

# Every moment counts

2023 to 2028 strategy





# Every moment counts

For all children the early years are a crucial time, but for deaf children this is even more true given the impact deafness can have on language development, communication and social skills. It's clear that supporting deaf children during those early years is where we can make the biggest impact and set them up for life. The evidence is so compelling that it forms the basis of our 2023 to 2028 strategy.

Our five-year plan is all about making every moment count – from the time a child's deafness is identified to their first day at school and beyond. We're here to transform the futures of as many deaf children and young people as possible, in the UK and around the world.

We'll make sure parents get first class support during those early years and empower them to make informed decisions and champion their child. We'll also bring families together so they feel part of a supportive, dynamic community wherever they live. We will campaign and challenge to make sure deaf children get the best start in life.

Our strategy is hugely ambitious. But we need it to be. This is what we need to do to change lives. Together with our amazing families, volunteers, partners and supporters, we won't rest until we reach every deaf child, as early as we possibly can. I, for one, can't wait to get started.



**Susan Daniels OBE**  
Chief Executive, National Deaf Children's Society



**The early years is where we can have the biggest impact and set deaf children up for life.**



# Who we are

**Our vision is a world without barriers for every deaf child.**

## Our values



### **We're game changers**

We innovate, push boundaries and ask challenging questions. We try new things and we're not afraid to fail.

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### **We champion every deaf child**

We're people-centred and put deaf children's needs at the heart of everything we do. We're here for every deaf child with every level of deafness.

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### **We make an impact**

We're ambitious and we won't stop until we've broken down every barrier. We work fast to give families what they need and make a lasting difference.

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### **We're united**

We stand side by side with families, professionals and supporters. Together we're an unstoppable force for deaf children's rights.

# Our strategy

Nearly 80 years ago a small group of parents got together to form the National Deaf Children's Society. They had one thing in mind – to give their deaf children the best start in life.

Our passion, our drive, has helped us transform thousands of lives over the years. There's so much to be proud of – but there's still much more to do.

Our fundamental challenge is that deaf children aren't receiving the support they need early enough. We need to change this.

Our goal is to reach more deaf children and young people than ever before, earlier than before, and to drive systemic change where it matters most.

Our new strategy sets out our ambitious plan to reach every deaf child, wherever they are and whenever they need us.

Join us in our fight to deliver change where it matters most.



Our objectives

## 2023 to 2028 strategy

Our enablers



# We deliver outstanding support in the early years

In 2022, only 34% of deaf children completed their first year of school having achieved expected levels of development, compared with 65% of all children. Such a big gap is unacceptable and can impact learning and development throughout deaf children's lives. We want to close this gap as early and as quickly as we can, making sure families get the best support as soon as their child's deafness is identified. We'll work with professionals and policy-makers so deaf children have everything they need at the start of their journey – and are thriving by the time they reach school.

## Our commitment

- **Parents** are able to find us quickly and get the support they need.
- **Parents** can support their child's learning and development and in particular their language and communication skills.
- **Professionals** learn from our expertise on how to support deaf children in the early years.
- **Services and policy-makers** are held to account so every deaf child gets the support they need.



# Two-thirds of deaf children are already behind when they complete their first year of school\*.

\*England only.

## What will success mean?

- More parents joining us as members in the first year after their child is identified as deaf through newborn hearing screening.
- More parents feel they have the support they need for their child in the early years.
- An increase in the number and quality of specialist professionals such as audiologists and Teachers of the Deaf.



The National Deaf Children’s Society has been a rock that we can always rely on. Any questions that we have there’s always been an answer. I now know that hearing loss isn’t going to be a limitation to Zoya achieving her potential.

**Waqas, dad to Zoya (1) who has mild to moderate hearing loss.**



# We provide life-changing information and advice

More than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents, who don't have any previous experience of deafness. Having access to information and advice is therefore crucial in helping families make tricky decisions about how their child will communicate, which technology they'll use and what type of school they'll attend.

As the leading provider of information on childhood deafness, we'll empower families to make informed decisions and champion their child. We'll provide this support in new and exciting digital ways, based on what families and young people need. We'll also offer specialist support to families who need it, uniting with them as they challenge to get the best for their child.

## Our commitment

- **Parents and deaf young people** can access our personalised, tailored information and advice in the way that works for them.
- **Parents and deaf young people** can draw on our specialists for support with more complicated information and advice.
- **Professionals** understand the needs, wants and feelings of parents and children and are able to give them the support they need.





# More than 90%



**of deaf children are born to hearing parents without any knowledge of deafness.**



## ★ What will success mean?

- Parents feel more confident about navigating their journey through childhood deafness.
- More families benefit from our membership.
- More members connect with us digitally.



It's been a whirlwind of different emotions since I found out Holi was deaf. I can never be thankful enough for the support we've had. It's not just the knowledge, it's the kindness and care everybody shows.

**Kate, mum to Holi (4) who's profoundly deaf.**

# We build communities that unite families

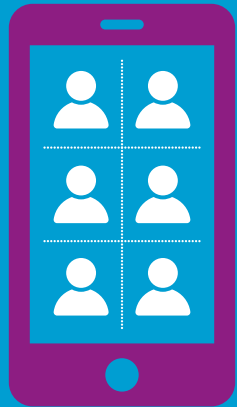
For parents with a deaf child, having a strong community is vital, particularly during those first few years when families are still finding out what their child needs. We reach around 5,000 people through our 90 local groups, and we want to build on this ecosystem of support to make families' lives easier from the start and throughout their journey. Growing the number of people we reach through our virtual communities will also be crucial.

We'll bring families together so they feel part of a supportive and dynamic community wherever they live. Having a collective voice is so important and can help families challenge for positive change in their local area.

## ♥ Our commitment

- **Partners, professionals, parents and deaf young people** work with us to challenge and shape their local services.
- **Parents and deaf young people** receive relevant localised support that's unique to the area they live in.
- **Deaf children and young people** have opportunities to make friends with one another, explore their deaf identity and access social networks.
- **We** collaborate with local groups and partners to achieve shared goals.





We reach  
27,000 people  
through  
**145 online  
groups.**

### ★ What will success mean?

- Increasing the number of local groups and how many people we reach through them.
- More opportunities for parents and children to connect face-to-face through local groups, other local structures and through our online platform.
- More campaigning networks with increased engagement from families and deaf young people.



My daughter's the only child in her year with a hearing aid, so she really enjoys meeting other deaf children and having a shared experience with them.

**Emily, mum to Katie (6).**



# We are the leading global authority on childhood deafness

We've been working with partners across the world over the last two decades to support deaf children and their families in developing countries. Most children we support aren't identified as deaf until they are six or seven years old and many start primary school with little or no language – either spoken or signed. We'll use our knowledge and experience to develop new ways to support deaf children and their families. Our aim is to become a leading global authority on childhood deafness, making sure more deaf children get the best start in life.

## ♥ Our commitment

- **We** become a leading authority on childhood deafness and its implications in developing countries.
- **International organisations** become more deaf aware, with our support.
- **Parents, young people and professionals** are empowered to advocate for change.
- **International partners** expand their reach to support more deaf children and their families.



In the developing countries we work in, deafness isn't identified until children are **six or seven years old.**



★ What will success mean?

- More organisations and individuals engaging with our international work through online events, training and partnerships.
- Evaluating projects and techniques used by our partners and sharing learning and success.



I always wanted to communicate with my son and now I can. He's also getting an education; I never thought this would be possible.

**Naznin, mum to Forhad (7) who's deaf and lives in Bangladesh.**

# We transform to meet deaf children's needs

We're going to transform how we work to make sure we achieve our ambition. We're making the leap into being an agile organisation, where we find out what deaf children and their families need and deliver on it. We're building a collaborative team culture where people aren't afraid to be creative, ask questions and push boundaries. And we'll put deaf children's needs at the heart of everything we do.

## Our commitment

- **We** are responsive, innovative and relentless in how we deliver for families, deaf children and young people.
- **We** will continue our transformation journey to build our capability and high performance culture.
- **We** will create an inspiring environment for our people and strive to attract the best talent.
- **We** will create a business development capability and improved partnership approach.

## What will success mean?

- Increased employee engagement.
- An agile organisational design and behaviours in place.
- Digital transformation milestones and adoption achieved.



We're sharper and more assured in our decision making. We're working far quicker and more collaboratively than we've done in the past. We have people grasping opportunities and learning new skills and experiences along the way. We're embracing failure, being honest about what we could have done better and recognising where our strengths lie. It's an exciting time.

**Maria Chambers,**  
**Chief Operating Officer**



# We deliver value for money

We will continue to be efficient with our finances and focus on growing our income so that we can change more lives. Valuing every gift means thinking carefully about the best way to use our supporters' money so we can deliver maximum impact and value.

## ♥ Our commitment

- We spend money wisely and make sure every penny goes towards improving the lives of families and deaf children.
- We continue to grow and optimise our income.
- **Supporters and donors** trust us because they know we use our resources wisely.

## ★ What will success mean?

- We achieve our budgeted income each year.
- We achieve our performance against budget each year.
- Our forecast reserves are within the target reserve range each year.



I ran the London Marathon in support of William's journey and to raise money for the National Deaf Children's Society, a worthy charity that supports children like William. I've never experienced an atmosphere like it and will remember race day for the rest of my life.

**Andy, dad to William, who's profoundly deaf.**



**Scan the QR code  
to watch our videos  
about the strategy**



**We are the National Deaf Children's Society,  
the leading charity for deaf children.**

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