

ANNUAL REPORT



2024-25

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Jo Nicolls summarises the issues affecting the communities and the work of DeafLink.

02. Hard of hearing work

Rosie informs us what she has been able to achieve with people who have acquired hearing loss.

03. Our BSL work

Claire, Fahmi and Michelle update us on the challenges they have faced this year. This includes the groups and Health Navigators.

04. Finances

The money we spent and where did we get our income from.

05. Statistics

How many meetings? Number of Groups we delivered. How many one-to-one clients and appointments.

06. People

The people who have volunteered and worked for DeafLink.

CHAIRS REPORT – JO NICOLLS

Another year has passed already! Deaflink continues to provide invaluable support to the D/deaf communities in the Northeast.

Starting on a positive note, the BSL Act 2022 is beginning to have an impact, and the first GCSE will be available in some schools very soon. We may have a generation of people who can sign.

Many people do not appreciate or understand how hidden the D/deaf communities are. As we have moved to a world of digital and automated services it is increasingly difficult for us to have our say, to engage or explain what their needs are and therefore we continue to be ignored. Without Deaflink we would fall through the gaps.

It is wonderful news that the Newcastle and Northumbria Hospital Trusts have committed to 3 years funding to our Health Navigator work, supporting BSL users on their hospital pathway at very difficult times in their lives.



I am pleased that this report shows some of the ways that Deaflink engage and work with the various communities. It is encouraging to read the feedback from clients; it helps us identify the reality of hearing loss and how important it is to share our experiences with others.

Finally, thank you to the dedication and commitment of the people who make Deaflink tick – the volunteers, the trustees and the staff. Well done on another successful year.

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I stepped into this role six months ago and have had the pleasure of continuing the fantastic work of **Louise McGlenn**. It's been a rewarding experience getting to know our clients and supporting them through this vital project.

What We've Been Working On

The Hard of Hearing work has been focussed on groups and reducing the isolation that hearing loss can bring. However, for several years we have seen a steady increase in referrals from audiology services and individuals seeking help with replacement devices. This has meant we have had to divert some of our resources to helping clients who have been told to contact us by the local Audiology Service.

We've also built strong partnerships with equipment providers, helping clients access solutions more quickly and efficiently.

In this year we supported 123 people, 82 of these were sent to us by Audiology. For many people, hearing aids and assistive technology can feel overwhelming—and this often impacts mental health and confidence. But with the right guidance and support, lives can be transformed. Clients gain the tools to adapt, reconnect, and participate fully in life.

"I feel more confident and ready to begin the day today with use of a hearing aid."

HARD OF HEARING WORK

Rosie Davison
HARD OF HEARING
INFORMATION
WORKER

“The speakers at the meetings are always interesting and informative. I enjoy their talks.”

THE HEARING LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Our Hearing Loss Support Group has grown steadily throughout the year. Many individuals who have received one-to-one support are now participating in group sessions to stay informed and connected. These events feature guest speakers, Q&A sessions, and social opportunities, creating a welcoming space for learning and peer support.

Looking Ahead

I'm excited to continue delivering **inclusive, supportive services** through our one-to-one work and group sessions. By focusing on **connection, education, and empowerment**, we can help more people embrace hearing technology and feel confident navigating life with hearing loss.

Thank you to all who have contributed, participated, and supported this work. I look forward to what we'll achieve together in the year ahead.

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Above is guest speaker- Clair Seago, Audiology, NuTH



Hearing Loss Support Group – Grace Pinson Bradley from Phonak explains equipment.

REGULAR BSL GROUPS



WALKING GROUP

Once a month, we organise a walking group that explores a variety of intriguing locations. This year locations have ranged from the sandy shores of Tynemouth beach and the Ouseburn, bursting with creativity and culture.

We also marvelled at the towering Angel of the north. Penshaw monument offering panoramic views. The botanical gardens were very relaxing and the Victoria tunnel, where stories of the past echoed.



DROP IN CHAT GROUP

Those who attend the sessions often say how enjoyable it is to meet with friends using their preferred language, British sign language (BSL).

The laid-back atmosphere creates an ideal setting for a social gathering, where there is much laughter and lively conversations. Many attendees have mentioned their excitement for the next drop-in, eager to continue building connections and sharing experiences in this welcoming environment.



DEAF FORUMS

Deaf forums are held four times a year at Brunswick methodist church on Saturday mornings for two hours.

This year we had discussions on domestic abuse led by Lou Redpath from sign health, BSL accessible apps presented by Charles Murphy, first aid and CPR training by Loveness Scott from NEAS, and fire safety tips from Louise Coulthard.

Thank you to the volunteers for your help – we couldn't do these without you.

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Michelle Perrie

KNITTING, PATCHWORK & CROCHET GROUPS

The knitting, patchwork and crochet groups taught participants new skills.

Those who attended reported that these activities helped them get out of the house, connect with others, and engage in a creative pursuit that they found both calming and satisfying.

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CHRISTMAS EVENTS



CRAFTS

This group embraced the festive spirit with Deaflink by creating handmade decorations to add a personal touch to their Christmas celebrations.

Everyone created some special memories and wonderful decorations. It did take us several weeks to get rid of the glitter!



CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Thirteen people attended the Christmas lunch at the Sambuca restaurant on the quayside. The atmosphere was lovely and relaxing.

To our surprise, the staff demonstrated a strong understanding of communication techniques. When asked, they informed us that their chef is deaf. He came over to introduce himself to the group.



THEATRE

We arranged to attend the performance of 'A Christmas carol' at Northern Stage.

What truly set this experience apart was the integrated approach of the BSL interpreter, who skillfully accompanied the actors on stage rather than remaining in a traditional corner. This allowed us to engage fully with both the performances and the translation, creating an atmosphere that heightened our enjoyment of the performance.

HEALTH NAVIGATORS

**Claire Hoggeth
& Fahmi Syeda**

“I can't thank you enough for taking the pressure off me and sorting interpreters for him 😊” – family member of a BSL user who was admitted to a hospital.”

“If it were not for Deaflink I would be lost, I really appreciate that Deaflink was set up and I hope it continues. I feel Deaflink is my support link, they are very reliable, I can rely on them, and they never let me down. Deaflink are amazing, really amazing and I want to say a big thank you for their help. I really appreciate them and think they are wonderful, thank you.” Health Navigator client, March 2025

The Health Navigator project has now been running for three years! In that time, we have worked tirelessly with our partners from Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospital Trusts (NUTH) and Northumbria Healthcare Trust (NCHT) as well as the wonderful BSL interpreters to ensure that BSL users are able to access healthcare services in a way that are both accessible and beneficial, according to their specific needs.

We have a steering group, a team of people from the various hospitals involved in this work. This gives us a valuable opportunity to put share information, discuss the gaps in services and to better understand that challenges that are faced by the hospitals and the Deaf communities.

It is widely established that BSL users have poorer health outcomes, compared to hearing people. That is precisely why our project is vital to the BSL community because we act as a bridge between the hospitals and the community. We do not just support our clients with their health-related issues, we also support them with benefits, housing, employment etc. We continue to embrace and foster a holistic approach to improve their health and wellbeing.

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57 BSL USING PATIENTS SUPPORTED.

1356 CONTACTS.

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Some of our achievements this year



Information and Greater understanding – with the hospital staff and with the BSL patients.



Interpreter Agency – working together to ensure interpreters are requested for appointments.



Training and Support – creating D/deaf awareness eLearning modules that will hopefully become mandatory.



Emergency interpreter – working with the hospitals to find interpreters for unplanned visits.



Accelerate issues – to have a clear pathway to address concerns

Mental Health and British Sign Language Users Conference

In May 2024 Deaflink were part of a team who delivered a conference trying to raise awareness of the issues affecting BSL users when trying to access mental health services. The conference was attended by over 100 people who work in GP practices and hospitals in the North East.

In the morning, we had some great speakers Margaret de Feu talked about Health and Barriers to Deaf Access, Chris Rowlands, CNTW did a great job bringing the Equality Legislation to life. There were 2 BSL Users who shared their own experiences. Our Advice and Support manager Claire Hoggeth talked about Deaf awareness and cultural issues of deafness. Finally, CNTW talked about the Mental Health and Deafness Service. The afternoon was used to explore a case study and asked participants to think about a BSL users' pathway through health services and the various people they will have contact with.

The learning that was shared was consistent:

- Communication passport.**
- Need to have better flags on records.**
- Raise awareness levels in practice.**
- Double time appointments.**
- Need to provide accessible communication methods.**
- Family members shouldn't interpret.**

'Why is this the first time I am having this conversation in 20 years of nursing?'
Psychiatric nurse at a GP Practice.



"It was nice to chat with other members of the group and find out how they deal with the problems we all face."



DEAFLINK 2024-25

- 67 GROUPS, 599 ATTENDED
- 252 ONE-TO-ONE CLIENTS

STATISTICS



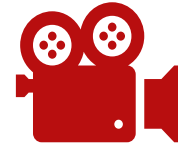
252 Clients (and this involved ...



Contacts
2473



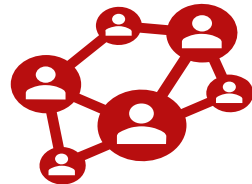
Home Visits
99



Video Meetings
689



Deaf Centre drop in
81 queries



Staff also attended 91 meetings with other organisations

FINANCES

INCOME £139,882

SPENT £118,054

Thanks to our funders and contributors - Newcastle Fund, the Trustees of Samares, Hospital of God, Barbour Foundation and various organisations who have bought our D/deaf awareness training.

We also received funding from the 2 hospital trusts - NuTH and NHCT and the Health Foundation to help us to deliver the Health Navigator programme. We are grateful to CNTW who continue to provide our office space.

THANK YOU for the wonderful donations from members of the public. We would like to thank Jo Nicolls, Julie Stephenson, Sheila Shirley and Mary Craig.

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To everyone who helped in 2024-25



- **Board Members**
- **Volunteers**
- **Staff**
- **Partners**
- **Funders**
- **Communication Support professionals**

To Louise and Jo who have moved on to new challenges, we wish them both good luck.

Partners include: Northumbria, Newcastle and CNTW Hospital Trusts; Newcastle Deaf Centre; Shearers Bar

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **ADDRESS:** 1 CHURCH VIEW HOUSE, ST NICHOLAS HOSPITAL, JUBILEE ROAD, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE3 3XT
- **TEXT:** 07897 329 359
- **TELEPHONE:** 0191 223 2128
- **EMAIL:** ADMIN@DEAFLINK.ORG.UK
- **WEBSITE:** WWW.DEAFLINK.ORG.UK
- WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DEAFLINK
- **X:** DEAFLINK_NE

Deaflink North East is a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales; Company No. 7982375; Charity No. 1147237. Registered address above.

Deaflink North East

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Trustees Report and Financial Statements For The Year Ended 31 March 2025

Charity No. 1147237

Company Registration No. 07982375

Legal and Administrative Information

Name: **Deaflink North East**

Reg'd Charity No: 1147237

Company no: 07982375

Trustees: Joanne Grace Nicolls (Chair)
Joyce Pennington
Rachel Ross
Laura McQuillan
Christopher Rowlands
Heather Thompson
Louise Borrell
Emma Ashie Neequaye
Geoff Bell (Resigned July 2024)

Address: 1 Church View House,
St Nicholas Hospital
Jubilee Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 3XT

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank

Independent
Examiner: Mark Thompson MAAT
42 Lesbury Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE6 5LB

Trustees Annual Report

For the year ended 31st March 2025

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025

The work of DeafLink addresses inequalities and barriers facing people who have hearing loss. Our primary focus remains ensuring that D/deaf people are empowered by having access to information to enable them to make choices and to communicate.

We encourage individuals and organisations to be aware of D/deaf people's rights and responsibilities.

In a changing landscape for D/deaf communities and ways that people can interact and engage our Forums and Focus groups for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people continued to provide invaluable support.

Health Navigators, a unique programme working together with the 3 hospital Trusts in the north Tyne area- CNTW; NHCT and NuTH continues to deliver extremely positive results for BSL users. The hospitals should be proud they are investing in such a ground breaking and Deaf friendly service.

Our eLearning modules are delivering training and D/deaf awareness to a much wider audience, and this can only bring positive rewards in the future. Our next focus is to try to get the training as mandatory within the hospital trusts.

The trustees/directors have considered the guidance produced by the Charity Commission on the provision of public benefit and they confirm that public benefit has been provided by the range of activities as described above.

Matters Pertaining to Companies Act 2006

For the year ending 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 447 of the Companies Act 2006. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

Signed ... Position Trustee



Print Name... Louise Borrell

Date 24 July 2025

Signed Position ...Trustee



Print Name.....Christopher Rowlands

Date 24 July 2025

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Report to the
trustees of

Deaflink North East

On accounts for
the year ended

31 March 2025

Charity no 1106223

**Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and
examiner**

The trustees of the organisation are responsible for the preparation of accounts; they consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an Independent Examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act),
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act), and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of
independent
examiner's
statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

**Independent
examiner's
statement**

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:

- proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act); and
- accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:



Date: 15th May 2025

**Name:
Address:**

Mark Thompson MAAT
42 Lesbury Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE6 5LB

Deaflink North East

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
Receipts		2025	2025	2025	2024
		£		£	
Grants	4	1000	102214	103214	84541
Donations		910		910	2268
Training Income		32150		32150	20650
Sundry income		2695		2695	0
Bank interest		913		913	870
Total Receipts		37668	102214	139882	108329
Payments					
Staff Costs		12038	84325	96363	89686
Sessional Workers		1970	2290	4260	90
Stationery & Equipment		1003	2489	3492	1113
Rent, Heating & Electric				0	483
Website & IT			580	580	2775
Telephone			346	346	342
Postage & Printing			327	327	303
Legal & Prof. Fees			2828	2828	7812
Meetings, Events & Forums			4684	4684	1578
Payroll, Accountancy & Bank Charges		204	650	854	697
Insurance			524	524	0
Communications		505	2465	2970	1650
Staff Travel & Training			628	628	346
User Travel				0	0
Independent Examination Fee				0	0
Other Costs		120	78	198	212
Total Payments		15840	102214	118054	107087
Surplus / deficit for the year		21828	0	21828	1242
Funds at 1 April 2024		91175	0	91175	89933
Funds at 31 March 2025		113003	0	113003	91175

Deaflink North East

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank & in Hand	123003	102675
Total Cash Balances	123003	102675
Current Liabilities	7 10000	11500
Net Current Assets	113003	91175
Net Assets at 31 March 2025	113003	91175
Represented By:	8	
Restricted Funds	0	0
Designated Funds	60000	50000
Unrestricted Funds	53003	41175
	113003	91175

For the year ending 31/03/2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors responsibilities:

- a) The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476, of the Companies Act 2006
- b) The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.
- c) The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act relating to small companies.

Signed . Position Trustee



Print Name...Louise Borrell

Date 24 July 2025

Signed Position ...Trustee



Print Name...Christopher Rowlands

Date 24 July 2025

Deaflink North East

Notes to the accounts, 2024/25

1. Basis of accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) – Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006

Deaflink North East meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

1b. Opening Balance Adjustment

A previous balance showing on the balance sheet has been removed £785. This does not effect The Restricted Funds balance.

2. Trustees and Staff

No Trustees were remunerated or received expenses payments.

Total Salary Costs	£96,363
Average no of staff was	5

3. Costs of financial services

The cost for the Independent Examination for the financial period will be £440.

4. Funding

Grants received through the year:

Restricted:

Deaf Conference:

- CNTW	3717
- Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust	4000
- Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust	4000
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust	20000
Trustees of Samares	10000
Newcastle Fund	25000
Health Foundation	15497
Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust	20000
Total Restricted Grants	102214

Hospital of God	1000
Total Unrestricted Grants	1000

Total Grants Received	103214
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5. Fund Analysis

Restricted Funds

Deaf Conference:

	March '24	Income	Expend	March '25
- CNTW		3717	3717	0
- Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust		4000	4000	0
- Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust		4000	4000	0
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust		20000	20000	0
Trustees of Samares		10000	10000	0
Newcastle Fund		25000	25000	0
Health Foundation		15497	15497	0
Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust		20000	20000	0
	0	102214	102214	0

6. Related party transactions

There were no significant transactions between the project and any related parties during the period. No payments have been made to Trustees.

7. Current Liabilities:

Grants Received in Advance:

Northumbria Healthcare Trust	10000
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Total Current Liabilities	10000
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8. Designated Funds

Contingency Fund	60000
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Total Designated Funds	60000
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Notes:

Contingency Fund

This is in place to cover closing costs for the organisation, so it can fulfil its legal obligations, e.g. Redundancy & leases.

Deaflink North East

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- Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust	4000
- Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust	4000
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust	20000
Trustees of Samares	10000
Newcastle Fund	25000
Health Foundation	15497
Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust	20000
Total Restricted Grants	102214

Hospital of God	1000
Total Unrestricted Grants	1000

Total Grants Received	103214
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5. Fund Analysis

Restricted Funds

Deaf Conference:

	March '24	Income	Expend	March '25
- CNTW		3717	3717	0
- Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust		4000	4000	0
- Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust		4000	4000	0
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust		20000	20000	0
Trustees of Samares		10000	10000	0
Newcastle Fund		25000	25000	0
Health Foundation		15497	15497	0
Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust		20000	20000	0
	0	102214	102214	0

6. Related party transactions

There were no significant transactions between the project and any related parties during the period. No payments have been made to Trustees.

7. Current Liabilities:

Grants Received in Advance:

Northumbria Healthcare Trust	10000
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Total Current Liabilities	10000
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8. Designated Funds

Contingency Fund	60000
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Total Designated Funds	60000
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Notes:

Contingency Fund

This is in place to cover closing costs for the organisation, so it can fulfil its legal obligations, e.g. Redundancy & leases.