

Inform



Summer 2004 Newsletter of Deaf Action – Making the difference



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Welcome

Director's message

In the last edition of 'Inform', I wrote that our major consultation exercise to find a new name and logo for the organisation was nearly at an end. I am delighted to say that on 1st April, we launched our new name "Deaf Action" and logo, to widespread congratulations. Our vision of working together for an equal and better future for all deaf people, and our determination to raise awareness of the needs and rights of people who are deaf, to challenge discrimination, and to provide services to promote independence and quality of life, is widely supported.

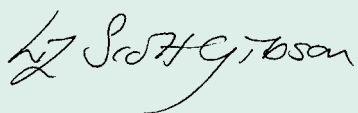
One of the most useful parts of the consultation process was meeting the people who use our services and finding out directly from them their views on the work which Deaf Action has carried out. Even more important were the suggestions for the work which we should be doing in the future.

We have really appreciated the time which people have taken to share their thoughts with us and have taken careful note of all the comments which we have received. Whilst we are unable to do all the things which people would like us to do, we do hope to focus on extending our successful Information and Advice provision, and on the Outreach visiting support work, which provides a valuable service to deaf people living in their own homes.

We are very much looking forward to establishing our new videophone project, which will seek to link Deaf people who may live at a distance to the services provided by Deaf Action, and although we are a very long way away from raising the £300,000 needed to convert our former Church building into a Learning Centre, we hope to at least begin some of the work later this year.

The work which we do has changed considerably since the organisation was first established in 1835. But one thing remains the same – our wish to 'Make the Difference' to the lives of deaf people.

Liz Scott Gibson
Director



British Tinnitus Association

The British Tinnitus Association is holding its AGM and Conference on 11 and 12 September 2004 at Wyboston Lakes Conference and Training Centre, Bedfordshire.

For further information and a booking form contact tel: 0114 250 9933, fax: 0114 258 2279 email: info@tinnitus.org.uk or log on to www.tinnitus.org.uk



Deafblind Services

Sense UK has gathered information on the impact of Section 7 Guidance in England and Wales. This guidance does not apply to Scotland which leaves Scottish deafblind people at a great disadvantage. Section 7 requires Local Authorities to report each year on how many deafblind people they have identified including what services have been put in place for them.

There is still a great misunderstanding that deafblind people will benefit from services for the single impairment and that is not automatically the case. Great efforts have to be made to ensure they are not doubly disadvantaged. Deafblind Scotland will produce a report in the autumn about the injustice suffered by deafblind people. If a person is deaf and a Sign Language user they can expect to receive the services of an interpreter free at the point of use. If they then lose their sight, most local authorities require them to undergo a community care assessment before they can access a guide/communicator service and then they may be expected to contribute to the cost. This is incomprehensible, particularly to former Sign Language users.

The European Parliament produced a written declaration in April asking member states to recognise the unique nature of deafblindness under the Human Rights Act. England and Wales have gone some way towards doing that. Scotland continues to lag behind.

Drena O'Malley

DEAF ACTION 'Making the Difference'

Following months of consultation with staff, members and stakeholders, the new name and logo, created by Deaf designer, Enrique Canton from Glasgow, became official on 1 April 2004.

Edinburgh and East of Scotland Deaf Society, one of the oldest organisations in the country working with deaf people, has come a long way since its early beginnings in 1830 in a small room in Lady Stairs Close, off the High Street in Edinburgh. Back then it aimed to 'promote the spiritual and temporal well-being of our adult deaf and dumb fellow-creatures', and to this day continues to provide outstanding services to the Deaf Community and all people with a hearing loss.

Instituted on 16 November 1835 as the Edinburgh Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society, it has only twice changed its name, the last over a decade ago. It was clear that another change was needed to help move with the times, and also to represent the much wider geographical area now covered, with the addition of offices in West Lothian and Highland.

Keith Hyland, Deaf Action's Chair said, "This is a very exciting time for us all. The Deaf Society's name may have changed but the same values and commitment to provide exceptional services continues."

Features

Videophone Research Project

In December 2003, three members of Deaf Action staff attended the Nordic Conference on Videophone Interpreting in Denmark and came back with lots of ideas for a research project using videophones to help Deaf people to communicate in Scotland.

We are now pleased to announce that with the support of NHS Highland and Highland Council, we will be implementing a year long research project based in Highland to look at videophone use in workplaces, council and health settings and for social interaction. At present there is no dedicated videophone interpreting provision in Scotland.



A videophone can make Sign Language services available to those in remote or isolated areas and can provide Deaf people with the opportunity to engage in social communication in their own language. Deaf people generally have problems in obtaining information that is widely available to hearing people, and unless the application of new information technology is supported in Scotland, such information will become increasingly further out of reach for Deaf people.

The project will aim to appoint two half-time workers – one from a Deaf background and one from an interpreting background – initially for one year. They will work together to carry out the research and present the findings. The project will be supported by the Technical staff based in Edinburgh.

A project report will be compiled with future recommendations and findings presented to appropriate conferences dealing with deaf issues and technology. The knowledge that the research project gains will be applied to the Deaf community in Highland and shared across Scotland as a possible model of good practice.

For further information on the project, please contact Kevin Geddes, Service Provision Manager at Deaf Action's Head Office.



Dogs needed to help deaf people

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People who train dogs to alert deaf people to everyday household sounds is experiencing a shortage of puppies and young dogs suitable for training, and is appealing to the public for help.

Although many dogs are selected from rescue centres, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find puppies and young dogs with the right temperament and in order to cut the waiting list of deaf applicants there is an urgent need to train more dogs.

Ideally, Hearing Dogs is looking for small to medium-sized dogs aged between six weeks and three years, and the Charity trains most breeds as well as crossbreeds and mongrels. Donors of puppies and dogs to the Charity are kept informed of their dog's progress all the way through the training process, and they have the satisfaction of knowing that their puppy is one day going to make a huge difference to the life of a deaf person.

If you can help Hearing Dogs for Deaf People by donating a young dog for training, please contact the Puppy Socialising Department at Hearing Dogs on 01844 348 105.

Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities

The Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee recently announced a major parliamentary inquiry into disability issues in Scotland.

'Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities', an 18-month long investigation, will examine many of the barriers facing disabled people in their everyday lives. Further and higher education, access to work, and leisure and the arts are three areas in particular the Committee will focus on. The Committee will also examine how to open up opportunities to disabled people by hearing from a range of groups and organisations, and has placed emphasis on hearing from disabled people themselves, through a series of meetings and visits across the whole of Scotland.

For further information contact 0845 278 1999 (voice), 0131 348 3415 (text) or sp.info@scottishparliament.uk (email)



Gala Day

Deaf Action held a successful gala day at the Corn Exchange in Edinburgh recently as part of the Health Improvement Project. The event was free and provided lots of great ideas about keeping fit and healthy.

Children were kept entertained on bouncy castles, had their faces painted, and learned how to make puppets, while the adults put on their dancing shoes for a spot of salsa and learned about the benefits of massage and yoga. Various information stalls provided advice on other forms of exercise and eating healthily, with fresh fruit and vegetables also on sale.

If you need to know more about the the Project contact Deaf Action.

Highland Communication Support Service

In the last edition of Inform, Dr Anne Griffiths, a GP in Inverness reported on the advantages of using an interpreter for consultations with patients. Dr Griffiths was extremely pleased that the communication support service established by Deaf Action last year in Highland was continuing to develop and expand.

In response to that article, Jean Pentland, a Deaf Sign Language user from Inverness wrote to Deaf Action, using a Sign Language interpreter to translate her views into written English.

"I want to congratulate Dr Annie Griffiths (GP) for what she said in the Inform Winter 2003 Newsletter.

I would like to see more GPs the same as Dr Annie Griffiths who has some basic signing skills which is better than nothing.

A few years ago the situation here in Inverness was very frustrating. There were no interpreters or interpreter service in the Highlands. A big problem was that I would have to wait maybe three or four weeks for an appointment due to too few interpreters to see my own GP. I would have to use my husband who is hearing. Both of us felt that this was not right. It is inappropriate that my husband be used as an interpreter as he is personally involved.

When my daughter collapsed and was taken to A & E at hospital, the doctors and nurses relied upon my daughter to interpret even though she was very ill and receiving oxygen.

Now, with the new interpreter service things have certainly become more settled. I can now go myself to Colin who organises an interpreter to be available for any doctor appointment.

As a result I have become more independent, going to personal appointments by myself, I don't have to use my own children, or husband as interpreters.

I hope to see the interpreter service continue to develop in the future. I would like to congratulate Colin, whose signing skills have improved a lot in such a short time. Finally, I would like to congratulate both Helen and Colin, and the trainee interpreters for all their hard work in the Highlands."

Jean Pentland



Jean and her daughter.



Deaf Action receive Investor in People award

We are fully committed to developing staff skills in order to achieve our wider business aims ...

Earlier this year Deaf Action was recognised as an Investor in People (IIP) organisation after achieving the required standard. The organisation embraces a commitment to training and development, and recognises the value of its staff, their performance and their contribution to the success of the organisation.

"We are fully committed to developing staff skills in order to achieve our wider business aims and objectives and have used the Investor in People process to address our needs. We will consistently evaluate our training and development programme to ensure our staff have the most up-to-date skills in order that we build on our success" said Liz Scott Gibson, Deaf Action Director.

To mark the recognition, staff organised a lunch party and invited guests to Albany Street where they celebrated the success.

More recently, an awards ceremony was held at Dynamic Earth where each organisation who has achieved the recognition received their official plaque. Keith Hyland, Chair, and Alex Preston, longstanding member of staff, represented Deaf Action and both agreed it was a great evening.

1.5 million gets allocated



Maria Eagle, Minister for Disabled People, has announced the ten organisations who will share the 1.5 million allocated to help train tutors and raise awareness of deaf issues. Speaking during Deaf Awareness Week recently, the MP said:

"Recognition by the Government of BSL as a language in its own right was a historic step, but it was not the end. Now we can start putting in place a programme of work to support the new position.

The quality of proposals received was so high that we have raised the original allocation of £1million by a further half

million. I am confident that the projects we intend to fund will leave a legacy of improved access to learning for BSL tutors and increased awareness of the language."

In response to the MPs announcement, Lilian Lawson, Director of the Scottish Council on Deafness said,

"The Scottish Council on Deafness was very disappointed to learn that no allocation of the £1.5 million has directly been awarded to Scotland - this was certainly a setback but SCoD and other members of the Scottish Training Strategy Working Group are determined more than ever to lobby the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive for funding for a training programme to improve deaf and deafblind people's linguistic access in Scotland."



Adult Learners Week

Deaf Action staff were involved in a busy series of events during Adult Learners Week at the end of May. The week coincided with Learning at Work Day on 27th May and provided an opportunity for learners to try out British Sign Language and to increase their Deaf Awareness.

On Learning at Work Day, Ian Dalton, Deaf Action's BSL / Deaf Awareness Co-ordinator, taught a short BSL lesson to Scottish Executive staff. The event was very popular, with 24 learners taking part. Colin Mills, who organised the event said *"The event was informative, enjoyable and good fun. The only "criticism" received was that the session was not long enough!!!"* We now hope to set up a longer course, tailored to the needs of Scottish Executive staff.

Ian then raced to the Scottish Parliament to teach BSL to a group of Parliament staff and MSPs, including Cathy Craigie, Lewis Macdonald, Shiona Baird, Kenneth McIntosh, and Kate McLean. The event followed a debate in the Parliament on the topic of skills and continued learning. Ian said *"Although the session was short, the course for MSPs and Parliament staff gave Deaf Action a good opportunity to highlight the needs of deaf people in constituencies across Scotland and the benefits that can be gained by learning BSL"*.

Meanwhile, another of our tutors, Rita McMillan, was teaching two short BSL courses at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow. Rita also provided some input on basic Deaf Awareness and communication tactics, with the aim of making the library's services more accessible to deaf customers. Susan Taylor, the course organiser, said *"From the attendants to senior management, everyone enjoyed the tasters – they were a great opportunity for us to mix and have a bit of fun. Rita, in particular, was praised by many for being a very engaging and motivating tutor."*

Rita also teamed up with Carri Neilson, another Deaf Action BSL tutor, to teach three BSL tasters to staff at the Crown Office, Edinburgh. The mixed groups included lawyers and office staff, and were designed to raise awareness of deaf people's needs when approaching legal services. Carri said *"The groups were really friendly and keen to learn – we all had a fun time!"*

Question Time Interpreted

First Minister's Question Time was interpreted for Deaf people earlier this year when a new pilot was tried out by the Scottish Parliament. The move saw British Sign Language/English Interpreters from Deaf Action signing in the public gallery at the Mound, Edinburgh.

The pilot sessions took place on successive Thursdays through February and March, where Deaf Sign Language users were encouraged to go along and provide feedback on the sessions. The pilot was well received and was a great opportunity to make the Parliament more accessible to members of the Deaf Community in Scotland.

It is hoped the provision of BSL/English interpreters for First Minister's Question Time will become a permanent facility at Holyrood when the Parliament moves there later this year.

Presiding Officer George Reid said, *"Every person in Scotland has the fundamental right to be involved in the work of the Scottish Parliament. We are striving to ensure that we have a barrier-free Parliament that delivers on equality of access for all."*



Question Time at the Scottish Parliament.

Disability Discrimination Act Forum

Deaf Action, in collaboration with the Scottish Council on Deafness and Capability Scotland, held a very successful Forum recently on the Disability Discrimination Act at Donaldson's College in Edinburgh.

Guest speaker Elspeth Ritchie from Capability Scotland gave an informative presentation, which included many well-researched and relevant examples of discrimination. This was followed by a very lively question and answer session, with some great points being raised.

Frankie McLean, Information, Advice and Guidance Worker at Deaf Action said, *"I was very pleased to see so many people attend the Forum and hope the Deaf Community is now more aware of how the Act will help them access much needed services."*



Features



"A job well done!"

"I was delighted to be given the opportunity to present a paper at the recent international Critical Link 4 conference in Stockholm Sweden. The theme of the conference was Professionalism in Community Interpreting – so, as I have been involved in our Communication Support Unit Advisory Group, I was able to talk about the methods we use at Deaf Action to ensure that we keep the standards of our interpreting high by gathering feedback from a variety of sources.

During my 20 minute presentation, I outlined our procedures and was able to give actual examples of comments from people living in Highland from recent feedback postcards. These postcards are invaluable in letting us know how the service is running – and have been particularly helpful with our new service in Highland. Thankfully all the comments were positive."

There were interpreters at the conference from both Sign and Spoken Language backgrounds, and I was able to gain a lot of information from the other presentations to help with my own work – and I am pleased to say that many people showed a genuine interest in our systems too! It was good to be able to share and learn from each other.

I hope that the interpreting team will have more of these exciting opportunities to present at conferences in the future – the next Critical Link is in Sydney, Australia... so fingers crossed!"

Mary McDevitt
BSL/English Interpreter,
Communication Support Unit.

Computer games

Children with hearing problems could soon be using computer games to help treat their condition. The role of computers will be explored as part of a £12m research programme to improve hearing ability in both children and adults. The Medical Research Council (MRC) project will focus on youngsters who have hearing problems but where tests find nothing wrong. It will also target adults with age-related deafness.

Research has found that some youngsters have problems hearing in the classroom and other noisy places, however, when given an auditory test there is no sign of deafness. Experts refer to it as an auditory processing disorder (APD) or 'brain hearing' problem, which means they hear sounds correctly, but their brain has difficulty distinguishing and making sense of them.



The team at the MRC's Institute of Hearing Research in Nottingham is breaking new ground by using computer games. The auditory brain study will develop computer games to improve hearing in adults with surgical and cochlear implants. It will focus on teaching people how to improve their lip reading skills and how to distinguish and differentiate between sounds. Scientists already have computer game prototypes and are now looking for industry experts to transform them into products that will be more entertaining and fun.

Accessing Health Care

With one in seven people in the UK having some form of hearing loss, it is no surprise that the average GP will see at least four patients a day who are deaf or hard of hearing. Lack of communication technology and deaf awareness training for staff, as well as a national shortage of British Sign Language interpreters only increase the communication problems faced by deaf people.

"A Simple Cure", launched by the RNID in association with UK Council on Deafness is a national report into deaf and hard of hearing people's experiences of the National Health Service. The initial survey found that more than a third of deaf or hard of hearing people left their GP unclear about their condition because of communication problems. The report suggests the NHS wastes millions each year due to lack of awareness and offers practical solutions that will make a dramatic difference for little investment.

NHS Scotland has acknowledged this problem, stating that disabled people often face unacceptable difficulties when they try to use NHS Scotland Services – not only the lack of understanding and awareness, but also poor physical access to buildings and environments. All these problems make it difficult for disabled people to access the services they are entitled to or communicate with staff.

For more information on NHS Scotland, including how it hopes to facilitate an improvement in the quality of services provided by managers and staff, check out www.show.scot.nhs.uk/hddda

Reaching deaf minds in the workplace

A new survey is being conducted into deaf people's wellbeing in the workplace. Researcher Susie Grant of Reaching Deaf Minds (RDM) is looking into the everyday working lives of British Sign Language users within mainstream employment.

The research will concentrate on how Deaf people can keep well at work and how employers can help create a Deaf Friendly workplace. Research findings will be presented to the House of Commons by a Deaf Advocate in February 2005.

RDM is now seeking examples of good and bad practice in the workplace and would like to interview volunteers, with the permission of their employers, to look at how things could be improved to make their place of work more inclusive and friendly.

If you would like to offer any information, or volunteer for an interview at work, please email: sgrant@signcharity.org.uk

In October this year the Disability Discrimination Act changes. These changes affect deaf and hard of hearing people.

How does the disability discrimination act affect you?

"The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 introduced new laws aimed at ending the discrimination that many disabled people face. The Act gave disabled people new rights of access to goods, facilities and services, as well as in employment and buying or renting property.

Since December 1996 it has been unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably than other people for a reason related to their disability. From 1 October 1999 service providers have to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services.

From 2004 service providers will also have to consider making reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access."

Who has rights under the Act?

If you are deaf or hard of hearing this new legislation applies to you.

"The Act protects the rights of a wide range of people with sensory, mental or physical disabilities. This includes people who use wheelchairs, blind and partially sighted people, deaf people, people with arthritis, people with long-term illnesses and people with learning disabilities. The Act also covers people with severe disfigurements and, in certain circumstances, people who have had a disability in the past – for example, someone who had severe depression, but has since recovered."

(Quote from www.disability.gov.uk Crown Copyright, produced by the department for education and training).

So what kinds of businesses are affected by the new law in October?

Some examples would be shops, restaurants, cafes, hairdressers, dry cleaners, opticians, high street solicitors, cinemas, theatres and garages.

(Remember this is not a complete list).

Do you know what type of equipment you can ask to be fitted?

In this newsletter we will look at how induction loop systems can be used to help hearing aid users communicate more effectively. The portable loop is great for one-to-one conversations and can easily be used on a visit to the doctor, hospital, opticians or hairdressers.

1. THE PORTABLE LOOP

It operates using a small portable loop placed in the room or on a table to aid conversation in small meetings or at reception desks. An in-built amplifier picks up sound and the loop then conveys this sound via a magnetic field to hearing aid users with a 'T' switch. The loop can run for six hours on an internal rechargeable battery. To use the loop you simply set it on the table and switch it on.



Portable loop



Counter loop

2. DESK OR COUNTER LOOP

A desk or counter loop is a great help at reception desks and counters, and can be used in shops, hotels, libraries, banks and building societies.

A small loop and microphone is fitted to the counter or reception desk. The hearing aid user switches to the 'T' position and picks up the person behind the counter speaking to them. The loop even works through security glass, although it only has a range of between two and three feet.

3. GENERAL LOOP SYSTEM

A general loop system is ideal for meetings where there are larger groups of people, eg. cinemas, the theatre, at church, or a trip to the bingo.

The loop is fitted around the room and the loop amplifier is either linked directly into the public address system, or it will have its own microphones. This allows the hearing aid user to receive the sound from the meeting directly into their hearing aid, cutting out distracting background noises.

Many public places already have loops fitted and display signs informing visitors to switch their hearing aid to the 'T' position. This is only a very small example of the special equipment available. For more information about the Disability Discrimination Act go to www.disability.gov.uk

Government publications can be purchased from:

The Stationery Office
PO Box 276
London
SW8 5DT
Telephone: 0870 600 5522
Fax: 0870 600 5533

For information on specialist equipment available at Deaf Action contact:

ideed@deafaction.org or telephone 0131 652 3206, fax 0131 557 8283, text 0131 557 0419, or write to Ian Deed, Technical Adviser, Deaf Action Head Office, 49 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QY.

Features

Counselling Training Project

SCoD is delighted to announce that the Community Fund has awarded the organisation a grant of £138,617 over the three years of 2004 – 2007 for the Counselling Training Project.

The overall aim of the project is to reduce isolation and help to improve the mental health and well-being of Deaf and Deafblind people through the training and provision of additional counsellors to support the wider Deaf Community. Existing counsellors and counselling training providers will receive training and advice to ensure that their services are accessible to Deaf and Deafblind people. This three-year grant will part fund one full time Project Co-ordinator, fees for tutors and other freelance workers, communication services and other project expenses. The Scottish Executive has already awarded SCoD a three year Section 9 Training Grant in April 2004 to partly fund the project.

Because there are only two Deaf trained and qualified counsellors who can communicate with Deaf and Deafblind people and there is no counselling course specifically tailored to meet Deaf and Deafblind people's needs in Scotland, SCoD set up a counselling sub-group in 2002 to identify gaps in counselling services for Deaf and Deafblind people in Scotland; and to see how training opportunities could be created for Deaf people interested in becoming counsellors and for hearing counsellors interested in working with Deaf and Deafblind people in Scotland. After research and piloting work, the Counselling Sub-group produced a report with a number of recommendations, which led SCoD to apply for funding for the Counselling Training Project.

SCoD wishes to acknowledge its appreciation to members of the Counselling Sub-group for their contribution and support for the Counselling Training Project and they are: Deafblind Scotland, Deaf Connections, COSCA and Michael Davis, a Deaf Counsellor.

Linguistic workshop



Deaf Action's BSL tutors, along with seven tutors from Highland, recently took part in a successful linguistics course designed to increase their understanding of how British Sign Language (BSL) works. Lesley Davidson, a Deaf trainer from Deafworks, an award winning organisation delivering customised training packages, ran the course over two days and introduced the 12 tutors to basic linguistics in relation to everyday language use, and the structure and concept of BSL. Having the ability to analyse BSL will mean our tutors are better equipped to teach hearing people more effectively.

Ian Dalton, Deaf Action's BSL Co-ordinator said, "As there is no current recognised career path available for BSL tutors in Scotland, or indeed in the UK, Deaf Action has set its own high standard of training for tutors. We recognised the need for BSL linguistic training and contacted Deafworks who delivered this excellent course."

New phone marks 20th anniversary

April 2004 saw the launch of the latest addition to BT's 'Design for all' range of phones which help people with hearing and vision problems.

The Relate 3000 was unveiled at an event in Glasgow to mark the 20th anniversary of the BT age and disability team. The phone includes a range of innovative features including amplification and an inductive coupler system to work with a hearing aid, specific and easily identified buttons dedicated to 1471 and 1571 functions and a light to indicate when a message has been left, a large LCD display, adjustable ringing pitch and volume and a hands-free option.

Deaf Action's technical staff, Ian Deed and Ron Dowie were invited to attend the launch and try out the new technology.

Ian said "I'm constantly asked for advice on buying phones from hard of hearing clients and I feel this new model has a great range of features to make using the phone easier for them."



Communication Tactics

With three quarters of people over the age of 70 experiencing some level of hearing loss, it's no surprise that staff working with older people need to be aware of the needs of hard of hearing service users, who use residual hearing, hearing aids and lipreading to aid communication.

Deaf Action's training team have been tackling these issues, in collaboration with agencies who have a will to change the way they interact with their hard of hearing clients.

Senior Action Group Edinburgh (SAGE) is one such organisation. SAGE approached us to deliver two pilot training sessions in residential care homes in Edinburgh. Caroline Ewing trained staff in communication strategies, specialist equipment and care of hearing aids. Together with SAGE Development Worker Ann Paget, she also spent time with residents to find out their difficulties and concerns. SAGE is now in the process of setting up a further round of training to extend the project to more residential care settings in Edinburgh.

Meanwhile, in West Lothian, Caroline Ewing and Sarah Kilbey, have been delivering monthly training sessions to West Lothian Council residential and home care workers. The training puts the experiences of hard of hearing clients into perspective; poor communication skills and lack of understanding can compound feelings of dependence and isolation. The training addresses this by providing practical communication strategies and information about specialist equipment which can greatly increase independence and quality of life.

So what can workers do to improve communication strategies? Here are some basic tips:

- Get the person's attention before you speak
- Make sure your face is well lit, to enable better lipreading
- Speak clearly and slightly more slowly, but keep the natural rhythm
- Don't shout, and don't cover your mouth
- If the person doesn't understand, rephrase what you said
- Write it down, if necessary, especially important information such as dates and times
- Be patient! Lipreading is a difficult and tiring task.

Next Newsletter ...

If you have any news or views you would like us to include in our next edition, please send them to

Gill Wood at:

Deaf Action 49 Albany Street Edinburgh EH1 3QY Telephone: 0131 556 3128 (voice)

Textphone: 0131 557 0419 Fax: 0131 557 8283 Email: admin@deafaction.org Website: www.deafaction.org

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