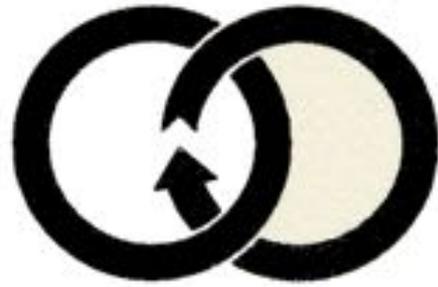


Annual Review 2009-2010

**The Trust for Deaf
Studies**



The Vassall Centre
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Bristol BS16 2QQ
Charity Number: 289302

www.deafstudiestrust.org

Progress for

**Families with deaf children
Deaf Community Views
Mental Health and Video
Telecommunications**

Chair Report

I was pleased to become the Chair of the Trust last year, taking over from Shelley Lanchbury who has had a long association with the Deaf Studies Trust. We are very grateful for all her work.



During this year, we saw two new projects begin, firstly, a study commissioned by Wiltshire Council and, secondly, support work with the Digital Switchover. In addition, the annual English Summer School, previously with the Centre for Deaf Studies, has been taken over by the Trust.

However finance continues to be a major concern coupled with the fact that the recent budget on top of the recessionary climate has not been conducive to the well-being of the Trust.

The previous chair pointed out in her report last year, that, even if the Trust is consulted and provides support to others, it is still under-funded and has difficulty in being anything more than a reactive agency.

The Trust began its life mainly as a research body looking into all aspects of Deaf life embracing culture and sign language. It has now expanded its field to incorporate two further elements – firstly, helping to improve the quality of life to all Deaf people and secondly providing training courses. We hope this move will attract further funding and help the Trust continue on a stronger footing. An example is the involvement with the Digital Switchover in which workshops were organised and visits to Deaf people's homes were made to help retune their TVs. It is hoped that further work on the Digital Switchover will be initiated in other geographical areas in which the switchover has not yet happened.

We remain committed to our target areas of elderly people and community and with an active interest in video telecommunications.

A training programme has been initiated and the Trust is currently seeking funds to support it.

As is usual, thanks must go to Anne Stygall who has managed the Trust Office and done a great deal of the public work on behalf of the Trust. And also to Esther Drewe who prepares the accounts, writes the cheques and manages the Finances.

We continue to be grateful to all the present Trustees and look forward to a new year with hope and determination.

Thanks to everyone.

David Jackson, Chair, June 2010

Secretary's Report



Despite the low level of financial activity during this year, the Trust continues to serve the community in small scale research and community action. We have supplied the lead tutors to a summer school for Deaf people and will take over the administration of this as part of a change of focus to provide training courses for deaf and hearing people.

We continue to support the Sign50 project which is beginning to benefit from the large scale European funding which the University of Bristol has for the development of video telephony (we explain this in the report under REACH112). Sign50 is a longstanding provision for older people to allow them to communicate at a distance in sign language.

The Stepping Stones project has been completed and is of some importance in regard to developing services in the South West Region. It requires some effort now to disseminate findings and to push for more funds.

DeafBlind Worlds remains an active project but is in need of focused dissemination. We expect to be applying for more funding in this area shortly as we can see that there remain major gaps in our understanding Deafblind people.

We have completed two community projects – one for Newport Council and one for Wiltshire Council. However, the most significant aspect in both cases, was the changing nature of the Deaf community and the significant difficulties we had in engaging members of the community to take part in the project. It would appear that Deaf people are becoming more isolated and parents of Deaf children are not seeing themselves as in need of specialist support – when their children are in mainstream schools. This is an area of concern as it is most likely to affect Deaf mental health.

The Trust continues to support the Healthy Deaf Minds project which aims to deliver seminars on health to Deaf people. This is a very important endeavour which offers accessible information to Deaf people.

We have also provided support to the Digital Switchover programme – where the analogue television channels are switched off and produce significant effects on the community. For us, these have highlighted issues in that Deaf people are often unaware of the capabilities of equipment which they have and need fundamental support in using the technology efficiently

It has been a busy year, albeit one with many lightly funded projects. The Trust will need to look for larger scale funding and by taking on some innovative teaching programmes it will hope to create a more stable financial environment.

We look forward to the coming year with some interest.

Jim Kyle, Secretary

Stepping Stones

This is a project set up to support the creation of a new approach to family services for Deaf children in the South West of England. The project completed last year but is still in the dissemination phase. A full printed report is available.



Its recommendations were:

1. Conference for professionals in the region to consider the research and to work towards collaborative applications for external funding for regional initiatives
2. Regional conference for parents to discuss the report and its possibilities
3. Creation of a regional information portal online
4. Regional pilots on specific issues with underlying parent-driven/ parent-led approach:
young mothers workshop
early parental experiences – sharing of strategies for daily life
technical seminar series – use of the Internet, videophones, text messaging, interpreter services
5. Family database – closed membership of families allowing them to contact each other
6. Ongoing family conference to discuss progress in each of the above areas
7. Development and validation of appropriate outcome measures for use in initiatives

In collaboration with the Family Centre for Deaf children, we are continuing to search for the means to implement these recommendations.

Sign 50+ becomes Total Conversation

The project began over 8 years ago. With the support of BT, we were able to install videophones in the homes of older Deaf people (50yrs +). For the first time, people were able to contact each other at a distance. This reduced loneliness at home and people felt more secure.

With the help of the Deaf Association of Wales, the Trust set up a social enterprise, SignWales to take this forward and with various grants from the Welsh Assembly Government, we were able to establish a full video telephony exchange. This is now running effectively and connects all the users in the Bristol area and in South Wales.

Through SignWales we have been able to expand the reach of this work to individuals and Local Authorities in South Wales and we are beginning to see a major expansion in 2010 in a new European project in conjunction with emergency services. This now offers free access to the video telephony network through a downloadable software package. During 2010, there will also be an interpreting service available at a distance.



See www.reach112.co.uk for more information on the project and www.myfriendcentral.com to access the free software and to register.



DeafBlind Worlds

This area of work continues to be of major interest. An absolutely final report on the work has been delayed but is going to be the basis of further applications and development. We remain concerned that there is very little real understanding of the lives of Deafblind people and very little Deafblind-led service.

We will seek to create more project work in this area and to influence the training of workers in this field.

Healthy Deaf Minds

This is a new area of work for the Trust involving a series of meetings aimed at Deaf people in order to explore particular topics in health. There were three meetings in this year – on sexual health, thyroid problems and Swine Flu. An additional meeting on mental health had to be postponed twice due to illness in the presenter. There are further meetings planned every two months over the next two years including the topics of advocacy & rights. There is a strong emphasis on accessibility of the presentations and groups of up to 50 Deaf people have attended the meetings. All sessions are interpreted and guidance is given to hearing presenters on the way in which they should approach sign language users in this semi-formal setting. Video recordings of the sessions have been made and these can be viewed by other groups of deaf people at the Deaf club in Bristol.

This continues to be an important aspect of Trust work.

Community Research

This year has seen two community research projects – one to determine the nature of services preferred by parents of Deaf children (Newport) and a second to understand Deaf experiences relating to council services (Wiltshire).

While these are very much in line with our research expertise and recent experiences, both encountered major problems in reaching the target population. It seems clear changes in the deaf community and new approaches to service provision have created a different population of both families and of members of the deaf community. Most children are now mainstreamed and parents are encouraged to reject old disability stereotypes. As a result there is less motivation to see the child as Deaf and less inclination to mix with other parents. We met with parents and discussed with them, these issues. The general feeling was that services were limited and that there was very little interaction among parents. Interestingly, this is also something which has been highlighted in the Stepping Stones report.

In the case of Wiltshire, we had serious problems in reaching Deaf young people. Nearly all of them will have attended mainstream schools and there is little

community interaction. Since there are no deaf clubs, the opportunities to meet and to form community views are very limited.

The overall conclusion here is that the deaf community in these locations is in decline and new models of research and new views of Deaf needs will need to be formed.

Community Provision – digital TV

In a late development in the year, we became involved in the television digital switchover from analogue to digital. This required the Trust to set up workshops and to explain the changes in sign language to Deaf users. This, in turn, highlighted a whole range of difficulties in using television and video recorders in the home. We were able to visit homes and make adjustments for Deaf people and also to explain better the way in which the digital switchover was affecting their viewing. The model of support developed should be able to be used in other regions of the UK, by the Trust.

The Deaf Studies Trust continues to move forward in its work and will work continuously to make Deaf people's lives more valued and understood by the society at large.



The Trust for Deaf Studies

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Chair David
Jackson



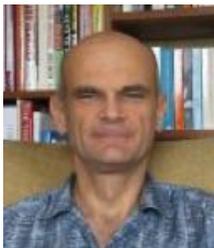
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