



**DEAF ACTION**  
Making the difference

# Inform

Newsletter Winter 2010



**175th**  
Anniversary  
Celebrations

Deaf Action  
Gets A  
**New Look**

Celebrating  
**25 years**  
of service!

Deaf Action's  
Charity Shop  
– One Year On

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## Welcome to Deaf Action's Winter Inform 2010

We've had a very busy six months at Deaf Action, so just fitting all our news in to this newsletter has been tough! 2010 has been a very special year for Deaf Action; it marks the organisation's 175th anniversary and we've had a good time organising celebratory events. You can read about all these events on page 3. From previous copies of Inform you will be aware of our work in Malawi; this edition we're delighted to bring you an update on our work on page 5. We're also very excited about our work in Tayside with Tayside Deaf Association and our work with Fife Sensory Impairment Services on pages 3 and 7 respectively, and we've also got some new services to tell you about on page 10.

We hope you enjoy Winter Inform 2010. If you have any news or views you would like us to include in our next edition, please send them to Jean Burke, Marketing Officer at [jean.burke@deafaction.org](mailto:jean.burke@deafaction.org).

**Season's Greetings to all our supporters, members and clients, we look forward to a prosperous New Year working together.**



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# 175th Anniversary Celebrations

Throughout the year Deaf Action has been celebrating its 175th Anniversary; you will no doubt have participated in some of the many events organised throughout the year.

**Events have included:**

- A Civic Reception hosted by the Lord and Lady Provost of the City of Edinburgh Council, held on 20th January at the City Chambers.
- A Cheese & Wine evening on 31st March, marked the opening of the Art & Crafts Exhibition, held at the Learning Centre, Head Office.
- On Sunday 11th April a church service, featuring the Deaf Signing Choir, took place in Greenside Parish Church.
- John Hay's 'From Benevolence to Empowerment 1835 – 2010' was launched on 29th October.
- A history exhibition took place at Deaf Action's Learning Centre from 29th October to 21st November.
- November saw the final filming of a short video featuring Deaf children from Donaldson's College alongside older members of the Deaf community.
- The year long celebration came to a conclusion with a Dinner Dance held at the Roxburghe Hotel in Edinburgh on Saturday 20th November.

**Now we're all looking ahead to the 200th Anniversary celebrations!**

Well done to all on the 175 committee for organising such wide ranging, stellar events.

The 175 committee consisted of:



Irene Francis



Peter Hay



Keith Hyland



Bryan Marshall



Carri Neilson



Harold Nicolson



Tommy Robertson



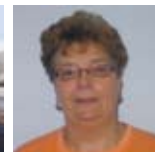
Liz Scott Gibson



Liz Sinclair



Jackie Slater



Jennifer Staples

With support from Jean Burke and Emma McGowan.

## Tayside Deaf Association

The Trustees of Deaf Action and the Tayside Deaf Association (TDA) are pleased to announce that they will be merging to form one organisation as from the beginning of next year. Between them, the two long established organisations have been working with deaf people for nearly 300 years, and have a lot of experience.

Deaf Action (Tayside) will be launched in January 2011. It will continue to provide already established services across Dundee, Angus, and Perth & Kinross, but hopes to develop new services too. We will be consulting deaf people across the area to ask them for their views and ideas on future developments.

TDA's current staff will join Deaf Action, and three members of the TDA Board will be joining Deaf Action's Executive Council. Deaf Action is very much looking forward to this exciting new development and to working with deaf people throughout Tayside!





**DeafAction**  
Making the difference

## A New Look Deaf Action

To start 2011 afresh, Deaf Action will be launching a new visual identity. From January, Deaf Action will have a new logo and we will begin updating all of our literature, publications and leaflets. The logo was developed after a consultation period involving members, clients, staff and similar organisations in Scotland.

Our name, Deaf Action, will remain the same, as will our strapline, Making the Difference, along with our mission and values. We will develop and refresh our website to correspond to our new visual identity and to make it more accessible and user friendly. It's a big project, but one we're very excited about; if you have any questions about the project or Deaf Action's logo, contact Jean Burke, Marketing Officer: [jean.burke@deafaction.org](mailto:jean.burke@deafaction.org) or 0131 556 3128.

## Deaf Action Christmas Cards

This year we organised a 'Design a Christmas Card Competition' to find a design for our Christmas cards. The competition, open to primary schools throughout Scotland, was organised to celebrate Learn to Sign Week. We received hundreds of entries from all over Scotland; there were so many excellent designs that we decided to create a secondary prize to find the cover image of our Winter Inform 2010. Marcus Fernandes, age 9 from Cornbank Primary, Penicuik, Midlothian, was the runner up in our competition. His design can be viewed on the cover of the newsletter.



The winning entry came from Leanna Paul, age 10 in P6 at St David's Primary School, Dalkeith, Leanna's winning image, seen here, was printed on all Deaf Action's Christmas cards for 2010. The cards are on sale at our charity shop in South Queensferry. Deaf Action's Christmas cards are also on sale from our Head Office, Albany Street, Edinburgh. A huge well done to both Leanna and

Marcus and to all the school pupils that entered, the standard of entry was very, very high; we had to draft in help from the 175 Committee to help us judge the results!

In addition to our Christmas card competition, to celebrate Learn To Sign Week, Deaf Action visited universities in Edinburgh to promote British Sign Language (BSL). During the week, taking place during 4th – 10th October, we also hosted a BSL taster session. The taster session was very well attended with a range of people from various occupations; we got some excellent feed back on the event.

Here is what we were told:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the BSL taster session. Having previously learnt the BSL alphabet many years ago, it really made a difference learning from a Deaf signer."

"Can't believe I learned the whole alphabet! I really valued understanding BSL as a unique language and not just a subcategory of English."

Learn to Sign Week is an annual nationwide celebration of British Sign Language intended to encourage people to develop communication and language skills.



## A Proposal for a BSL Bill



**In July 2010 Cathie Craigie MSP lodged a Proposal for a Bill to make BSL an official language in Scotland, marking an historic moment in the recognition of British Sign Language.**

The proposed BSL bill was open to public consultation from 9th July until 29th October.

**The Bill asked the public to consider four key areas:**

1. Do you believe British Sign Language should be granted legal recognition and protection by the Scottish Government?
2. Do you think Deaf people in Scotland should be able to access information and services in British Sign Language?
3. How can the number of people able to use British Sign Language be increased?
4. Do you agree that the parents, grandparents, siblings and other family members of deaf babies and toddlers in Scotland should have the opportunity to access free BSL classes in order to be able to communicate effectively with the child?

The Bill aims to secure BSL as one of Scotland's official languages, commanding equal respect with English and Gaelic.

Public consultation closed on 29th October with an amazing 850 responses from the public, including the response submitted by Deaf Action – the average number of responses received for a bill consultation is 20 – 40! This is obviously a Bill that the public felt very strongly about. The Bill will now be discussed in the Scottish Parliament.

## International Connections

### Working in Malawi



**Deaf Action's Scottish Government funded project in Malawi is coming to an end. Trainers Bryan Marshall, Deaf Action's British Sign Language Teacher, and Tessa Padden, from Heriot Watt University, have just returned from weeks of intensive teaching of the 12 Deaf student teachers of Malawi Sign Language.**

Amongst the subjects covered were sign language linguistics, teaching methods, preparation of materials and the use of IT. The students were very enthusiastic and worked from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm!

Bryan and Tessa were thrilled when all 12 of the students successfully passed their assessments and are now qualified by TEVETA (the Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational Education and Training Authority of Malawi) to teach introductory courses in Malawi Sign Language.

However, this is only the beginning and there is much work to do. We hope that Deaf Action will be able to continue its partnership with the Malawi National Association of the Deaf so that the lives of Deaf people in Malawi can continue to improve.



# Events

## ASLI 2010

Association of Sign Language Interpreters, Nottingham



On 16th and 17th October, Paul Belmonte, one of Deaf Action's interpreters, and Jacqui Lees, Social Enterprise Manager, attended the Association of Sign Language Interpreters conference in Nottingham.

The theme of the conference was 'Developing the Interpreter, Developing the Profession'. Deaf Action's Communication Support Agency has a good reputation throughout Britain for supporting and training new staff, so Paul and Jacqui were happy to represent the team by presenting their workshop 'Clearing the Pathways to Success – Supporting and Developing New Interpreters'.

A good number attended the workshop and there was a lively discussion; both Paul and Jacqui enjoyed meeting with their English colleagues and representing Deaf Action at this prestigious event.

## efсли 2010

European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters, Glasgow



From September 10th – 12th the efсли conference, which had been organised by Deaf Action and its sister organisation Deaf Connections on behalf of the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters, was held in Glasgow and was well attended by

the Deaf Action interpreters from Edinburgh and Inverness. The conference brought delegates from all over Europe and the USA to discuss various topics under the theme of 'SYNERGY- moving forward together'.

The conference was filled with numerous presentations and workshops and was lucky to have Dr. Adam Kosa from Hungary, the first Deaf MEP, open the conference.



In total there were approximately 230 delegates (Deaf and hearing) from 32 countries. The Communication Support Agency at Deaf Action really enjoyed the event, including the Scottish dancing on the Saturday evening!

## New Specialist Equipment Display Room



Deaf Action is pleased to announce that the Specialist Equipment Service's new and improved display room is open for business. Service users in Edinburgh and Lothian can now come and test our council-funded and commercial equipment, as well as our Try Before You Buy service for amplified telephones, in a purpose built environment. Anyone wanting to see the range of equipment on offer can visit us by appointment only on a Wednesday afternoon, or simply get more information, by contacting our Specialist Equipment Service in Edinburgh: [specialistequipment@deafaction.org](mailto:specialistequipment@deafaction.org) or 0131 556 3128.

## Communication Support Work

Deaf Action has been building a list of freelance Communication Support Workers (CSWs) so that we can offer a full communication support service to colleges and universities across Scotland, working with Deaf or hard of hearing students.

Communication Support Workers are used to facilitate communication in lectures, workshops and seminars so that Deaf and hard of hearing students have the same access to higher education as hearing students. This may be through the use of British Sign Language/English Interpreters, Notetakers or Lipspeakers.

We now provide CSWs throughout Scotland. All CSWs who work for Deaf Action agree to a code of confidentiality and will receive training on professional practices. If you would like to find out more about the work of CSWs please contact Alyson Grainger: [alyson.grainger@deafaction.org](mailto:alyson.grainger@deafaction.org) or 0131 652 3200.



## Including You Information Guide

During September and October, we launched two 'Including You' information guides; one to cover the Fife area and one to cover Edinburgh and Lothian. Our Big Lottery-funded 'Including You' project concentrates on informing, advising and assisting newly diagnosed hard of hearing people. The information guides, which are filled with local details and contacts, also provide practical advice and facts including: how to care for hearing aids, coping at home and at work, accessing health and other services, and communication tactics.

On 29th September the Edinburgh and Lothian guide was launched in Deaf Action's Learning Centre with an Open Day which hosted various exhibition stands from Deaf Action and other organisations supporting hard of hearing people in Scotland.

Our Fife 'Including You' information guide was launched in Dunfermline City Chambers on 12th October. Attendees were treated to presentations from Liz Scott Gibson, Deaf Action's Director and Carol Sinclair, Head of Audiology Service with NHS Fife.



## Lothian Deaf Community Mental Health Service (LDCMHS)



Lothian Deaf Community Mental Health Service recently celebrated its second anniversary. In addition to the second anniversary of the LDCMHS, the team also celebrated the one year anniversary of the drop in facility. The LDCMHS drop in takes places on a Wednesday afternoon at Albany Street from 1pm - 3.30pm. For more information contact Debbie O'Reilly [debbie.o'reilly@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:debbie.o'reilly@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk) or Barbara Brown: [barbara.a.brown@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:barbara.a.brown@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk) or 0131 652 3212.

## Fife Sensory Impairment Services

Deaf Action will shortly be moving premises in Fife; by early next year we hope to have settled into our new premises at the Sensory Impairment Centre, Wilson Avenue, Kirkcaldy. In September, Deaf Action became a partner in Fife Sensory Impairment Services, a charitable umbrella company set up to provide a way to jointly plan and deliver services for deaf and hard of hearing people, and for those who are blind and partially sighted too. Other partners are NHS Fife, Fife Society for the Blind, RNIB Scotland and Sense Scotland.

This is another new initiative for Deaf Action, and we are looking forward to working together to make sure that people with sensory needs in Fife can contribute their views to the planning and implementation of services which meet their needs. We'll let you know when the relocation is complete and when you can visit Deaf Action in Kirkcaldy.



## Celebrating 25 years of service!

In February this year Gordon Veitch, Senior Support Worker at Slateford Green, celebrated 25 years of working at Deaf Action. Gordon began working at Castleview Home for the Deaf (now Slateford Green) in February 1984. Here, Gordon shares his thoughts and experiences with us:

### **What initially attracted you to the job at Deaf Action?**

Back in 1984, I had just left Bangour Hospital in West Lothian, where I was a Student Nurse. As a poor student with lots of debt I needed to get a job. My then girlfriend (now wife) Issy had been working for the Deaf Society (now Deaf Action) for 3 - 4 years, she informed me that there was a job vacancy at Castleview Home for the Deaf. After an interview, I was offered the post and as I had met most of the "Family" (the clients that lived at Castleview Home), it was quite an easy transition.

### **You must enjoy your job! What aspects of your role do you most enjoy?**

Well I suppose I must be a bit of a people person. The best thing about my job is being able to make a difference in peoples' lives, seeing service users learning new skills or helping them to maintain their independence. I feel lucky that I have known and worked with some of the same service users for all these years, seeing how they have developed and gained skills. On the flip side I have seen many clients sadly pass away; sometimes it is worse than losing members of your own family as the relationships that you build over many years mean so much.



### **What changes have you noticed in your time here?**

The organisation has grown so much over the years; I think there must only have been about 10 staff in total at Albany Street, and not many more at Castleview. Now we're working throughout Scotland which obviously means a much bigger team. To be honest the time has just flown by, and I still love working with the service users - they always manage to put a smile on my grumpy old face.

### **Any advice for people beginning their career in a care role like yours?**

I think you have to be the right sort of person for care work - if you have preconceived ideas about people, probably best to find something else, but if you like "making a difference" to peoples' lives and that can be anything from just having a smile for someone, or assisting them with aspects of their daily routine or personal care, then it can be a very rewarding job. If you find the right area of work for you and you are willing to put in time and effort to learn about Deaf Culture and different communication skills, then you have the potential to have a very happy career working with Deaf Action.

On behalf of all the staff, clients and members of Deaf Action we would like to congratulate Gordon on his 25 years of service and thank him for all his hard work and input over the years.



## Our Work in Aberdeenshire



**Since 1st April, based in Inverurie Hospital, Deaf Action has been delivering a wide-ranging service to deaf people in Aberdeenshire, including the provision of information and specialist equipment. Project workers Jody Dexter and Sam Reid have been busy covering the length and breadth of the shire, providing home visits, drop-in surgeries and information events.**

Since July, Deaf Action has held six open talks throughout Aberdeenshire to inform people about our work and to gather information on the services people need. In the coming months we also aim to provide more opportunities for deaf people to get together, so if you have ideas for the types of activities you would like to see us delivering, please do get in touch. Contact [aberdeenshire@deafaction.org](mailto:aberdeenshire@deafaction.org) or 01467 629 604.

## Keeping Fridays Fun!

**Since the launch of Fun Fridays! in 2010, the programme has continued to build momentum and seek innovative afternoon adventures for young adults.** Held on the first and third Friday of each month Fun Fridays! encourages young deaf or hard or hearing adults, aged from 12 to 18, to get together and explore their local area. They can also bring along a hearing or deaf friend or sibling. All Deaf Action youth workers are highly skilled communicators and some are themselves deaf. If you would like more information about Fun Fridays! please contact Debra Wherrett [debra.wherrett@deafaction.org](mailto:debra.wherrett@deafaction.org) or 0131 652 3208.

## Smiley Family Saturdays

**In addition to keeping young adults busy on Fridays, the Health Project have also introduced 'Smiley Saturdays', held at Deaf Action's Head Office on Albany Street to welcome the entire family.**

Smiley Saturdays consist of three activities, designed to keep all members of the family occupied. Example activities include energetic activities like hill walking or zumba, relaxed activities such as aromatherapy or massage, with a final activity aimed at children like face painting or baking.

Smiley Saturdays take place on the last Saturday of the month, every second month (January, March, May etc). If you would like to find out more about the project or you would like to attend, please contact Kaz Langlands: [kaz.langlands@deafaction.org](mailto:kaz.langlands@deafaction.org) or 0131 652 3200.



## New Developments in Argyll and Bute

**Deaf Action has been awarded funding by the Scottish Government to pilot a new two-year sensory project in Argyll and Bute. This innovative project is developing new ways of working with both deaf and blind people across this remote and rural local authority area.**

Working with NHS, council and voluntary sector partners, we aim to help people with a sensory loss to maintain a high quality of life by providing a range of information and advice. We also work with service providers and non-specialist staff to ensure that people with a sensory loss have the same level of service and opportunity as other members of the community. Workers Abigail Apps and Debbie Gibson have recently started to make this vision a reality.

For more information about our work in Argyll and Bute please contact Jackie Slater, Community Development Manager: [jackie.slater@deafaction.org](mailto:jackie.slater@deafaction.org) or 0131 652 3219.



## New Year, New Service - Deaf Action's SignVideo

**From January 2011, Deaf Action is very excited to begin offering an online interpreting service throughout Scotland, in collaboration with SignVideo, an award winning service developed by Significan't, a deaf-led Social Enterprise.**

SignVideo will allow Deaf Action to deliver the same high quality interpreting service, as an online service. The online interpreting service for deaf people will provide instant access to experienced SASLI registered BSL/English interpreters using the most advanced technology in the field. Deaf Action's SignVideo will provide deaf people with access to video interpreters within seconds - over the last

six months the average wait for a SignVideo interpreter has been 30.6 seconds.

SignVideo offers a simple, easy to use interface that provides BSL interpreters on demand, regardless of geographical location. Being part of a network of video interpreting services throughout Europe ensures network stability and supported servers so that Deaf Action's SignVideo always remains online.

If you would like to find out more about Deaf Action's SignVideo or are interested in trialling the software, please contact Jacqui Lees, Social Enterprise Manager: [jacqui.lees@deafaction.org](mailto:jacqui.lees@deafaction.org) or 0131 558 5298.

## Deaf Action's Charity Shop - One Year On

**On Sunday 5th September Deaf Action's charity shop celebrated its first birthday.**

The celebrations were held in the Priory Church hall, South Queensberry, with lots of good food, drinks and excellent music from local musicians, Jim and Joyce McIntosh. The event, organised to thank the many volunteers for their time and contributions to the shop, was attended by the charity shop volunteers, Deaf Action staff, local Councillor Norman Work and the Lord and Lady Provost of Edinburgh. It was a wonderful afternoon and a very fitting show of thanks to our supporters.

Deaf Action's charity shop was officially opened in August 2009, but had been successfully trading since May that year. Since its opening the shop has gone from strength to strength thanks to all the hard work from the volunteers and the continued support from the South Queensferry community.



## Apprentice Interpreters - Apprentices No More



**Starting in April 2009, Deaf Action has been pleased to be part of the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI) apprenticeship scheme, Building Bridges. The scheme offered a mix of recognised qualifications and work experience that will lead to direct registration with SASLI.**

Earlier this year, in September, the apprentice interpreters sat their final BSL/English Interpreting exam. As part of the apprenticeship, Deaf Action employed two apprentice interpreters and provided placements for a further two apprentices to facilitate their 20 month training programme within a SASLI-registered interpreting agency, from April 2009 to December 2010. We are delighted to announce that all the apprentice interpreters working with Deaf Action successfully passed their exams to achieve a Postgraduate Diploma in Interpreting. Well done to Ailsa Laidler and Clare Canton, working from our Head Office in Edinburgh, and Rebecca Goodall and Debbie Mackenzie working from our Highland office. The Graduation Ceremony took place at Leeds University on Monday 13 December 2010.

## Dressing Up in Inverness

**In August our Highland Office supported member of Deaf Action's Executive Council, Jean Pentland, in a fancy dress fundraiser for Deaf Action's work with the Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD) and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsli).**



The event was attended by people from across Scotland. Deaf DJ Gerry Malley kept everyone on their feet with a superb selection of vibes and his famous signed performance as Freddie Mercury of Queen. A fantastic £823.20 was raised from the event which was supported by many local businesses. Huge thanks to them for their kind generosity.





## Coming Soon to a TV Near You



**As part of our 175th Anniversary celebrations, Deaf Action invited See Hear, the BBC program for deaf and hard of hearing people, to film our book launch 'From Benevolence to Empowerment 1835 - 2010'.**

The book was officially launched by its author John Hay MBE, at our Head Office in October in front of a room full of invited guests. After John's launch, tea and cakes were served whilst attendees had their chance to speak to the See Hear team and give their memories of Deaf Action through the years.

We'll keep you updated on when the programme is due to air; look out for details on our Facebook page and our website.

## Multimedia Translation

Our Multimedia department specialise in making information more accessible for Deaf BSL users. We assist a range of organisations and public bodies in translating and delivering their information and pamphlets in BSL. If you would like to find out more about this service please contact Colin MacLeod, Social Enterprise Administration Manager: [learn@deafaction.org](mailto:learn@deafaction.org) or 0131 56 3128.



## Training at Deaf Action

**During 2010 Deaf Action introduced a very well received Deafblind Awareness course, designed to raise awareness of the difficulties that deaf, blind and partially sighted people encounter on a daily basis.**



In addition to Deafblind training, Deaf Action also offers tailored Deaf Awareness courses to individuals or organisations.

In 2011 Deaf Action are excited to be offering SQA British Sign Language Level 3; we will be the only centre in Edinburgh to offer BSL at level 3 qualification. We will also be developing the training opportunities available in the East and North East of Scotland.

If you would like to find out more about any of the training at Deaf Action please visit our website [www.deafaction.org](http://www.deafaction.org) or contact Colin MacLeod, Social Enterprise Administration Manager: [learn@deafaction.org](mailto:learn@deafaction.org) or 0131 56 3128.

### Upcoming training dates:

SQA British Sign Language Courses

- Introduction to British Sign Language - daytime and evening courses starting week commencing 24th January 2011
- Level 1 - daytime and evening courses starting week commencing 24th January 2011
- Level 3 - evening course starting week commencing 24th January 2011

### Deaf Awareness Courses

- 25 February 2011

## Learning Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Deaf Action's Learning Centre offers a range of courses for Deaf and hard of hearing people. If you would like to find out more, contact Emma McGowan, Learning Centre Course Organiser: [emma.mcgowan@deafaction.org](mailto:emma.mcgowan@deafaction.org) Text: 0131 557 0419

