



Deafblind Enablement Ltd

Welcome to Deafblind Enablement's September 2014 edition of "Network Newsletter"

Apologies to those of you who were expecting to receive our Newsletter in July – I really don't know where this year has gone except to say that we have been very busy.

We are happy to welcome on board new communicator-guides who have joined us during the last 12 months; also to Josh who is assisting us in the office with the never ending 'admin' work and not forgetting the new service users who are now being supported by DBE.

As always a big Thank You to our Consultant on Deafblindness, Dr Philip Gafga, please read his very interesting article titled 'Social Care: keep an eye on the bigger picture' on Page 2, Philip's blog is on: <http://www.deafblind-enablement.co.uk/DAW14.php>

To all our Awareness Officers who have assisted with training, our Assessors for facilitating with Signature DBG Level 2 courses a big Thank You.

Please help us to spread the word by passing this newsletter onto colleagues and friends who may be interested.

The aim is to publish "Network Newsletter" annually; if you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive this and any updates or wish to provide us with your feedback to help us improve future issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.



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Our mission is to enable people with a sight and hearing loss to learn new skills, develop existing skills, gain access to their community and existing services with dignity, respect, control and choice.

News Update:

DBE produces their first national leaflet regarding 1-1 specialist support - <http://www.deafblind-enablement.co.uk/docs/DBEleaflet.pdf>. If you require copies of our leaflet, please contact us.

All Communicator-Guides adhere to our policies and procedures, including confidentiality; they have current DBS/CRB's and are covered by our professional indemnity insurance.



Lynn Sargeant
Services Manager



Debbie James

Director



Dr Philip Gafga
Consultant on
Deafblindness

If you are a carer, perhaps we can help by providing a few hours respite care - contact us to discuss your individual needs, this service is flexible. Unfortunately, personal care is not provided.

For further details regarding any of the services designed for deafblind people please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Are you sight AND hearing impaired?



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Deafblind Enablement offers Communicator-Guide support for hospital appointments

If you have any problems with accessing information, communication and mobility for your health appointments then you may benefit from using Deafblind Enablement's Communicator-Guide service to support you at your hospital appointment; this would include:

- Guiding to and from the appointment
- Guiding around the hospital including full access to all facilities
- Full access to all relevant information
- Clear and concise communication throughout
- Assisting with making follow-up appointments
- Assisting with prescription dispensing
- Follow-up by providing notes or repeating info

Subject to funding approval from the Hospital Trust then we may be able to help by providing a fully trained and experienced Communicator-Guide

Deafblind Enablement offers Communicator-Guide support to meet your individual needs.

Do you wish you had support to be able to:

- Go shopping
- Visit family or friends
- Take part in a social activity
- Go swimming or take part in physical activity
- Outings of interest, ie visiting a Cathedral
- Reading correspondence, books / magazines, legal documents etc
- Paying bills, assisting with organising finances
- Meetings

Deafblind Enablement can provide Communicator-Guides to assist with the above, contact us with your unique needs inline with personalisation, using personal budgets, direct payments or self funding.



Dr Philip Gafga
Consultant on Deafblindness



Social Care: keep an eye on the bigger picture

In my blog post for Deafblind Awareness Week, I mentioned the Deloitte study briefly, which looks at the economic impact of providing social care. Although social care is seen as a cost on society, we are in danger of losing sight of the bigger picture. I make the case for all deafblind people to have the right to access to communicator-guide support.

The Care Act passed into law in May 2014 and it reaffirms the right of deafblind people to have a specialist assessment that is carried out by someone who is experienced in deafblind issues. The Act also

puts a lot of emphasis on holistic approaches to personalisation and prevention is one of the central themes.

Prevention is one of the main benefits of social care that was looked at in the Deloitte study. Enabling opportunities for healthier lifestyles through regular exercise and proper nutrition can pay dividends in terms of savings to the NHS. Lack of exercise and poor nutrition has been linked to the obesity epidemic with cases of Type 2 diabetes on the rise.

Social isolation for prolonged periods can create the potential for mental health problems, adding a further burden to the NHS. If deafblind people miss medical appointments because they do not have access to a communicator-guide, it is a cost to the NHS creating the potential for higher costs if medical problems are not diagnosed and dealt with sooner.

Looking at some direct benefits of social care, falling into debt may be an issue if deafblind people cannot read important correspondence, such as household bills, because they do not have communicator-guide support. This is a potential cost to the Treasury in terms of debt resolution processes. The Deloitte report recognises that there is higher uncertainty with regard to employment prospects for deafblind adults of working age, but communicator-guide support may improve the chances of finding employment. This would lead to further accumulation of direct benefits, such as more income to the individual; increased tax receipts to the Treasury; and reduction or elimination of some income-related welfare payments by the DWP and local authorities. In addition to these preventative and direct benefits, there are also intangible benefits that can be difficult to quantify. Having access to a communicator-guide can open many doors for deafblind people and present new channels for creativity and social interaction, enriching the fabric of society.

It is vitally important that deafblind people assessed as having moderate needs should still be given the chance to access communicator-guide support services, which could make all the difference in preventing 'moderate needs' from cascading over into a situation when those needs become 'substantial' or 'critical'. Any 'savings' by not providing social care would turn out to be a false economy.

The most flexible approach would be to offer 'ad hoc' communicator-guide support where the local authority allocates a set number of hours per month, and leaves it to the service user to use those hours as desired. If you would like to discuss the practicalities of setting up and running an 'ad hoc' communicator-guide scheme in your local area, Debbie James and Lynn Sargeant will be pleased to offer advice and information.

DBE's Specialist Support:

Deafblind people are an extremely vulnerable group, hidden within society and often their lives are full of frustrations, isolation and loneliness. DBE recognises the vital support needed for deafblind people and provides fully qualified Communicator-Guides and Deafblind Interpreters on a flexible, adhoc or regular basis in line with the personalisation agenda.

DBE has provided support for approximately 300 **medical appointments** within the last year, including providing Specialist Deafblind Interpreter support on several occasions when deafblind people have been admitted to hospital, this includes providing emergency and overnight support; also being reactive when requested to provide interpreter support when deafblind people have needed the on-call GP to attend in the early hours.

DBE's partnership working with **Hospitals and GP's** continues to increase on a national basis and we continue to negotiate with other Health Departments to ensure that deafblind people have appropriate communication and guiding support.

DBE is pleased to continue to provide **Interpreter support** for Sensory Review and other 'formal' meetings.

DBE continues to work closely with **Capita Interpreting Ltd** (previously ALS) to provide support to people with a dual sensory loss attending medical appointments, including hospital, GP, dental and opticians appointments and we continue to provide 100% cover.

We are pleased to continue to be a **preferred provider** in the following areas: Essex; Southampton; Peterborough providing formal and social communicator-guide support to deafblind people in these areas to enable them to access information and the community.

Thank you to everyone who helped us to become an **Accredited Approved Provider** in North Tyneside

New initiative: Southampton Council has contracted DBE since April 2014 to provide a Communicator-Guide Scheme for people who have a sensory loss – this includes deafblind people and people with a single sensory loss. We currently have 12 service users and 4 members of staff. We will be facilitating a **Communicator-guide training course** in the near future – please do not hesitate if you are interested in joining our team or training in this specialist field.

If you would like DBE to meet with you to discuss services available and how we can provide a quality enabling service for deafblind people – please contact us.

DBE's Communicator-guide Schemes: We have a team of dedicated, experienced and qualified communicator-guides and deafblind interpreters to fulfill assignments on a flexible basis.

Feedback:

Communicator-Guide, Anne B: I have had a brilliant eventful day with A today, we went to London for a health appointment, afterwards she decided to use some of her 'ad hoc' communicator-guide hours to see 'Covent Garden', where we had a super time around the shops, a light lunch and a rickshaw ride that took us around some of the sights, including Soho, China Town, Leicester Square, Holborn and Trafalgar square, the courier also pointed out items of interest along the way. A was elated at being able to do this. A said she thoroughly enjoyed today. We even managed the underground - A wanted the experience. It was really rewarding to see someone so happy with their choices of what they wanted to do!

Alexa Roseblade, Conference and Events Officer, Sense: I wanted to say a huge thank you to you, and the 2 communicator-guides, Paul and Marion, for all of your hard work and support. After the last minute drop out of E at the event I can only describe Paul as wonderful, he was willing to do anything to help, constantly upbeat and an absolute joy to work with! He ended up supporting a lady who had not requested a guide after she got a bit confused with our application forms and did an absolutely brilliant job – after being up since 7.00am he was still smiling and energetic at 5.30pm!

Marion was as ever brilliant and both her and R seemed to have a lovely day, she even managed to get him up and dancing at one point! Again I cannot fault her or the support she provided.

I really have appreciated the support you have given in finding communicator-guides and the flexibility with the pairings and timings, I was more than happy with the whole service.

Communicator-Guide Venetia: I have recently returned to working with deafblind people after a long break and am enjoying it very much. All DBE staff are very efficient and supportive in every aspect of our working relationship (and out of it as well). The service users are very patient, informative in teaching new signs for communication and techniques for guiding. I feel very much part of the group; I look forward to learning a lot more"Debbie says I can"!

Annette, Service User: I have found DBE highly professional, they have been able to meet my needs in different circumstances such as communicator-guides that understand the process of meetings and I have had those needs met. My needs have been met with continuity of preferred communicator for meetings. DBE offers flexibility in my personal budget, I book ad-hoc support when required.

Bill, Service User: Communicator-guides are all lovely; very good with hospital appointments. System is very good for support for hospital appointments, nothing official to help other than you.

Sarah, Service User: Thank you to the communicator-guides for their support; Kim for your valuable shopping advice and to Paul thank you for showing me things on the beach I would have missed.

N, Service User: I really want Debbie to interpret for me, I do not understand the interpreters that try to use hands-on with me, Debbie is very good and is very clear.

Mrs L, Service User: I am happy with my service, I would not hesitate to recommend the service to others and I will carry on using the Communicator-guide support for hospital appointments

Peter Skivington, MBE: I have always found Josh a very pleasant and helpful young man. He has accompanied me to the club, shows, bowling, meals out and shopping. His Communicator-guide skills are very good.

Meet some of DBE's dedicated team of qualified Communicator-Guides



Newcastle



Essex



Peterborough / National staff meeting

Our team of trained communicator-guides continues to grow from strength to strength; thank you to all of them for their support over the last 12 months. We currently have **41** qualified staff nationally.

If you wish DBE to develop a Communicator-guide scheme in your area, please contact us to discuss.



Keep up to date with what is happening and 'like' us; we currently have **324** likes!

DBE has devised a Refresher Training course for staff that hold the 'old' level 3 Deafblind qualification, this course is a condensed version of our nationally recognised Communicator-Guide Support Worker Course. Please contact Debbie if you require further information.

DBE's 1st National Rally & Debbie James 30 year's Celebration Day:

Please have a look at our Gallery photos:

<http://www.deafblind-enablement.co.uk/GalleryEvent.php> and Awareness Officers Information: <http://www.deafblind-enablement.co.uk/Awareness%20Officers.php>



In September 2013, DBE were pleased to bring deafblind service users and staff together in Peterborough for the first Rally; this coincided with Debbie James (Director) celebrating 30 years working in the field of dual sensory loss.

All participants had an enjoyable day with one deafblind lady asking if we could do it every 3 months!!!

The 2nd National Rally is to be held on **19 September 2014** in Peterborough

Debbie James, Director receiving her vase

Thank you to the staff at the Farmers, Yaxley, for their help and support. This is a fantastic venue. Our thanks also go to the Richmond Trust for their very kind donation and to all DBE staff who assisted to ensure that deafblind people mingled, meeting up with old friends and making new ones.

National Deafblind Awareness Officers



Deafblind Enablement now has 16 Deafblind Awareness Officers nationally, getting together for the first time at the Rally, September 2013. If you would like to arrange an awareness talk, please contact us.

Specialist Training:

Deafblind Enablement continues to facilitate Signature's Level 2 DBG

Communicator-Guide training courses and this year has worked in partnership with a number of organisations to run this course. Communicator-Guide courses were held in Durham, London, Sandwell and Surrey. We have trained **32** Communicator-Guides this year with our feedback receiving 'excellent' or 'good' ratings.

Exciting News: DBE is also involved with Signature's working party on the development of new deafblind qualifications which we are hoping will be available early 2015 – watch our website / Facebook page for further information or contact us to add your email address on our mailing list.

Some of the training we have provided over the last 12 months includes:

- **Specialist Assessment Training: Essex County Council, Staffordshire, West Sussex and Euston (individuals from the regions):** We have trained 40 people to be specialist assessors in the last year.
- **Environmental Audit for a nursing home in London**
- **Central Bedfordshire Council** continue to book us to provide ongoing specialist sensory training for their staff.
- **Milton Keynes Council** also continues to book us for specialist training
- Thank you to **Guide Dogs** for continuing to work in partnership and to allow us to use their venues to deliver Deafblind Awareness, Specialist Assessment and Communicator-Guide Training courses

DBE is pleased to have worked in partnership with Handy Training facilitating BSL courses. In March 6 students passed Signature BSL Level 1 in 7 days! Three students are currently working towards Level 2 BSL. We will be starting another Level 1 course soon. Please contact Debbie for more information

DBE is pleased to have raised awareness by training 116 people in the period July 2013 - August 2014

DBE's Training Feedback:

Kathy Kohler, Team Manager, Tower Hamlets: 'I recently attended the 5 day Deafblind Communicator-Guide Support Worker training course led by Debbie James of Deafblind Enablement. It was a very intense experience consisting of a well-balanced mixture of theoretical learning, experiential exercises and practical training in communication methods and guiding. There was a strong focus on preparing for the exams on the 4th and 5th days which helped to maintain our interest and application. Debbie is an inspiring trainer and her person centered approach enabled me to develop skills beyond my expectations. I am indebted to her and would recommend this training to all social care staff working with deafblind adults.'

Cathy Mills, delegate on a Communicator-Guide Course: You are all terrific ambassadors, I learned so much about the deafblind world, about myself and about others. Please continue your wonderful work.

TRAINING DATES FOR 2014:

Deafblind Awareness Course: Euston, London: 9 December 2014

DBG 2 Communicator-Guide Support Worker Course:

Gateshead: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 October 2014

Southampton: Dates coming soon

Fetcham, Surrey: Dates coming soon

Peterborough: Dates coming soon

Specialist Assessment Course: Euston, London: 9 & 10 December 2014

Please contact DBE if you are interested in attending any of the above courses or wish your name to be placed on our mailing list for future information.

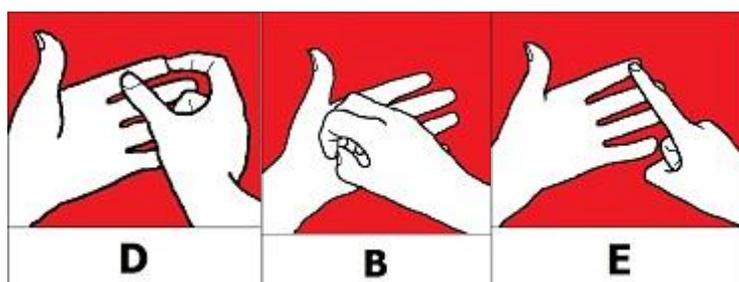
Thank you to everyone who has worked in partnership with us during the last 12 months to enable us to put on training courses, these includes:

Guide Dogs
Sight for Surrey (Formerly SAVI)
Signature
Sandwell Sensory Team

Contact us for a copy of our Training Brochure detailing all our courses and their learning outcomes.

DBE would like to hear from anyone who wishes to discuss their training needs and to commission in-house training courses in a cost effective, quality way. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your individual requirements.

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