

Deaflink North East Newsletter

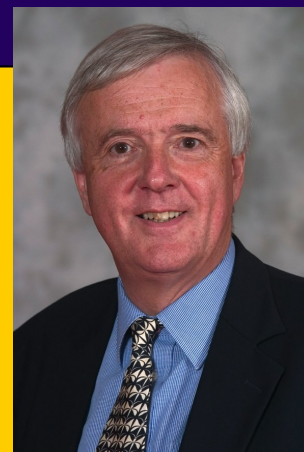
Issue 15 ~ Winter 2014



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Interview with our Deaflink Patron Lord John Shipley



Thank you for agreeing to answer our questions.

Q. Can you tell our readers something about your background and interests?

I come from Whitby on the Yorkshire Coast but moved to Newcastle after university to work in marketing with Procter and Gamble and then for 34 years with The Open University. I married Margaret in 1969 and we have two wonderful children and three lovely grandchildren.

I was a Lib Dem councillor in Newcastle for 36 years including 4 years as Leader of the Council.

Q. Who or what inspired you when you were younger?

President Kennedy and Jo Grimond, the Liberal Party Leader.

Q. How and why did you get involved in Politics?

I liked the Liberal Party's values and stood for Parliament unsuccessfully five times in Blyth, Hexham and Newcastle North. Winning wasn't easy as a Liberal so I decided to concentrate on the city council. It was the right decision and I look back with a lot of pride on the things we achieved for Newcastle.

Q. What's it like being a 'Lord'?

I don't feel any different because I am a Lord. It's very demanding in the time required and the number of meetings and debates there are whilst in London. And there are a lot of organisations in the North East I give support to as well. Keeping up with e-mails is a constant headache.

Q. You first became involved with Deaflink in 2005 - can you remember that occasion?

Yes. This was when I was interviewed by the Big Lottery for the bid for a new Deaf Centre for £10 million pounds on the day of the General Election! I was disappointed that the bid was not successful.

Q. What have you learnt from your contacts with deaf people?

I have learnt not to assume that all deaf people are the same and communicate in different ways. I need to remember that I need to speak clearly for the BSL Interpreters and for those who need to lip read. Also that supportive organisations like Deaflink are central to achieving a more equal society in which everyone can participate.

Q. Have you got any wise words for the next generation?

Take your opportunities - if you want to do something badly enough you will find a way!

Thank you Lord Shipley for all your support you give to Deaflink, and have a Happy Christmas.

Home Fire Safety comment...

'I always check everything before I go to bed. One morning my alert trigger flashed in my room, I woke up my son and got out with my dog. The Fire Service came and checked my house and found a gas leak from the old boiler. I was so thankful for the quick help from the Fire Service and my alert trigger and smoke alarm flashing light saved us from gas leak. The Fireman checked everything and made sure my home was safe. Check your smoke, fire alarm and boiler especially before Christmas time with tree lights, heating and candles.'

(Maureen McGarrity)

Need your home fire safety check? See our website www.deaflink.org.uk/important-services/emergency-services or contact us for Fire Service for D/deaf, deafblind and hard-of-hearing people and 999 SMS Emergency Service registration information.

Remember: In a police non-emergency text/SMS to 07786 200 815.

Many thanks for kind donations from...



Newcastle College Learning Support Service raised £182 through their Deaf Awareness Week events in May this year, Linta Toor presented us with a cheque.

Also thanks to all of you who gave us Wish tokens, we received £105.70 from Newcastle Chronicle!

Many thanks!



Information from our Deaf Forum

You told Deaflink that something was going wrong. For example:

- The interpreter not booked or too many turn up.
- Family or friends asked or told to act as interpreters.
- Lip-reading and writing notes.
- No choice of interpreter, no gender matching (if you want a male or female interpreter).
- Using unqualified interpreters.

What have we done?

Met different people to talk about issues and have a better understanding of the problems:

- This is not about individual interpreters but the companies who 'won' contracts.
- Some companies had no experience of providing a BSL service.
- Contracts and providers - not everything is clear or open.
- Problems regarding the alerts on Health computer systems and cancelled appointments.
- Staff will be reminded of the policy to put the BSL Interpreter name on letters.
- Reception/admin staff retrained how to use 'choose and book'.
- Staff not aware that gender matching (male/female interpreter) is important.

The commissioners have told Deaflink they:

- 'Inherited' the contract with Language Empire.
- Have had no complaints from deaf people.
- Want feedback on the service you get so changes can be made.
- If possible they want you to have the interpreter of your choice.
- Confirmed that no deaf person should pay for interpreter to see optician (unless from non contract agency) see www.deaflink.org.uk/important-services/health-services or contact us for the list.

They are making changes:

- Looking at all parts of their service and making changes – some quick, some take time.
- BSL video for complaints on website.
- Clearer information on website about communication support.
- Deaf awareness training.
- Ongoing training issues.
- Changing computer alert systems.
- Research on BSL user patients experiences will start in the New Year.

REMEMBER

- ⇒ Please ask for interpreter if you want one.
- ⇒ Please complain or feedback if not happy.
- ⇒ If you are having problems you can tell us.

If you have an appointment in a Newcastle hospital you can now check if an interpreter has been booked for your appointment.



The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

For British Sign Language Users

BSL interpreter booked for your Newcastle Hospitals NHS appointment?



Ask PALS

(Patient Advice and Liaison Service)

Text/sms: 01670511098

Website: www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk/patient-guides/patient-advice-and-liaison-pals.aspx

E-mail: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

**Letter: FREEPOST, RLTC-SGHH-EGXJ, North of Tyne PALS,
The Old Stables, Grey's Yard, Morpeth, NE61 1QD**

**PALS check for you and book a BSL
interpreter if one has not been booked.**
(Confidential service - BSL users, carers and families can ask
PALS)

Deaflink Loop Newcastle Pilot project

Working in partnership with Hearing Link we have been part of a national campaign to improve access for Hearing Aid users in our towns and cities. From our Shhh! (Self Help for Hard of Hearing) Group we recruited and trained 12 people to become Loop Checkers for a pilot scheme in the city.



Going out in pairs the Loop checkers visited 17 venues. Using evaluation forms they found that the majority of these venues which included Banks, Shops, Railway and Bus stations, were found to have no loop system or staff did not know how to use the existing equipment.

The added value of this pilot project has been the impact on the Loop checkers themselves; who returned from their visits full of excitement, confidence and feelings of achievement. They were doing something to break down the barriers that exist in their city.

A small team of Loop checkers are now in the process of collating all the information which will be made into a report and recommendations will be sent to each of the venues with the results to encourage them to maintain or improve their loop system access.



Once the loop project report is ready, we will look for funding to continue the project next year.

‘Can you see or hear the loop system??’

Good or bad Deaf Awareness or loop system?

When you are out and about shopping or using services for example; buses trains, hospitals, leisure places like the cinema or pubs, please let us know if you have had a good or bad experience .

Contact us and we can use your story to tell the service provider “Well done we can recommend you to other Deaf and Deafblind people” or if you had a poor experience with a loop system we can advise them on how to improve their accessibility.

Comments before the loop project starts.....

'I am severely deaf and wear two hearing aids, over eight feet I cannot understand what is said. In church or in a meeting I am too far from the speaker to make out what they are saying unless they use a loop system. Currently I do not use loops in shops and public buildings much, as they are generally not working. When the Deaflink Loop Campaign starts this will raise public awareness and working loops will hopefully become the norm. This will make life easier for hearing aid wearers.'

'I have childhood memories of going to church every week, sitting in the pews with my parents, and a priest mumbling away at the front. I was very bored, as I couldn't follow what was being said, but just assumed no one else could either. I stopped going to church as soon as I was old enough to be left at home. As an adult, attending weddings and funerals in churches, it has been a revelation to switch on the T loop and realise those mumblings are actually proper words and the speaker has something interesting to say!

A good hearing loop system changes mumbled speech sounds into a clear voice inside your head. But sadly it's not all good news. Time and time again you go to places displaying the T loop sign only to find it isn't working. Then, when you tell the staff they just look on bemused! "But its switched on!", "I don't know how it works". With a queue building up behind you and wanting to save yourself any further embarrassment, you give up and suffer in silence. So a message to all you counter staff, if your customer is fixated on your lips, with an intense frown on their face and unwilling to join in your chit chat – that person may not really be unfriendly, he/she may just be deaf and your T-loop doesn't work.'

Comment from a loop checker ...

'Working on your own to raise a problem with a loop system is demoralising. It takes courage to raise the issue in the first place, and even if you point out how things can be improved, the loop system usually won't be any better when you go back next time. No wonder people don't raise the problem with the loop systems on their own. Working on the Deaflink loop project has helped us all to meet like-minded people who also want working loops in public places. Being part of the project gives us a public identity when going onto premises to test the loops, and working together we have identified many places where there are no loop systems or they don't work properly. We now need to build on this by addressing these issues with the relevant businesses to make sure these loops are installed and are working effectively.'

Deaflink Groups



Deaf Men's Health Forum

2014 has seen our Men's group out and about exploring places, such as the Model Railway Steam Trains, NUFC 'Toon Times' Tour, Great North Museum and REAL Body World in Centre for Life!

The men meet on a Monday afternoon once a month at 2-4pm in different places. New group members are always welcome.



'This is better than staying at home and being bored!'

See our event sheet for dates of future group sessions.



SHHH! Self-Help for Hard-of-Hearing Group

The SHHH Group have moved to a new venue due to growing numbers! Anyone who is Hard-of-Hearing, Deafened or Deafblind is welcome to join our monthly group meeting with invited speakers talking about hearing loss, health issues and lifestyle. The group have had good presentations with loop system talk, deafblind experiences, 'Try before you buy' equipment, Communication, Technology, Hearing Dog for Deaf, Audiology/NHS hearing aids updates and Newcastle City Guide.

We have up to 30 members all keen to chat, share information and experiences, talk about issues and support one another. Loop system, BSL interpreters and speech-to-text screen are provided.

This Group meets the first Tuesday at 1:30-3:30pm of every month (unless stated) in TUC, 5th Floor, Commercial Union House, 39 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 6QE (Alongside the old Odeon Cinema and opposite Tyneside Cinema).

Healthy Eating Cooking Class



Healthy Eating Cooking Classes are running again for the second course with our sessional worker Sarah Eaglestone (photo below).

Comments from our group:

- “Learnt about healthy food, different varieties and names of different creams, spices and flavours”.
- “Looking forward to different recipes in September. I don’t want extra fat I want to try new food like vegetables I never try before”.
- “Cook at home now I try put different food in recipes”.



Comment from Sarah:

‘Another lot of cookery sessions have come round and it's lovely to see some new faces. Everyone in the group has made our new members welcome and they have enjoyed making their first recipe Easy Sunday rice which is a Caribbean dish, the group have asked to try out some different recipes from different cultures.

This just shows how confident the group has become from our first lot of sessions. At each session we will be covering some information on storing ingredients and cooking on a budget this follows healthy eating information from our last sessions. All recipes are adapted to fit into our healthy eating goal.’



If you would like to join us in the future cooking classes, please let us know and we will add you to the waiting list.

Deaflink North East's Contact Details...

Minicom/phone: (0191) 281 2314
SMS/Text only: 07897 329 359
Fax: (0191) 212 0300

Email: admin@deaflink.org.uk

Website: www.deaflink.org.uk

Twitter: Deaflink_NE

Facebook: Deaflink North East
Skype: deaflink.deaflink



**Key House, 11 Tankerville Place, Jesmond,
Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE2 3AT**

**(Over the road from Northern Counties School and 5/10 minutes
walk from Jesmond / West Jesmond Metro Station)**

Date for your diary

IMPORTANT!

'What is Politics? Why you should vote?'

Nick Forbes, Leader of Newcastle Council

'What is your MP's role?'

Local MP (To be confirmed)

Saturday 24th January, open 10.30am, starts 11am-12.30pm

**In Brunswick Methodist Church (Behind Fenwicks), Newcastle,
NE1 7BJ.**

BSL interpreter, loop system and Speech to Text screen provided.



**Please let us know if you would like to receive this
newsletter by e-mail to save our trees!**