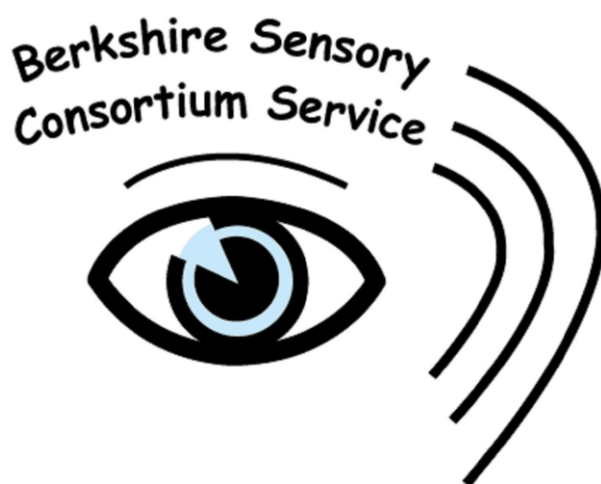


Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service

Newsletter 4: December 2022



As we approach the end of the Autumn Term, I can hardly believe that the Christmas holidays are approaching so quickly. We have had a number of new staff who joined us in September, some of whom are already qualified as Teachers of the Deaf and Teachers of the Vision Impaired and the rest who are in training for the mandatory qualification. Welcome to Angela and Joanna our Teachers of the Vision Impaired, Jemma our new Teacher of the Deaf and Tim who is already a Teacher

of the Vision Impaired and is undertaking his Multisensory Impairment qualification.

Towards the end of September, we introduced two new Information Sessions for parents. Thank you for all the positive feedback we received. We will be running them again on the 18th of January at 10am and repeated at 7pm for an hour. It is to give an opportunity to find out more about the Service, events we are running and general updates. We won't be able to talk about specific children so do talk to your visiting teacher or contact us if you have a specific question. This term we have seen a huge number of new referrals, so it has kept everyone busy keeping up with them.

Our Annual Report for 2021/22 will be available on the website in a couple of weeks for you to read. There are also a number of new resources signposted to on the website and details about the next parent workshops and training opportunities as well as lots of general information. You will see that lots of our young people who left school in July have gone on to do amazing things. Many have gone on to university, some are taking a gap year, joining apprenticeships or going on to work or courses at further education colleges with no one not in education or employment. We are extremely proud of all they have achieved both personally, and academically. It has been a privilege to see their journey and how they have grown in confidence and resilience.

In 1998 Berkshire split up into 6 Local Authorities each with their own services however we as the sensory educational team at the time stayed together as the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service (BSCS) in a pan-Berkshire arrangement BSCS Th which has been in place ever since. This is a huge achievement and an arrangement which is held up nationally as an example of a strong partnership which meets the needs of our deaf/ hearing loss and or vision impairment children and young people who are in special educational needs terms seen as a low incident group.

25 years is a long time, and we want to celebrate this momentous occasion in a number of different ways. We have just launched a 25th anniversary logo competition for our young people to design a logo we can put on all our communications, we will be having a family day in the summer term and special events hearing from our

young people and their families past and present. Keep a look out for other events we will be running to mark the occasion.

I also want to thank the voluntary agencies we work with and give a special mention to the Berkshire Deaf Children's Society, Berkshire Vision and Guide Dogs among others who we work collaboratively on a number of joint projects and who support us to support you and our young people.

I hope you enjoy reading our termly newsletter, do send us your feedback. A big thank you to all who contributed and to Leanne Cox for putting it together.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and season's greetings

Best wishes Jane

Head of Service



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Think Right, Feel Good Course

Some of our secondary aged VI students attended the Think Right, Feel Good course this term. The course focuses on the development of self-advocacy skills and well-being, as well as providing students with the opportunity to meet other children who have a vision impairment and share experiences.

We had a very enjoyable day with lots of positive discussions and sharing of ideas to help develop new skills and learn how to respond in different situations.

This is what some of the attendees said:

- *It helped me be a lot more confident than I usually am.*
- *It was good how we could discuss things; I liked meeting new people.*
- *It was helpful to talk about different situations and how to solve problems in and out of school.*
- *The teachers were really helpful and understanding. They also gave great advice.*
- *It was helpful because we got to talk and share about things that bother us.*
- *It was very helpful.*
- *It was fun!* Also, a big thank you to Carol Barnfather of Berkshire Vision, who helped provide transport to/from the event.

Speech and Language Therapy - working in partnership with families and the Berkshire Sensory Consortium

Welcome to the Speech and Language Therapy service for Deaf children, part of Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

We are based in settings across Berkshire and work closely with our audiology and Teacher of the Deaf colleagues in the areas that are

services are commissioned. We work with preschool children across Berkshire, and school aged children in West Berkshire, Wokingham, Bracknell and Windsor and Maidenhead that have a permanent hearing loss as a primary need. Some children access other parts of the Berkshire Speech and Language Therapy service eg the Complex Needs Team, or the mainstream schools team.

We recognise the expertise and experience the wider team of professionals around children have supporting early communication- your Teacher of the Deaf, Health Visitor, and Nursery staff or childminder will all be able to share ideas with you to support communication, and trying these ideas consistently always helps inform any future assessment with the Speech and Language Therapist, if needed.

For children with a permanent hearing loss, our Teacher of the Deaf colleagues take the initial lead in supporting hearing aid use, monitoring responses and providing ideas. You can find advice sheets that relate to many aspects of early communication development (and other areas of development) at

[Communication and hearing | Children Young People and Families Online Resource \(berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk\)](#) and [I CAN's Talking Point](#)

In addition, you can find excellent videos to support deaf children's early communication at [Introduction to the Series - YouTube](#)

When you have support from the Teacher of the Deaf in place, if additional specific questions arise around communication development, your child's Teacher might suggest that the Speech and Language Therapist does a joint visit along with them, to discuss how Speech and Language Therapy observations and suggestions might help at that stage. You or your Teacher of the Deaf can make a referral to us at that point (where services are commissioned) with an online referral form that can be found at <https://forms.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/cypf/>

Not all Deaf children will need a referral to Speech and Language Therapy.

We really value opportunities to visit at Chatty Monkeys, join in with SCS Parent workshops, complete joint assessments with Teacher of the Deaf colleagues and write joint reports and targets where appropriate and helpful for a family. We also are part of the Berkshire Children's

Services Working Group (CHSWG). We might see you in any one of those forums, and we look forward to saying Hello!

Louise Dix working with Talyn Roberts



Please help us....

Design a logo for our 25th anniversary



Design a 25th anniversary logo

In 2023 Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service will be celebrating 25 years of working with pupils, families and schools across all of the six Berkshire Local Authorities. To start our anniversary year, we want to design a special logo to celebrate this achievement and would like our young people to design it. The competition is open to anyone who is currently (or has been previously) supported by BSCS.

Did you know in 1998.....

- Berkshire Sensory Consortium was started
- Google was founded
- Furby's were the favourite 'pet'
- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets was published
- It was the last time the UK hosted Eurovision Song Contest!

Keep the logo **simple**, pick a **colour** and the right **font** and make it **distinctive** and **memorable** and **accessible**

The winning logo will be used on all of our 25th anniversary communications and there will be prizes with all of your entries displayed on our website.

- **Give** your designs to your visiting teacher
- **Email** to sensory.consortium@achievingforchildren.org.uk or
- **Post** to Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF
- Ensure your entry is clearly marked with your name and contact details,
- **Closing Date:** Sunday 8th January 2023.

EXPLORE YOUR CREATIVITY



W: berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk T: 01628 796786 E: sensory.consortium@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Wellbeing Tips from NDCS

3-5 Year Olds

NDCS have partnered with Cosmic Kids and created three yoga videos. Each video is British Sign Language interpreted. This is great for exercising at home, improving balance and coordination, becoming more flexible. It also helps your child to learn to follow instructions and improve their concentration. Here are links to the videos:

[Squish the Fish](#)

[On the Farm](#)

[Betsy the Banana](#)

8-18 Year Olds

The NDCS is opening applications for mentoring for young people aged 8-18. It connects young people with a positive deaf role model. For more information click on the link below:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/services-for-deaf-children-and-young-people-8-18/mentoring-for-deaf-young-people/>

Families

There is a Festive Signed Songs event help online on Thursday 1 and 8 December from 4.30pm to 5.30pm on Zoom. For more information click on the link below:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/our-events/events-for-children-and-young-people/festive-signed-songs/>

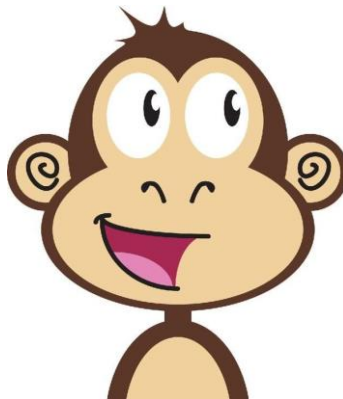
NDCS have partnered with Cadburys Fingers. This is to encourage more people to get chatting in British Sign Language. As part of this campaign, Cadbury are contributing to the NDCS Family Sign Language courses which teach deaf children and their families how to use BSL at key times such as mealtimes, story and play. The applications for sign language courses are now open.

Here are links for more information:

[partnered with Cadbury Fingers](#)

[Family Sign Language](#)

Deafness/Hearing Loss - Chatty Monkeys



Amelia and Robyn were busy painting hand prints and they will be ready to make Holly Wreaths at our next session at Chatty Monkeys on 13th December in Spencers Wood from 9.30-11am in St Michael and All Angels Church.





Our Chatty Monkeys group at St Michael & All Angels Church have enjoyed making decorations for our annual windowsill display. The children painted angels and stuck glitter to make a beautiful and sparkly display to contribute to the church festivities. Just a reminder that it is lovely to see so many old and new faces to the group which takes place every other Tuesday morning from 9.30-11.30, returning in the New Year on the 10th of January. We hope you have a lovely Christmas.





At Chatty Monkeys this week we had a Christmas Party, Santa visited and we had party food. One of our Mummy's made some very creative and yummy snowman cakes with BAHA's, hearing aids and cochlear implants on. Thank you, Alicia Hutchinson!



Student Celebrations



Ananya, Y8: Deaf/ Hearing Loss



On a visit to see Ananya in school this term, she showed me this fabulous drawing of her cochlear processors. Thank you for sharing this piece of art with us Ananya.



Georgia Walburn-Green, MSI

Georgia attends Castle School, West Berks. Mum told us the pilot let Georgia take control for a short time! It is a real plane in the air, not a simulator. Thank you so much for sharing these fabulous pictures. You are very brave Georgia!



Anna Cauchi, Deafness/Hearing Loss

Please read the inspiring article about Ana's transition to university life, aided by her trusted hearing dog Valley. We have had kind permission from Hearing Dogs for the Deaf magazine to include an article below. Thank you, Anna, for sharing this with us and introducing us to Valley.

PARTNERSHIP 🐾

"EVERYONE ON THE TEAM LOVES VALLEY"



She wakes me up in time for lectures too and having a dog in accommodation also helped my flatmates and I bond, especially at the beginning of the year.

"One alert in particular has helped with this. My parents used to do 'the call', in which they'd ask Valley to find me in the house. She'd just off, give me a noise nudge and then lead me back to them. Now, my student friends use it!"

Raising the game

Indeed, Ana hasn't just coped with university – she's excelled in sport, having been invited to train with the England Deaf Women's football team!

"Valley comes to camp with me. She wakes me up because it's very important not to be late for morning training sessions. When I'm training she gets looked after by staff on the sideline but during recovery, she comes and lies down beside me."

And how do the other team members feel about Valley? Ana laughs. "Everyone on the team loves her! She has definitely helped me bond with my teammates and staff too. She's a very sociable dog so loves all the attention she gets."

➡ More real-life stories

To read more inspiring stories about the difference our dogs make to the lives of deaf people, visit our website hearingdogs.org.uk/stories



PARTNERSHIP 🐾

Ana and Valley: A great team

When Ana went to university, a lot changed in her life. Her amazing hearing dog Valley, alongside our ongoing support, helped Ana with this transition

Ana had hearing dog Valley as a child. She explains: "I used to be really anxious about going out in public. I always had to ask someone to be with me in case I'd have to talk to someone."

So, Ana decided to take matters into her own hands. She contacted Hearing Dogs, and when she found out she was eligible, convinced her mother that it would be a great idea to have one. She was right!

"Having Valley with me helps people understand that they need to talk more clearly and that I need to lipread. People are a lot more patient and considerate, especially at the height of the pandemic when people were wearing face masks."

New life, new skills

Valley helped Ana through the society-wide challenges of the pandemic. Ana's next big step came when she went to university to study Sport and Exercise Science.

Starting university is a huge change for anyone but as a deaf student with a hearing dog, there were some extra things Ana had to think about, including some additional training for Valley.



Back to Ana: "There are three major areas where Valley's training has been supplemented: being around more people in lecture rooms, settling patiently during long lectures; and learning new alarms."

"Firstly, we had to get her more comfortable in larger rooms with lots of people to prepare her for big lecture theatres."

"So, with the help of a Hearing Dogs trainer, I started teaching her to tuck under a chair so that she'd be able to do this in the theatres. Then, whenever I went to a cafe or restaurant, I'd get her to settle under my chair again. To do this, I gave her a treat whenever she did it right. She does love her treat!"

"Before the semester began, we also visited the lecture theatres and labs. So, she was already used to the rooms and knew what to do."

This is an object lesson in how we train our hearing dogs. It is always gentle, at the dog's pace, and involves lots of love, fuss, patience, and treats.

Valley has perfected settling, and sleeping



Back to Ana: "For the settling, we started with short cafe visits and built up to longer restaurant settles. When we moved to university she was pretty much ready – she just needed a chewable rubber toy to keep her occupied at first, but now she rarely uses it and snoots quietly beside me."

"Finally, the smoke and fire alarms are different at university, so she's been taught the new sounds. This is such an important alert, where she has to tell me about the alarm but doesn't lead me to it. I know that she'll get it right if the time comes."

"There are also many smaller ways in which she supports me. She alerts me to my phone, which gives me independence."



Dayzie Simpson, Vision Impaired



Dayzie wrote an article in the Newbury Weekly News - here is the link.
Well done, Dayzie!

<https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/news/13-year-old-blind-girl-wants-to-promote-braille-awareness-9282220/>

Daniel Forey, Deafness/Hearing loss

Daniel has been working hard on following instructions and using his fantastic listening skills to create works of art. Here he is showing his wonderful rocket he made for firework night, and he has been doing lots of things to do with night-time as his class topic has been focused around the story 'Whatever next' by Jill Murphy.



Jonah Maskell, Deafness/ Hearing Loss

Jonah has settled brilliantly into the Foundation Stage at Thameside School. Jonah and his peers were making dough after listening to the story of The Little Red Hen. Jonah listened well to all of the instructions and made delicious bread. Well done, Jonah!



Pawel, Deafness/ Hearing Loss

Pawel has given us some useful tips and advice after one term at college. Thank you for sharing this with us!

What did you expect to see at college?

I expected to see heavy amount of responsibilities on myself, ultra-complex topics in class, 3 hour long classes etc.

Were there any things that you did not expect?

The amount of freedom all students get. There are less strict rules, and more support which I didn't expect to see.

What did you find easy?

I found it easy to ask for support.

What did you find difficult?

Catching up with lessons does take a lot of time, but it will be over soon.

What do you like about college?

We made paper dolls as a visual reference to show how we are all similar but in our own ways we are unique. Bethany used a fingerprint with finger paint to show the uniqueness of each of us on each doll.

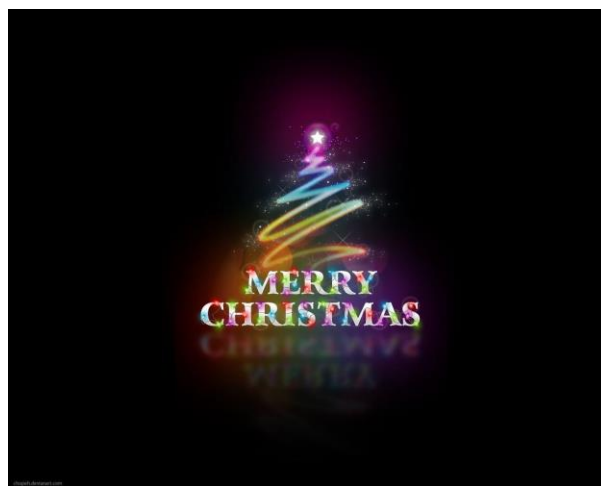


Primary Cooking Event, Vision Impaired

Primary cooking event jointly run by BSCS, Berkshire Vision and Guide Dogs. This event was run on the 6th of August, and we had 6 attendees. The CYP's enjoyed making cheese and onion triangles and a marshmallow treat to take home. Yum!



Wishing you all a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year for 2023



Moving towards using positive language around Deafness

The Berkshire Sensory Consortium has been reviewing their use of positive language and in particular the terms deafness and hearing impairment linked to our support of children and young people.

Historically 'hearing impairment' or 'hearing impaired' (HI) has been widely used in deaf education and in services for deaf children however there is a growing conversation around what this should now look like going forward.

Currently the terms deaf and deafness are increasingly used within the UK to represent all levels of hearing loss from mild to profound. It is also used to include those who identify culturally as Deaf, hearing impaired, hard of hearing or deafened

Consultation with young people supported by the Service found that they used a range of terminology. To reflect this the Service has decided to use Deafness/Hearing loss although recognises that within the Code of Practice and in Local Authorities the term hearing impairment is still current and therefore in some circumstances for reporting this terminology may still be used. The term hearing loss is widely used by the World Health Organisation.

As a Service we also feel that young people and their families should be able to choose how their hearing is referred to in for example reports or training within settings and their view will be proactively sought and may change over time.

The Six Authorities





w: www.berkshiresensoryconsortium.co.uk

f: www.facebook.com/berksscs

twitter: @BerksSCS
