

# **Empowering Deaf Society Annual Report 2021 - 2022**

## **Reference and Administration**

Charity Name : Empowering Deaf Society  
Charity Number : 1131970  
Charity's Address : 2A Central Parade, Ley Street, Ilford, IG2 7DE  
Periods : 01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022

### **Trustees**

Trustees, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

#### **Name**

Ms Iona Manning

Mr Bernard Wills

Ms Liliya Vasina

Ms Ravisha Krishanthan

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The organisation is Empowering Deaf Society formed on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and registered as a charity on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009. The charity was established to support the Deaf community and has a constitution which sets out the objectives and powers of the charity and its manner of governance. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the accounts.

### **Our Vision**

Run for the Deaf, By the Deaf

### **Our Mission**

To 'empower' Deaf people so that they have the power to change their lives for the better.

## **Our Aims**

Our main aim is to empower the Deaf Sign Language community by providing access to information, advice advocacy and education, promoting independence and helping deaf people to fulfil their potential.

- To advance education within the Deaf Sign Language community
- To relieve unemployment by providing advice, advocacy and education for the Deaf Sign Language community.
- To relieve need among Deaf people by helping them to access mainstream and public services, and thus helping them participate optimally in society.
- To promote equality of treatment and opportunity and diversity between the Deaf and hearing populous.
- To advance education and training for deaf teachers, teachers working with deaf people and colleagues of deaf people, with the objective of improving standards of teaching on behalf of the deaf community

## **About us**

Empowering Deaf Society (EDS) is a charity that provides education and services to Deaf people in British Sign Language.

In addition, we offer support services which include Advice, Advocacy and Employment amongst other things. EDS aims to expand on these provisions by offering an 'added value' service that can provide more than mere everyday solutions.

We are in our final year of a three year funded project by Big Lottery and have applied for a 5 year extension, to enable us to continue this work. We hope to receive a decision from Big Lottery in July 2021.

The three year funding has enabled us to provide 5 key services for deaf people; Soft skills, advice and advocacy, large scale social events, deaf awareness training and workshops on a variety of useful and informative topics.

Big Lottery funding, together with various other small funding grants, has enabled us to provide the following:

- Events
- Workshops
- Deaf Awareness Training
- Deaf teaching
- Information

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- Advice and Guidance (IAG) and
- Advocacy
- After school club
- Employment
- Peer friendly activity
- Fitness
- Clubbing
- Educational activity
- Kids activity
- BSL courses
- Large events
- BSL Classes for Deaf people (free of charge)
- Street party

We have been able to provide employment support to deaf people, with securing employment. We have supported them with all aspects of their new employment, including support with Access to Work funding applications, and education for their employers and colleagues. The employment support service is in very high demand by deaf people as they are finding it exceedingly difficult to find job.

We have provided numerous free deaf awareness training sessions to various agencies, including public sector and these sessions are always over-subscribed.

## **Our Philosophy & Beliefs**

At EDS, we believe that the optimal method in achieving our aims is to be a fully accessible organisation. EDS is focused on providing services to Deaf people in their native sign language and enabling them to access opportunities without barriers. EDS believes that by demystifying deafness within mainstream services, businesses and institutions, and by encouraging deaf people to become more confident and embrace their independence, a richer and more integrated society can be formed.

## **Standards & Performance**

The charity will monitor its performance and outcomes against strategic objectives and priorities, internal standards and external benchmarks. Actions will be taken to respond to and learn from recommendations for improvement.

### **Managing through covid**

At the start of this period, the whole country was put into lockdown, with no notice when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK. As a Deaf organisation already facing barriers and struggles, this came as a huge shock to us and our beneficiaries and we had to have a complete rethink of our strategies in order that we could continue supporting the deaf community during this unprecedented time.

Our office was closed and all staff were working from home. Deaf staff who normally work alongside Communication Support Workers and Interpreters were forced to work remotely via video calls. Deaf beneficiaries who were used to coming into the office for support, had to start accessing our services remotely.

In order to cope with these new and changing times, we had to rethink our communication strategies internally. We created Whatsapp groups for each individual event, where we could discuss specific issues.

The first six months of the year were very stressful for our staff and our beneficiaries but we are so proud of how we have adapted and learned to work in new and innovative ways. With emergency Coronavirus funding, we were able to set up new projects, enabling us to help the most vulnerable and isolated of the deaf community. We set up regular workshops on a variety of topics; both informative and fun. Before lockdown, no one had ever heard of Zoom and now our staff and beneficiaries are experts!

We are so proud of how we have adapted and during this most difficult time, our services and our financial situation have improved significantly.

### **Our Projects and Success**

Latest statistics from 'Action on Hearing Loss' estimate that there are over 30,000 Deaf people living in Greater London alone. There is a stark significant gap in providing services to Deaf people and young Deaf people. EDS was established to address this gap in provision for Deaf people in London. British deaf people who have additional needs (i.e. the vulnerable, those from ethnic or minority backgrounds and the unemployed) are considered as those that are very 'hard to reach'. Mainstream services are unable to engage with these groups due to communication barriers and lack of awareness in relation to their immediate needs,

background and cultural differences. Consequently, the unemployment rate for profoundly deaf BSL users is four times that of the national average. Unfortunately, the statistics are far worse for those from ethnic minority backgrounds, those that suffer racial discrimination, social exclusion and other communication barriers. Mainstream services are often inaccessible due to chronic national shortage of BSL/English interpreters.

## **Empowering Through Education**

Our project 'Empowering through Education' included offering Deaf Awareness training, BSL courses from Level 1 to Level 6 as well as after school BSL clubs for children. However, due to strict funding criteria, we had to limit this project to only a few specific London boroughs. Many Deaf people from outside of these boroughs were also interested in participating in this project, however, we unfortunately had to turn away many potential beneficiaries as we were unable to offer those living outside of these London boroughs this opportunity. This, therefore, highlights the demand, or the dire need, for the delivery of this project.

## **Deaf Awareness Workshops**

EDS projects included Deaf Awareness workshops to most of London's boroughs. The impact of these projects will be the increase in awareness in the hearing community in terms of establishing mechanisms to ensure effective interaction and comprehension between the deaf and hearing communities.

Our projects extend to all ages which proves to be vital when taking into account the recent closure of many deaf schools and reduction in disability funding within many academic institutions. This means that many deaf people can no longer receive the support that they need to access education within a mainstream setting. This will help to generate some income, however, due to the rapid increase in immigration under the previous Labour Government, it meant that the number of deaf immigrants also increased significantly. These Deaf people have become extremely vulnerable; firstly, because they are deaf and secondly, not only do they not know English, but they are unable to secure a sign language interpreter that is sufficiently fluent in the sign language utilized in their native country to access and communicate with any service, such as schools and health institutions. As of direct consequence, this has increased the demand for our service with foreign sign language users wanting to learn BSL in order to assimilate.

EDS has delivered Deaf awareness courses to mainstream organisations and employers. The aim is to create a positive awareness of Deaf people in mainstream society and improve communication and social interaction between the two groups.

EDS previously identified a need to deliver teacher-training courses, BSL levels 3 to 6 and other professionally accredited courses to our own staff and the deaf community, but due to a move from most funders to tackle Covid-19 issues and emergency funding, we have not been able to find the funding to enable us to tackle this issue. We hope to be able to do so in the coming years.

## **Employment Services**

The gap in employment services in meeting the needs of Deaf people has become much more significant in recent times. The closure of certain specialist services from RAD (Royal Association for Deaf people) and budget cuts forcing mere skeleton services in other provision from them, has left the Deaf community increasingly vulnerable particularly within our current political and economic climate.

Our employment service was set up several years ago.

We recruited staff and beneficiaries to this project and have been able to provide support with CVs, writing letters and application forms. In addition, we liaise with employers regarding support needs, Access to Work for funding, and refer to interpreters/agencies to fulfil their communication support needs.

We have supported many deaf people into employment at Waitrose, H&M, Coop, Travel Lodge, Amazon which has made a significant difference to their lives. Waitrose is a great employer, with good rates of pay and working conditions are incredibly good. Not only have the deaf beneficiaries benefited from gainful employment, but Waitrose staff have had education, awareness and exposure to deaf colleagues, and customers have benefited from exposure to deaf staff.

## **Advice & Advocacy**

Our advice and advocacy services are a strong part of our overall service and we are proud of the work we have achieved and the people we have supported with this. The need for this service within the deaf community is a necessity to enable this community to thrive, prosper and be heard.

EDS aims to help deaf people with their problems, by providing the advice they need, in British Sign Language. The service aims to help deaf people manage the problems they

have; using text messages, email, webchat or visit us in person where Covid-19 rules have allowed.

For each channel we welcome the deaf person, allow them to explain the problems they are facing, then we carry out a quick check to determine how we can offer the client self-help: information with an explanation of how they might use it to help sort out the problems themselves. If the matter is within our expertise, we offer advice or we may signpost them to another organisation that is better able to help with their problem.

We have supported many deaf people under our Information, Advice and Guidance, and Advocacy services. We have had strong demand for help with PIP applications but have supported with many other issues too.

We have struggled to meet the demand due to limited staffing and resources and a significant increase in demand due to the uncertainty around the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, we do not advertise this service widely. We are also able to signpost people to other services if we are unable to help them.

During the pandemic and due to lockdown restrictions limiting our ability to meet with beneficiaries face to face, we set up regular Zoom sessions as a way of disseminating information more widely than in one to one sessions, where beneficiaries learned about the issues affecting the deaf community and how to go about resolving them.

## **Other current projects**

This year we have been successful in securing funding for a variety of projects such as:

- Award for all
- Funded project
- Drop-in service for deaf people and Deaf Awareness sessions
- School project to teach deaf and hearing pupils and staff
- Deaf awareness training to anywhere they needed
- Volunteering opportunities give to deaf and hearing people
- EDS needs volunteers to meet the constant demand for advice and assistance and the effective running of the charity. Bearing in mind that we are working with a specific clientele the need for volunteers in helping us to reduce our operating costs cannot be overstated
- Large events
- Employment support
- BSL classes
- Hands talk club
- Weekly deaf club

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- Weekly BSL club
- Cycling event project
- Fundraising event
- Signposting
- Women only project
- Fitness
- Zoom activities
- Children in Need Covid support activities for children and families

## **Our Achievements**

- Provide basic BSL training to London's mainstream services, businesses and institutions, by offering BSL courses
- Provide BSL training to London's deaf residents (where BSL is not their native sign language)
- Provide services for Deaf people such as advice, advocacy and employment
- Provide social clubs for Deaf people
- Provide workshops on fundamental issues e.g. health problems
- Facilitate tailored courses to London's deaf residents to provide a basic comprehension of the employment market, HMRC etc.
- Covid Emergency support
- Zoom activities to reduce isolation and promote wellbeing

## **Creating A Community**

As noted, wider services for deaf people have been restricted due to government cutbacks. Many services are now not able to meet the needs of the deaf community. The barriers that exist between deaf and hearing people are becoming increasingly exacerbated, a step in the wrong direction. EDS hopes to set up future projects to reduce the negative impact of these public-sector cuts and the total loss in services.

Our primary focus in most of this year has been meeting the needs arising due to Covid-19 i.e. facilitating working from home, supporting beneficiaries remotely and continuing service provision, fundraising and strategizing for new ways of working.

We have continued to work in partnership with external bodies, e.g. presenters at workshops and remote activities and interpreters.

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## **Future Plans**

We are in our third year of a three year project, funded by Big Lottery, which covers the following five services:

- Large scale community events (2 per year)
- Services for Deaf people who are new to the UK
- Information, Advice, Guidance, Advocacy and Employment service
- Deaf Awareness Training in all London boroughs
- Information Workshops
- Employment support
- Better work project

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, large scale events are not possible due to limits on numbers and social distancing rules. As such, we are unlikely to plan any large scale events for next year although are keeping a close eye on the situation. The future is very uncertain at the moment and our face-to-face work depends largely on the Government guidelines, the progress of the vaccination roll out and the Covid-19 statistics.

The deaf community have been severely affected by the lockdown, with reports of declines mental health, well-being and access to services. We hope to be able to run large scale community events again in 2022/23. Until then, we will continue offering emergency support as and when it is needed, together with remote support services and workshops.

In addition to the above, we are hoping to hold a large scale collaborative arts festival in 2022 and are already pursuing funding opportunities from the Arts Council.

We were successful with funding from Children in Need to run a children's project through Covid-19 and we hope to be able to secure continuation funding for this to enable us to continue with this provision.

We have run health, fitness and sporting services in the past, such as our cycling programme, and there is a need for this to expand, with running and basketball for example, and a continuation of the cycling programme. We hope to be successful in gaining funding for this sporting project for such times when we are able to meet face-to-face. Throughout lockdown we ran regular fitness sessions over Zoom and these were incredibly well attended, with beneficiaries reporting that they are keen to come to face-to-face sessions.

Our previously successful BSL in Schools project has unfortunately had to be put on hold due to school closures and lockdown restrictions. We were able to run some sessions ad hoc but not the regular sessions we had been running previously.

Due to Covid-19, most of our fundraising activities were not able to go ahead as usual, but we have managed to carry out some small fundraising activities and are delighted that our reserves now amount to around £60,000 which we are keeping for emergency use.

## **Deaf club**

Our previously successful Deaf club unfortunately had to close due to lockdown. We did try to convert this to Zoom, but the members struggled with the technology and also struggled with group conversations on the screen, turn taking etc. We tried to set up smaller deaf clubs with restricted numbers, in each borough, but this proved very difficult to manage and organise. We hope that Deaf Club will be back, face-to-face in 2022.

Our aim has always been to deliver the community-centred projects that we have designed. EDS will continue with its ongoing research to identify needs within the community along with funding opportunities. Once needs have been identified, EDS will follow procedure in order to secure funding and deliver projects in accordance to the needs identified.

We are also continually exploring other funding opportunities to enable us to develop and extend current projects, and establish new projects based on need and demand.

With the intent of increasing the charity's core funding, when lockdown restrictions end and we are able to provide services to external organisations, we will be charging mainstream organisations and services for training. The beneficiaries of the charity will therefore benefit from having this stable income. We hope to target organisations such as local Councils, Hospitals, the Police, Schools, Colleges, Universities and individuals.

## **Fundraising Strategy**

We have received funds from the following funders

- Big lottery Continuation funding
- Children in Need
- Trust for London
- Comic Relief
- ESFA

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We are awaiting decisions from the following funders

- Civil society root 3 GLA
- Award for all
- Money CAP
- Albert hunt
- Jubilee funds The National Lottery
- City Bridge Trust
- Groundwork
- Sport England
- Art council
- Clothworker

We endeavour to continue looking for further funding opportunities to allow us to continue our work.

We are so proud of all that we have achieved since we first set up in 2009; our portfolio of events, services and achievements is impressive, and we receive fantastic feedback from beneficiaries.

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CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Empowering Deaf Society

1131970

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period  
from

01.04.21

To

31.03.22

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grants received *1	-	183,976	-	183,976	200,020
Donations received *2	7,601	-	-	7,601	6,165
Income received from main activities *3	2,549	-	-	2,549	60
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	10,150	183,976	-	194,126	206,245
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
Loans received from external funder	-	-	-	-	40,000
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	40,000
<b>Total receipts</b>	10,150	183,976	-	194,126	246,245
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Direct Project Cost*5	-	29,553	-	29,553	35,493
Support Cost*6	-	106,578	-	106,578	85,744
Management & Admin Cost*7	1,920	-	-	1,920	3,078
OH Apportionment*8	12,954	2,286	-	15,240	23,322
Loan Repayment*9	4,970	-	-	4,970	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	19,844	138,417	-	158,261	147,637
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
Asset Purchases	-	-	-	-	7,667
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	7,667
<b>Total payments</b>	19,844	138,417	-	158,261	155,304
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 9,693	45,559	-	35,865	90,941
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	65,581	110,406	-	175,986	85,045
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	55,887	155,964	-	211,852	175,986

### Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>				
		55,887	155,964	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	55,887	155,964	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
	Details			

**B2 Other monetary assets**

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

**B3 Investment assets**

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-



**B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use**

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
See Note *11		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

**B5 Liabilities**

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
BBL Loan	Unrestricted Loan	35,030	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Iona Manning	30.01.2023
	M. Sutherland	30.01.23





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
Empowering Deaf Society

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 March 2022

Charity no  
(if any) 1131970

Set out on pages

3-4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2021.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Date: 28/01/2023

Name: Osama Ayub

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

FCCA, CTA

Address:

76 Aveling Close

Purley

CR8 4DW

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**

The charity had received a bounce back loan of £40,000 during the financial year ended 31 March 2021. During the current financial year a repayment of £4,970 has been made towards the loan, leaving an outstanding balance of £35,030 as at 31 March 2022.

The charity has sufficient unrestricted cash and liquid reserves to cover the loan, therefore, no going concern issues have been recognised.