

Deaf Parenting UK – Press Release on Her Majesty The Queen/ celebrities support & new ambassadors

Message from the Chair:

Wow! Time flew so quickly that we are now in June, middle of 2008. Since I last wrote at the beginning of 2008, announcing our excellent selection of Ambassadors, raising the profile of Deaf Parenting UK and putting us on the map. I am delighted to inform you that since then, my life changes for the better, after giving birth to a baby boy on 19th March 2008 and that my first daughter just celebrated her 2nd birthday. Dealing with newborn and a toddler is often a great challenge for many parents including tiredness, sleepless nights but nevertheless, both brought us lots of love, lights and joy to our lives.

Although it is a very busy start to the year for many of us, I am delighted to inform you that Deaf Parenting UK have continued to sought more support from Her Majesty the Queen and well-known celebrities including, Niki Evans, X-Factor, Coronation Street and some MPs.

We also welcome our new Ambassadors Mike Penning MP, Richard Howitt MEP and Cathie Craigie MSP and our national/ international supporters who have written their messages of support to Deaf Parenting UK. They were so pleased to see Deaf Parenting UK growing strength to strength, being the only one of its kind in UK and worldwide.

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.

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 wonderful summer 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, PR/Project Manager 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.

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 visit our website on www.deafparent.org.uk.

NEW: Profile & Support from our Deaf Parenting UK Ambassadors

Mike Penning, MP Shadow Health Minister



Mike was born in North London in 1957 and was educated in Essex at Appleton and King Edmund Comprehensive Schools. He is married to Angela and has two daughters.

He joined the Army as a boy soldier and served with the Grenadier Guards in Northern Ireland, Kenya and Germany; he also undertook ceremonial duties in London including the Trooping of the Colour. On leaving the Army Mike served as a full time fireman in Essex for many years before going into the family business and later, after several career changes into political journalism.

In May 2005 Mike was elected as Member of Parliament for Hemel Hempstead. He is a strong believer in the traditions and values of our country and is a passionate defender of our constitution and that includes keeping our own currency. The first job of any politician is to serve his country and Mike has a proven track record here for most of his working life.

Since winning the election in 2005, Mike has taken up many campaigns that affect the people of Hemel Hempstead, most notably the campaign to Save Hemel Hospital, the fight for compensation for Dixon pensioners who lost their pensions and the campaign for a public inquiry into the Buncefield disaster.

In July 2007, Mike was promoted to the Opposition front bench as a Shadow Health Minister.

"I am delighted to have been invited to support Deaf Parenting UK. There is a vital role for voluntary organisations such as DPUK who can offer a wealth of information and shared experiences in support of the millions of deaf parents in this country."

Richard Howitt, Member of European Parliament & Vice Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee



Richard Howitt is the Labour Member of the European Parliament for the East of England, first elected in 1994.

He is Vice Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee, a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and is the Labour European Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs. Richard is a member of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, and was recently a member of the Parliament mission to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and to monitor the Palestinian Presidential elections.

He is also a member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, and is European Parliament Spokesperson on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He was a member of the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly and Parliament's Development Committee for nine years. He regularly campaigns to raise awareness of Fair Trade issues, and has written a number of parliamentary reports on Europe's relations with developing countries.

Richard is the President of the All-Party Disability Intergroup at the European Parliament and is Labour's European Disability Rights spokesperson. He has campaigned on social, anti-discrimination and, in particular, disability issues for many years. He has campaigned for disability

to be considered a human rights issue, and previously worked in community care for people with disabilities.

Having served for eleven and a half years as an elected councillor, three as Leader of Harlow Council, Richard speaks on local government issues in the European Parliament, and is European vice-president of Britain's Local Government Association.

"I am honoured to be an Ambassador for Deaf Parenting UK and to support their tireless work drawing attention to the needs of deaf parents within the UK. As President of the All-Party Disability Intergroup at the European Parliament I am keen to work alongside DPUK to aid their important work championing these issues. I hope that DPUK's good work will continue to make a real difference to the lives of deaf parents."

Cathie Craigie MSP, Convener of the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Deafness

Cathie Craigie MSP is the Member of the Scottish Parliament for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency.



First elected in 1999, Cathie chairs the Parliament's Cross Party Group on Deafness, working with Scottish organisations and charities to ensure Deaf and deaf people and their concerns remain high on the political agenda at Holyrood.

"I am honoured to be invited to be an Ambassador for Deaf Parenting UK. Too many of the needs of Deaf parents are still to be addressed at every level in Scottish and British society, and I commend DPUK's fantastic efforts to both raise awareness and to provide information and advice to Deaf mothers and fathers. I completely support Deaf Parenting UK in their efforts to enable and empower Deaf parents."

Comments of support from Her Majesty The Queen, Politicians and Celebrities to Deaf Parenting UK:

Her Majesty The Queen



"Her Majesty, The Queen was interested to see Deaf Parenting UK's first Annual Report and Newsletter. Her Majesty sent her warm good wishes to you and to everyone at Deaf Parenting UK for a successful future."

Niki Evans Semi Finalist of X-Factor



“As a parent with two boys, I have overcome so many challenges that parenting brought and can support Deaf parents as parents themselves. Having learnt about the work of Deaf Parenting UK and read their annual report with Deaf parents’ experiences, I realise the barriers that Deaf parents face in being a parents and the lack of access to the much-needed information and services that many of us have taken for granted.

For these reasons, I am delighted to show my strong support to Deaf Parenting UK and the work they are doing. They have worked tirelessly to highlight the gaps in services for Deaf parents and working with others to empower, enabling confidence and supporting Deaf parents in UK. I am also impressed by the recognition that they have in raising the profile of Deaf Parenting UK across the world.”

Coronation Street



“Coronation Street learnt that 90% of deaf children come from hearing families but when these deaf children grow up and become deaf adults, they are 90% likely to have hearing children and yet Deaf parents’ access to information and services on parenting issues are extremely limited.

Coronation Street is proud to support the work of Deaf Parenting UK and share the vision that Deaf parents should have the same opportunities in life as everyone and should not be discriminated.”

David Lammy MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills



“I would like to thank you and the organisation for all the hard work you have put in for deaf parents and congratulate you on the publication of your book, 'Pregnancy & Birth: A Guide for Deaf Women'. Providing support to deaf parents is a vital service and I am thankful to Deaf Parenting UK for providing this.”

Tom Levitt MP



"I know that Deaf parents face special challenges in bringing up their children, whether hearing or deaf themselves, and I admire the work they do tremendously. Although we have passed laws to help people like you in several ways, it remains the job of politicians to make life better for those who struggle with the everyday demands of life. I urge you to make sure that your local politicians are aware of what needs to be done - and encourage them to do it."

Haji Saghir Alam OBE, Equality 2025 Member



"You are doing excellent work in a very important area ensuring disability equality for all."

Comments of support from International to Deaf Parenting UK:

Millie Brother, Children of Deaf Adults International Founder

"I was so impressed with the work of your organisation. As a hearing daughter of Deaf parents, it warms my heart to know that you are working so hard to improve the quality of life for Deaf parent/hearing child families. Please accept my gratitude and pass that along to the others that work with you."

Isabella, Austria

"I checked your website very interesting and recommended it to some children of deaf adults in Austria/Germany. Wish to stay in touch."

Raúl Ceberio, General Secretary – The Board of the Association of the Deaf Chile

"The Board of the Association of the Deaf Chile wished Deaf Parenting UK and having great success in the projects ahead."