

15 October 2009



Dear colleague

An update on National Deaf Children's Society's (NDCS) work with deaf children and young people

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Purpose: To inform you of:

- a) The NDCS new website for deaf children and young people
- b) Other measures NDCS is taking to implement its "Big Plan" for deaf children and young people

Intended audience: Members of staff or volunteers in your organisation with a particular interest or role in working with deaf children and young people

Required action: Please:

- a) Assist in any way you can in bringing the website called *The Buzz* to the attention of deaf children and young people
- b) Contact NDCS if you would like more information and/or feel there are opportunities for partnership working with your organisation

You may be aware that in 2007, the NDCS Youth Consultation, *Change Your World*, received 1,500 responses from deaf children and young people thanks to the support of many organisations across the UK. Our strategy for working with deaf children and young people is based on the results of this consultation and further discussions with deaf children and young people throughout the UK.

90% of deaf young people responding to our consultation said they wanted a dedicated website for young deaf people.

I am therefore very pleased to inform you about NDCS's new Youth Website, *The Buzz*, which we have developed with significant input from deaf children and young people themselves. The website will be in operation by 1 November 2009 and a formal launch will take place in the New Year. The link will be emailed to you as soon as the website goes live.

The Buzz is an exciting website especially for deaf children and young people aged between eight and 18 years old. There are two sites – one for children (8 to 11 years old) and one for teenagers (12 to 18 years old). *The Buzz* gives deaf children and young people a website of their



own that is safer than many alternative websites. Please do encourage deaf children and young people your organisation works with to sign up and get involved.

The Buzz gives deaf young people the opportunity to make new friends, check out the latest information and to chat and discuss issues that matter to them. The site is closely monitored and we have a clear safety policy to help deaf children and young people keep themselves safe when using the website. *Cool Topics* presents deaf young people who have achieved amazing things, strongly promoting our message that deaf young people can succeed at whatever they want to. *Cool Topics* also has other fun, informative features, such as news, reviews and advice on subjects like going to college and getting ahead in life.

The *Events* section lists lots of exciting NDCS events and activities for deaf children and young people across the country and throughout the year. All of our events – which include sporting activities, arts workshops, camps, holidays and personal development courses – are designed to help deaf children and young people meet and make friends with others, to give them life skills and to boost their self-esteem. There is also the facility to benefit non-NDCS providers, such as your organisation, to promote your activities to this audience.

We also hope that young people will find our *Information and Advice* section useful. We're gathering together lots of useful links for deaf children on issues like health, bullying, relationships, sex and planning for the future. We'll also be listing organisations which provide information or activities specifically for deaf children and young people.

Alongside the commitment to launching this website, we have also made progress along the following commitments made within the NDCS Youth Strategy;

- **Participation** – an additional Participation Officer has been appointed to work within our Participation Unit alongside our Head of Youth Participation. The Unit has been involved in a wide range of consultations and is working to develop a formal NDCS Youth Advisory Board in the next year and a NDCS youth membership scheme.
- **Training and development** – after some pilot work, we have increased the number of "Getting Ahead" weekends where deaf young people are given the opportunity to develop their skills in preparation for leaving school and adulthood. We also run Young Leadership weeks to develop young people's skills in leading activities.

More events – since 2007 we have trebled the number of places on our events to 2659 a year. We have broadened the type of activities offered throughout the UK. A number of events are run in partnership with other organisations.

- **Helping other organisations become more deaf-friendly** - through initiatives such as our Me2 Campaign and our Deaf Friendly Football project we are working on supporting mainstream leisure providers to be more deaf aware and positive about including deaf children and young people in their activities, by offering the advice and expertise of our Youth team as well as

providing materials. In this respect we are working with the Woodcraft Folk, the Rugby Union, England and Wales Cricket Board, Dream Flight, Pulse 3k, London Symphony Orchestra to name but a few.

The intention over the next 5 years through NDCS's Youth Strategy is to empower young people to become more involved in the decisions that affect their lives and campaign for change to improve the services they receive.


NDCS is keen to ensure that its direct work with children and young people complements existing and planned work being carried out by national and local organisations across the UK. We therefore intend to work in partnership to avoid wherever possible duplication of services/events being offered by different organisations, signpost deaf children and young people to the most appropriate service and organisations, identify gaps in provision and find solutions to filling them. If you would like more information on our strategy or if you feel there are opportunities for your organisation to work with NDCS in this area please do not hesitate to contact me by email on susan.daniels@ndcs.org.uk or by letter via NDCS Head Office.

I hope that this letter achieves its purposes in bringing you up to date with our current and future plans regarding deaf children and young people in the UK and that you will be in touch if appropriate.

I look forward to hearing from you

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours sincerely



Susan Daniels OBE
Chief Executive