



Deafblind Enablement Ltd

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.



Welcome to Deafblind Enablement's "Network Newsletter"- January 2016

Debbie James, Director reports: 5 years on.... I cannot believe it! Time has definitely flown by whilst we have been having fun... Thank you to everyone who has helped our mission.

Deafblind Enablement's name is often shortened to DBE, our small dedicated team of staff have enabled us to grow from strength to strength, gaining further fully qualified staff in various regions. My main aim when we started our company was to remain passionate, caring but to make a difference by creating as much deafblind awareness as possible, ensuring a better quality of life with choices for all deafblind people.

From March to August 2015 DBE undertook a major audit of its operations. This has already resulted in significant improvements being made, such as the office re-structure and the new bookings database. *Kim Olivier, Specialist Deafblind Worker, Peterborough expressed it to me as we here all feel: 'I am looking forward to the year ahead and the challenges that I will come across whilst working with DBE. I intend to continue to do my best to make a real difference – however small - to the lives of deafblind people.'*

We really have achieved some remarkable things such as facilitating quality communication, access to information and mobility to deafblind people by providing ad hoc support for all occasions such as medical appointments, weekly shopping trips, attending trips and activities and end of life support...heart wrenching but vital support. Facilitating specialist assessments to enable deafblind people to receive essential support and equipment to improve their lives. Providing specific training for specialist assessors, support workers and anyone interested in gaining Communication and Guiding DBG2 nationally recognised qualifications. Working in partnership with St. Peters Church, Yaxley, holding a monthly sensory impaired group. On a personal note, last year I continued with studying and have successfully completed my MBA...

I am so pleased we have reached 500+ Facebook 'likes', posting articles of interest to keep people up-to-date weekly. The Care Act 2014, issued with the Deafblind Guidance, 2014, is influencing many deafblind people's lives with awareness being created within Local Authorities and Health. Our major achievements consist of the presentation by Annette Bodsworth (DBE's Awareness Officer) and myself to National Rehabilitation Worker's Seminar, working closely with Birmingham University to develop a Level 6 Deafblind Complex Needs Module - to be facilitated by myself in November 2016. Most importantly we have continued to work closely with Signature (formerly CACDP) to develop Level 3 Care Act compliance for Specialist Assessors as well as Communications/Interpreter modules in Deafblind Manual, Visual Frame and Hands-On qualifications, available this year – contact Abby to be the first to become appropriately qualified.

Please do contact us for information, advice and discussion, we are here to help....





Message from our Consultant on Deafblindness, Dr Philip Gafga

Recently, I was helping carry out some technical testing of the new text relay system provided by Next Generation Text Service (NGTS). This involved installing and running the NGT Lite app on a computer with a Braille display to discover any accessibility issues for deafblind users of NGTS.

I would like to highlight some useful features of the NGT Lite app that will be useful that I have tried on a Windows computer. One feature is the ability to change screen colours and font sizes in the app so that you can have a more comfortable colour scheme with larger text to make text relay telephone calls easier to follow on screen.

The second feature is the ability to make text-to-text telephone calls that bypass the text relay service. You and your friends could download the NGT Lite app and install it on your computers and have a real-time typed telephone conversation without the text relay operator taking part. As the NGT Lite app is free to download and install, it could eliminate the question of owning and operating a separate textphone.

For more details about NGTS, you can visit their website at <http://www.ngts.org.uk>.

On a final note, the growth in new communication channels may mean that we rely less on NGTS over the longer term. I am finding new ways to contact companies and service providers without having to resort to NGTS. It is a question of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of various communication channels.

Wishing you all the best for 2016.

Welcome to the new head office team:



Abby Marshall,
Operations Manager



**Josh James, Training Officer,
Finance Officer and
Specialist Communicator-guide**

Our **Essex region** has gone from strength to strength with the appointment of Sue Waite (below) as our Specialist Deafblind Worker. Sue has worked for DBE for nearly 3 years and took up her new post in June. As well as being a highly sought after Communicator-Guide, Sue is the first point of contact and conducts supervisions for our Essex team, and promoting our services in Essex including visits to new service users to assess their immediate needs, and liaising with Health and Social Care providers to ensure referrals are followed through. DBE provides weekly/ad-hoc support for social care and health appointments. Sue states: 'We already have a good Team in Essex and we continue to grow with 2 new Communicator-Guides starting in Jan 2016. I'm really excited about the year ahead'.



DBE's Specialist Support in the regions:

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 well-being agenda.

Meet some of our service users:



Peterborough: Julia Kimbell has been busy winning rosettes at various shows throughout the region. Here she is pictured with her Sheltie Guinea Pig named Kingsley,

Julia says: I've around 100 guinea pigs, give or take, I breed as well as show them. I find them fascinating little things and they give me something to fill my days. I also do a little rescue work: Take in piggies needing a forever home, often elderly ones, who can then live out their lives being loved to bits. I also have 5 rabbits, 3 of them are rescues.



Thomas from North Tyneside receives regular support from DBE's dedicated staff team, he is very talented at craftwork and enjoys making models.

For DBE's 5th anniversary he presented Debbie with a wonderful model....



Varan from Essex playing 'spoons' on the Cadbury's float after visiting parliament with Sue his Communicator-Guide It's amazing how much fun Varan is having now he is able to get out and about...



John Smith from Newcastle receives regular support from DBE's dedicated staff team, he enjoys weekly shopping and trying new activities.



DBE is pleased to continue to provide **Deafblind Interpreter and Communicator-Guide support** for Sensory Reviews 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 optician's appointments and we continue to provide 100% cover.

DBE's 3rd National Rally was held on 5th October 2015, with over 50 people attending (deafblind people and their communicator-guides) getting together meeting new and old friends. We believe in deafblind peer support, developing communication systems together with lasting friendships, meeting up once a year. Johnboy came over from N. Ireland to meet his deafblind friends. Anyone can come to this year's event, please contact us.

Annette comments: Thank you for a brilliant day in brilliant company. Three cheers for DBE...



Specialist Training

DBE continues to work with Local Authorities, Health and Social Care organisations and others who come into contact with Deafblind individuals in any way, delivering specialist training in line with current government legislation.

In September 2015 we delivered the first bespoke combination training in Specialist Assessments and Communicator-Guide support to 14 staff in Ealing Borough Council, completing Signature qualifications. Delegates represented teams from across the LA including Social Workers for Adults, Young People, Older People, Disabilities, Rehabilitation and Sensory teams.

Feedback from the course included the view that '*DBE training should be mandatory*', we couldn't agree more! They are excited about developing their skills and knowledge further when our Level 3 courses are available.

Here are our Ealing candidates proudly displaying their certificates at the end of the six-day course- still smiling!



Delegates complete practical exercises prior to undertaking DBG2 Signature Assessments (with deafblind assessors).





DBE's Deafblind Awareness Officers have been assisting us with our specialist training –

Here's Patricia Skivington with our new Essex communicator-guides Julie and Anna.



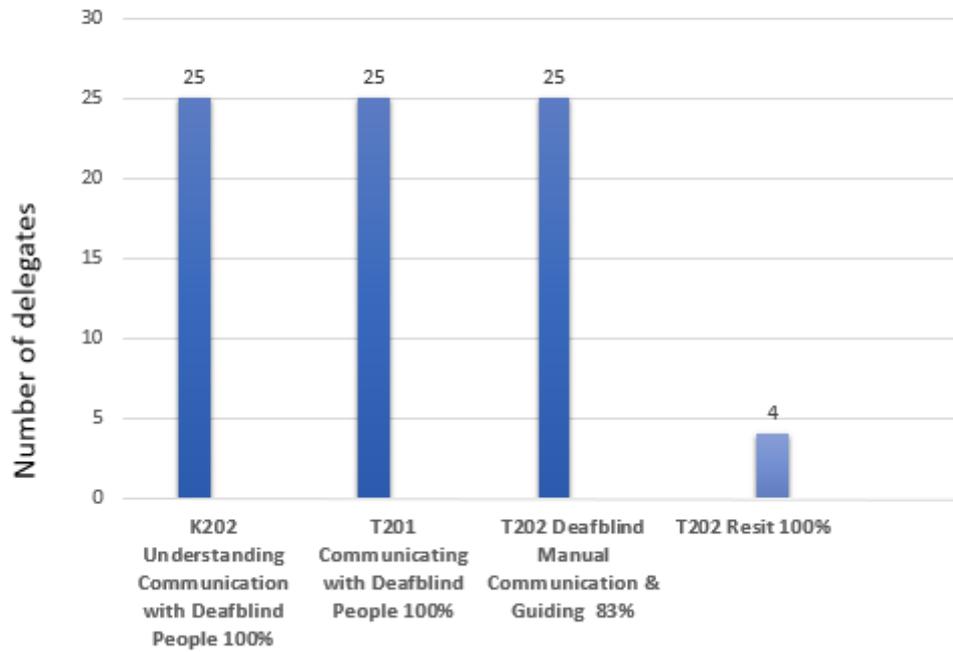
DBE's specialist training always involves meeting a deafblind person – here's Linda Jameson is assisting Leeds delegates understand her life experiences and practicing communication and guiding skills whilst undertaking DBE's Specialist Assessment training



Thank you to all our Awareness Officers for their commitment in assisting DBE with their specialist training.

TRAINING DATES FOR 2016:
Signature DBG2 Communicator-Guide Support Worker Course:
West Sussex: 2, 3, 9,10, 11 February
Peterborough: 16, 17 Feb, 7, 8, 9, March
Please contact Abby for future dates.

DBE Training 2015- DGB2 Pass rate



All delegates attended DBE’s specialist training courses rated it ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.

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.

'Interview with DBE's Communicator-Guide'

Venetia Charlton, Newcastle Region



How long have you been doing this and what attracted you to the role?

I started working with deafblind people when I lived in Manchester and had a placement from college with the RNID and went to the local Deaf club. Previously working with other deafblind organisations' especially a deafblind gentleman who taught me a great deal and I owe a lot to him, wish he was still here today. I found out about DBE through a previous employee about 2 years ago and have not looked back since. I was attracted to the role with DBE as there was a wealth of experience within the organisation and a lot of support and encouragement throughout.

What do you enjoy most about working with Deafblind people?

I feel I am able to enable them to do tasks and have experiences that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to do. The deafblind gentleman I worked with had a go at skiing which he enjoyed and it was a pleasure for me to be part of the enabling process.

What is the most frustrating aspect of your job?

The most frustrating part can be when other people who have no experience of deafblind people make comments such as "isn't he marvelous!!" (my view is that he is same as you or me just deafblind)!!! Or when people ask a deafblind person to move out of their way, there is no response they tend to look at you as if you are daft (Deafblindness is invisible and communication takes time) Difficult to access information regarding simple tasks can be frustrating.

What surprised you most about the job?

People's eagerness and confidence to do things for themselves surprised me at first. Mental concentration is part of the role - I always find the energy from somewhere each time.

What do you think would make the biggest difference to a deafblind people's quality of life?

I think that offering deafblind training and awareness in places that they frequent such as Doctors, supermarkets, care companies would benefit deafblind people as they would not have to rely on specifically trained staff, becoming equal in society. I think that British Sign Language should be taught in school along with awareness of sensory impairment.

DBE welcomes Karen Wood and Kay Hewson as North East Communicator-Guides.

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.

The Care Act 2014 states that Communicator-Guides should be available within each region, we have a team of dedicated, experienced and qualified communicator-guides and deafblind interpreters to fulfill assignments on a flexible basis.

Feedback:

Newcastle Hospital Ward staff: The staff wish to say thanks to everybody for your support. Robert (deafblind man without speech) had a long stay in hospital, discharged, supported at home by both DBE and staff from the Care Agency. Thanks to everyone for their hard work, commitment and understanding in making this unusual arrangement work. Maureen, District Nurse who supported Robert at home asked me to pass on to everyone what a fantastic job you all have done with the communication, but in particular acting as advocates for Robert. She learned huge amounts from DBE and explained that the awareness raising of Deafblind issues from everybody has guided her work.

RWPN conference Birmingham 09/07/2015 from Mark Gray:

Annette Bodsworth addressed the RWPN conference in Birmingham, with Debbie James from Deafblind Enablement. Annette's illustrations of her life in the context of the updated Section 7 Guidance in the health and social Care Act 2014, was one of the most moving presentations I have ever seen about the difficulties of being deafblind.



Annette with Sula, her beautiful Guide Dog.



Annette was dignified and articulate as she explained about the importance of a specialist assessment, and the difference that her communicator-guide has made to her life and how easy it is for it to spin out of control without the right support. We take things for granted, things like birthday cards and bills coming through the door, but what if they come, and you can't read them for day's months and sometimes years? She really brought home how important the little things are that stop us being isolated. A great ambassador for deafblind people who should be heard by more professional workers who think they know best.

Emilia: Very helpful to adapt skills which I feel should have been taught years ago! (attended Specialist Assessment Course)

Dennis Stringer: "Thank you for being patient and clear, you understand me".

Pam Watling: "I am really glad that I asked for help for my medical appointments, I didn't know this was possible. I used to get lost when I was on my own and I could not read the information or see/hear what they were telling me. I cannot see their faces or what is happening. Now communicator-guides tell me the information and my questions get answered".

Julie Rana: "The support I have received from DBE has proved to be punctual, reliable and professional".

Contact Details: 01733 686969 / 0755 709 2282, abby@deafblind-enablement.co.uk, 5 Stephenson Close, Yaxley, Peterborough, PE7 3ZP Registered No: 7480324.
www.deafblind-enablement.co.uk

