

## From Sabina Iqbal, Chair/Founder of Deaf Parenting UK



Deaf Parenting UK is unique as the first ever charity and small national organisation run by Deaf parents for Deaf parents, representing the needs of all Deaf parents in the UK. Deaf Parenting UK are delighted to host their Annual Deaf Parenting Conference 2008. Our theme of conference is Empowering, Enabling and Supporting Deaf parents, putting the needs of Deaf parents in UK into the heart of Deaf Parenting UK and the Government's agenda

As 90% of Deaf children comes from hearing families and when they grow up into adults and become parents and yet very little resources and support is available to them in an accessible format. This is particularly 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, including maternity, parenting skills classes, midwives or health visitors. Deaf parents find it difficult to access to childcare, nursery or participate in primary and secondary school life adequately due to staff inability to communicate in sign language or because of lack of Deaf awareness. This has in turn prevented Deaf parents of their human right to participate fully in their family lives.'*

The conference will have decision-makers from Government and that is a fantastic opportunity for all of us as Deaf parents and professionals to put forward questions, influence and raise issues on the needs of Deaf parents and what can Government do to ensure that Deaf parents/ families have equal access to all services without barriers.

The conference provides an exciting programme of speakers and workshops as well as crèche with fun activities for children of Deaf parents. This is also an excellent opportunity for you all to meet with other Deaf parents, families and professionals, to work together of how we can move forward toward empowering, enabling and supporting Deaf parents.

Deaf Parenting UK has continue to grow from strength to strength as an unique organisation in the UK, representing deaf parents and we are delighted to announce our fantastic selection of Ambassadors for Deaf Parenting UK of which many are VIP or well-known in the celebrity, politician, academic, sport fields and some are Deaf parents themselves.

Deaf Parenting UK has 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

I hope you will have an enjoyable stay at the conference and benefit greatly from the day, take from what you learn at the conference and most of all, this is your opportunity to ensure Deaf parents are empowered, enabled and supported in accessing to services without barriers.

May this be a start of a long journey to ensuring Deaf parents enjoy family life to the full.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sabina Iqbal". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Sabina Iqbal**  
Chair/Founder of Deaf Parenting UK