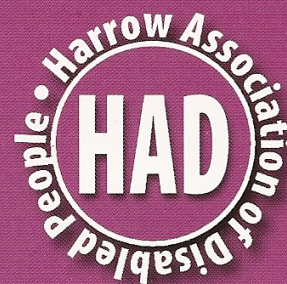


ACCESS



Autumn 2010 Issue 131

Supporting disabled people

Kayleigh's Story

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Kayleigh tells her story about being a young carer and how she has been affected by life situations.

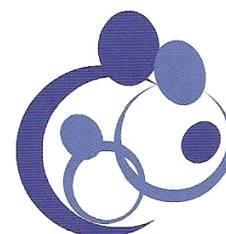
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We are the Champions!



PRESS RELEASE

DEAF PARENTING UK HELD A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE FOR DEAF PARENTS FOCUSING ON 'ARE WE EQUAL?' AT THE RESOURCE CENTRE, HOLLOWAY ROAD, LONDON



Deaf Parenting UK

Deaf Parenting UK Conference 2010 was held on Wednesday 7th June 2010 in London and attended by mostly Deaf parents and professional/ service providers working with Deaf parents, co-chaired by Professor Waqar Ahmed and Dr Lesley Jones, both well-known in the research field of Deafness & Ethnicity. We also had a range of speakers – Anne Bristow from Association of Director of Adult Social Services (ADASS); Surinder Sharma, Department of Health (Equality & Human Right Unit) and Professor Alys Young from Manchester University; two local Deaf parents/ families on their personal experiences/ perspective, as well as two workshops, one from Child Health programme Unit of Dept of Health jointly with the Family Nursing Partnership programme; and National Association of Family Information Services, who gave presentations on the theme: 'Are We Equal? in accessing to Health, Social Services and Children's Education', of which many Deaf Parents experienced numerous of barriers.

The theme of the conference on 'Are We Equal?' have touched the core issues in many Deaf parents and bringing them from across UK as well as USA. As we all know, the support for all Deaf Parents are vital for Deaf Parenting UK so all Deaf parents and parents to be know that they are not alone in their experiences/ difficulty in accessing to information about their rights and parenting services.

Although, 90% of Deaf parents are likely to have hearing children, accessing to health services, social services and their child's education (especially in the mainstream) are proving to be the major battles for many parents especially:

- Health – accessing to health services for Deaf parents' own health as well as their children's health. This ranges from maternity care, children's health and women / men's health.
- Social Services – accessing to social services for family support to prevent family breakdown as well as accessing to personalisation. This ranges from Early Years support, children & families services and Adult services
- Education – accessing to nurseries, primary and secondary school.

During the conference and workshop, delegates were given an insight on the following three key areas that affect Deaf parents the most:

- Educating professionals about the needs of Deaf parents across Health, Social Services and Children's Education;
- Access to Health, Social Services and children's education is vital for many Deaf parents but are Deaf parents equal?

- Deaf parents to be informed about their rights and entitlements.

In Anne Bristow's presentation on access to social services for Deaf parents including personalisation, she explained and challenged how Deaf parents can access to personal budget to gain independent and control of their daily lives. Eg, Deaf parents could use Personal budget to purchase parenting support/ workshops and even set up parent support group to gain confidence in their parenting skills and peer support that they needs. Other suggestion is perhaps to buy interpreter support for parents evening if the traditional route prove to be too time-consuming for many Deaf parents arguing with nursery/schools on who should pay for interpreters.

In Professor Alys Young's presentation, she highlighted the lack of social services support for Deaf adults and children especially if there is no specialist Sensory/ Deaf services team in place. Her research also shows that more than half of local authorities in UK do recognise children of Deaf parents are 'children in needs' and support them accordingly however some other local authorities have certain criteria eg if children of Deaf parents are seen as 'young carers' or depend on their family situation before they can be classified as 'children in needs'. The conference calls for all children of Deaf parents to be seen as 'children in need', therefore should be supported with appropriate resources to meet the children and Deaf parents' needs.

Feedback from Deaf parents and professionals have found the conference useful and such eye-opener on the presenting issues and gave them the motivation and drive to do something about it especially the gaps in their local area.

Sabina Iqbal, Chair/Founder of Deaf Parenting UK:

"The conference is an excellent opportunity for Deaf parents to share their concerns regarding accessing to Health, Social Services and their children's education.

Human Right Act emphasised that every parent have the right to enjoy family life. Furthermore, Government's policies: Every Parents Matter and PEAL confirmed that every parent have the right to be involved in decision making of their children's educational future but how can they if they are unable to access to information and choices? Furthermore with the Government's Personalisation Agenda, enabling deaf/ disabled people (including those who are parents) to have more independent and control on their lives but how can they have control if they don't have access to information/ resources to make it happen?

Despite the Disability Equality Duty & Disability Discrimination Act already in place which also covers Health, Social Services and Education, very little has been

done to address the issues that Deaf parents face. For example, inconsistency of policies regarding who pays for BSL interpreters in accessing to health eg GP, family support eg Sure Start centre/ social services and parent's evening. Lack of Deaf awareness, attitudes and lack of information/ access to those three key services needs to be tackled to enable Deaf parents to participate in their daily lives without barrier, which many other hearing people take for granted"

Professor Waqar Ahmad Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise, Middlesex University & Deaf Parenting UK Ambassador:

"I was honoured to have the opportunity to chair this excellent conference. Sabina and Asif are an inspiration to us all. Their energy, drive and determination has enabled Deaf Parenting UK to achieve so much with so little resource and in such a short space of time. They and other Deaf parents at the conference demonstrates that Deaf parents, like all other parents, are committed to bringing up their Deaf and hearing children to the best of their ability and resources. It is important for health, education and social services to work with Deaf parents as partners in the design and delivery of outstanding services."

Anne Bristow, the Joint-Chair of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services Physical Disabilities Network/ HIV/ and Sensory Network:

"This was a vibrant event where deaf parents shared their experience and challenged all professionals to design the services that will give them equal access. They deserve our support"

Dr Lesley Jones, Senior Lecturer in Social Science, Hull York Medical School, University of York & Deaf Parenting UK Ambassador:

"It was an excellent day of lively, informed exchange between parents, policy makers and practitioners. Both deaf and hearing views were represented in a conference which truly felt to be a move towards constructive change for the better. It was an honour to be part of it and we look forward to seeing the impact of the networking and work done on that day in the future provision of services."

Chris Kubwimana, Social Worker, SPD Team, Wandsworth Council:

"I really enjoy the Deaf Parenting UK conference. I thought the conference was a successful and informative. There were key relevant to my current work and my colleague's. But I also think the information would be very useful for our other colleagues from Children and family department. Congratulations for being such a high figure and for playing a good model to Deaf Community. I am sure many Deaf people include myself can look at your example and be confident enough to say I can do this or I can be this person."

Debra Dalton, Deaf Parent:

"Very informative and the speakers gave me a lot of thought about children services who are totally unaware of deaf issues!"

Sannah Gulamani, ViewTalk Deaf Reporter:

"We were honoured to attend the Annual Deaf Parenting Conference this year and capture the events of the day. We spoke to several people; key speakers, deaf parents, organisations on issues discussed in the course of the day, providing a fascinating insight to a great conference."

Clarissa Williams, Former Head teacher and President of National Association of Head teachers (NAHT) & Deaf Parenting UK Ambassador:

"The latest DPUK conference brought together an impressive line-up of speakers with important up to date information to share on the position of deaf parents in today's world. However there is still much to be done to fight ignorance and prejudice in some sections of society. Too many deaf parents describe feeling isolated and frustrated in dealing with day to day situations. DPUK has done a great deal to bring this sense of isolation into the open and together we must continue to maintain a strong public voice in bringing about whole scale entitlement for all deaf parents to have equal access and rights. Indeed, I am very proud to be associated with DPUK."

-Ends-

For all media enquiries/ contact please contact Asif Iqbal via email: media@deafparent.org.uk
www.deafparent.org.uk

If you want to know more about Deaf Parenting UK, please email them on: info@deafparent.org.uk

Editors notes:

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 by Sabina Iqbal as a project in 2001. The project became an independent organisation in 2004, following her research done on gaps in services for Deaf parents within the UK. Sabina's research, revealed a scenario of risks to families of Deaf parents – services demonstrating the lack of awareness and appropriate consideration of the needs of Deaf parents.

Because of varying hearing-led communication issue within the home and at school, Deaf children often lack reasonably adequate access to basic information in the area of personal, social and health, such as growing up,

sex education, pregnancy and parenting. The reality of such backgrounds and statistics expose those facts:

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 limited access to information, resources and support via Social Services and Deaf children's organisations. Such information on parenting (for hearing parents) is also readily available in print, Video/DVD material and Parenting Classes etc. It all depends on how proactive the parents are, such resources are available locally, and the attitudes of medical & educational professionals working with deaf children.

When those Deaf children grow up into adults and become Deaf parents, what is appropriate for them to get resources, information and support in accessible formats, is scarce or fragmented locally and nationally. Therefore the lack of such access creates an acute issue when Deaf Adults have a 90% chance of having hearing children.

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 easily access mainstream information - parenting skills classes, midwives or health visitors. Deaf parents find it difficult to access or adequately participate in their children's school life due to staffing's inability to appropriately communicate in sign language or lack of Deaf awareness.

The start of 2009 saw Deaf Parenting UK receiving requests via our helpline of which huge proportion of 57% were for parenting supports to deaf parents/ families. We also received 22% request from parents and professionals to provide legal advice/ representation where Deaf parents were at the crisis stage, of which 46% of referrers are from local authority and 38% of all referrals received are from London, the rest from across UK. Those two highest figures for parenting support and legal advice/ representation is a staggering huge part of our work as well as DPUK helpline which is manned by our DPUK coordinator working 7 hours a week.

Deaf Parenting UK a vast range of services which can be found on: www.deafparent.org.uk/services/services-we-offer/