

## Including deaf children and young people in groups

This resource was created by Scouts who have kindly shared it with Woodcraft Folk.

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### Contents:

Introduction

A deaf friendly Scout group

Inclusive tips

- General advice
- Language and communication
- Technical support

Programme on a plate

Question time

Deaf issues

- How to identify deafness
- What is deafness?

NDCS

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## Deaf Friendly Scouts

### Introduction

There are 35,000 deaf children and young people in the UK and nearly 2,000 deaf babies are born every year. Just like their hearing peers, deaf young people want to be able to access Scouting. The Scout Association is committed to being fully inclusive and has produced the **Deaf Friendly Scout Guide** in partnership with the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) to ensure all Scout leaders have the resources and confidence to work effectively with deaf young people and provide an inclusive setting for all Scouts.

By 'deaf' we mean anyone with permanent or temporary deafness and this could be a mild, moderate, severe or profound level of deafness.

Deafness makes it harder to communicate which can be very isolating and many deaf young people find it difficult to participate in out of school activities because they do not facilitate good communication. This practical guide will help you and your Scout group adopt a positive and inclusive approach to including all deaf Scouts.

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## A deaf friendly Scout group

By adopting a 'whole group' approach the deaf young people in your Scout group will feel included and valued along with their hearing peers.

**Astrid has been a Scout for 2 years. "I love going to Scouts because it is great fun and I am with my friends. I like to help my hearing friends learn sign language and we have fun doing this. In my troop being deaf doesn't stop me doing things - I can do everything that hearing Scouts do like playing games. I have two badges now and I just got my artist badge because I love drawing and painting."**

### **Inclusive tips**

To meet the needs of deaf young people you may need to make some specific adaptations to the way you lead the Scout group. Follow these guidelines:

1. Make sure that you have the attention of all Scouts before starting to talk.
2. Speak clearly and naturally and face deaf young people when talking to them, allowing some space between the two of you for signing or lip reading purposes.
3. Remember lip reading involves a lot of guesswork, so don't cover your face with your hands or objects or walk around while you are speaking.
4. Avoid having your back to a window as this creates a shadow and again, can make it difficult for a young deaf person to read your facial expressions or lip-read.
5. Encourage all Scouts to talk one at a time and to raise their hand before speaking so deaf young people are aware who is talking.
6. Use whole sentences and not single words.
7. Encourage all Scouts to say when they do not understand something so you can use a different word with the same meaning.
8. Get to know how the deaf Scouts in your group communicate most effectively and ask what is useful and what is not.
9. Use wall displays to cover and soften large flat surfaces and carpet floors where possible as this will help reduce echoing.
10. Use written and visual support wherever possible. Support what you are saying by writing key words and timings on a board and use pictures wherever you can.

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### **Language and communication**

**Shaun has been a Cub Scout Leader for a year and is deaf.**

**"At first it was a real challenge finding suitable activities for deaf and hearing children together. Now I believe we can do everything other groups do...but do it in sign language. We play traffic lights in sign language, and our opening and closing songs are also in British Sign Language. The Cub Pack does the Grand Howl in a horse-shoe – not a circle – so the leader can face everyone. I make sure everyone is quiet before addressing the Cubs and most importantly, I keep a sense of humour. Deaf children**

**need to see more deaf adults leading things like the Scouts so they grow up thinking 'I can do that!' ”**

### **Technical support**

There is a wide range of technical support now available for deaf young people.

### **Radio aids**

If a young person in your Scout group is wearing a radio aid, then there are a few basic rules that you should follow:

- Even though they are using a radio aid, they may still be making use of other forms of communication, e.g. signing, lip reading and other visual clues.
- Remember to switch on the transmitter when using it to talk to a deaf Scout and to switch it off if you are having conversations that they are not supposed to hear.
- A radio aid transmitter can pick up unwanted background noise. If you are standing in a particularly noisy area consider turning off the transmitter.
- Avoid wearing loose jewellery that can knock the radio aid microphone and create noise.
- Check radio aids regularly to make sure they are working properly.
- When using the radio aid, do not tap or shout into the microphone.
- Wear the microphone approximately 15 –20cm from the mouth.
- Pass around the transmitter during group discussions.

### **Hearing aids or cochlear implants**

If you are working with deaf children who wear hearing aids or cochlear implants, here are a few tips:

- Check that the aids are switched on and working.
- One problem that can occur with hearing aids is acoustic feedback which causes a high pitched whistling sound (usually as a result of a poor fitting ear mould).
- Batteries can fail at any time, so it is useful to have some spare ones (this applies to cochlear implants as well as hearing aids).

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### **Programme on a plate**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Instructions</b>
20 mins	British Sign Language (BSL) alphabet	Skills	Learning new skills	Photocopy the enclosed alphabet-signing card. Go through the alphabet signs and ask everyone to sign their name and show the group.
25 mins	Port and Starboard	Fitness	Games	Instead of shouting instructions, point to where you want the Scouts to run and use signs or actions for climb the rigging, man over board and clean the deck! Using visual cues only, means that the Scouts will

				have to look at the Leader to get the instructions at the same time.
45 mins	Treasure Hunt			Organise a treasure hunt that is deafness / ear related. By giving clues on cards to different locations, groups can either collect parts of the ear or letters that make up an associated word to deafness e.g. Sign Language.
10 mins	Action songs	Skills	Learning new skills	Choose a favourite song and use actions to illustrate the words
Ongoing	Fundraising	Skills, values		Organise a "Wear it Loud" day! All Scouts and leaders donate £1 to the NDCS and wear really loud clothes to the scout group. You can do this on any day and raise money for the NDCS and help the 35,000 deaf children and young people in the UK.  You could also organise a cake sale, bring and buy or sponsored walk to raise vital funds for the NDCS.

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## Question time

### What adaptations should I make to the Scout venue to make sure it is deaf friendly?

- Flashing fire alarms are widely available now and when set off will notify deaf Scouts that they need to evacuate the building.
- Use wall displays and tablecloths to cover and soften large flat surfaces.
- If appropriate, carpet floors.
- Fit blinds or curtains.
- Close the window or door when there is noise outside.

It may not be possible to alter everything; however making specific changes to the environment can help to make it deaf friendly. Remember it won't just be deaf Scouts who will benefit, but also those who do not have strong communication skills or who are not very confident.

### How do I pay for these adaptations?

The Treloar Fund is available to Scout Groups that need to make reasonable adjustments to their meeting place to enable young people with special needs to attend the Scout Group. For further information contact the HQ special needs Office at [special.needs@scout.org.uk](mailto:special.needs@scout.org.uk)

### How do I prepare a deaf Scout for a day trip or activity weekend?

It is important to prepare a deaf Scout for any future activities so that they can experience the anticipation like the other Scouts. This can be done by:

- Using pictures.
  - Using different objects and books that are related to the experience.
  - Using one to one time to explain the new vocabulary.
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## Deaf issues

### - **How to identify deafness**

If you have concerns about a child's hearing, it is important to raise them with their parent, guardian or carers. The following are just a few of the signs that may indicate a potential hearing loss:

- The child does not respond when called
- There is a lack of clarity in speech
- The child watches your face or lips intently
- The child constantly asks for repetition – pardon? What?

Parent, guardian or carers should be encouraged to visit their family doctor and to ensure that if deafness is suspected the child is referred for further tests.

### - **What is deafness?**

Some children are born deaf and other children may become deaf early in life. Each child's deafness is different, depending on how loud and at what frequency a sound has to be before then can hear it. There are two main types of deafness:

**1) Conductive deafness:** Is the most common type of deafness. It means that sounds cannot pass through the outer and middle ear to the cochlea and auditory nerve in the inner ear.

**2) Sensory-neural deafness or nerve deafness:** Is caused by a fault in the inner ear or auditory nerve, usually when the hair cells of the cochlear are not working properly. Sensory-neural deafness is permanent.

Mixed deafness is a combination of conductive and sensory-neural deafness, for example a child who has permanent deafness and also has glue ear. Glue ear can come and go but a child with a sensory-neural deafness and glue ear will find it harder to hear than usual, even with their hearing aids.

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## NDCS

NDCS is the national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.

There are 35,000 deaf children in the UK and three more children are born deaf every day. 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents with little or no experience of deafness or knowledge of how to communicate with a deaf person.

NDCS represent the interests and campaigns for the rights of all deaf children and young people from birth until they reach independence. NDCS believes that the family is the most important influence on a deaf child's development and supports the deaf child through the family as well as directly supporting deaf children and young people themselves.

NDCS offers:

- Clear, balanced information and support to families through a network of family officers and the NDCS Freephone Helpline
- Advice on education and welfare benefits for deaf children and young people and support with appeals and tribunals
- Opportunities for deaf children and young people to develop social skills, confidence and independence through arts, sports and outdoor activity events
- Membership and support through local Deaf Children Societies
- A range of free publications and an online discussion group for parent, guardian or carers on the website [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk).
- A purpose-built Listening Bus which travels widely to schools and audiology clinics across the UK.
- An equipment loan scheme and grants to help people on low incomes to buy essential equipment.

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NDCS Registered charity number: 1016532