

The logo for deaf PLUS features a stylized four-leaf clover icon in red, blue, green, and yellow to the left of the text. 'deaf' is in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font, and 'PLUS' is in a larger, all-caps sans-serif font.

SOMERSET NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 45

June & July 2024



DeafPLUS Somerset Mobile Advisory Service

- Hearing aid maintenance clinics
- Equipment demonstrations
- Advice and information through our advice surgeries on the following dates and locations through April and the coming months.

Our Information and Advisory Session staff Amber and Sophie will be happy to meet you at the

June

10th June 10.30am-12pm
Minehead Talking Cafe, Methodist Church, The Avenue TA24 5AP.

12th June 1.30pm-3pm Castle Cary Highfield House, High Street BA7 7AN

19th June 10am-12pm Chard Bath Street, Car Park TA20 2ET

26th June 12pm-1.30pm Martock Moorland Car Park



This Service is supported by Somerset Council

July

10th July 10.30am-12.30pm
Wincanton Balsam Centre,
Balsam Park BA9 9HB

17th July 13.30pm-3pm Castle Cary, Millbrook Gardens Car Park BA7 7EE

24th July 10.30-12pm Burnham-on-Sea Bay Centre, Cassis Close, TA8 1NN

31st July 10am-12pm Yeovil Talking Café Gateway Church BA20 1QN.

August

7th August 10.30am-12.00pm
Wellington ASDA Longforth Car Park TA21 8RQ

14th August 10.30am-12pm
Langport Cocklemoor Car Park, TA10 9RA

21st August 1.30pm-3pm
Shepton Mallet Dobbie's Garden Centre BA4 4PE

28th August 10.30am-12pm
Watchet Swain Street, Car Park TA23 0AQ

For more information, please
call or text Stewart on 07762
848226 or email
stewart.weston@deafplus.org



**Deaf Plus Lip-
Reading classes
for the teaching
year 2024 to**

**2025 in Somerset. New
sessions start from week
commencing 16th September.**

Somerset Lip reading classes.

**Monday Glastonbury – 10am-
12pm – Grace Church, Landmark
House, Wirrall Park Road, BA6
9FR**

**Tuesday Frome 10-12pm – The
Library Justice Ln, Frome BA11
1BE and Castle Cary – 1.45-
3.45pm – The Market House,
Castle Cary BA7 7AH
Tutor for all the above
Gill.cumming@deafplus.org**

**Wednesday Ilminster – 10-12pm
– Ile Youth & Community Centre,
Frog Lane, TA19 0AP**

**Langport – 1.30-3.30pm —
Ridgway Hall, Langport Town
Hall, Bow Street, TA10 9PR.**

**Thursday Burnham-on-Sea –
10-12pm – The Bay Centre,**

Cassis Close, Burnham-on-Sea
TA8 1NN

**Bridgwater – 1pm-3pm Hembry
Room, Westfield Church, West
Street, TA6 7EU.**

**Tutor for the above
linda.horner@deafplus.org**

**Thursday Yeovil – 10-12pm –
The Gateway, Yeovil Community
Church, Addlewell Lane, Yeovil,
Somerset BA20 1QN.**

**Tutor for the above Janet
Thomas
carinya.ecoker@gmail.com**



**The next Deaf social gatherings
is this month on 15th June 2024
at CLUB 22, 22 High Street
Keynsham BS31 1DQ. From 12
noon onwards.**

The Deaf Gatherings for the rest
of spring will take place on the
following dates.

Lucy Barron will be hosting. It is
an opportunity for Deaf. people to
meet, converse in BSL and enjoy
Deaf culture in a relaxed and safe
environment.



deafPLUS Adviceline Service

Need information or advice about
Benefits? Housing? Health?

Debt? Consumer Issues?

Any other information?

Send email or video to

adviceline@deafplus.org



Six surprising causes of hearing loss

On the surface, if you have good hearing, it may seem like life would not change much if you developed a hearing loss. However, we know that the impact hearing loss can have on a person's mental wellbeing and physical safety can be huge.

Hearing loss

When most people imagine someone with hearing loss, they conjure up the image of an older person. And while it is true that age-related hearing loss is one of the most common causes, there are many different medical and

environmental causes of hearing loss that can happen at any age.

Below we explain some causes of hearing loss that you may not expect, and how to get support if you are concerned about your hearing. If you ever experience a sudden or rapid loss in your hearing, do not delay in seeking urgent medical care.

Headphones

The humble headphone is now part of daily life for so many of us. However, many devices allow headphone volume to exceed what we would consider a 'safe' limit. Your ears adapt to higher volume settings over time, meaning that you can damage your hearing even if the volume does not seem uncomfortable.

Tips: Try to get into the habit of turning your volume down a couple of notches when you start listening. If you are listening at a louder volume, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends limiting your listening time to 15 minutes. Also, check the settings on your mobile device as many devices now offer settings which can limit your volume exposure. You can find more information



about safe listening practices on the WHO website.

Hair dryers

This may be surprising, but long or repeated exposure to the sound of a hair dryer, especially if held close to the ears, is loud enough to contribute to hearing loss over time.

Tips: If you work in a hair salon, consider wearing ear protection such as earplugs. We have some ear protection products in our online shop. If you use a hairdryer at home, why not only use it to style your hair for special occasions, or embrace your natural air-dried look more often? There are also some lower-noise hair dryers on the market that may be worth looking into.

Earwax

Often, the reason for hearing loss can be really simple: too much earwax! For some people, as well as hearing loss, this can lead to dizziness, earache, and infection if it is not cleared.

Tip: Never put anything into your ears, including your fingers, to try to remove the wax yourself. If you think you may have a build-up of wax in your ears, speak to your

pharmacist who can suggest some ear drops to remove excess wax. If this does not work, you may wish to see an accredited earwax removal specialist who can remove the wax safely.

Sporting events

Sports are such an important part of life for so many of us. Unfortunately, the mass cheering at live events and at pubs can be too loud for our ears and can put us at risk of hearing damage.

Tip: If you hear ringing in your ears after being in a loud environment (a type of tinnitus) this is a sign that your ears have been exposed to loud noise for too long. If forgoing the footie is too much, consider wearing ear protection when you watch a game live or at the pub. We have some ear protection products in our online shop.

Diabetes

The charity Diabetes UK estimates that five million people in the UK are living with a type of diabetes. Unfortunately, complications relating to diabetes, including nerve damage and ear infections, can result in hearing loss for some people.



Tips: If you are diabetic and are concerned about your hearing, speak to your doctor as soon as possible. The NHS website has more information about diabetes.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD)

Having cardiovascular disease increases the chances of someone experiencing hearing loss as it can reduce the level of blood flowing to the auditory system. According to the British Heart Foundation, there are 6.4 million people living with CVD in England alone.

Tips: If you have cardiovascular disease and are concerned about your hearing, speak to your doctor as soon as possible. The NHS website has more information about CVD.

If you are worried about changes in your hearing

If you ever experience a sudden or rapid loss in your hearing, seek urgent medical care at an Accident & Emergency department, and ask to see an ENT (Ears, Nose and Throat) specialist.

It can be really unsettling when your hearing changes. It is

important to remember that you are not alone, and that seeking help as soon as possible can help prevent further issues from developing. As a first step, see an audiologist who can investigate the causes of your hearing changes further. You can be referred by your GP or visit a private audiologist.

Reliable new data points to an extraordinary 1.5 million UK citizens being able to sign in British Sign Language

Reliable new data points to an extraordinary 1.5 million UK citizens being able to sign in British Sign Language (BSL), following the release of an important report by National Records of Scotland (NRS). Derived from Scotland's 2022 census, the results are part of a wide range of statistics published on ethnic group, national identity, language and religion. NRS states that 117,300 people in Scotland can sign in BSL, amounting to 2.2% of people aged 3 and over. Against a UK population of sixty-eight million, the same 2.2% would amount to a total of almost 1.5 million BSL signers.



No previous census in the UK has asked a question allowing such a figure to be calculated. In the previous Scottish census (2011), information on BSL use was only collected through the question “Do you use a language other than English at home?”. NRS presented a new question to Scottish respondents in 2022, enabling this striking information to be brought to light.

All indications are that a similar proportion of the whole UK population can sign in BSL – which means that around one-and-a-half million Britons are now signers!” “This shows that BSL is a significant feature on the linguistic map of the country. It is a source of pride to the Deaf Community to see our language recognised in national statistics and taken up by the wider population in this way.”

With England now creating a BSL GCSE, the UK as a whole need to ensure that there is a strong professional supply of fluent, Deaf BSL teachers to respond to this level of enthusiasm for BSL and extend it throughout the school system to maximise the long-term benefit to society.”

In Deaf hands, BSL and the sensibilities it reflects must be

recognised as an asset to the nation. It is vital that deaf infants and their families get free access to high-quality, long-term BSL input from Deaf professionals who can introduce them to the language, culture, and community. On such a basis, every deaf child can benefit from a firm bilingual platform (BSL and English) that will be of lifelong value in wellbeing, employability, and personal development.

Surprisingly, the data shows two out of every three BSL signers to be female (67.0%). Females make up a larger proportion of the workforce in the education and health and social work industries.

In the past, it has been proposed that BSL should be recognised as Britain’s fourth language English, Welsh and Scottish Gaelic were understood to be the top three. However, the vast majority of the UK’s signers live in England, which certainly cannot be said for Gaelic. The NRS figures therefore point persuasively to the conclusion that BSL has now moved up in this list to become one of the most widely used of the UK’s languages.

