

16th Annual Report

April 24 – March 25



Front cover – Dan Walker stopping off at the DRC during his marathon bike ride in aid of Global Make Some Noise

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

Welcome from the Chair	Page 4
Mission Vision & Values	Page 5
Governance	Page 6
Chief Officer's Report	Page 7
Treasurer's Report	Page 8
Financial Review	Page 9
Progress Towards Our Aims	Page 10 - 30
Future Priorities	Page 31
Staff Team	Page 32
Summary Accounts	Page 33-35
Declaration	Page 36

Welcome from the Chair

It gives me great pleasure to present the 16th Annual Report and Accounts of the Deafness Resource Centre. This report highlights the vital work of the charity and the impact it has on our clients; their stories bring to life both the challenges faced, and the difference made when the right support and interventions are provided.

It is encouraging to see an increasing number of organisations and agencies accessing Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language courses, thereby improving accessibility and fostering greater social awareness of the needs of the D/deaf community.

Over the past year, we have achieved—and in many areas exceeded—the targets and objectives set at the outset. This success is the result of the dedication and hard work of our staff and volunteers, who consistently go above and beyond to ensure the best possible outcomes for individuals and families.

Throughout this report you will also find examples of the strong partnerships and collaborations we have established to further our mission of identifying and meeting the needs of D/deaf people across the Greater Merseyside Region. These partnerships illustrate the importance of maximising opportunities as they arise, sharing resources, and working collectively to create greater impact and influence.

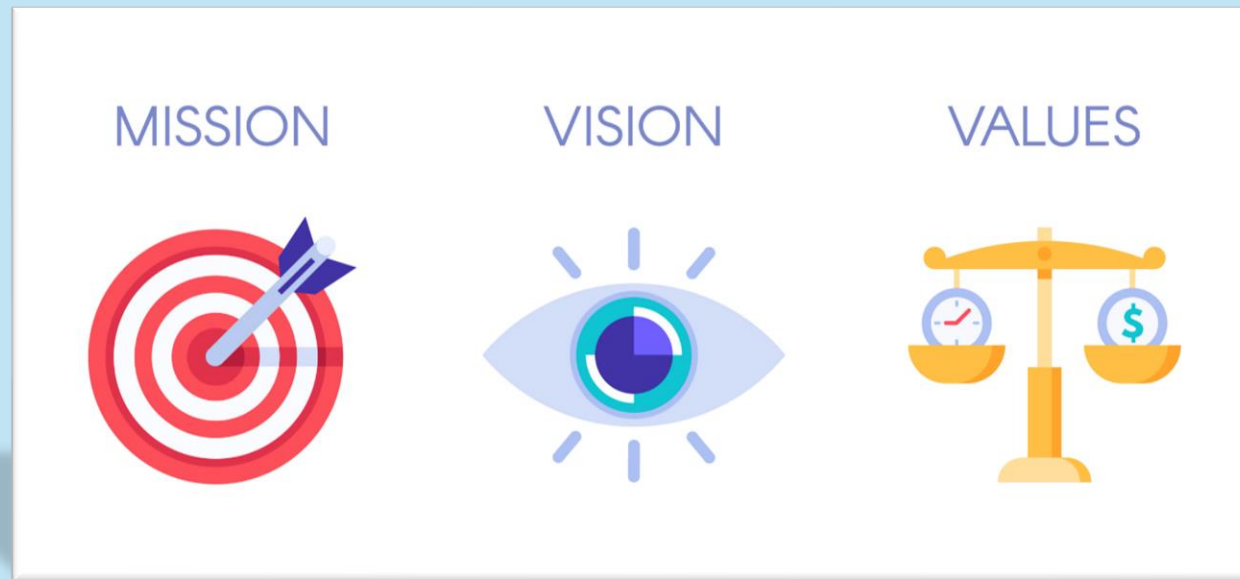
The Trustees recognised the potential risks posed by the conclusion of the National Lottery Community Grant and put in place strategies to manage these challenges, with a clear priority on retaining staff and ensuring the continued delivery of essential services. The award of a further five years of Lottery funding represents a significant achievement and a much-needed boost for everyone connected with the charity.

The coming year will bring new challenges with the retirement of our Chief Officer, who has provided outstanding leadership to the charity for 21 years. I look forward to working closely with the Trustees and with Helen as we begin a new chapter, embracing the opportunities this transition will bring.

Finally, I would like to thank all our stakeholders for their continued support and contribution to what has been a very successful year.



Janet Yates



To **Challenge** Inequalities – **Advocate** Best Practice – **Enable** Greater Participation

To create a community in which D/deaf adults, young people and children can communicate, and live independent and fulfilling lives.

Respect – for each other, clients, and partners

Fairness – in attitude, approach, and delivery

Accountability – to all stakeholders

Quality – Underpinning all we do

Governance

Management Committee Members

Janet Yates	Chair	Independent	Appointed Chair July 24
Katy Sheridan	Treasurer	Independent	Appointed Treasurer July 24
Cllr. Lynn Clark	Co-opted	Independent	
Patricia Callaghan	Trustee	Deaf Community	
Graham Evans	Secretary	Independent	Appointed Secretary July 24
Brian Hardiman	Trustee	Deaf Community	Joined 21.3.23
John Whalley	Trustee	Independent	Joined May 2025
Paul Steele	Chair	Independent	Resigned July 24

The charity recruits' trustees and co-opted members onto the board who can provide leadership, vision and direction to sustain and develop the charity, and support the achievement of its objectives based on their skills, experience and knowledge. We actively seek to achieve an equal representation of D/deaf and hearing members in line with our memorandum and articles of association. Nominations are made in writing and must be countersigned by an existing management committee member. The nomination is considered at the next committee meeting. If selected, the nominated person receives an induction pack containing the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, a role description and additional duties of officers and the latest annual report and accounts and business plan. Potential trustees are invited to observe at a management meeting prior to agreeing to become a trustee. We actively follow Charity Commission guidelines on effective trusteeship; trustees are offered training appropriate to their role and undertake mandatory Safeguarding training.

Understanding and Reporting on Public Benefit

The Trustees of the Deafness Resource Centre Limited are fully aware of; and understand the requirement to report on the charity's activities in relation to Public Benefit, as set out in the Charity Commission's guidance. The trustees have paid due regard to the guidance when managing the activities of the charity and in reporting on its activities in this annual report.

Chief Officers Report

This has certainly been a year of two halves. The start of the year brought financial challenges and a great deal of uncertainty, as a major grant came to an end. In response, the trustees implemented a range of strategies—including redundancies and use of reserves—to manage the situation.

It was therefore with great relief and celebration when, in December, we were awarded a further five years of funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. This transformative support changed our financial landscape, securing the continued delivery of vital services for D/deaf children, young people, and families. It was not just a financial lifeline, but a powerful endorsement of the value and impact of our work.

Alongside grant funding, we have continued to diversify and strengthen our income streams. Demand for Deaf Awareness and BSL-accredited training has grown, and together with the Communication Service, room hire, and Direct Payments, these have helped generate unrestricted income to support our core costs. We were also humbled to receive two legacy donations—gifts that offer unexpected opportunities for the charities fortunate enough to receive them. Combined with funds raised as the mayor's chosen charity, these legacies enabled much-needed refurbishments, including upgrades to our lounge, training room, and reception area.

A key priority this year has been developing the charity's governance structure and preparing for the planned retirement of the Chief Officer. We have made strong progress, including the election of new officers to the management committee (Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary), and the appointment of a new trustee. Succession planning is well underway, with an interim structure now in place, including the introduction of a Deputy Chief Officer role.

Despite the challenges, the past year has delivered countless rewarding and exciting successes that far outweigh the obstacles we faced in achieving them. None of this would be possible without the strength and resilience of our partnerships, built on shared values and a deep commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for our clients. We remain active contributors to local strategic partnerships and voluntary sector networks, ensuring that D/deaf voices are heard in the planning and delivery of local services and in addressing broader social challenges in our communities.

On a personal note, this is my last annual report. Each one has reflected the strength and spirit of this remarkable charity, and I feel deeply proud and privileged to have been part of it for so many years. I look forward to future updates as the charity continues to grow and achieve even greater success.

My heartfelt thanks to our incredible staff team for their continued drive and commitment. Thanks also to the Chair and the management committee for their unwavering support over the past year.

Helen Fitzgerald



Treasurers Report & Financial Review

This year, our financial position has remained positive, thanks to a diverse range of income streams. We are particularly proud to have been recognised and awarded with a grant from the Lottery Community Fund which exceeded our expectations and confirms our beliefs that what we do really does make a positive difference in the lives of children, young people and families.

Expenditure has been aligned with our organisational strategy, prioritising frontline services, staff development, and building maintenance. Donations and a substantial legacy enabled us to carry out a much-needed renovation of the building, which is now complete, has given the centre a new lease of life and should attract additional room hire income.

As with many organisations, the year ahead brings challenges: increasing competition for grants, potential funding changes, planned staff changes, and evolving service demands. However, our robust financial management, the resilience of our team, and the continued support of our partners position us well for the future.

There is scope to involve local businesses in our service provision, as we are capable of offering a package which helps them to meet their social values and corporate social responsibility. This is something we are keen to explore over the next 12 months.

We will continue to focus on maximising a variety of income streams, maintaining the best staff, building partnerships, and sustaining our rigorous financial procedures. Our commitment is to ensure that every pound is used effectively to support our mission to empower individuals with deafness and hearing loss to live fulfilling and independent lives.

Recognition should go to the Board of Trustees, our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters, as we move forward into another year.

Katy Sheridan



Reserves Policy

The Trustees have reviewed the Charity's need for reserves in line with guidance issued by the Charity Commission. The Trustees agree to the aim of holding at least three months' running costs in free reserves on the understanding that the charity's funding is not certain and to ensure that the charity can run effectively and continue to meet the needs of its beneficiaries.

Accountability

The charity must comply with legislation and regulation in many areas of its work, including Data Protection, Employment, Income Tax, National Insurance, Health and Safety, Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding, Charity Commission and Companies House

Annual Accounts

In accordance with Section 47 of the Charities Act 1993, copies of the Trustee's Report and a full set of audited Annual Accounts are available from the Deafness Resource Centre's registered office.

A copy of the full memorandum and articles of association is also available from the registered office.

Auditors and Payroll Services

Livesey Spottiswood
George Street
St Helens
Merseyside

Honorary Solicitors

Barrow & Cook
Victoria Square
St Helens
Merseyside

Bank

Co-operative Bank

Our Funders



Steve Morgan
FOUNDATION



Delivery Partners



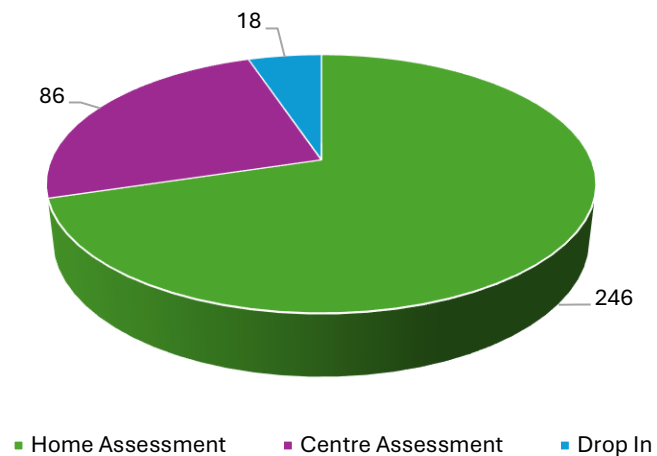
STRATEGIC AIM 1

To deliver high quality services that empower, enable and support the D/deaf community

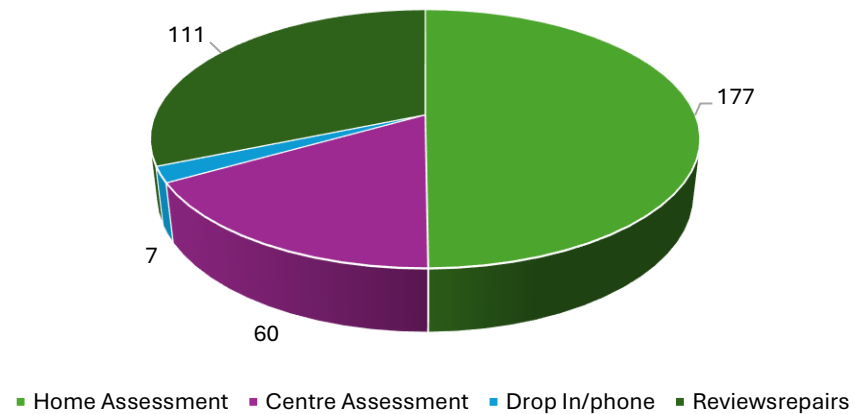
Equipment Service

The equipment service covers St Helens, Halton and Knowsley (fitting only). We have undertaken a total of 815 assessments and repairs both in the home and at the DRC bases.

St Helens Equipment Assessments



Halton Equipment Assessments



894 pieces of equipment have been issued including doorbells, loops, smoke alarms, personal listeners and alarm clocks. Staff are working with suppliers to introduce more Bluetooth technology to meet the changing needs of clients.

Client Experience

Mrs S of Runcorn has two blue tooth hearing aids, but she was still feeling very lonely, isolated and frustrated as she couldn't hear conversation in a small group or if there was just a minimal amount of background noise. She had been reluctant to come to us as she didn't believe anything could be done to help her. Her cousin persuaded her to come and see if we could help.

I advised that there is equipment available that can connect directly to her hearing aids that will enable her to hear conversation more clearly, even when there is background noise.

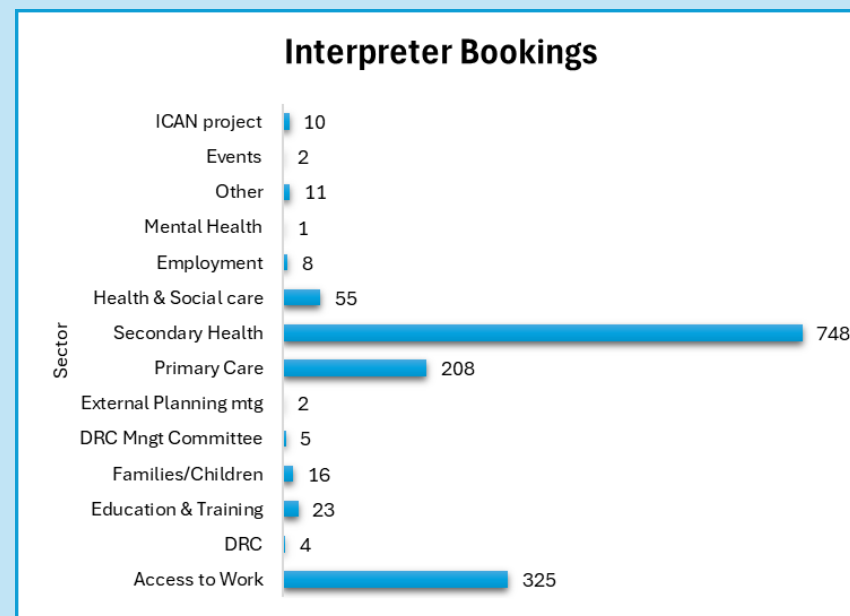
I set up the Oticon connect clip microphone and her reaction was over whelming. She became extremely emotional and said *"I can hear you, it's so clear!! I'm ecstatic, it's like Christmas!! The difference is huge; I'm struggling to explain the difference this will make' it is honestly life changing for me. This equipment and the staff here are amazing. Everyone who has difficulty with their hearing loss should know about you! thank you so much"*



Communication Service

The Communication Service continues to provide qualified Interpreters, working across diverse sectors, facilitating effective communication between deaf and hearing people. We are proud to offer a professional, high-quality service that is flexible, responsive and accessible.

- **1419** bookings received
- **98%** of bookings filled
- Working partnerships with Mersey and West Lancashire (MWL) Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust
- Worked with MWL Hospitals on Communication boxes for all wards and departments (a tool for staff with supporting information/guidelines for supporting patients with a hearing loss)
- Access to remote interpreting developed for use in hospitals and GP practices



“Support from DRC interpreting services means that I understand my health condition and can be confident with what I need to do to stay well”

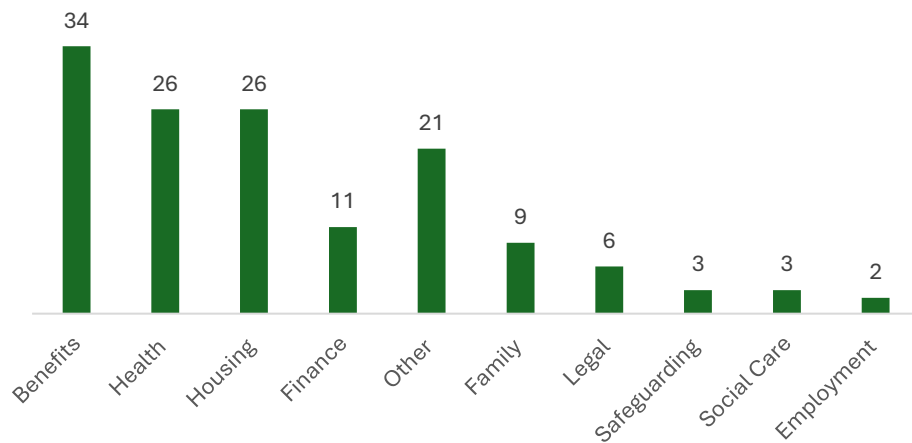
Advocacy Service

The service offers specialist 1:1 support for adults, children and families to uphold their rights, and to have a voice when dealing with issues that impact on their daily lives.

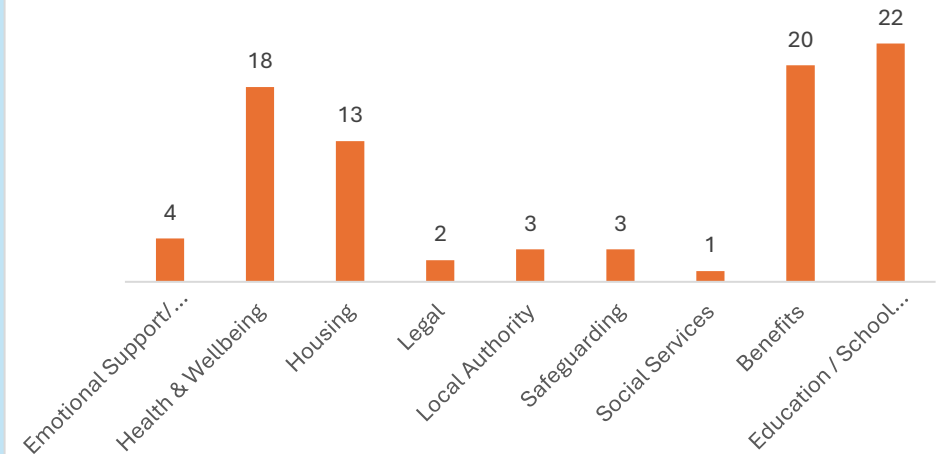
Total Interventions: 227



Adult Advocacy Casework



Children & Families Advocacy



Client Experience

The X family have faced numerous challenges over the past few years, suffering a bereavement of a close relative, relocation to a different area, and being put into temporary accommodation in a hotel.

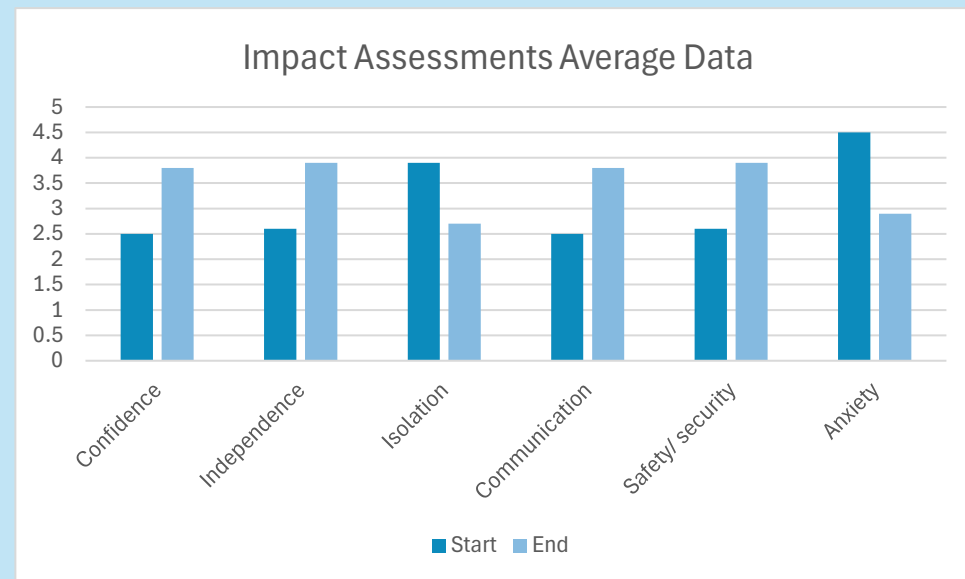
The Deafness Resource Centre have been supporting the family for many years as one of the children (Y) is profoundly deaf. The family have been accessing Family Sign, a free course delivered to the whole family so they can learn British Sign Language, the chosen first language for Y. Staff have supported the family with housing applications, making sure the family are in receipt of the right benefits and more recently working with the children around their emotions and behaviour.

Mum tells us

“Staff are always there to support; they help me find solutions to problems. During our most challenging times the Deafness Resource Centre have been right at the centre of my support network. When I am visited by staff or attend the centre, I always leave feeling like I can tackle the next issue, they make me feel like I can conquer anything. As a single parent I’m not sure I would cope without them”.

ADVOCACY IMPACT

Impact assessments measure the improvement made against key indicators, as a result of the intervention



Children, Young People and Families



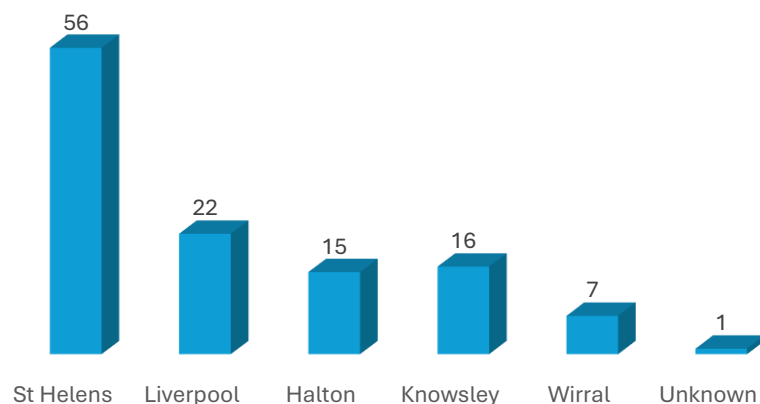
Funded through the Lottery Community Fund, the *ICan* initiative is in the last year of a 5-year grant, enabling the team to provide a range of services and support for children and families living with deafness and hearing loss.

Working across the Greater Merseyside Region the service has received **117** new referrals in this year.

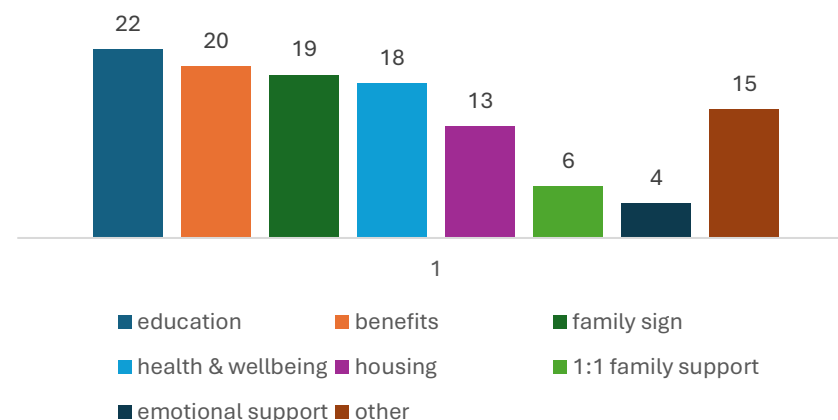


All the targets set out for 24 – 25 have been met, the children and family team have exceeded and, in some areas, doubling the target that was set. Looking back over the past 12 months it is encouraging to see that referrals for support are consistent with most of them coming from the local authorities' sensory teams. We continue to build positive partnerships and promote the children and family offer across the Greater Merseyside region.

ICan Referrals by Area



Reasons for Referral



Family Sign

Delivered in the home to introduce basic BSL to the family unit.

- 52 individual participants
- 120 sessions
- 16 families

“We wanted to learn sign language to be ahead of our daughter who is deaf so we can teach and support her. The sessions have made such a difference. The Tutor has-been amazing. So helpful and really easy to learn from! We've really enjoyed our lessons with them and really enjoyed learning family sign. Thank you for offering this service, it really makes a difference!”



ICAN Sign

Group sessions aimed at children to introduce them to basic BSL in a fun and interactive way.



- Working with *St Helens Family Hubs* we delivered **34** sessions involving **29** participants.
- A further **44** sessions delivered to local schools, colleges and groups, including Carmel College and Legh Vale Primary School

Basic BSL

A six-week introduction to BSL course for adults. Delivered to school staff, community groups and Care Homes. – **67** sessions

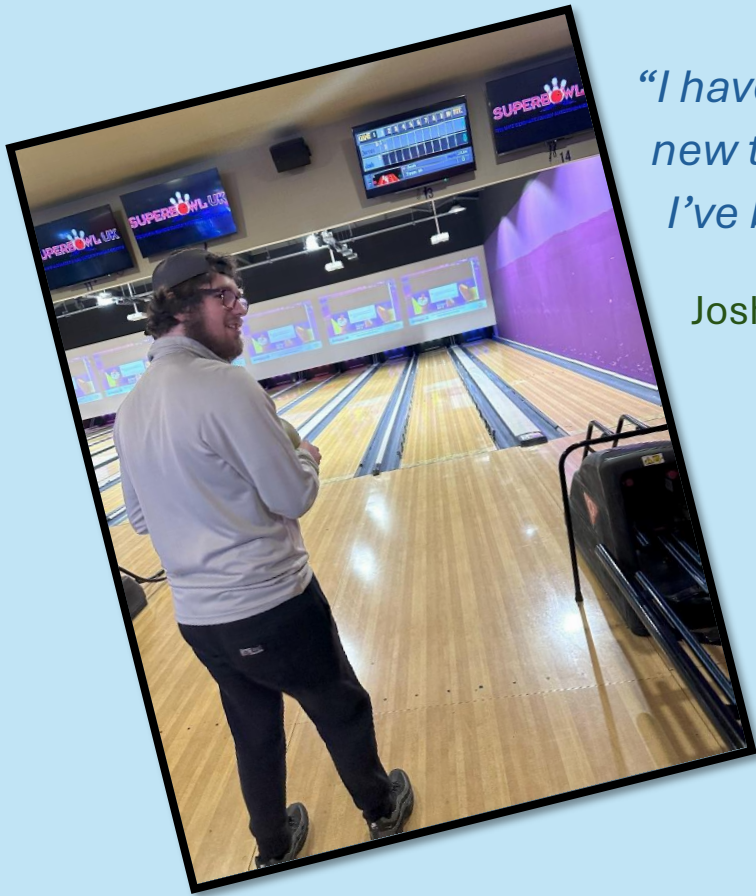
“Really enjoyed the course, the tutor and style of teaching were excellent, delivered with enthusiasm and fun”.



Direct Payments

Supporting individuals on a 1:1 basis, to become more independent, learn new skills and enjoy new experiences, Direct Payments are made via Local Authorities.

We have 8 active partnerships through St Helens Council and Halton Council.



“I have been supported by Darren, it’s fantastic I have learned lots of new things like new activities, how to travel on the bus and train, since I’ve been supported my behaviour has improved a lot, I feel happy”.

Josh

STRATEGIC AIM 2

Create greater opportunities for the D/deaf community to access peer support and community involvement

Children, young people and family's engagement

- **38** sessions delivered including cooking, family bingo, sports, animal magic and crafts.
- **110** participants
- **Partnerships with St Helens MBC, Wirral MBC, Gilcrest Sports, WonderArts and Fresh Beginnings**
- Youth groups delivered in St Helens and Wirral (in partnership with Wirral MBC) funded through Global Make Some Noise
- **5** Healthy Minds workshops for young people to explore emotions and feelings

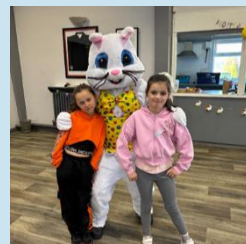
"I love the half term activities at the deaf centre; it is the only place my child can mix with others like themselves".

"The cooking session was good, I cooked steak by myself and cut up potatoes to make wedges, I loved it".

"We loved the animal farm session, we felt really welcome at the deaf centre, my daughter is very timid and usually won't attend activities, but she loved this".



Engagement Activities



Social Activities for Adults

B I N G O



Youth Residential

Feedback

"Like it here, different to last year.
Favorite activity was the Night Line
in the dark! Would like to volunteer
when older"

SAM

"Lots of different activities favorite
high swing and Night Goggles –
nearly fell over! It was fun!"

LUCY

"Like it here, like climbing and
swing, food is good"

ALEX

"Like playing with friends"

JJC



Kingswood Yorkshire 24

Halton Deaf Club

Through successful partnership working, an identified need was addressed with the launch of a new social group for D/deaf people in Halton. The group meets every two weeks on a Tuesday.



Tinnitus Groups

Client Experience

"I became aware of a loud high-pitched ringing in my right ear. I started to feel panic. I was referred by my GP to ENT but had to wait for months for an appointment. At my first appointment, they checked my ears, and they were normal, they then referred me for an MRI. I didn't hear anything for several months. The results came back as normal.

I heard about the Tinnitus Support Group from a poster in my GP's Surgery, I called them, and they said that I could come to the next meeting, they helped me with coping strategies. It was so nice to talk to people who knew exactly what I was going through. I wish that I knew about this earlier as I would have attended the group from the moment my tinnitus had started.

It took nearly two years for me to come to terms with my tinnitus and manage it better. Now I manage it much better with the help of the group. I would recommend anyone living with Tinnitus to contact the Tinnitus Support Group in St Helens as it has really helped me".

Tinnitus support groups meet monthly in St Helens and Halton. They provided vital peer support and information on managing the condition as well as enjoying each other's company!



Hard of Hearing Support Groups

Meeting monthly, the groups offer peer support and social interaction for people with hearing loss, there are two groups one in Widnes and one in Runcorn.

“Going to the group has helped build my confidence and I don’t feel as lonely. I look forward to every session”



STRATEGIC AIM 3

Facilitate a better knowledge and understanding of deafness and hearing loss within the community and service provision.

Deaf Awareness Training (DAT)

- **4-hour DAT** – Whiston, Alder Hey, Arrow Park, Wirral, Southport & Ormskirk hospitals, Shakespeare Playhouse, GP surgeries, and St Helens Family Hubs
- **2hour DAT** – Nursing homes, Catalyst Museum, Halton Sensory Service, and St Helens Library service. **1hour DAT** – Bereavement Service, Carmel College, St Helens College, Social Housing provider.

53 Deaf Awareness Sessions delivered

“I feel I will be more confident when greeting deaf patients and have more of an understanding of their needs”

Alder Hey Nurse



British Sign Language – Accredited Courses

- BSL Level 1 course – 10 students
- BSL level 2 course – 12 students



Video Translations

12 videos produced for agencies to provide information in BSL format – **Catalyst Museum – St Helens Council – Halton Council – WonderArts**

Outreach

The team have undertaken **61** outreach activities across Halton and St Helens with a further **49** drop-in sessions at MSDP and Prescott Town Hall, supporting Knowsley D/deaf residents.



- Work closely with audiology departments in Hospitals (Highfield, St Helens, Warrington & Halton)
- Established partnership with Specsavers who use Halton base for hearing tests.
- Drop-in sessions at GP surgeries in Halton & St Helens
- Information sessions in Care Homes, community centres and other agencies



Specsavers in Halton Sensory Services

STRATEGIC AIM 4

Create a stronger charity to better champion and meet the needs of the D/deaf community.

Governance

The Management Committee elected new Officers and welcomed a new trustee, to strengthen the governance structure. (see page 6 for detail)

During this year the following actions have been taken:

- Review of staff salary and grading structure – to be introduced in September 25
- Agreed new staff structure in preparation of staff changes
- Plan in place for retirement of CEO
- Approved refurbishment plan for centre utilising legacy and Mayors Charity donation.



Management Committee Members

Staff Development

- Mandatory training taken place for all staff, Trustees and volunteers; Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Equality and Diversity and Wellbeing
- Staff team took part in defence training delivered by Mersey Tunnel Police

Funding

- Secured a further 5 years funding from National Lottery Community Fund to sustain Children & Families services



- Held Christmas Fayre and Christmas Bingo to raise funds

Future Priorities

- ✓ Fully implement revised staff structure, supporting staff through the changes
- ✓ Deliver succession plan for the forthcoming retirement of CEO and subsequent recruitment process
- ✓ Obtain sufficient funding to sustain Engagement Worker and Advocate role beyond current grants
- ✓ Complete the refurbishment of the centre
- ✓ Seek to recruit new trustees to further strengthen the governance structure

Meet the Team – Making it Happen

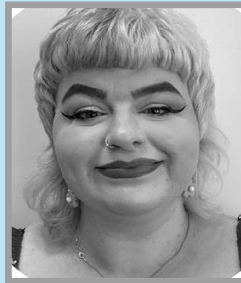
Children & Families Team



Tanya McGibbon



Joa Lee



Tash Lofthouse



Fiona Robinson



Vicky Haynes



Darren Hilton



Ann Tollitt

Community Team



Ruth Turner



Evonne Evans



Angela Edwards



Lyn Lowe



Wendy Edwards



Helen Fitzgerald

Chief Officer

The team is supported by 5 sessional workers delivering 1:1 support under Direct Payments and 5 volunteers helping with events and activities.

Summary Accounts

**DEAFNESS RESOURCE CENTRE LIMITED
(LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations and Legacies	3	27,473	-	27,473	22,116
Charitable Activities	4	470,594	124,877	595,471	527,047
Other Activities	5	11,593	-	11,593	15,339
Investments	6	<u>1,688</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,688</u>	<u>966</u>
Total Income		<u>511,348</u>	<u>124,877</u>	<u>636,225</u>	<u>565,468</u>
Expenditure					
Raising Funds	7	38,273	-	38,273	36,336
Charitable Activities	8	<u>457,318</u>	<u>93,273</u>	<u>550,591</u>	<u>482,520</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>495,591</u>	<u>93,273</u>	<u>588,864</u>	<u>518,856</u>
Net income for the year		15,757	31,604	47,361	46,612
Transfers between funds		<u>37,057</u>	<u>(37,057)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Movement in funds		52,814	(5,453)	47,361	46,612
Reconciliation of Funds					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2024		<u>459,927</u>	<u>25,215</u>	<u>485,142</u>	<u>438,530</u>
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2025		<u>512,741</u>	<u>19,762</u>	<u>532,503</u>	<u>485,142</u>

The notes on pages 21 to 30 form part of these accounts.

DEAFNESS RESOURCE CENTRE LIMITED
(LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	£	2025 £	2024 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible fixed assets	11		181,493	181,493	
Current Assets					
Debtors	12	66,742		39,746	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>355,118</u>		<u>285,449</u>	
		421,860		325,195	
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year					
Net Current Assets	13	<u>(70,850)</u>	<u>351,010</u>	<u>(21,546)</u>	<u>303,649</u>
Net Assets	14		<u>532,503</u>	<u>485,142</u>	
Funds					
Designated Funds	15		60,000	140,000	
Unrestricted funds held in fixed assets	15		181,493	181,493	
Unrestricted funds	15		271,248	138,434	
Restricted funds	16		<u>19,762</u>	<u>25,215</u>	
			<u>532,503</u>	<u>485,142</u>	

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2025. The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility for:

(a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records which comply with sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006, and

- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 16 September 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:-

TRUSTEE: Mrs J Yates

TRUSTEE: Mrs K Sheridan

Declaration

This Annual Report was adopted by the Management Committee of the Deafness Resource Centre Limited at their meeting held on 16th September 2025 and is a true reflection of the work of this organisation over the past year (1st April 2024– 31st March 2025).

Signed: Janet Yates, Chair

Signed: Katy Sheridan, Treasurer