media opportunities, pushing for change with the Department for Education and much more!

I felt really happy when the Government finally changed its guidance on face masks. However, they could have (and should have) made some small changes much earlier, such as recommending clear masks in classrooms. Above all, I'm pleased that the petition raised some deaf awareness among people who wouldn't have otherwise considered the effect of masks on those who have hearing loss.



£115,000

raised through virtual
and socially distanced
community events such as
The Big Step Forward



2,548

people learned more
about deafness through
our digital Roadshow

Overcoming barriers to independence

Most deaf children are born into hearing families and it's not unusual for them to grow up without meeting another deaf child. This can feel very isolating, particularly if they're missing out on conversations at school or are being left out by hearing friends. It's important that deaf young people have the chance to connect with one another and share experiences and tips.



206 deaf children and young people were matched as pen pals.

Our new **Pen Pals project** proved to be a great way for deaf children to make new friends, stay connected and develop their communication skills. We matched 206 deaf children and young people (aged 8 to 18) with another young person of a similar age and communication preference. As pen pals, they wrote letters or recorded videos to each other in British Sign Language (BSL), giving them a chance to ask questions and get to know one another. All communication went through our team first, to keep everyone safe.

We also delivered a popular series of virtual writing and illustrating workshops for deaf children and young people, linked to our Big Story Challenge in association with ITV Signed Stories.

When the pandemic forced our big purple bus off the road, we adapted our **Roadshow workshops** to visit schools and community groups online. The fun, interactive and engaging sessions are aimed at developing deaf young people's knowledge and confidence and increasing deaf awareness among hearing children. Many of our Roadshow staff are deaf, and we also involved some amazing young volunteers to talk about their own experiences. Our digital Roadshow workshops were attended by 2,548 people, including 686 deaf children and young people.



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It's been a hugely beneficial experience for us all.

Heidi's story

Ceri is mum to Heidi (9) who has had unilateral hearing loss in her left ear since birth and uses the Roger Focus hearing aid, mainly at school. Ceri signed Heidi up for our Pen Pals project during lockdown so she could connect with someone who had similar experiences to her.

Heidi's dad is a Deputy Head, so we were able to send her into school as a key worker's child for some of lockdown. This was invaluable as, due to her hearing loss, Heidi lacks confidence in spelling, reading and maths. But it was far from a normal routine; she missed her usual friendship group.

Also, in the last few years, Heidi's become very aware of how her hearing loss makes her different to others. So, when I saw information on the Pen Pals project, I asked her if she'd be interested.

Heidi jumped at the chance to meet someone else with a hearing loss and really enjoyed writing letters to her pen pal on the computer.

Her favourite part was first getting to know her pen pal and sharing stories about their struggles. Then, after creating some common ground, the discussions changed to favourite toys, books and games!

The project was so valuable for Heidi's mental health, social skills and to normalise her hearing loss. I was blown away by how involved she got through every letter she received and wrote back. It really helped with her confidence and dealing with her hearing loss. She loved it!

The Pen Pals project is a brilliant way for children to get to know others who are going through similar things, as well as creating a vital support network. It's about friendship and kindness. I'd recommend it to anyone. It's been a hugely beneficial experience for us all.



Overcoming barriers to independence

Deaf people are twice as likely to be unemployed as their hearing peers. That's despite being able to work almost everywhere with the right support. Our aim is not just to get more deaf young people into work, but into jobs that inspire them.



84 deaf young people attended our webinar on Access to Work.



This year, we launched a series of **And You webinars** to inspire and inform deaf young people aged 13 to 18. The topics included technology, benefits and deaf identity. The most popular webinar was on Access to Work, with 84 young people attending the live session. All attendees said they had either learnt something new or felt more confident.

We completed our work on the **My Future** project, which provided workshops and tailored, deaf-specific careers advice to young people in five pilot areas, with funding from the Careers & Enterprise Company. During the project we reached 160 deaf young people, increasing their career aspirations.

We went on to create, test and launch a free **Deaf Works Everywhere** toolkit and resources for careers advisors, teachers and Teachers of the Deaf, to help them support deaf young people plan for a bright future. We also developed a deaf awareness e-learning module for Careers Advisors in Wales, which is now mandatory for all new Careers Advisors.

Our Deaf Works Everywhere campaign video aimed at 13 to 17-year-olds won the Drum content award for Best Charity Content Marketing Campaign. It was described by judges as “powerful” and “inspiring”. You can watch it at www.ndcs.org.uk/deafworkseverywhere.

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The webinars have given me great tips and coping strategies.

Daniel's story



Daniel (16) has mild to moderate hearing loss. Attending our webinars gave Daniel tips that he can use to look after himself and help other deaf young people too.

The National Deaf Children's Society has always been a friendly voice at the end of the phone. They've helped with things like making me aware of the support available and advice for filling out my Personal Independence Payment claims.

By watching the Deaf Works Everywhere And You webinar, I got great advice from other deaf young people on careers and getting a job. And at the Technology And You session, I found out about technology like radio aids, which could really help me at college.

At one of the webinars, I heard about a group that the National Deaf Children's Society was putting

together for a mental health project. I've struggled with my mental health in the past, so it sounded really interesting. I also wanted to learn more about how the mental health system works, so that I can help others by raising awareness that there is help available for deaf young people.

I really enjoyed connecting with other deaf young people, even if it was just online. It showed me that I'm not the only one going through this kind of thing.

When I leave school, I'm hoping to go to college to study laboratory science, or carpentry and joinery, or maybe take on an apprenticeship. Whatever I end up doing, the webinars have given me great tips and coping strategies that I will use in the future.

Deaf Child Worldwide

Through our international arm, Deaf Child Worldwide, we support deaf children facing challenges in some of the poorest communities in South Asia and East Africa. Working locally with partner organisations, we support projects which aim to tackle the significant barriers that deaf children face in developing countries.



In South Asia, 722 parents received training to support their deaf child to communicate.



Being able to communicate is essential to getting a good education. In developing countries, communication is often made harder by late diagnosis, few opportunities to learn sign language, lack of specialist support and poor-quality hearing aids.

Ten of our partners focused on providing education and communication support to deaf children and young people and their families.

In **South Asia**, they supported 838 deaf children and young people and 722 parents. The support they provided evolved throughout the pandemic, with our partners continuing to reach beneficiaries over the year as much as possible, even if not always face-to-face. With this support, many families were able to improve communication with their deaf child. In Bangladesh, our partner, Centre for Disability in Development, began providing more structured training to parents so they could support their deaf child's education while schools were closed. They trained 137 parents in this way.

In **East Africa**, we worked with our partner, the National Association of Parents of Deaf Children (NAPADEC), to teach parents in Uganda to use sign language. Working through their Parent Support Groups, they recruited 82 new parents and expanded into more rural areas, bringing the total number of parents to 233.

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Sayal has come out of her shell and is proving to be very smart.

Sayal's story



Sayal (4) lives in a small village near Odisha, India. Through our partner organisation, Lower Income People's Involvement for Community Action (LIPICA), she has been learning simple signs to help her communicate.

Sayal didn't have an easy start, with her mother sadly passing away when she was only a year old. Sayal's grown up cousin Banita and her husband Santosh stepped in to raise Sayal.

Early on, Banita and Santosh realised Sayal didn't react to the sound of their voices or everyday noises like other children of the same age. They suspected that she was deaf but they didn't know how to help her.

When Sayal was two, Banita learned of LIPICA, which was based nearby. A caseworker assessed Sayal's hearing

and visited the family at home to show them how they could support Sayal. At first Sayal was very withdrawn and shy, but after four months and a lot of patience she started to show interest.

When the pandemic made it impossible for the caseworker to visit, LIPICA came up with new ways to keep in touch with the family. They created learning resources to deliver to Sayal at home and contacted Banita and her family regularly by phone to support her.

Sayal is learning the Odia alphabet and can sign a range of words including 'Mother', 'Father', 'goat' and 'dog'. She has come out of her shell and is proving to be very smart, with a keen interest in reading and drawing. Banita and Santosh are so proud and now have the confidence to help her succeed.

Deaf Child Worldwide

It's vital that deaf children and young people in the world's poorest communities get the right support to thrive and succeed in life. The pandemic has meant that we all – individuals and governments – have had to make changes in the way we do things. By working together, we can make this an opportunity to bring transformational change to the lives of deaf children, young people and their families around the world.



90 people from 35 different countries attended our first Unheard Children webinar.



To help extend our impact beyond the areas we work in, we launched the Deaf Child Worldwide **Unheard Children report** on the experiences of deaf children in developing countries. The report included a foreword signed by Former UK Prime Minister and the UN's Special Envoy on Global Education, Gordon Brown.

Following on from the report, we started a series of **Unheard Children webinars**. They bring together NGOs, academics, professionals and policymakers to discuss the challenges that deaf children face in some of the world's poorest communities, and the initiatives that can help transform their lives. The first webinar, on language and communication, was attended by 90 people from 35 different countries.

We continued to strengthen our **evidence base**, closely monitoring insights from partners on the ground as COVID-19 hit, and evaluating our projects remotely. We also started a research project with three partners in West Bengal, India, to understand the learning experiences of deaf secondary school children during the pandemic.

In Kenya, our partners supported 38 deaf young people through deaf youth groups, keeping in touch on WhatsApp. They also trained 68 young people in skills relating to employment or starting a business. Eighteen deaf young people successfully applied for government grants to fund their own business ideas.

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Joyce could see that this cycle of late diagnosis meant that children started school late and often dropped out early.

Joyce lives in Uganda and is a doctor and mother of a profoundly deaf daughter. She formed our partner organisation, the National Association of Parents of Deaf Children (NAPADEC), to give parents a way to connect and advocate for their deaf children.

group – she saw children who were communicating with their parents and doing well in school. It gave her hope for her daughter’s future.

Deaf children usually get assessed very late in Uganda, and the knowledge and awareness of deafness is very low. Joyce could see that this cycle of late diagnosis meant that children started school late and often dropped out early. She knew all of this led back to parent support and access to services.

So Joyce formed NAPADEC to encourage parents to form small parent support groups. NAPADEC not only brings parents and siblings together to learn to communicate with their deaf child, but it has also become a united voice to speak to government and policymakers. Over the years, Joyce has led NAPADEC, with support from Deaf Child Worldwide, to help bridge the gap between deaf children and their hearing counterparts in accessing services.

When Dr Joyce Nalugya found out that her daughter was profoundly deaf, it came as a big shock. She worried about how they would communicate and if her daughter would be able to go to school or get married.

But Joyce knew that as a doctor herself she was in a privileged position. She was signposted to a school for deaf children and met a parent support group. Joyce found so much comfort in going to the

Joyce’s story



How we're fundraising

It was a difficult year for fundraising and we are so grateful to the amazing people and organisations who so generously support our work. Last year, thanks to you, we raised more than £24m in charitable income.



You raised more than £24m to help deaf children stay connected.

Despite most traditional events being cancelled, our incredible fundraisers raised £115,000 through virtual and socially distanced community events. They took on our GoTeam44 virtual British Sign Language (BSL) challenge, organised their own virtual runs and bike rides, and found new and creative ways to keep fundraising. Among the cancelled events was the London Marathon, usually one of our biggest events. We were so impressed by the committed supporters who ran a virtual marathon instead, raising £40,000.

At a time when businesses were facing their own challenges, our corporate supporters continued to give hugely valuable support. Our Charity of the Year partnership with The Access Group was extended, raising a massive £135,000 during the year.

The gifts we received from supporters in their Wills made an enormous difference to the deaf children and young people we help. We received gifts from 50 people, bringing in £1.1m and allowing us to keep supporting deaf children in the ways they most need.

We couldn't do our work without supporters like you. Whether you sold raffle tickets, awarded us a grant, fundraised at work or pledged a gift in your Will, we want to say a huge thank you.



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I wanted to help in whatever way I could from home.

Claudia's story



Claudia has used her experiences as a deaf young person to give back to the National Deaf Children's Society, even finding a way to get her workplace involved in a virtual fundraiser during lockdown.

Before the pandemic, me and my best friend Lucy, who is also deaf, went along to the Young People's Advisory Board residential weekend in London. We talked to the deaf young people about our own experiences of deafness and the challenges we've overcome growing up, and we gave advice on getting into university and the workplace. I want to support young people to embrace their deafness and prove that they are just as capable as anyone else!

As COVID-19 hit the UK, I knew it would be a difficult time for charities, so I wanted to help in whatever way

I could from home. I decided to spread more awareness about the National Deaf Children's Society and raise some money too.

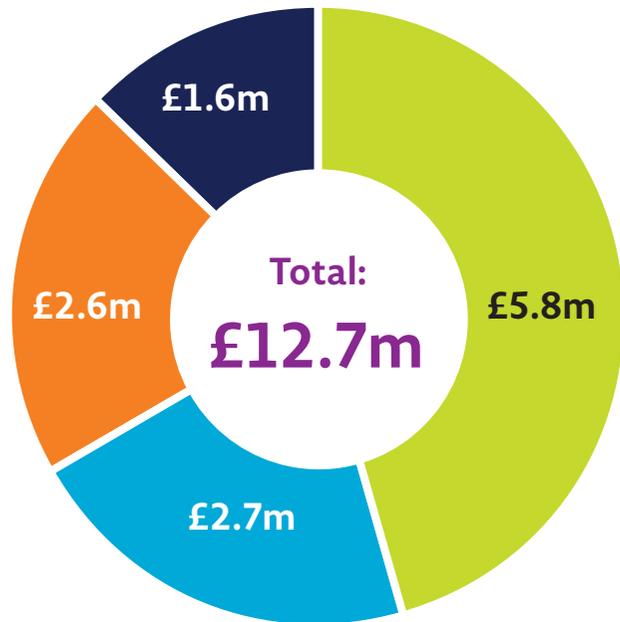
During the first lockdown, my team at Pulse Brands, a business management consultancy firm, took on a virtual version of our fingerspelling fundraiser called The Fingerspellathon. My colleagues really enjoyed learning some sign language. They learnt to spell out their own names and Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, and we had a competition to see who was the fastest. It was a great morale booster for the team, and we raised an incredible £635!

We also posted a video online in which we spelt out our names. The video was a way to spread awareness about sign language and the importance of visual cues for deaf people. Whenever I watch the video, I am in awe of how beautiful sign language is.



Finance and governance

Summary of charitable expenditure



- Overcoming barriers in local and national services
- Overcoming barriers in language and communication
- Overcoming barriers to independence
- Other charitable activities

Board of Trustees

Our Trustee Board governs the charity and has a maximum of 12 Trustees, all volunteers. The majority of our Trustees are parents or carers of deaf children and members of the charity. Trustees can serve on the Board for a maximum of nine consecutive years.

Thanks to all our Trustees for their service over the last year:

Tim Polack (Chair)
Dominic Holton
(Vice Chair)
Helen Selwood
(Treasurer)

Sheila McKenzie
(Deputy Treasurer)
Suzanne Beese
Katherine Binns
Lynn Gadd

Altaf Kassam
Damian Proctor
Jennie Rayson
Jan Rutherford
Lorraine Wapling

Annual Report and Financial Statements

The annual report and financial statements were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 10 November 2021.

The statutory financial statements, on which the auditors Crowe UK LLP gave an unqualified audit report on 11 November 2021, are submitted to the Registrar of Companies, the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

You can get the full Trustees' report, statutory financial statements and auditors' report from our Freephone Helpline on **0808 800 8880** or from our website www.ndcs.org.uk.

How we're learning and improving

We aim high but there's always more we can do to improve support for deaf children and their families. We want to develop new areas of work and learn from things that didn't go according to plan. We owe it to you – our funders – and to the families we support, to continuously strive to do better.

- We found that we can reach many more people by providing some of our services and events online. But online support isn't right for everyone or accessible to everyone. We will work to better understand the effect of the digital divide between people who have good access to the internet and technology, and those who don't. We'll make sure that families who can't access our support online can get it in other ways.
- Our services for borrowing and purchasing useful technology for deaf people were paused for much of the year due to COVID-19. We used this opportunity to evaluate the services so they will be more effective and efficient when they start up again.
- Ensuring a good start in life is vital for deaf babies and young children. We believe there is even more we can do to support families at this important time and have created a new Bright Start team to focus on this. We will be further strengthening our work on support in the early years in 2021/22.
- We planned to set out a vision and roadmap for deaf children's future education support through our Deaf Education 2030 project. This work was delayed due to COVID-19 and furlough. We will continue to work on this in 2021/22 and beyond.
- We reflected on the services we offer families and felt that there was also more we could do to support deaf children in the 8 to 14 age group, and their families. We have created a new team that will focus on support for these families.
- We had aimed for the Buzz, our new website especially for deaf children and young people, to go live in 2020/21. After a slight delay, the website was launched at the end of April 2021. We will continue to enhance the site during 2021/22.
- We reflected on our social media posts through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion and created a plan for user-generated content that would ensure better representation across our channels.

What we'll do next year

We have extended our current five-year strategy by a year to avoid creating a new strategy during the the pandemic. We've made a change to the strategy to focus more on the early years of a deaf child's life. Our three focus areas will now be:

- local and national services
- the early years of a deaf child's life
- independence.

Language and communication will continue to run as a theme throughout our work in all three areas.

Area of focus 1: Overcoming barriers in local and national services

We will improve outcomes for deaf children and young people by making sure that services for them are available, accessible and of a high quality to meet their needs.

Measure: Evidence of our influence, so that the rights of deaf children and young people are upheld, and their needs are met, as services recover from COVID-19.

Area of focus 2: Overcoming barriers in the early years

We will help families to ensure their deaf child has the best possible start in life, particularly focusing on information, advice and peer-to-peer support.

Measure: Evidence of positive outcomes for families with children in the early years.

Area of focus 3: Overcoming barriers to independence.

We will support the development of deaf children's independence and preparation for adulthood, with a focus on post-16 transitions and entry into employment.

Measure: Evidence of positive outcomes for deaf young people in activities which link to independence.

International

We will continue to work with partners in East Africa and South Asia, supporting deaf children

internationally in our three strategic areas of focus. We will continue to increase our profile, build our evidence base and develop our international role as an expert trainer.

Underpinning activities

We will continue to develop the support we give to our members, providing them with information, advice and guidance, and empowering and supporting them to advocate, influence and campaign on behalf of their own child and on behalf of deaf children more generally. We will continue to build on our accelerated digital transformation from the previous year.

Smarter working

We will continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our work, and will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our staff.

Thank you



♥ Key funders

Barclays Bank Plc
Charles Brotherton Trust
Churchhouse Family
Charitable Trust
Dandia Charitable Trust
Deans Charitable Trust
Department for Communities
Miss A M Pilkington Trust
Miss Anne R Jolly's
Charitable Trust
Mrs M A Black Charitable Trust
Murphy-Neumann
Charity Co Ltd
Scottish Government
Sir Jeremiah Colman Gift Trust
The Access Group

The Allan and Nesta Ferguson
Charitable Settlement
The Brock Webb Trust
The Buffini Chao Foundation
The Careers and
Enterprise Company
The Cecil Rosen Foundation
The Charlotte Tana Heymann
Charitable Trust
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**You're helping to
transform deaf
children's lives**





**We are the
National Deaf
Children's Society,
the leading charity
for deaf children**

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