A young boy with a hearing aid is sitting on the floor, feeding a small brown and white dog. The dog is sitting on a green towel. The boy is wearing a dark t-shirt with a graphic. In the background, there are white plastic storage bins. The text 'Annual Report 2024-25' is overlaid on a blue rounded rectangle on the left side of the image.

# Annual Report 2024-25

# DEAF CHOICES UK

Thrive with Language and Literacy  
for Life

The Boatshed, Steamer Quay, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5AL

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Wales No. 279523

A Company Limited by Guarantee No. 1477997

**Welcome to Deaf Choices UK.  
DCUK. Our name reflects our  
approach.**

**We believe in the importance  
of informed choice. We  
support parents of deaf  
children and professionals to  
make the best CHOICE(S) for  
Communication, Language  
and Literacy.**

**Deaf Choices UK is currently  
the only UK charity providing  
Cued Speech training.**

# Introduction to Cued Speech

DCUK champions equal opportunities for deaf children at home, in school and in their wider communities. We do this by providing information, training and family-led activities.

Based in Totnes, Devon, DCUK provides nationwide support to families of deaf children, through online technology, in-person home visits across the Southwest, and a monthly community group for deaf children and families in Plymouth.

DCUK is the only UK charity delivering training and support in Cued Speech for use at home and in education.

In 2024, Cued Speech UK rebranded as

Deaf Choices UK (DCUK) to better reflect our philosophy and the evolving needs of deaf children. DCUK realised the powerful significance of offering parents informed, unbiased choice. It is not just one choice that is needed for a deaf child but many throughout their lives to achieve their potential, socially and emotionally.

Research indicates that Cued Speech plays a vital role in language acquisition for deaf children, ensuring they develop phonemic awareness necessary for literacy. By strengthening our organisation and developing a specialised literacy resource, we aim to help deaf children thrive at home, succeed in education, and reach their full potential.

## **"An Approach Designed to Fail Deaf Children and Their Parents—and How to Change It"**

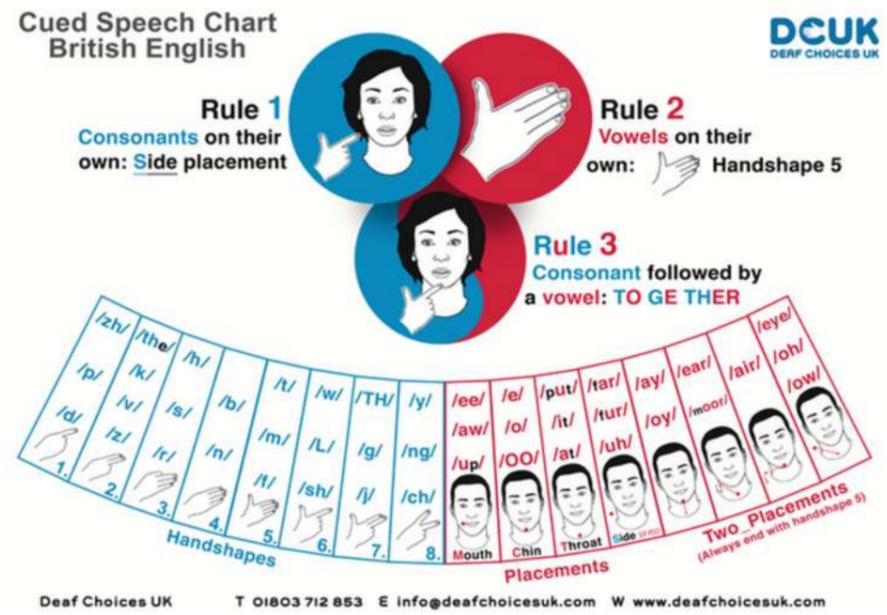
*Tom Humphries, Gaurav Mathur, Donna Jo Napoli, Christian Rathmann*

This paper challenges outdated practices that advise parents of deaf children to only pursue spoken language development which often leads to devastating delays in language acquisition and cognitive development. The authors argue for early, immediate access to visual language from the moment deafness is detected.

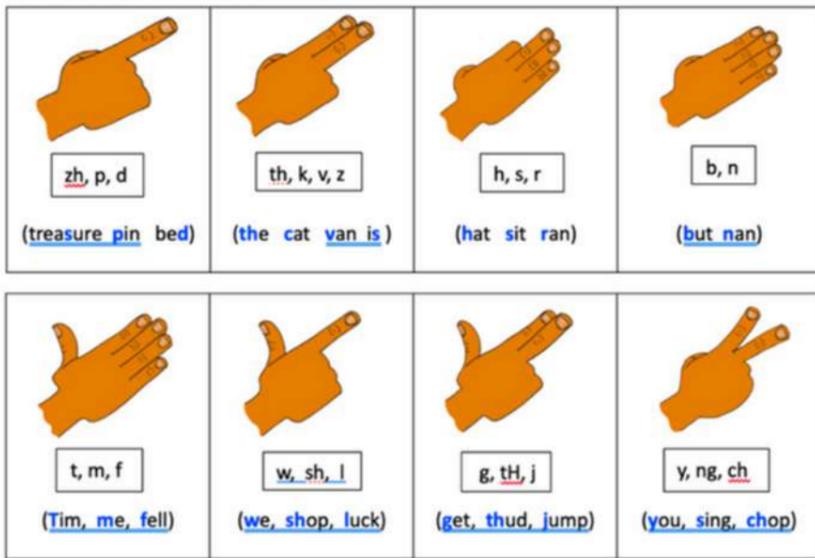
They emphasize that delaying access to a fully accessible language—such as a sign language—until a child falls behind is harmful. While sign language is central in their recommendations, the core message supports any system that provides clear, early visual language input, such as Cued Speech, which can work alongside sign to ensure children acquire strong language foundations.

# Introduction to Cued Speech

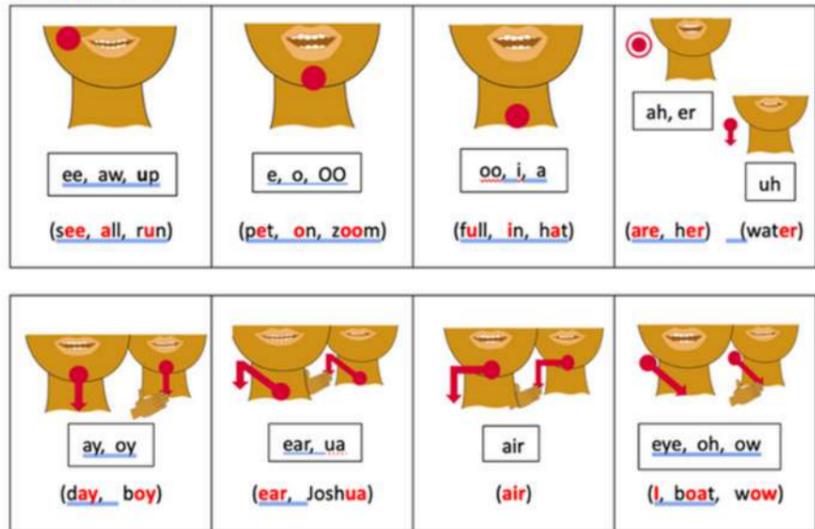
Traditionally, the educators of deaf children have been divided between using an oralist approach where the educator speaks and the deaf child listens as best they can using technology such as hearing aids or cochlear implants, or a Total Communication approach where the educator adds a sign to some of the words as they speak, this still leaves big gaps for many deaf children.



## Consonant sounds:



## Vowel sounds:



Cued Speech (CS) bridges these gaps and was developed in America by Dr Orin Cornett with the aim of giving deaf children equal access to spoken languages by the speakers adding manual cues to every spoken word as they speak. Cued-to children can develop age appropriate language levels and often excellent literary skills.

Unlike BSL, CS directly supports literacy by providing a visual representation of spoken language. "Hooked on books - Cued Speech allows deaf children to learn to read so they can read-to-learn" - Dr Cornett.

Can you see how to cue these words?



# DCUK Articles and Governance

Deaf Choices UK (DCUK) aspires to give deaf children improved access to:

**Language** - by empowering their families to make fully informed choices.

**Literacy** – by supporting their educators to access information, training, and resources.

We provide knowledge, information and training around the unique benefits, concepts, and skills of using Cued Speech.

Our offer supports deaf children and those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) to thrive at home, succeed in education, and achieve their potential.

The DCUK Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association reviewed in October 2001, have not changed:



Scan me

**Memorandums of Association**



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**Articles of Association**

## Trustees

The Trustees work in line with DCUK Articles of Association.

All Trustees apply with a full CV and two references and are interviewed by the Executive Director and another Trustee. New trustees are 'voted in' on their first meeting by the full Board. All Trustees must complete Level 1 Safeguarding training and have an Enhanced DBS check.

## Volunteers

Volunteers provide a vital contribution to the work of DCUK. Our volunteers support training activities, demonstrate how to cue at public events, provide external advice and guidance, take part in fundraising activities, provide expert advice in specialist areas of delivery and trial our new resources. Volunteers support the delivery of our monthly coffee mornings at Plymouth Deaf Choices (PDC). Volunteers cannot work on their own with children and when working with us they must have an enhanced DBS and have completed level 1 Safeguarding training.

# Policies and Safeguarding

## Safeguarding

We are registered with the Safeguarding Network - “Confidence in safeguarding”.

This is an online resource produced for schools. The site is updated with the latest reports and articles and relevant training events. It contains information and training in all the key areas which should be considered when working with children. Safeguarding network has a training matrix which CSUK can use, update, monitor and record the training log of every employee and Volunteer

including Trustees. It is an easy resource to use with online login for every member of staff or volunteer and it also contains useful proforma for recording incidents:



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Policies on employment, holidays, behaviour and inclusion are available in the DCUK Handbook:



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HR Procedures and guidance are supported by Westcountry HR ([www.westcountryhr.com](http://www.westcountryhr.com)). Health and Safety at work is overseen by Peninsular ([www.peninsulagrouplimited.com](http://www.peninsulagrouplimited.com))



# Why Cued Speech

Cued Speech can provide a foundation for all other communication interventions for deaf children right from the start.

## Language

- It provides access to the full and rich first spoken language of the home on which to build other languages such as British Sign Language.
- It positively impacts lip-reading which is a significant skill underpinning literacy development for deaf children.
- It allows a child to develop an understanding of spoken language and an auditory memory (regardless of the level of hearing loss) that will support and accelerate the rehabilitation process post cochlear implant.

## Literacy

- Cued Speech enables deaf children to develop a fluent mental model of the same language they later need to read. Many go on to achieve age-appropriate literacy levels. They can then go on to explore the world through reading which may enhance

their self-esteem.

With Cued Speech children have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

- Learning to read and write, a reader needs to be able to think in English, look at each letter and attach and remember the sounds associated with each letter. Next, the reader must string the sounds together (phonemes), to make words and understand the meaning behind the words.

A beginner reader needs to:

1. To recognise the letters of the alphabet.
2. To identify all the speech sounds and recognise which ones are in each word.
3. To link the right sound with the right letters.
4. The reading rules such as reading from left to right, spaces between words and punctuation.

Cued Speech can provide the link between language and literacy for deaf children.



# DCUK Beneficiaries

DCUK beneficiaries are:

(a) Those deaf children who are not able to benefit fully or at all from hearing aids or implants.

(b) The very significant number of children who use listening (via technology) but subsequently fail to acquire a practical understanding of English.

(c) Visual learners such as children who have auditory processing issues, language delay, dyslexia, auditory neuropathy, and those who do not have English as a first language.

(d) Those children who are struggling to access literacy in education at Key Stage 1 due to special educational needs and disability (SEND) including deafness.

A recent paper published in the Oxford Press by Gardiner Walsh and Giese, 2023, further answers the benefits of Cued Speech for deaf children accessing home language.

**Scan the QR code to read the report:**



Scan me



# Strategic and Operational Overview

## Strategic Overview 2024 2025

This year, Deaf Choices UK (DCUK) reached more deaf children, families, and professionals than ever before, delivering support both in person and online, and ensuring that Cued Speech is accessible wherever it is needed.

Our family support work remained at the heart of what we do. Over the past 12 months, we provided more than 1,200 hours of direct training to parents, carers, and extended family members. Many of these families were just beginning their journey following a newborn hearing diagnosis.

For them, our sessions offered not just practical skills but a vital sense of hope and possibility. Training was delivered flexibly through regular online sessions that connected families nationwide, and through home visits across the South West, where we could offer more personalised, hands-on support.

*“When we were told our son was profoundly deaf, we felt lost. DCUK not only gave us a way to communicate, but also hope for his future.” – Parent*

Alongside this, we worked closely with education professionals to embed Cued Speech into classrooms and early years settings. Teachers of the Deaf, Speech

and Language Therapists, Communication Support Workers, and mainstream teaching staff attended our courses and in-service training sessions. These sessions were practical and tailored, giving professionals tools they could use immediately to improve phonics and literacy outcomes for deaf learners.

*“DCUK’s training gave me practical tools I could use the next day in class. It’s changed the way I teach phonics.” – Primary School Teacher*

We also continued to nurture community through Plymouth Deaf Choices, our monthly social group for deaf children and their families. Each event, from sports days to arts and crafts, provided not only fun and friendship for the children but also a safe space for parents to share experiences, advice, and encouragement. We began disseminating a specialist literacy resource, Nan in a Van (NIAV) designed specifically for deaf learners.

Due for launch in 2025 - 26, this will integrate Cued Speech into literacy teaching in a way that is accessible to both families and professionals, helping to close the persistent gap in reading achievement.

Our advocacy and awareness work also grew in reach. We presented at regional and national education conferences, contributed to policy discussions through

# Organisation Change

the Speech and Language Communication Alliance (SLCA). In all these ways, 2024–2025 was a year of growth, innovation, and deeper connection, ensuring that deaf children are language-ready for life and equipped to achieve their full potential.

## **Organisational Changes**

There have been some structural changes within the charity that have had a positive impact on the charity.

Name Change: The transition from Cued Speech UK to Deaf Choices UK has been well received, with more users and stakeholders reporting that the new name better reflects our inclusive philosophy and scope of work:

Charity Expansion: In September 2024, we formally adopted a smaller local organisation, now known as Plymouth Deaf Choices (PDC) This group-based program offers monthly activities and support to over 40 families through Saturday coffee mornings and events—an immensely successful addition to the DCUK offer.

Staffing Flexibility: To manage budgets effectively, several staff members voluntarily reduced their hours during summer 2024 and returned to full-time hours in September. This allowed us to maintain full delivery capacity while remaining cost-efficient.

## **Family Advisors in Herts and the North East**

Unfortunately, we were unable to secure ongoing funding for our Regional Family Advisors, Sagira Jethra in Hertfordshire and Carly Simpson in the North East.

As a result, in August 2024, we had to part ways with these two exceptional and experienced professionals. Their absence is deeply felt, as they made significant contributions to the DCUK team.

Sagira's expertise in inclusion, cultural values, and familial dynamics, as well as Carly's remarkable creative input through film and storytelling, represent a considerable loss to our DCUK offerings.

# Activities and Project Areas

At DCUK, we are passionate about addressing the needs of every deaf child, providing them with visual access to English and empowering them to achieve their aspirations.

This report will share the personal journeys of deaf children, their parents, and the professionals who support them, highlighting how, through DCUK's activities and the use of Cued Speech, they have gained greater access to improved outcomes.

The report will cover our three key areas of work:

1. Language and Literacy for Life (ages 0–18)
2. Active – Our regional family activities delivered through Plymouth Deaf Choices
3. Love Literacy – Focused on our work with schools using the Nan in a Van literacy intervention

## **1. Language and Literacy for life 0 – 18**

This includes our work with families, training the team around a deaf child and networking and publicity.

1a. Supporting families remains a central focus for Deaf Choices UK (DCUK).

Parents come to DCUK through referrals from audiology departments, Teachers of the Deaf (ToDs), and self-referral.

Most families prefer face-to-face support. In many cases, this involves weekly home visits from a Regional Choices Advisor who helps families navigate the multiple challenges they face in securing appropriate services and funding for their deaf child. These visits also include training in how to use Cued Speech. The new Nan in a Van resource has proven invaluable in helping parents learn and practise cueing and reading with their child at home.

For families living outside South Devon, DCUK provides support via weekly Zoom calls and access to an online self-study course.

When a child transitions into school, DCUK offers training and support to nursery or pre-school staff so they can incorporate Cued Speech into the child's learning environment.



I am Tim.

# Training and Networking

Quote from a parent:

*“For us as a hearing family of a deaf child, Deaf Choices UK and the support that they have provided for our family has been vital. Having the opportunity to learn Cued Speech has meant that our daughter hasn’t had to struggle communicating with us, as we have been able to turn our language into something she can see, rather than having to rely on her hearing aids and lip reading.”*

## 1b. Training

We have supported 146 professionals to learn to cue in this year. This has been achieved through:

- Working directly with schools and their staff who support deaf children. DCUK training provides training in Cued Speech and a greater understanding of the way in which deaf children learn both language and literacy.
- The provision of access to our online training for schools who are trialling our literacy resource Nan in a Van (NIAV.)
- Bespoke training in Cued Speech and demonstrations of NIAV to teams of professionals.

- The delivery of workshops and demonstrations at conferences and seminars, for example we delivered a workshop in how to use NIAV to 42 professionals at the International Audiology and British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) conference in March.

## 1c. Networking

Networking Highlights

Manchester University ‘Future Proofing’ Event – 22 April 2024

We explored the new mandatory qualification for Teachers of the Deaf, shared updates on technology and research, and introduced the Nan in a Van books to delegates.

SEND Summit, London – 19 June 2024

Attended to connect with education professionals and raise awareness of DCUK’s resources.

BAToD Local Conference, Torquay – 31 August 2024

Showcased Nan in a Van and networked with South West practitioners. Follow-up interest was received from schools in Plymouth.

Jersey Training – 10–13 February 2024

Delivered two days of training to Jersey’s

# Networking and Active

Deaf Support Team. The Government of Jersey invested in the Nan in a Van materials for use across the island.

## BATOD National Conference – 22 March 2024

We ran a popular workshop and exhibition stand, gaining two strong leads for resource trials. The event focused on innovation in deaf education.

## Access to Communication Services (ACS)

Attended training sessions including Theory of Mind and Metacognition. One professional signed up for a free trial of Nan in a Van.

## Podcast – ‘Education on Fire’ with Mark Taylor

Kathy promoted DCUK and shared her personal story as a parent of a Deaf child, reaching a wide audience of educators and families.

## Schools & Academies Show, NEC Birmingham

Connected with key stakeholders, including NASEN, and were invited to attend their summer conference.

## Speech and Language Communication Alliance (SLCA)

DCUK joined a Westminster visit to the Houses of Parliament with the SLCA, a coalition of 30+ charities lobbying for

better speech and language outcomes in education. The initiative received ministerial backing and highlighted the needs of children with speech and language challenges.

## Marketing Campaign with PR Specialists - Crest

Launched a major campaign to promote DCUK across media platforms. Featured on ITV Westcountry News, we introduced Nan in a Van to children at Eggbuckland School, with great engagement from pupils and staff.

Watch the video on Youtube by scanning the QR code with your smartphone:



Scan me

## 2.Active

Welcome to Plymouth Deaf Choices (PDC).

In September 2024 we finally ‘adopted’ PDCS, and they are now Plymouth Deaf Choices (PDC.) We are really delighted to add this extra group to our offer of family support, family group engagement, and activities. We are also hoping to recruit a new trustee as a representative of this group.

Coffee mornings are held on the first Saturday of every month in Plymouth,



# Plymouth Deaf Choices and Love Literacy

and the DCUK Executive Director has attended a number of Saturday events. In January the attending families made a plan for the year ahead, which included activities and information for deaf children and their families.

PDC provides a great opportunity for families to meet and share experiences and for deaf children to have a lot of fun and extra activities with their deaf peers and their siblings.

PDC enhances and supports the DCUK outcomes at every level, increasing self-confidence and improving family participation. With its links to Cued Speech and Eggbuckland school, we are also enhancing the opportunities for improved literacy.

Active has also supported dance sessions for deaf children after school attended by 8 children.

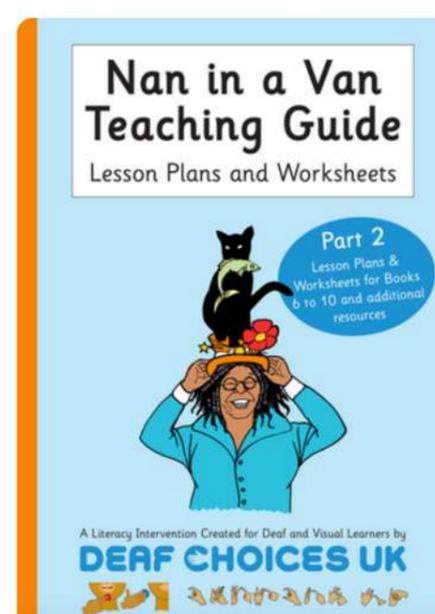
### **3. Love Literacy**

We launched our new foundation literacy initiative, Nan in a Van (NIAV), to address significant gaps in deaf education while also ensuring our long-term financial viability. NIAV delivers specialised support directly to schools and communities and introduces a new revenue stream through our services.

Our team focused on training in sales and marketing to bring NIAV to life, and we have made notable progress. However, navigating the education sector to make sales poses its own set of challenges.

Schools operate within a variety of complex frameworks, including academies, trusts, and federations, each with distinct budget holders and decision-making processes. Identifying the right contact can be quite difficult. Additionally, ongoing reductions in education budgets, particularly for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), leave many schools struggling to meet even basic requirements.

While there have been assurances of reform, tangible changes have yet to materialise. On a positive note, thanks to our networking efforts, community engagement, and strong word-of-mouth referrals, NIAV is beginning to gain momentum. Schools that have collaborated with us are already recognising the benefits of our offerings.



# Love Literacy

What is in our NIAV Phonics Intervention package?

- ✓ Ten beautiful reading books
- ✓ Ten matching eBooks with digital avatars that cue and sign
- ✓ Two Teaching Guides packed with over fifty lesson plans, activities and photocopiable resources
- ✓ Forty four brilliant sound cards highlighting cued phonemes and a whole range of spelling choices
- ✓ Clever game-board that allows users to learn how to cue any word
- ✓ Instruction booklet that explains how to use the cards to teach phonetic awareness, make letter-sound links, synthesise and blend new and known words, teach new vocabulary and prepare students for the early phonics screening test.

## Nan is out in the world!

Buyers include The Government of Jersey.

Members of the Jersey Hearing/Deaf Support Team including Teachers of the Deaf, Specialist Teachers and Speech and Language Therapists attended a 2 day workshop held on the island to help them use the Nan resource with their deaf children.

## Gathering evidence for Nan in a Van

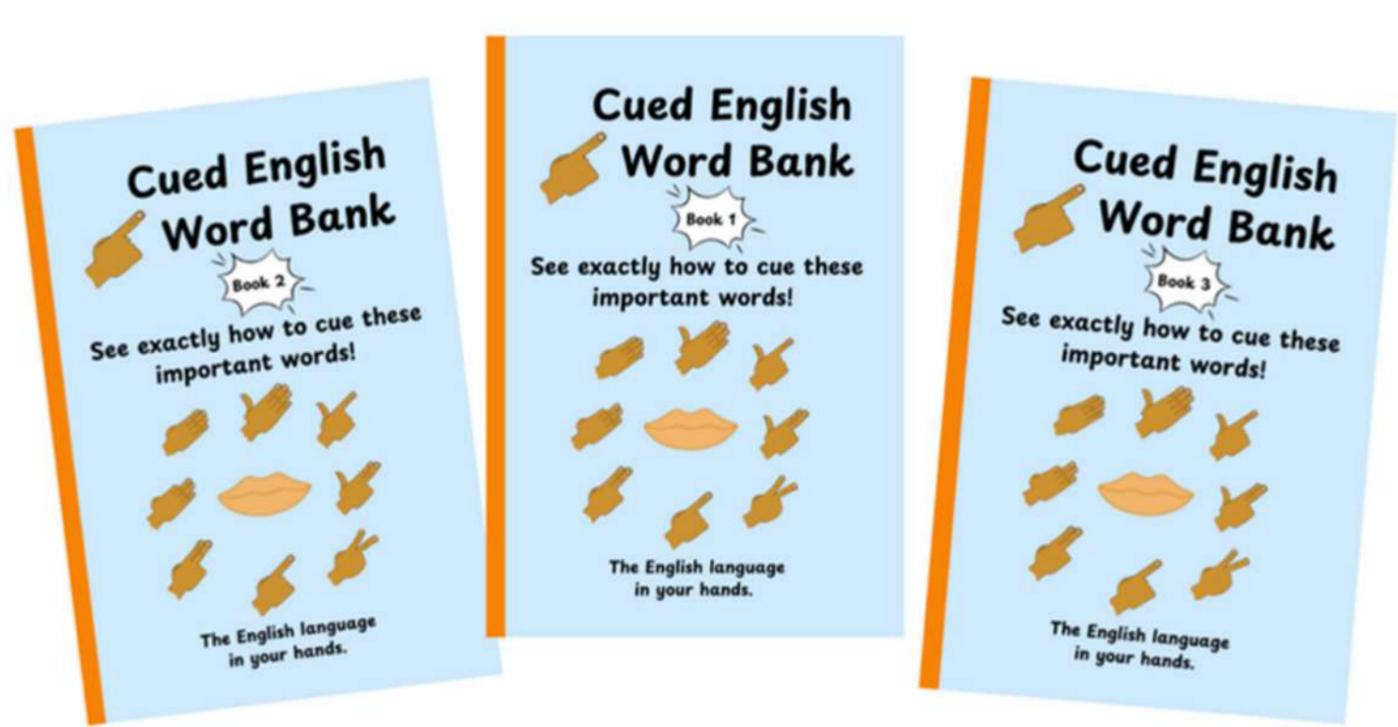
We now have a number of trials running in mainstream schools, these wonderful collaborators are using the Nan materials with their deaf students and getting great results.



# Nan in a Van (NIAV) Development

Quotes from staff using the Nan books and card game (taken from voice recorded interviews):

- ✓ "x has really grown in confidence with her literacy and you can see she really understands it because she can pick up the words, it's so gorgeous." (ToD)
- ✓ "We are delighted that the guidance now says we can use cues for the phonic screen test so we are very hopeful for better results" (ToD)
- ✓ "Nan in a Van (NIAV) is really helpful as we can send it home with him to share with mum." (ToD)
- ✓ "DCUK NIAV books can be used as a foundation to any reading programme used in school. Once deaf children understand how to blend from NIAV they can transfer that skill into any literacy program" (ToD)
- ✓ "Her expressive language has really developed in the last few month as a result of reading using the cues in NIAV" (ToD)
- ✓ "It is a joy to see how the cues impact on the accuracy of his speech sounds!" (CSW)
- ✓ "With the help of Cued Speech and NIAV, he blends (sounds) beautifully now" (ToD)



# NIAV Assessment

## Request for an Assessment based on NIAV

Our trial users have requested we design a Nan-specific assessment protocol that they can use to track and record their student's progress as they use the intervention.

We think this is a great idea and work is already underway to create a game-based assessment tool that can be used to track skills at single sound, single word, sentence level and more. We are grateful to have encouragement and advice for this from 3 highly experienced academics at DCAL (Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre at University College London).

## What's new this year in our Love Literacy Project?

### Cued Speech Dictionaries

This year has seen the arrival of a long-awaited resource for our parents and professionals – three Cued English Word Banks.

## From saying 'hello' to talking about school

Anyone learning to cue can use these books to see exactly how to cue a whole

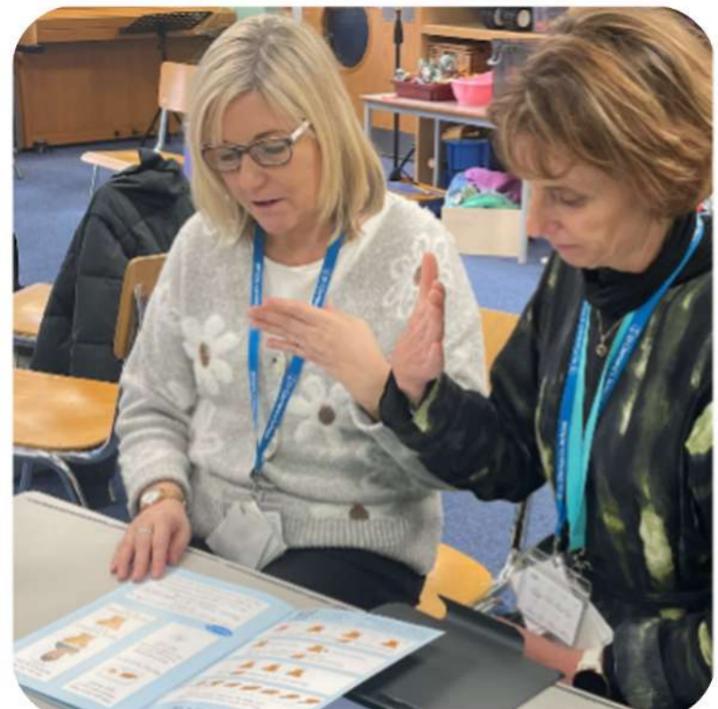
range of important everyday vocabulary. And there are 'how to cue' tips throughout that match with the lessons on our Learn to Cue Self-Study course.



Here is a link to a YouTube film that demonstrates a NIAV lesson in school with two profoundly deaf children:



Scan me





# Outcomes and outcome monitoring.

We measure our outcomes in three specific areas.

1. Deaf babies/children will demonstrate an increased understanding and use of English – at single word level (vocabulary expansion) and sentence level and will demonstrate the ability to apply this increased understanding of English to reading and writing skills.
2. Deaf babies/children will experience increased self-esteem and confidence for life and learning.
3. Deaf babies/children will demonstrate greater participation in family life.



# Outcomes and outcome monitoring.

**Totals for March 2024 – 2025.  
Numbers that we have engaged with**

Total number of children engaged	560	This number includes face-to-face at home, in education and group settings and online
Number of children engaged with Plymouth Deaf Choices	35	This is the number that attend the monthly coffee mornings and other events and activities
Number of children engaged with school sessions	42	
Total number who have engaged with a 'live' intervention	450 plus 10 hearing children	This is the number who have engaged with interventions at home, in education or in groups
Total number of family members trained	62	This includes live, one to one, in house sessions and online sessions
Total number of professionals trained	146	This is through education, online training and workshops and conference demonstrations



# Outcomes and outcome monitoring.

Activity	Output March 2023 – April 1st 2024	Output March 2024 - April 2025
Attended Deaf Events	14	12
Cued Speech foundation and further training		32
Attended children's deaf groups and activities. Including 2 theatre trips, 1 family NT Saltram House Easter fun and 8 themed coffee mornings and 4 sound explorers group sessions.	15	35
Delivered CS training to schools	13	43
Cued Speech Foundation Training		
Home visits	152	92
Online training	17	7
Preschool visits	30	67
Online Self study	26	18
Love Reading sessions	60	40
Choices programme	6	3
Nan-In-a-Van contact to schools	0	90 Schools Contacted
Nan-in-a-Van Demo	10	14 done and 12 booked
Nan-in-a-Van Sales	0	4

# Outcomes and outcome monitoring.

Totals for March 2024 – 2025.

Outcomes and numbers that we have engaged with

<p>Outcomes. These have been measured using data collected on our Systems Impact Tracker and through questionnaires completed by families who have been offered an intervention.</p>		<p>The mother of L told us; “Cued Speech has made a huge impact on our family and L’s potential. Since we started cueing, we’ve seen a lot of progress. L is very sociable and happy, and while she communicates in her own way, I believe she is absorbing English through Cued Speech.</p>
<p>Increased participation within the family</p>	<p>Positive change 72%</p>	<p>E is a baby of four months with complex needs and deafness. On my first visit he was non-responsive. At the six-month review, he is happy alert and responding to sound. He watches when he is cued to and smiles back. He makes some sounds and noises during interactions</p>
<p>Increased Literacy</p>	<p>Positive change 78%</p>	<p>Following an eight-week period of using Nan in a Van, Z has been able to access the Read Write inc assessment which demonstrated significant progress as she had not been able to participate in the assessment prior to using NIAV as a literacy support intervention.</p>
<p>Increased confidence</p>	<p>Positive change 56%</p>	<p>E has been to an adventure park and surfing. This is incredible as during my first visits 24 months ago, E and her mother never left the house. E’s communication is improving through Cued Speech and some signs</p>

# Outcomes and outcome monitoring.

## Review of Outcomes

Our outcomes help us to understand which areas are progressing and which are not running efficiently, which helps us to improve and restructure our practice efficiently. DCUK Regional Family Advisors across the UK did not generate the amount of engagement that we had hoped for, particularly in the Northeast, therefore in response to the data, we did not replace these posts. We were disappointed that the Hertfordshire post was not funded through the Local Authority when our funding came to an end.



# Partnerships

DCUK have created some exciting partnerships over the last six months:

1. We are currently working with 7 schools and 2 Speech and language therapists from across the UK and in Jersey who are engaged in trials of the Nan in a Van literacy intervention. They have agreed to give us an assessment on change and development in literacy skills of foundation level deaf learners and interviews with educators on the accessibility of the NIAV intervention and its teacher handbook.

2. We are working with Researchers in the field of deafness and Cued Speech. Rachel Rees, (Cued Speech and phoneme identification), Mairead McSweeney (neurobiology of language and deafness) and Fiona Kyle (Developmental psychology and literacy development) from the University College of London, are working with us to create a robust literacy assessment tool.

3. We have been advised by external consultants in the field of Education and assessment: -Dr Hilary Emery, initially a primary teacher Hilary Emery, CBE, did her PhD on assessment in primary schools, worked on national assessment policy and led teacher education at the

University of Worcester. Professor Roger Murphy is Director of the Visual Learning Lab (VLL) at Nottingham University. His areas of interest and experience include educational research, evaluation and assessment. He has a strong interest in educational innovations, which open up new ways.

4. We have worked with advisors within the field of deafness, Dr.Lee Fulwood (specialist Teacher of the Deaf) and Stewart Harris, Senior Audiologist, who have advised us on referral, intervention and engagement of families with a deaf child.

5. The ED is part of the advisory group for the Speech Language and Communication Alliance.

6. We continue to network through conferences and seminars and were key speakers at the International Conference for Teachers of the Deaf in March 2025.

7. We are looking at the potential for collaboration with an organisation - Elklan ([www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)). They are interested in supporting our online training through OCN and supporting sales of NIAV through their website which has a well established client base from education and primary education.

# Family Advisors

## Overcoming Challenges and Building Impact

This year has certainly presented its share of challenges, especially regarding funding. Like many small charities, we have felt the strain of a fiercely competitive funding landscape. As more organisations step in to assist overwhelmed children's services, particularly in critical areas such as poverty, mental health, and neglect, resources are more limited than ever.

In response, Deaf Choices UK has embraced innovation. In the upcoming months, our priorities include:

- Engaging more schools to participate in trials of NIAV.
- Collecting data and testimonials that highlight the positive impact of NIAV on deaf children.
- Collaborating with researchers and evaluators to assess effectiveness and bolster our case for broader implementation.



We look forward to what lies ahead and are immensely thankful for our supporters, partners, and the families we serve. Together, we are dismantling barriers to language and literacy for deaf children through Cued Speech interventions, paving the way for brighter futures.



# Funding and Risk Management

## Funding and Risk Management

Looking ahead, DCUK is committed to developing our social enterprise model and scaling our programmes based on evidence and evaluation. While NIAV has generated strong interest, current income remains below expenditure.

We maintain a hopeful yet pragmatic perspective. Without crucial funds for our core operations, we risk being unable to sustain our charitable activities, which may necessitate reducing employee hours in the financial year 2025 – 2026, ultimately limiting our capacity. Our goal is to preserve our presence in Plymouth and the Southwest while staying true to our identity and mission.

## Equity Diversity and Inclusion

93% of deaf children are born to hearing families, early language access is crucial. Our strategy is holistic and promotes:

- Technology: Encouraging the best use of hearing aids and cochlear implants.
- Sign Language: Promoting British Sign Language for peer and family communication.
- Cued Speech: Filling the gaps where technology falls short, supporting literacy and spoken language development.

At DCUK, we believe every deaf child deserves access to communication and language, regardless of income, location,

You can find our NIAV resources online via our website:

<https://www.deafchoicesuk.com/nan-in-a-van>



Nan-in-a-Van  
literacy  
Intervention

# Case Study

or additional needs. That's why all our interventions are provided completely free of charge to families.

## Case Study

### Isabelle's Story: Confidence Through Communication

Isabelle is 28 months old and has both conductive and neurosensory permanent hearing loss. She uses a BAHA device on a soft band and recently had grommets fitted. In addition to her hearing challenges, Isabelle also has a condition known as choanal atresia.

Her parents, Becky and Lee, joined Plymouth Deaf Choices (PDC) group, where they met with Henrietta Ireland the DCUK Executive Director (ED) . The ED has been regularly attending this group since September 2024. It was through the PDC group that they first discovered Deaf Choices UK and were referred to the DCUK Regional Family advisor..

Becky shares:

*"Attending the PDC sessions has provided us with a support network of families who understand the emotional ups and downs we face and have a*

*wealth of knowledge to share. Everyone is so welcoming, and Isabelle enjoys the sessions as well!"*

Both Becky and Lee have been learning Cued Speech to support Isabelle's language development. They combine this approach with some sign language, which Isabelle has responded to with great enthusiasm. She is a highly expressive child who loves creative play and engaging with those around her. She has already learned signs for animals, colours, and emotions, and can identify special people and familiar household items.

At home, Becky and Lee regularly cue words and phrases they use with Isabelle, including "shop," "park," "time to go to Nursery/childminder," "hello," and "bye bye." Becky explains:

*"Learning to cue has helped us communicate with Isabelle more confidently, reducing misunderstandings and frustration. She loves to cue and say words like 'shop' and 'park,' and she feels happy when she's understood. Recently, when I asked Isabelle if we should give the dogs a treat, she responded by signing 'tree,' so I cued 'treat;' and she immediately went to get it for the dogs!"*

Having sessions at home has made a big

# Case Study

difference for the family, enabling cued speech sessions to fit in around their busy work lives.

The fact that their practitioner is also a parent of a deaf child has been particularly meaningful, giving them real hope for Isabelle's future.

They've also been using the Nan in a Van resource, cue-it cards, and dictionaries, all of which have inspired them to cue more regularly with Isabelle.

Isabelle currently attends Pixieland Nursery and spends some days with a childminder.

Thanks to support from the Teacher of the Deaf (TOD) team, including Kathy and Jayne Loader, the professionals involved in her care recently attended a twilight session introducing them to Cued Speech, ensuring everyone in Isabelle's circle can support her communication journey.

## And Finally.

*Quote from a parent:*

*For us as a hearing family of a deaf child, Deaf Choices UK and the support that they have provided for our family has been vital.*

Having the opportunity to learn Cued Speech has meant that our daughter hasn't had to struggle communicating with us, as we have been able to turn our language into something she can see, rather than having to rely on her hearing aids and lip reading.

I can say with certainty that she would have never made the fantastic progress that she has if it hadn't been for Cued Speech. Deaf Choices UK also helped us with stepping into the deaf/Deaf world. They taught us about Deaf culture, deaf awareness and introduced us to other deaf children and adults. I hate to think about where we would be now as a family without the vital support that Deaf Choices have provided for us.'



# The Deaf Choices Team

At the end of the financial year 2024 – 2025, DCUK maintain a highly motivated office team of 6 part-time employees who use their transferable skills to meet the needs of our beneficiaries and cover a number of projects delivered across the UK.



**Henrietta Ireland** is the Executive Director of CSUK. Her energy and creativity have continued to bring opportunities to the Charity and her ability to fundraise has continued to bring income into the Charity. A successful funding bid to the National Lottery Community Fund has ensured some imperative core funds over the next three years and it has given her the opportunity to consider the best pathway and plan for the Charity during this time. Henrietta is currently working on a re-branding and marketing plan and continues to network with potential partners.



**Louise Creed** is highly skilled at writing budgets for the Charity which is an art and takes considerable experience and accounting genius. Without this our funding bids would not have been successful. Louise keeps clear and rigid spending targets and holds all project spending to account.



**Debbie Hawke** runs the day-to-day and month-to-month administration of the Charity. Her role is integral to the efficiency and safety of our practice and delivery.



**Mark Murton** can and does do everything and is remarkably successful in achieving his goals. This may be re-writing the web-site or writing standard appeals, and publishing the Annual Report. If he can't do it, he finds out how. Mark also manages new referrals of families and the CSUK online training site.



**Cate Calder** is the CSUK Training Lead. Cate is the creative and professional gift to CSUK. She has spent the last 18 months as the key point-of-contact for Robotica Machine Learning (RML) the company who are making our digital interventions for us. Cate's eye for detail has

ensured that our products cue with accuracy and that the lip shapes made by Cassie are 99% faultless. Enabling Cassie to get to such a degree of accuracy has taken time, diligence and commitment.

In addition to this she has monitored and overseen training delivered both online and face-to-face and has been the highly respected - and in demand - voice and the face of CSUK at conferences and seminars across the UK.

# The Deaf Choices Team



**Kathy Kenny** is the Lead Regional Family Advisor. Kathy continues to focus her work as an RFA in the Southwest region but will take referrals from other regions and when requested, from abroad! Her training as a teacher and her experience of deafness through having a deaf child herself, means that she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her work. Kathy is really starting to reap the rewards of persistent engagement with families and professionals over the last five years. She has multiple referrals from audiology and works with our key schools in the South West where there is a specialist unit for deaf children. As the Lead Practitioner, Kathy also oversees the work of the other Regional Advisors offering them advice, guidance and supervision.



**Carly Simpson**, an RFA based in the North East, working in Newcastle, North Yorkshire and Leeds. During and following the 'Lockdown years,' Carly helped us generate a lot of creative material for you tube and the website including cued stories, songs and view-it-cue-it. Carly never stops looking for work opportunities and this has paid off this year with referrals of families wanting to learn to cue and the provision of training for professionals.



**Sagira Jetha**, is an RFA in Hertfordshire. She is a hosted member of the Hertfordshire Hearing Impairment Team and is a highly valued member of the team. Her work was affected by Covid with less parents wanting to engage with mother and baby or toddler groups. However numbers have been improving month-on-month from September. Her Line manager in Herts is Claire Gamon who will be leaving the Service in July. Claire has been a great advocate for CS and her foresight helped us to set up our successful partnership in 2019. She will be missed.

**We are proud to also have 7 experienced Trustees on hand to offer specialist advice and expertise to the team.**



Peter chose Cued Speech for his profoundly deaf son in 1985 (a year after he was born) and attended a number of beginners and intermediate courses in Canterbury. Peter became a trustee in 1986 and was elected chair of National Centre of Cued Speech Management Committee for a number of years until 1995 during a time when fundraising and raising the profile of Cued Speech were the key objectives. His son benefitted from Cued Speech and now works for ITV adding sign language bubbles to the current programmes. His ability to communicate in the deaf and the hearing world is excellent.

# The Deaf Choices Team



**Vicki Macklin** discovered Cued Speech in 2020 whilst looking for Speech and Language resources to help her son Ryan, who was 4 years old at the time. Speech and Language support was focussed on Makaton whereas Vicki wanted to teach him sounds and speech. Ryan's vocabulary had outgrown the Makaton signs he knew. During the COVID lockdown all SALT support stopped.

As a parent of a deaf child with speech difficulties, and being deaf herself, Vicki hopes that she can bring some experience and insight to the Cued Speech team from personal experience, including sharing the benefits she has found using cued speech which have gone beyond lip reading. Vicki think it is no coincidence that Ryan is in the top reading and phonics groups at school.

Vicki is an IT Project Manager by profession.



**Sarah Elumba-Hill** has a BSc Information Technology degree and has worked in Information Technology and Sales. She now runs her own business, Hill Top Brews LTD, where she sells and supplies roast to order coffee beans, equipment and supplies.

Sarah has been profoundly deaf since birth and has worn hearing aids for 34 years and now wears a Cochlear Implant. She looks forward to learning to Cue. Having experienced a different type of multi-sensory speech therapy growing up, she sees the benefit of how Cued Speech can improve the quality of life for a deaf person.



Ken is the grandfather of a deaf child brought up with Cued Speech. Ken's early career was with the Merchant Navy, before moving into a sales career in the food industry. Ken became aware of Deaf Choices UK after his granddaughter was born deaf. She lives in France with her

parents and brother, who all attended a Cued Speech course in Exeter. His granddaughter, now 11, not only speaks fluent French and English but uses Cued Speech and signing in both languages. The whole family has benefited enormously by learning to cue.



**Christine Hardy** is the Chair person of the charity, and brings with her a wealth of knowledge from growing up in the deaf community, as a child of a deaf adult. With NVQ Level 6 in British Sign Language and a rich and varied background in which she has used her linguistic skills in the working world, she will be a vital member of our committee. She currently works

# The Deaf Choices Team

as an 'Advocacy, Rights and Awareness Manager' for Deafblind UK, whom she has worked for now for ten years, and has an educational background in both linguistics and law.



Jacob Twomey is passionate about leveraging marketing expertise for good, and he brings his 8 years of commercial experience to the Board of Trustees. He will be instrumental in developing and executing strategic plans for the exciting new initiative of establishing a trading branch for the charity. Jacob's experience in branding, lead generation, and business development, combined with his positive and collaborative outlook will be invaluable as we work towards creating a sustainable trading branch. This will allow us to generate income to support our goal in enabling as many deaf children and families as possible with access to language and literacy. With his dedication and consultancy, we are confident that this new venture will have a significant impact on the lives of deaf individuals in our community.



# Efficient and Effective Delivery

Our application to the National Lottery needs to fulfil its outcomes which if successful will provide income generation by year 4 which will easily cover DCUK core costs.

## Efficient and Effective Delivery

DCUK keep their overheads low. 60% of funding goes towards staff wages, however, our team is small with only 8 part-time employees 6 full-time equivalents, who have the skill and knowledge to deliver within several different work and social contexts. Careful budgeting enables us to provide all our family interventions for free for parents of deaf children.

From September 2024 we will lose 2 Regional Family Advisors in Herts and the North East, due to the termination of funding, these posts will not be replaced. The ED lobbied extensively to get the post in Herts adopted by the Local Authority Hearing impairment Service but as of the date of writing this report, this has not been confirmed.

## With Thanks

We are most grateful to our funders who have supported DCUK to continue to deliver essential interventions to deaf children and their families.

Multi-year funding helps the Charity to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of its models of delivery and its activities.

Unrestricted funding enables the Charity to be flexible and responsive in meeting costs not directly related to projects such as the cost of computers, staff training, marketing and publicity.

Core funding is essential to support staff costs such as that of the Executive Director and Training Lead.

Project funds are essential for meeting the fast-changing needs we observe when working with deaf babies and children.



# Statement of Financial Activities

Year ending 31st March 2025	Unrestricted Funds - £	2025 Restricted Funds - £	Total Funds	2024 Total Funds - £
<b>Income</b>				
Donations	56,361	207,471	<b>263,832</b>	323,240
Charitable activities	92	6,645	<b>6,737</b>	2,703
Investment Income	2,991		<b>2,991</b>	1,793
Total Income	59,444	214,116	<b>273,560</b>	327,736
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Expenditure on charitable activities	(196)	(271,103)	<b>(271,299)</b>	(308,244)
Total Expenditure	(196)	(271,103)	<b>(271,299)</b>	(308,244)
Net income and net movement of funds				19,492
Net Income/ (Expenditure)	59,248	(56,987)	<b>2,261</b>	19,492
Transfer of Funds	(28,370)	28,370		0
Net Movement of Funds	30,878	(28,617)	2,261	19,492
<b>Reconciliation of Funds</b>				
Total funds brought forward	92,370	46,849	<b>139,219</b>	119,727
Total funds carried forward	123,248	18,232	141,480	139,219

# Legal and Financial

## Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

Assets	2024	2025
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible Fixed Assets	4,181	3,135
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Stocks	743	743
Debtors	5,072	7,875
Cash at bank and in hand	141,048	138,977
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	146,863	147,595
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	(11,825)	(9,250)
<b>Net current assets</b>	135,038	138,345
<b>Net assets</b>	139,219	141,480
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>		
Restricted income funds	46,849	18,232
Unrestricted Funds	92,370	123,248
<b>Total Funds</b>	139,219	141,480

## Income

Total income received in 2024/25 was £273,560, of which £263,832 was

donated by charitable trusts, companies and individuals. The remaining £9,028 included tuition fees and charges, membership subscriptions and

# Legal and Financial

investment income.

## Expenditure

Total expenditure was £271,299. £235,998 was spent directly on charitable activities. Support costs of £35,301 includes our rent of £13,216.

## Reserves

Income exceeded expenditure by £2,261 resulting in an increase in funds from £139,219 to £141,480 of which £18,232 is restricted to specific work.

The Association's policy is to hold a designated reserve of £30,000 and in addition, operating reserves equivalent to not less than three months' expenditure. The balances held at 31 March 2025 met that requirement.

## Donors

The Directors are grateful for the support, interest and encouragement received during the year from trusts, companies, organisations and individuals, including members who gave more than the minimum membership fee. During the year donations were received from five anonymous donors and from the following:

## Charitable Trusts

Archer Trust  
BBC Children in Need  
Benham Charitable Trust

Clare Milne Trust  
Dorothy Hay-Bolton Charitable Trust  
Dorothy Whitney Elmhirst Trust  
Elizabeth & Prince Zaiger Trust  
George A Moore Foundation  
Henry Smith Charity  
Marjorie and Geoffrey Jones Charitable Trust  
Marsh Charitable Trust  
MCF Masonic Charitable  
Michael Cornish Charitable Trust  
Ms Chloe Gwynne  
National Lottery Community Fund  
Okemement Chapter Rose Croix  
PF Charitable Fund  
Reeve charitable trust  
Shamrock Trust  
Sir John and Lady Amory Charitable Trust  
Smb trust  
The Carmela and Ronnie Pignatelli Foundation  
The Foyle Foundation  
Vandervell Foundation  
Viscount Amory's Charitable Trust  
W A Handley Trust  
Weinstock Fund

## Individual Donations

Carole Fletcher  
Anth Mills  
Cathy Groeger  
Sue Tweed  
Ken Orpin  
Mr C Millar  
Mrs Emma Sadeghi  
Gill Banham  
Jane godwin  
A C Gillespie  
Mr Mark Evans  
Peter Bowman  
Win Burton





# DEAF CHOICES UK

Makes Spoken language visible for  
deaf babies, children and adults

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