

Deaf Parenting UK Ambassadors

Message from the Chair:

What a wonderful start to the New Year 2008.

I'm delighted to announce an excellent selection of Ambassadors who will raise the profile of Deaf Parenting UK and putting us on the map.

It is with thanks to Deaf Parenting UK who has sought high and low across the country to get a good representation of the communities who can carry out the roles of Ambassadors from variety of backgrounds. As you can see from the following profiles, it is an excellent mixture of Deaf & hearing parents, academic professor/ researchers, celebrities, and politicians of whom all are parents or have been strongly involved in families issues.

All of our newly-appointed Ambassadors have written their messages of support to Deaf Parenting UK as follow with their profile. We hope that by working closely with them, they will assist us in raising Deaf Parenting UK's profile, ensuring that deaf parenting issues remain on top of the agenda in influencing in policy-making on local, national and international levels.

We also have had some celebrities, including, Cherie Booth QC, The Duchess of Kent, Prince William, Prince Harry and the Prime Minister, who have been invited to join Deaf Parenting UK and they were so pleased to see Deaf Parenting UK growing strength to strength, being the only one of its kind in UK and gave us their support. (See comments of support from celebrities).

May we reach out to as many Deaf parents across the UK countries in Scotland, Wales, North Ireland and England and make them aware of our small but unique national organisation, representing Deaf parents and professionals who work with Deaf parents.

Deaf Parenting UK have been recognised on local, national and international level especially on recent World Federation for the Deaf's conference where we realised the uniqueness of Deaf Parenting UK as a national organisation in UK. We checked with other countries and there were none like Deaf Parenting UK apart from small projects here and there, but not a formal organisation of Deaf parents for Deaf parents. It shows on how important for Deaf Parenting UK to present itself as a good model for other countries across the world on enabling confidence, supporting and empowering Deaf parents.

To learn more about Deaf Parenting UK and to qualify for free membership for Deaf parents/families, please go to www.deafparent.org.uk.

Wishing you all a prosperous New Year and may the year bring us strengths in reaching out and supporting to all our families and communities.

With warmest wishes

*Sabina Iqbal
Chair/Founder of Deaf Parenting UK*

Note: For all media enquiries/ contact with Ambassadors please liaise with Asif Iqbal, Media/PR for Deaf Parenting UK on media@deafparent.org.uk. If you want to know more about Deaf Parenting UK, please email them on info@deafparent.org.uk

Notes to editors:

Deaf Parenting UK is the first ever charity and small national organisation to be run by Deaf parents for Deaf parents. It represents the needs of Deaf parents in the UK, who have hearing children, deaf children or children with disability.

Deaf Parenting UK was established following research done on gaps in services for Deaf parents within the UK. From research, a picture emerged demonstrating the lack of awareness and consideration for the needs of Deaf parents.

Because of communication issues within the home and at school Deaf children often lack access to basic information in the area of personal, social and health, such as growing up, sex education, pregnancy and parenting. Yet the background statistics are:

- ***90% of Deaf children are born to hearing parents. As well as mainstream support and information, which is available to parents in general, parents of deaf children have access to information, resources and support via Social Services and organisations providing services to deaf children and their families. Information on parenting is also readily available in print, Video/DVD material and Parenting Classes etc.***
- ***Deaf children grow up into adults and become parents and yet few resources and support is available to them in an accessible format. This is particularly with services noticeable as Deaf Adults have a 90% chance of having hearing children where access is a real issue.***

The following is common in Deaf parents' daily lives, as services offered to Deaf parents are sometimes non-existent, very limited or patchy as compared to those available to hearing parents:

Deaf parents are unable to access mainstream information - parenting skills classes, midwives or health visitors. Deaf parents find it difficult to access or participate in school life adequately due to staff inability to communicate in sign language or because of lack of Deaf awareness.

Deaf Parenting UK offers the following services for Deaf parents and Deaf parents to be:

- Deaf Parenting Skills Workshops for deaf parents with young children, teenagers and expectant parents.
- Befriender Services
- One - to - One Parenting skills support at private home or at own discretion.
- Tailor - made parenting support services to meet Deaf parents' needs.
- DPUK can deliver presentations/consultation meetings giving an insight into the service that we offer.

To learn more about **Deaf Parenting UK** and to qualify for free membership for Deaf parents/families, please visit our website on www.deafparent.org.uk.

Profiles & Support from our Deaf Parenting UK Ambassadors

Baroness Uddin



Baroness Pola Manzila Uddin was born in 1959 and was raised to the peerage as Baroness Uddin, of Bethnal Green in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 1998. She received her education at University of North London, where she earned a Diploma in social work. With her husband, Komar Uddin, she has four Sons and one daughter. Baroness Uddin's career background includes being a Youth and Community worker at a YWCA, Liaison Officer for Tower Hamlets Social Services, and Manager of Tower Hamlets Women's Health Project. She is a member of the EOP Implementation Committee, and a trustee of St Katherine's and Shadwell Trust. Baroness Uddin has special interests in education, health, children, local government, and equal opportunities among others. Baroness Uddin whole heartedly supports this initiative.

"I'm delighted to have been asked to become an ambassador for this unique and great cause. I have been at the forefront of humanitarian causes and central in the push for equality and sensitivity. I am a board member of the group "Autism Speaks" and also supports other initiatives aimed at tackling misconceptions and promoting equality for people with all kinds of disabilities. I believes that everyone should be given a chance to make the most of their lives regardless of the disability they may have."

The Baroness has been pioneering and spearheading women's rights from all angles for the last 10 years and she will continue to do so for as long as she is able.

"I'm delighted to see the efforts of Deaf Parenting UK taking shape and is delighted to know that Deaf parents have an organisation like Deaf Parenting UK to support, enabling confidence and empowering them to live life as it is possible. Finally, I congratulates Deaf Parenting UK for their efforts and is looking forward to a healthy and successful relationship."

The Rt Hon Malcolm Bruce MP



Malcolm Bruce MP has been a Liberal Democrat MP for the Aberdeenshire seat of Gordon since June 1983.

He is currently Chair of the influential International Development Select Committee, a position he has held since 2005. Prior to this he held a number of high profile Party spokesman ships in Westminster including Trade and Industry, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Treasury. He has also been a member of the Scottish Affairs Select Committee, the Trade and Industry Select Committee, the Committee for Standards and Privileges and the Treasury Select Committee.

As an MP Malcolm has an interest in a variety of issues and as the father of a grown-up deaf daughter he has long campaigned on deafness issues in Parliament. Malcolm is the current Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Deafness. He is also President of the Grampian Branch and a National Vice President of the National Deaf Children's Society and a Trustee of RNID Scotland. He was made a Privy Councillor in 2006 by invitation of Her Majesty the Queen.

"I am delighted to be asked to be an Ambassador for Deaf Parenting UK. As a hearing parent with a Deaf child, it is often difficult to assess and obtain the support and assistance your child needs but I recognise it is equally confusing for Deaf parents who have hearing children and may not know where to start. The role that Deaf Parenting UK can play is very important in helping provide this support to Deaf parents and in providing basic parenting information. I hope the Deaf Parenting UK will continue to go from strength to strength."

Carole Vincent



Carole rose to fame, for her role in Big Brother 8 series in 2007. She was well-known for being a self-confessed political protestor with a big heart. From Greenham Common to anti-war rallies, she's passionate about her beliefs and is extremely positive about life. She doesn't suffer fools and is always happy to say exactly what is on her mind. She works as Youth health worker for East London Health Clinic.

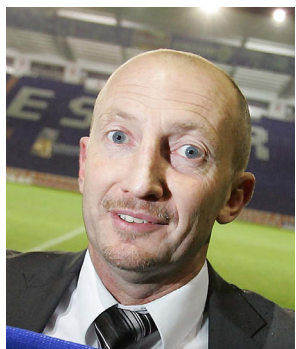
"I am really pleased to be here and to be giving my support to the Deaf Parenting UK. My mother was actually deaf after meningitis at the age of 2. There were no services and support for her family she had a very difficult time growing up was isolated. At that time, my mother was often considered stupid and was excluded, missed out on bits of schooling and as she grew up she actually had a lot of difficulty in being involved in groups with friends who were mainly hearing. She didn't sign either, she lip-read. So she was left out of a lot of things especially when she had a family of her own.

It wasn't until when my own daughter was born in 1980, I discovered that she was completely deaf in one ear and partially hearing in the other. She was like my mum, she didn't want to sign and wanted to be in a mainstream school, but the difference in my daughter's time and my mum's time was that there were quite a lot of support for me as a parent of deaf child but at the same time, I noticed that there were no support for deaf parents. I realised that after meeting so many Deaf parents going to audiology clinic either for themselves or they were there for their deaf children. I spoke to those Deaf parents and realise they had no support as a parent. In the last couple of years, I learnt sign language as a mean to communicate with my daughter and other deaf people. This is where I learnt more about Deaf Parenting UK and the importance of their work.

With regards to Deaf parents, one of the things that happened at my work place - I worked in young people's health service for Tower Hamlets and Mile End PCT. While I was there, often young people would come into the clinics and come into the hospital, including pregnant young woman who were deaf. Although I can use basic sign language, I am not qualified or trained as a BSL interpreter and therefore I couldn't actually support them in terms of interpreting. The clinic had to book a qualified BSL interpreter and that often took time. This can be problematic as those deaf pregnant women in need of supports immediately without appointment and no interpreter available at very short notice especially at an open clinic. What I managed to do and do reasonably well was go to those deaf pregnant women and support them by explaining I sign in basic BSL, reassure them and make them feel a bit more comfortable help them with things they couldn't understand and explain. I am aware that there were boundaries to my knowledge and ability and my role wasn't to interpret but to provide practical support.

Having found out about Deaf Parenting UK and how useful they are to our services especially to young deaf pregnant women, I have informed other professionals and spread the words in hope they would use the services of DPUK and certainly I will continue to support Deaf Parenting UK in their vital roles of empowering, enabling and supporting Deaf parents."

Ian Holloway



Ian Holloway, a well-known footballer, played 561 league games during a 19-year playing career as a midfielder with Bristol Rovers, Wimbledon, Torquay United, Brentford and QPR. He was named manager of Leicester City FC on November 22 2007.

"Being a hearing parent with deaf children, I fully understand how difficult it can be when the roles are reversed. All that matters in the world to me is my family and I fully support Deaf Parenting UK and the excellent work it carries out. I am highly honoured to be asked to be an Ambassador for the charity. Keep up the good work."

Susan Daniels OBE



Susan Daniels is the Chief Executive of NDCS, (The National Deaf Children's Society, which is the leading organisation in the UK working directly with all deaf children and their families. She has been responsible for developing the Society's capacity to reach more families and expand its services, as well as increase its policy and campaigning brief.

Susan has also been responsible for the creation of Deaf Child Worldwide, NDCS's international development branch. Deaf Child Worldwide (formerly the International Deaf Children's Society) was created in 2003 to support organisations working with deaf children and their families around the world.

Susan is a qualified teacher of the deaf. In 2005, Susan received a fellowship from the University of Central Lancashire and, in 2006, Susan was awarded an OBE for Services to Deaf Children and their families in the Queen's New Years Honours Award.

Susan was a Commissioner of the Disability Rights Commission from 2003 until its merger with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights at the end of September 2007. She is Chair of Groundbreakers, an informal networking group for women CEOs in the voluntary sector and also Chair of UK the Council on Deafness, the infrastructure body for deaf organisations.

"My husband and I are both deaf and we have two hearing daughters. I am proud to be associated with Deaf Parenting UK, as it provides invaluable advice and support for deaf parents, 90% of whom have hearing children"

Lilian Lawson OBE



Lilian Lawson OBE, is the Director of Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) since 2000, and has been a Chair of Mental Health and Deaf People Task Group. She was also well-known for her strong involvements in the following groups as member of SASLI's Scottish Training Strategy Working Group; Scottish Executive Equality Unit's Disability Working Group; Scottish Executive Equality Unit's BSL & Linguistic Access Working Group; Scottish Executive Sensory Action Plan's Steering Group; and a founding Member and Treasurer of Deaf Professionals Scotland.

She graduated with BSc (Hons) degree from University of Edinburgh and MBA from University of Strathclyde. She has an impressive CV which highlighted her extensive roles to date, ranging from being a Manager of Regional Sign Language Interpreting Services, Strathclyde Regional Council 1992-93; Director of RNID Scotland (1993-2000) and then proceeded to a Chair of NES Deaf Project Working Group and Member of NES Diverse Health Needs Steering group (2003-2005). In recognition of her work to date, she was awarded the OBE in the New Year Honours List (2005)

Throughout her career, she was co-chair of Scottish Best Practice Standards for Social Work Services for Deaf, Hard of hearing and Deafblind People Task Force of which document was published in Nov 2001. She was also a co-author of "Words in Hand" – a structural analysis of the signs of British Sign Language (1980).

"Being a Deaf mother of two hearing daughters, I fully know what it is like having no or little access to support services including information and advice that are widely available to hearing mothers. Therefore I am delighted to be an Ambassador of Deaf Parenting UK. I hope that this charity's good work will be extended to include Scotland."

Jeff McWhinney



Formerly the CEO of British Deaf Association, Jeff McWhinney is leading Significan't, a social enterprise dedicated to exploiting the latest technology advances for the purposes of improving life quality and access for the deaf sign language communities. Its latest development is the SignVideo Contact Centre, the UK's first IP video contact centre (based on the latest video technology) which has won a number of prestigious awards for its innovativeness. Significan't provides video access points in many public sector services which provide efficient and immediate access to sign language interpreters. Mr McWhinney is a Deaf father of four children, comes from a Deaf family and uses sign language.

"Deaf Parenting UK has my full support both as a Deaf parent and a Deaf professional for your objectives, training programmes and services. I firmly believe that it is essential to address and highlight the challenges that Deaf parents face on a daily basis with bringing up their children in today's society and also to raise awareness within the wider society. It is my experience as a Deaf parent that we have to encounter ignorance and prejudice preventing us from having better access to information and more importantly assert our rights as parents. Future generations of deaf parents will appreciate your push toward a clear sense and direction for raising awareness leading to equality of access for them and their children."

Professor Ulrike Zeshan



A professor in sign language linguistics and director of the new International Centre for Sign Languages and Deaf Studies (iSLanDS Centre) at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston. Before she came to the UK, Ulrika mostly worked on sign languages in South and West Asia. At the iSLanDS Centre, she worked with a team who documented and compared the grammatical structures of sign languages around the world.

Most of her staff and students at the Centre are deaf, and do a lot of work with deaf communities in developing countries, for example Uganda, India, and Lebanon. Ulrika also is involved in sign language curriculum and materials development together with NGOs and governments in India and in Turkey. Together with some of her deaf colleagues, she serves on the board of the Deaf Empowerment Foundation, which works towards university access for deaf people in developing countries. Ulrika is fluent in Indian Sign Language, Turkish Sign Language and International Sign, and is learning BSL now. In her spare time, she likes spending time with her son, playing with her cat, going for walks in the forest, and making music.

"I think it is great that DPUK functions as an organisation for deaf people by deaf people, as is evidenced by the composition of its board. This organisation has grown out of in-depth, personal and academic knowledge about the issues it works with, and this, more than anything else, is important for the success of such an NGO. I fully support DPUK's aims and hope to learn a lot from "carrying the flag" as an ambassador and being involved in DPUK's activities."

Professor Waqar Ahmad



Professor Waqar Ahmad is Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise at Middlesex University. Previously he has been the Chief Social Scientist at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Professor and Director, Centre for Research in Primary Care, University of Leeds and a senior researcher at York and Bradford universities. Ethnicity and deafness has been one of his major areas of research interest where he has conducted work supported by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Department of Health.

"Deaf children and adults who become deaf have received research and policy attention in recent years. However, the needs of Deaf parents remain neglected. I am delighted that Deaf Parenting UK is highlighting the needs and perspectives of Deaf parents and honoured to accept their invitation to become an Ambassador for their organisation."

Professor Alys Young



Alys Young is Professor of Social Work Education and research within the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work at the University of Manchester, UK. She worked as a social worker in mental health and also with Deaf people before doing her PhD at the centre for Deaf Studies, University of Bristol, in the early 90's. She led the parent centred evaluation of the introduction of universal newborn hearing screening in England and the national evaluation of the government's Early Support Programme. She is currently working on a NDCS funded research project investigating social care provision for families with deaf children in England. She has worked as a hearing person with Deaf and deaf people for 20 years.

"I am honoured to be invited to be an Ambassador for Deaf Parenting UK and will work in whatever capacity I can within my professional role to raise awareness about the needs of Deaf parents and also the contribution that Deaf parents will make to our greater understanding of parenting and how support services for parents might be improved. I congratulate Deaf Parenting UK on their pioneering work in this field. Too little research attention has been paid to Deaf parents. In the past a great deal of research has looked at Deaf parenting from a deficit perspective – the assumed difficulties Deaf parents will have in parenting hearing children, for example; instead of looking at the issues from a service user perspective – what are issues for Deaf parents that services may need to address differently so that the same rights and standards can be achieved? As a support and campaigning organisations Deaf Parenting UK is playing a vital role in turning this situation around."

Dr Lesley Jones



Dr. Lesley Jones is a researcher in Deaf Studies working at Hull York Medical School has published books (with Deaf researchers) on access to health care and information, ethnicity and genetics.

"I am delighted to be an Ambassador for DPUK and look forward to working with the organisation. I have been impressed with work that has been done so far to highlighting the importance of deaf parents' roles in bringing up children. Rather than being seen as a "problem" (as they sometimes were in the past by some professionals) the situation is that many deaf parents are successfully raising families and are now able to share their expertise with other Mums and Dads in the same position. DPUK also provides access to parenting information for those families and gives a positive image for deaf parents throughout the UK "

Craig A Crowley MBE



Craig is currently Chief Executive of Action Deafness, a regional Voluntary Organisation based in Leicester. He is a Trustee of CACDP (Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People) and is also a Trustee Chair of UK Deaf Sport. He was Vice-President of FYD (Friends for Young Deaf) until 2001 when the organisation was merged with NDCS.

He was awarded MBE at The Queen's 80th Birthday Honours and received the medal at an investiture in October 2006.

"As Deaf father of 3 in a bilingual family environment I believe Deaf Parenting UK will encourage and enable Deaf Parents to make 'informed' choices about parenting itself. I am extremely delighted to see DPUK flourishing into more dynamic and up and coming organisation. As DPUK's ambassador I would like to see DPUK going from strength to strength following its recent successes, providing support and friendship to Deaf parents whilst receiving information and guidance via accessible means of communication."

Kathy Robinson



Kathy Robinson is a successful writer, producer and consultant, raising the profile of British Sign Language through her award-winning educational and training materials for children and adults. She is the originator of the "Signs for Success" programme which uses sign language to develop young children's language and literacy skills. She is the parent of two deaf daughters, now adults, about whom she wrote a book "Children of Silence".

"Deaf Parenting UK is a forward thinking organisation which has my support in all they are trying to achieve."

Lesley McGlip



In the last 19 years, Lesley was well-known for her work in TV media as director and producer for BBC See Hear and Central Office of Communications (COI). Lesley is working as an in-vision signer for the Access Service, Red Bee Media Limited as well as being involved with the deaf film makers to produce short films for deaf and hearing programme with deaf media professionals/ and also to support the team making a short film for the Deaf Festivals in the UK/and International.

In her spare time she is involved in the voluntary sector as a trustee and secretary for the Deaf Women Health's Organisation since 2004. One of the main aims is to improve access to information and services for Deaf women.

"I'm honoured to be asked to become an ambassador for Deaf Parenting UK. I was born deaf of deaf parents; from the third generation of a deaf family from Scotland. I'm a mother of my two children, Ryan and Eire. I support the Deaf Parents of deaf and hearing children in the UK. I am aware there are barriers in the public services for the deaf parents. I believe Deaf Parenting UK is working in partnership with deaf organisations and mainstream parenting organisations to improve access to information and services for Deaf Parents. I look forward to meet you all."

Comments of support from Celebrities to Deaf Parenting UK and our work:

Cherie Booth QC



"I am delighted to give my personal support to the important work of Deaf Parenting UK. DPUK has become an increasingly essential forum of advice and support for deaf parents - enabling ideas, experiences, problems and solutions to be shared and to help lead the fight for better information and services. And it is because it is driven by the experiences and needs of deaf parents themselves, that DPUK has proved such an effective champion in such a short space of time. It is why I am sure your organisation will prove a model for other countries to follow.

Everyone associated with DPUK can take great pride in what you are together achieving."

The Duchess of Kent



"I have read your DPUK Report and DPUK Newsletter with great interest and am impressed by all that you have achieved at Deaf Parenting UK"

Prince William & Prince Harry



"The Prince William and Prince Harry were very interested to hear about your organisation and send you and all at Deaf Parenting UK their best wishes."

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister



"We recognise the significant expertise and the crucial role that practitioners such as Deaf Parenting UK have to play in helping to deliver strategies and plan high quality services for parents and their families."