



**DeafAction**  
Making the difference

# Inform

Newsletter Winter 2011



Outreach  
in Fife

The first  
Scottish Healthy  
Deaf Minds  
meeting

Working  
with CSWs

Cowboys &  
Indians in  
Inverness

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## Welcome to our Winter Inform 2011

And so another year passes and what a busy year it has been for us! We are very excited to bring you news of our working partnership with Tayside Police – you can read about our joint DVD launch on page 5 and news of our Remote Reporting Centre in Dundee on page 8. You could just turn straight to page 5 to see some wonderful photos of a recent fancy dress night held in Inverness or perhaps you will enjoy the more 'traditional' tale of Victorian tea featured on page 6.

All that's left for us to do is to wish you all the best over this festive season with a wonderful new year to follow.

We are always happy to get your thoughts. Please do get in touch if you would like to share any news for our next edition of Inform; contact Jean Burke, Marketing Officer at [jean.burke@deafaction.org](mailto:jean.burke@deafaction.org) or 0131 556 3128. You can also keep up with all of our news and events online at [www.deafaction.org](http://www.deafaction.org) or find us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



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## New sensory services in Fife



**In July of this year we were delighted to join forces with Fife Society for the Blind to launch a dual service supporting people with sensory loss across Fife. An official launch was held at Fife Sensory Impairment Centre, Kirkcaldy. The event was attended by over 30 people including local Councillors, health representatives and clients.**

This joint working practice is keen to find new ways to deliver services to people with sensory support needs, including those who are blind, partially sighted, deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. This also marks the beginning of a working relationship between Deaf Action and Fife Society for the Blind. Between them, the charities have over 320 years of experience in working with sensory impaired people and providing services to promote independence. Deaf Action will focus on delivering a range of training courses throughout Fife, increasing awareness of specialist equipment and providing advice and support for local residents.

At the launch Councillor Tim Brett spoke about the importance of working in partnership to deliver quality care to our elderly population. Liz Scott Gibson, Chief Executive of Deaf Action added: "We look forward to extending our services in Fife and in working with Fife Society for the Blind to ensure that people with a sight or hearing loss are included within their communities, and maintain a high quality of life. We recognise that the vast majority of people with dual sensory needs are over 60 years of age and as the population of Scotland ages, we expect to see an increase in the number of people using our services."



## SignVideo wins support from Edinburgh MP

**Since our last edition of Inform we've been very busy with Deaf Action's SignVideo, our online interpreting service. We were very happy to sign up Edinburgh West MP, Mike Crockart, making him the first elected member in the UK with SignVideo available at his constituency office.**

Mike first visited our office in July to find out more about using SignVideo and how it could work within his constituency. He met with Frankie McLean, Social Worker at Deaf Action, to discuss the importance of equal access for Deaf people, particularly in employment. Frankie commented: "Deaf Action's SignVideo service really increases access for Deaf people in many settings like universities, colleges and in the workplace. It allows the Deaf community to confidently make phone calls in their first language; British Sign Language."



In October, Mike Crockart went on to table an Early Day Motion (EDM) in the UK Parliament in support of Deaf Action. The EDM, printed below, has to date been signed by over 50 UK politicians.

### **Early day motion 2306:**

Access to information and services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

That this House congratulates Deaf Action on its launch of SignVideo, an online interpreting service available throughout the UK; is concerned that there is a shortage of British Sign Language/English interpreters across the UK; believes that deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people face great difficulties in securing the information they need; further believes that the nine million people in the UK who are deaf or hard of hearing have a right to access information and services functionally equivalent to hearing people; invites hon. Members to work with Deaf Action and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People so that their constituents can access SignVideo within constituency offices; and calls on the Government to ensure that public information and services are accessible for all people suffering from hearing loss.

## Fundraising with Tayside Association of Secretaries

Deaf Action was thrilled to have been selected as the charity of the year for The Association of Secretaries Tayside Branch. This means that throughout 2011 all of the Association's fundraising activities were in aid of Deaf Action. The first event, a Zumba morning, took place on a Saturday morning in Lochee Parish Hall and raised over £200.

In early November the Association held a very successful Coffee Morning which included a cake and book stall, raffle table and a gift stall. The event raised over £500 for



Deaf Action but also allowed us to raise awareness of the services we offer in Dundee. It has been a wonderful year working with the Tayside Association of Secretaries and we would like to thank them for all the support they have offered us.

## Launch of our BSL DVD in Tayside

**Deaf Action, working with Tayside Police, launched a British Sign Language (BSL) DVD in June of this year. The DVD, packed with information about the Force, is aimed at enhancing access to police services for BSL users.**

Tayside Police recognised the significant communication barriers faced by many Deaf BSL users and, with Deaf Action, set out to address this issue. The DVD entitled Tayside Police: Making A Difference for BSL users includes how to contact the Force and Crimestoppers, how to access BSL interpreters and other communication support, the Disability Hate Crime and Remote Reporting Scheme, the role of community officers, how to make a complaint and other general details about Tayside Police.

Liz Scott Gibson, Chief Executive and George McGowan, Development Officer at Deaf Action were joined by Deputy Chief Constable Gordon Scobbie to officially launch the DVD at Tayside Police Headquarters. DCC Scobbie said: "We are always looking at new and better ways of making our information available and communicating with our diverse communities. As such, we recognised that the quality of service for BSL users needed to be improved. This resource is intended to remove barriers to access and promote equality for BSL users by giving them information about key services in a format they can make best use of."

BSL users can request a copy of the BSL DVD from Deaf Action by contacting [taysideadmin@deafaction.org](mailto:taysideadmin@deafaction.org) or telephone 01382 221 124  
Text: 01382 227 052 Fax: 01382 200 025 SMS: 07795 338 231  
Alternatively you can contact Tayside Police to obtain a copy of the DVD.



## Cowboys and Indians take over Inverness

**In what is becoming an annual event, Jean Pentland, a member of Deaf Action's Board, organised a Cowboys and Indians fancy dress night in Inverness in aid of MANAD (Malawi National Association of the Deaf). The celebrations were held at The Chieftain Hotel in Inverness in October with over 90 people attending, travelling from Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife, Stornoway, Ireland and Doncaster to join in the fun.**

A fantastic evening was had by all with the chance to meet up with old friends, play games and win some great raffle prizes – many donated by local businesses. There were also prizes given for the best fancy dress costumes - Jim Pentland AKA Desperate Dan won 1st prize, Kevin McLeod from Ullapool won 2nd prize and Rupe Hosie won 3rd prize. A total of £1254.30 was raised on the night with many thanks for all the generous donations of raffle prizes and a huge thanks to all those who supported this event.



## Scotland's first Healthy Deaf Minds meeting

**November witnessed the first meeting of Scotland's Healthy Deaf Minds (HDM). Healthy Deaf Minds is a new initiative organised by Helga McGilp and hosted by Deaf Action.**

The project, which is funded by 'see me', aims to establish a community group interested or involved in mental health so that they can run open meetings with the Deaf community about mental health, seek users' views on mental health issues and share information with health service providers. The project will include training and support for the group.



HDM is based on a similar and very successful event which has been running for a number of years in England. The project organises workshops for members of the Deaf community and those who work with them on topics such as depression, parenting, bereavement, addictions, dementia and stress.

## Victorian Café makes a welcome return

**Amidst last year's flurry of activities for our 175th anniversary we hosted a very successful Victorian Café at our Head Office in Albany Street. This year, in November, a group of supporters and members of the 175 committee got together to resurrect the café and once again to open for business for one week only in Edinburgh!**

The Victorian theme café took place from 31 October - 04 November and served locals, staff and regulars to Deaf Action a selection of fresh cakes, scones and tea served in traditional teapots. The café was fully staffed by members of the Deaf community in full Victorian dress - a wonderful sight to see! All money raised from the café was donated to Deaf Action.



## Learn to sign week

**In October Deaf Action was pleased to be part of the annual celebrations for Learn to Sign Week, which took place 03 - 09 October 2011.**

Throughout the week we held eight British Sign Language (BSL) taster sessions that resulted in almost 150 people learning a little BSL and a lot more about Deaf culture. Councillor Richard McCready from Dundee was one of our guests at our events and commented "it is important that as a local elected member I am able to offer assistance to all of my constituents." With wonderful feedback including "the session was very practical, fun and I learned more than I expected in a short time", we're already looking forward to next year's celebrations.





## News from Malawi

**Recently our partners in the Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD) were pleased to welcome representatives of the Scottish Government, who included Brian Dornan, Head of International Development, who have funded our work on the 'Strengthening Malawi Sign Language' project.**

They were able to visit Mary View School in Limbe, and observed Lucy Siwinda and Mike Phiri, two of the Deaf student teachers teaching MSL (Malawi Sign Language) to a class of Special Needs teachers. Whilst this particular project has now ended, we are hopeful that we can secure new funding to enable MANAD to produce a Dictionary of MSL, and teaching resources. We also would like to pilot a programme to teach Malawi Sign Language in one of the Teacher Training colleges in the country, which in turn would improve educational opportunities for children who are deaf. Currently, literacy levels are very low, and only 3% of deaf children receive an education.

One of the positive benefits from our work with MANAD is the interest generated amongst the Scottish Deaf community to support them. Recently, we have held two fundraising events, one in Inverness led by the Highland Deaf Forum and Deaf Action Board member Jean Pentland, see page 5, and a Malawi Quiz Evening in Edinburgh, co-ordinated by BSL teacher Bryan Marshall, which raised £280 – a wonderful achievement.

Finally, we are delighted to send our warmest congratulations to Betty Wisiki and her husband Sam Kalitera, who were married in Blantyre in October. Some of you may remember Betty, who worked with us on our first Malawi project to train sign language interpreters, and who spent time with us here in Scotland as part of her development as an interpreter trainer. Our good wishes go to them both.

## Remote Reporting in Dundee

Earlier this year our Social Work team based in Dundee received training from Tayside Police. The training means our Dundee office has now been recognised as a remote reporting centre for Deaf and hard of hearing people.

Our Dundee Remote Reporting centre is aimed at Deaf BSL users, deafened, hard of hearing or deafblind people who do not wish to contact the police directly. This may be for a number of reasons including feeling intimidated, a fear of victimisation or a lack of confidence. Remote Reporting enables people to report their experiences to a member of Deaf Action's staff, who will then communicate directly with the police.

Remote Reporting Centres, like our offices in Edinburgh and Dundee, allow victims of crime to report the incident in an environment which they feel comfortable in, whilst providing them with the support they need throughout the investigation process.

## Outreach in Fife

In addition to our new sensory service based in Kirkcaldy we have also recently introduced a visiting support service throughout Fife. We are now an approved Care and Support provider within the area and have begun working with Fife Council to deliver support to Deaf and hard of hearing people in their home.

Similar to our service throughout Edinburgh and Lothian, our flexible outreach service enables people to stay in their own home and enhances independent living. Our service in Fife will work with people on a one to one basis to agree a support package best suited to their needs. We offer a variety of levels of support and assistance with tasks such as telephone calls, budgeting, household tasks, preparing meals and booking or attending appointments.

If you would like to find out more about any of our support services or are interested in receiving support please contact Donald Bethune, Support Services Manager on Telephone/Textphone: 0131 442 6900 Email: [donald.bethune@deafaction.org](mailto:donald.bethune@deafaction.org)

## A renewed Health Project

We are happy that NHS Lothian has agreed to continue funding our Deaf Health Project until March 2014. In the past, the project has delivered health promotion activities such as healthy eating and exercise classes. Under the new project plan, we will be working on a "Social Capital" model, ensuring that Deaf people themselves have the skills, abilities and knowledge to make positive changes to their health.

After recruiting nine volunteers, all Deaf BSL users, we have begun offering a wide range of training workshops including topics such as Life Skills, Confidence Building and Hearing Awareness. These workshops are ongoing until next year and we look forward to bringing you updated news on the project in our next newsletter.



## Including You comes to an end

**In November our Big Lottery funded Including You project came to an end after three and a half years of working throughout Edinburgh & Lothian and Fife.**

During this time many hard of hearing clients benefited from the advice and guidance offered through this project. Two highly informative information guides were produced, which are available to download from our website, to provide a wealth of information and support for hard of hearing people.

The project organised numerous 'Sound Advice' courses that focused on caring for and maintaining hearing aids, SMS texting classes, coping with hearing loss and an introduction to specialist equipment. We have had some very encouraging feedback from those that have enjoyed our Including You project and would like to thank everyone that made it a success.

"Deaf Action gave me confidence to face up to my situation... I am persevering with my hearing aids and I am grateful for the help I received concerning my choice of telephone. This has made a great difference in my life."



## EyeT4All in Argyll & Bute

**In September our Scottish Government funded sensory service in Argyll and Bute teamed up with EyeT4All to bring free Information Technology (IT) training to the area for people who are registered blind or partially sighted.**

The training days held in Dunoon, Campbeltown and Oban introduced attendees to using email, writing letters, shopping online, looking for holidays and finding out about local services.



These are everyday tasks which can greatly enhance the quality of life for blind or partially sighted people by providing information and independence.

EyeT4All is a project funded by The British Computer Association for the Blind and the Big Lottery Fund.

Earlier in the year our team in Argyll and Bute held three consultations, in Dunoon, Helensburgh and Argyll, with Deaf BSL users in the area to ask about the services available for deaf people and what services are needed to encourage inclusion and community cohesion. During this time we also held consultations with service providers and health professionals to ensure they are adequately equipped to work with Deaf BSL users.



## Celebrating two years!

**Earlier this year we celebrated the second anniversary of our charity shop in South Queensferry. Becoming part of the South Queensferry community has been wonderful for us; we currently work with 32 fantastic volunteers but over the years we have had many people lend their time and support. We have also seen lots of students pass through our doors as they achieve Duke of Edinburgh and Boys Brigade awards.**

At the end of this year we will be bidding farewell to Sian and Tom Brady who have been instrumental in establishing the shop, the huge pool of volunteers and of course building our reputation in the local community. We would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to Sian and Tom for all their hard work over the years and to wish them the very best in all their future endeavours.

## Student placements

From May to June this year Deaf Action hosted two students on work placement from the University of Seville, Spain. The students, Rocío Casado and Viviana Coraini, worked with our Communication Support Agency (CSA) to support their studies in becoming Spanish Sign Language interpreters.

The visiting students accompanied our interpreters on various jobs to discover the sheer variety of work that our CSA cover. Our team and the students enjoyed discussing the differences in interpreting practices in Spain and Scotland. During the placement we were visited by tutors from the university which has created great links for future students to join Deaf Action on placement and vice versa.



## Working with Communication Support Workers (CSWs)

**For Deaf people going to college or university, access to education depends on high quality and consistent communication support. Recognising this need, Deaf Action has been building a list of freelance Communication Support Workers (CSWs) to offer a comprehensive communication support service to colleges and universities across Scotland, working with Deaf or hard of hearing students. All of our CSWs agree to a code of confidentiality, receive training on professional practices and are skills tested.**

Matteo McCormack, an eighteen year old from Linlithgow, has been working with one of our CSWs since he began studying earlier this year. With family connections in Italy, he has always been interested in food, so after completing High School starting a level two qualification in catering at West Lothian College felt like a natural choice. Matteo, a profoundly Deaf BSL user, has been matched with June, one of Deaf Action's CSWs, though West Lothian College. "When the tutor is teaching, June signs to me what he is saying," Matteo told us, "and when I am doing assessments on the computer, she makes sure I understand everything." He also feels free to ask questions knowing that June will be able to interpret them to the tutor and accurately pass on the replies.

Matteo also benefits from the consistency of having the same Communication Support Worker every day. "It helps when she knows the signs we've used before in the course," he explained.

It is important for the student and the CSW to establish a good working relationship, especially when they spend so much time in one to one situations. Matteo told us that "June is very nice and we get along well."



After completing his level two this year, he hopes to complete his level three in catering next year and to begin thinking about his future. "I'd like to work in restaurants, travel and work around Europe and then move on and see the world. I'd also like to be able to teach hearing people to sign." When we asked Matteo for his favourite recipe, he told us, "Pasta, with lots of different sauces!"

Here's wishing Matteo every success in his studies and future plans!

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.

For more information or to book a CSW please contact our Communication Support Agency on [bookings@deafaction.org](mailto:bookings@deafaction.org) or 0800 014 1401.



## New courses coming your way

**Our training department has been very busy recently setting up BSL courses in new areas. In early 2011, NHS Grampian asked us to set up a BSL course for staff at Woodend Hospital in Aberdeen, which started in September. In January 2012, 16 staff will have achieved their SQA Introduction to BSL certificate, and plans are underway to continue with the Level 1 qualification. The course has been so popular that we have been asked to offer it again in the New Year for staff at St Gray's Hospital in Elgin.**

Our next round of British Sign Language (BSL) courses, in both Edinburgh and Dundee, are scheduled to commence in January 2012. Our training department recently introduced a brand new pre-level 3 course. The course, running at intervals throughout the year, is due to take place before our Level 3 course begins. A full list of our training timetable can be found on our website or on our Facebook page.

If you would like to find out more about any of the training at Deaf Action please contact our training co-ordinator on [learn@deafaction.org](mailto:learn@deafaction.org) or 0131 556 3128.



## Fun Fridays and now Saturdays!

Our programme of events for Fun Fridays and Saturdays runs into the new year, to keep up to date on all our latest events; find our Facebook page and like us!

Fun Fridays has developed into Fun Saturdays to offer a wider range of activities. Fun Fridays and Saturdays are designed to get young adults out exploring their local area.

Events are held on alternate Friday and Saturdays twice a month and are open to deaf and hard of hearing young people aged 12 - 18 years old. Attendees can also bring along a (hearing or deaf) friend or sibling.

## Duty changes

In Edinburgh we have recently changed our Interpreting Duty times on a Thursday. Duty appointments are available from 10am to 12 noon. Interpreting Duty sessions can be booked in advance, if necessary, or you can drop in to see a BSL interpreter during the allocated times. Interpreting Duty is useful for assistance completing forms, making phone calls or getting help with translations.

In Dundee our Social Work Duty has also changed. Social Work Duty is useful for advice, filling in forms, talking about a problem or getting information. Duty appointments in our Dundee office are available every Tuesday 10.30 - 1.30pm and 2.30 - 4.00pm and Thursday 10 - 12 noon and 2.00 - 4.00pm.



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