



Royal Association for Deaf people

DEAF ACHIEVE 2 PROJECT

INDEPENDENT VALUATION

Wider Impact Consultancy
February 2018



LOTTERY FUNDED

Meeting the needs of deaf people

At RAD we take time to understand what matters to Deaf people; modelling services that really work and therefore achieving positive outcomes for people.

Deaf Achieve has been our flagship project for the last three years, providing informative workshops, organising activities and encouraging active participation. We are very proud of the team that has worked so hard to bring Deaf Achieve to life – working responsively and creatively; developing the project as it progressed to ensure it was meeting the real needs of Deaf people.

Wider Impact has provided invaluable support, knowledge and guidance through their evaluation. We are extremely grateful to Wider Impact Director Edwin for his enthusiasm, passion and patience. Thank you.

The Deaf people who have been part of this project have made real progress towards achieving their personal goals – forging life-changing friendships, learning new skills, exploring opportunities and taking greater control of their lives. We know that their journey will continue.



**Edwin Lewis, Director,
Wider Impact Consultancy.**

INTRODUCTION

RAD delivers significant outcomes

It is always a pleasure to report on such a successful and impressive project. It is apparent that a number of factors have contributed to the success of this Project, which include the expertise and experience of RAD to develop and deliver such innovative and much needed projects, careful and thorough research during the conception phase of this Project, early and ongoing consultation with key stakeholders and appropriate, well thought out Project outcomes, supported by realistic and challenging indicators of success.

There can be no doubt that RAD has delivered what Deaf people need and value. Credit for this should be attributed to the Project Managers and wider support staff for their impressive inputs,

which have included genuine empathy and a clear understanding of the needs and aspirations of Deaf people.

Special note, of course, should be made of the involvement of service users, who have been confident enough to provide feedback and important information, which has helped to shape and update delivery throughout the life of the Project.

In conclusion, opportunity is taken to thank service users, Project staff, multi-agency partners and all those involved in the delivery of this report for their knowledge, experience and valuable time.

Edwin Lewis, Director, Wider Impact Consultancy

About the Project

Established in 1841, the **Royal Association for Deaf (RAD)** was incorporated in its current form in 2000. The organisation works mainly with Deaf people, such as those who have been deaf since birth or before acquiring language and whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language (BSL). **RAD** comprehends deafness as a language, a culture and an identity as well as a disability.

It is RAD's experience that the best way for Deaf people to learn is in small groups. British Sign Language lends itself best to concrete forms of expression (rather than abstract) – information is understood better when broken down into examples, and when participants have the opportunity to question and discuss the subject.

So, to fully understand a complex subject, a group might need an expert (e.g. health worker), an interpreter to translate what they are saying, and a group leader who helps intermediate, clarify, and facilitate group discussions to embed learning.

The **Deaf Achieve 2** Project is a development of a previous Big Lottery funded project, **Deaf Achieve**, and works with Deaf people based in **Essex, London and Suffolk**.

With a focus on one-to-one support and small group working, **Deaf Achieve 2** Project objectives include looking to reduce isolation and help Deaf people to improve their **health, independence and employability**; and involves:

- **One-to-one support** – working with each participant to identify individual



needs and goals to shape the topics of group sessions and workshops. The provision of one-to-one support and advocacy for participants who are inspired to take action to improve their lives, but who encounter barriers because they are deaf. Helping them to make their voices heard to, for example, health providers, adult learning providers, organisations offering work placements or volunteering opportunities, and potential employers.

- **Workshops** – on a variety of themes:

- **Health** – healthy eating, cancer, joint problems.
- **Rights** – know your rights, citizenship, hate crime.
- **Parenting** – child development, sleep issues, picky eaters.
- **Skills** – basic BSL, English/literacy, numeracy, driving theory, travel training, food hygiene, first aid, computers/IT, managing your money.
- **Employment** – CVs, interviews, Access to Work.

Those who take part are encouraged to share experiences, ideas and tips, and offer each other peer support all the while building of friendships.

Project Outcomes

No. Deaf Achieve 2 Outcomes	
1	Deaf people who are some distance from the workplace will become more employable by learning skills and attending job clubs.
2	Deaf people who are isolated (e.g. young, black minority, ethnic, refugees (BMER), new parents) will have more opportunities to socialise and make friends.
3	Deaf people will have better access to health information and use it to make healthier choices in their lives.
4	Deaf people will be more independent: able to travel, manage money, and choose how they live.

What people say about the Project

"...then I became aware of the Deaf Achieve Project! I suddenly had access to so much! For example, I had access to job searches – real practical support. I wasn't on my own anymore and that made a real difference.

"I feel very comfortable being around people I can communicate with and who understand where I am in my life. Peer support is so useful and we learn so much off each other. I have joined a Tube group and I have more confidence using the Tube and public transport.

"I feel much more employable and I have the skills and support to find a job that suits me. I am me and can get out and about, socialise, and meet new friends. As a result, my health and wellbeing has certainly improved and I feel really good about myself and life in general."

Mary, Service User

"RAD, has given many great opportunities for D/deaf clients in building self-esteem and confidence to be more independent and improving their everyday life skills through the use of BSL as their first language.

"Many D/deaf clients have language barriers so it is great to have **RAD** as an organisation to break the barriers between languages by the use of British Sign Language. I wish for **RAD** to continue giving many fantastic supports in the D/deaf community and make the difference in their life."

Edmund Lepre, Independent Trainer

"Deaf Achieve 2 is brilliant, innovative and inspiring. The potential impact of this project is vast.

"Working with Deaf Achieve has been incredibly rewarding for me and great for the organisation to meet their objectives. It has helped me see what type of work we should aim to do.

"The health needs of Deaf people have not been clear to me until now. I can only thank Deaf Achieve for this."

Reema Huzair, Senior Health Promotion and Training Officer, Bowel Cancer UK

Statistics, facts and feedback

Project indicators of success

As the table to the right highlights, there can be no doubt that, on the whole, the Project has achieved, and in a number of cases, exceeded performance indicators agreed with the Big Lottery.

Project outcomes

Linked to the achievement of Project outcomes:

Outcome 1 – 1,377 visits by service users to the employability workshops/job clubs, 94 service users submitting job applications, 52 service users taking up volunteering or work placements linked to job opportunities.

Outcome 2 – 264 service users attending group activities and events, 106 service users attending social and leisure opportunities and 200 service users reporting more and better friendships.

Outcome 3 – 136 service users attending health workshops and reporting improved knowledge of the topic, 136 service users planning to make healthy changes and manage their health conditions and 55 service users making a positive change to their health and wellbeing.

Outcome 4 – 68 service users attending training to travel by public transport or learn to drive, 106 service users completing financial capability training to manage their money and 102 service users feeling able to choose where, how and with whom they live.

Summary of Job Clubs, Workshops and Social Activities

- 5 Job Clubs delivered each month, with 977 total visits.
- 194 workshops attended by 1,184 service users.
- 56 activity days attended by 509 service user.

Additional comments

In order of preference, the following are summaries of service user statements about 'What is really good about the Deaf Achieve 2 Project?':

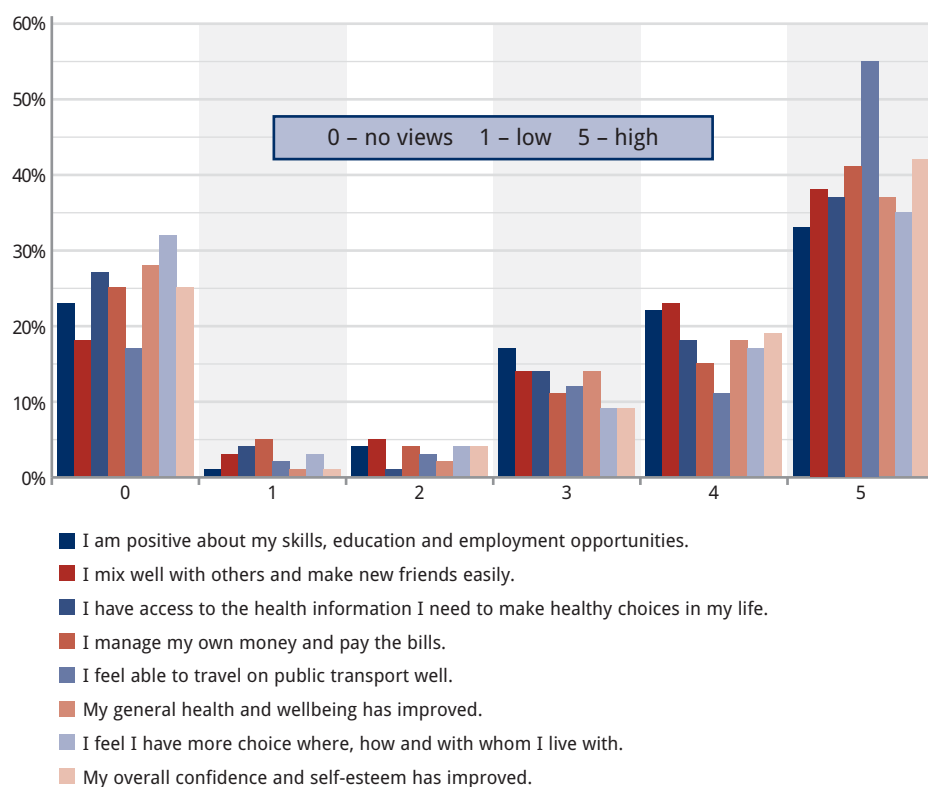
- Meeting other people and making new friends (x24).
- Being able to access information about health and skills (x18).
- Friendly staff (x17).
- Job Clubs/employment opportunities (x11).
- Learning new things (x11).
- Building confidence (x9).
- Clubs and activities (x7).
- Travel opportunities and excursions (x6).
- Communications (x6).
- BSL, access to interpreter and support for phone calls (x5).

Outcomes	Description	Targets	Timescales	Actuals (20-02-2018)
1	People attending employability workshops/job clubs	100	Annually	1377 (339)
	People submitting job applications	100	End of Project	589 (94)
	People taking up volunteering, work placements or job opportunities	45	End of Project	60 (52)
2	People attending group activities and events	100	Annually	1460 (264)
	People attending social and leisure opportunities (RAD and non-RAD)	50	Annually	493 (106)
	People reporting more and better friendships	200	End of Project	1078 (200)
3	People attending health workshops and report improved knowledge of the topic	70	Annually	378 (136)
	People planning to make healthy changes and manage their health conditions	50	Annually	390 (136)
4	People making a positive change to their health and wellbeing	50	End of Project	69 (55)
	People attending training to travel by public transport or learn to drive	50	Annually	275 (68)
	People completing financial capability training and can manage their money independently	70	Annually	278 (106)
	People feeling able to choose where, how and with whom they live	50	End of Project	211 (102)

Project Indicators of Achievement (Unique clients shown in brackets).

Feedback from Service Users

The graph below clearly illustrates the positive views of the (109) service users consulted by Wider Impact about how well the Project achieved the outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery.



CASE STUDY 1: Polly

Polly is 26 years of age, she is single, and lives with her mother in South East London. She is educated to A Level, with an academic achievement of 6 GCSEs and 3 A Levels. She was born deaf and grew up in a hearing environment where no one signed.

She says, "I was one of two deaf children at secondary school, with no provision of hearing support, such as someone who could provide support with sign language. I was not at all 'proud to be deaf', it was just something I had to make the most of. I did find it hard to communicate at school and felt I should be signing, rather than looking to use speech.

"I was so delighted to achieve my A Levels and so proud of myself as it was really hard work. It was at 6th Form that I became proud to be deaf! It was who I am.

"I won't kid you, it was hard at first finding employment. I took on voluntary work in a Deaf organisation to build up my experience of work. It was hard looking for a job on my own. I just wanted any job! I eventually become a part-time Business Administration Apprentice for four days a week, and eventually took on a really meaningful role as a full time Family Support Worker.

"A really significant thing in my life has been my connection with RAD! I am so proud to be working with them and passing on what I have learnt to others. I am also continuing to learn from RAD, and am so impressed with what the organisation offers. This includes information about support such as



Case study names changed and photographs posed by models.

Access to Work and accessing what is on offer in relation to gaining employment; the support and friendship from all of the staff, learning how to become independent, able to travel on public transport and how to manage finances. They have really brought me on. I have so much more confidence now in my ability to communicate and achieve my ambitions.

"I have done public speaking and been taken out of my comfort zones. The organisation's support is practical in relation to the useful support on offer and meaningful in terms of how your confidence and self-worth grows. I feel a much more confident, rounded person now, and know the future is in my hands, and not with others."

What difference has the Deaf Achieve Project made to my life?

"I really feel RAD has brought my employability opportunities onto another level. I have flourished as a young woman and love being a role model to other deaf people."

Team Leaders' update:

"Polly has significantly improved in her confidence and ability since starting her position at RAD. She has an excellent rapport with the clients and is able to adjust her signing register to meet the needs of the clients, many of whom are from abroad and use their native sign language to communicate. She is a strong team member at RAD and an excellent role model for other deaf people."

CASE STUDY 3: Aahil

Aahil is 60 years of age, originally from Uganda, having arrived in this Country aged 16. He has been partially deaf from birth. He is currently in receipt of ESA, having been made redundant from Remploy when the organisation closed some two or three years ago.

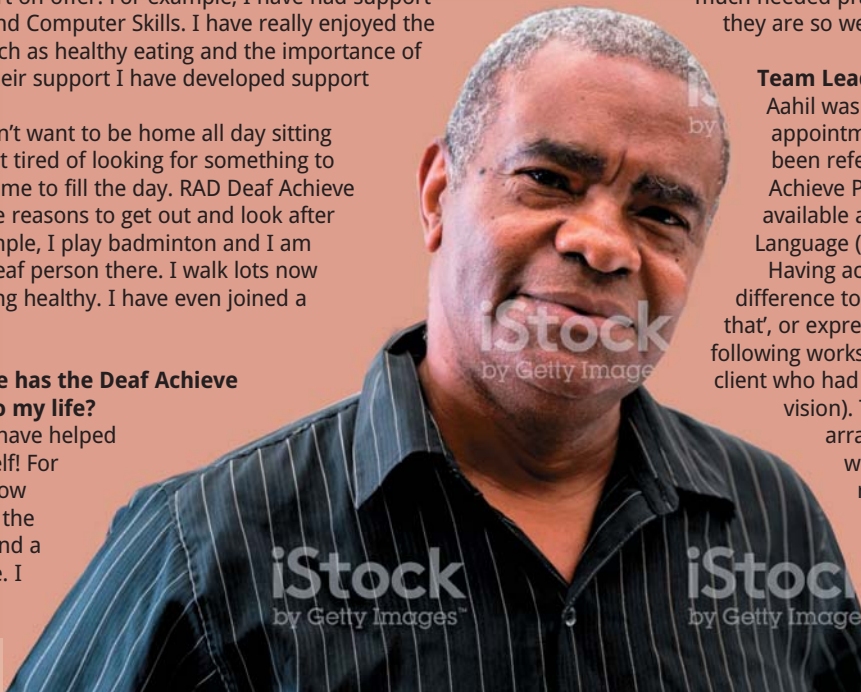
He says, "Whilst I have not hesitated to seek support with getting back into work, I have found it difficult to communicate with support staff at agencies such as the Jobcentre, as they don't seem to have the resources to communicate with Deaf people.

"RAD Deaf Achieve have been excellent, in particular with the variety of support on offer. For example, I have had support with Maths, IT and Computer Skills. I have really enjoyed the health topics, such as healthy eating and the importance of exercise. With their support I have developed support plans for myself.

"I certainly don't want to be home all day sitting around, and I get tired of looking for something to clean all of the time to fill the day. RAD Deaf Achieve has given me the reasons to get out and look after myself. For example, I play badminton and I am often the only deaf person there. I walk lots now and enjoy keeping healthy. I have even joined a gym."

What difference has the Deaf Achieve Project made to my life?

"So much! They have helped me to help myself! For example, I am now confident I have the skills I need to find a job that suits me. I am much more



confident about myself and now know how to look after myself. I was overweight before I received RAD's advice and support, but I am REALLY fit now and feel so good about myself.

"I have a good social life now and lots of friends – both as a result of RAD and those I have made myself. I have independence, and have positive views about my life and my future.

"RAD Deaf Achieves team are really good, and they are so calm and quiet when they help you. They understand where I am coming from and really recognise my achievements. As well as providing much needed practical support that others can't provide, they are so welcoming and lovely!"

Team Leaders' update:

Aahil was very anxious during his first appointment with the Deaf Achieve team, having been referred to us by his Jobcentre. The Deaf Achieve Project was explained to him- the support available and how this would all be in British Sign Language (BSL).

Having accessible information made a big difference to him, often stating that he 'didn't know that', or expressing information learnt via feedback following workshops. Aahil made friends with another client who had Ushers Syndrome (deaf with reduced vision). Through this friendship, Aahil often arranged to travel to and from workshops with this client, providing the support he required as an 'informal volunteer' as well as being able to offer advice and friendship plus an increased opportunity to leave the house as this client struggled to do this on his own.

CASE STUDY 2: Steward

Steward is 28 years of age, single and lives alone on the South coast. He was unemployed at the time when interviewed by Wider Impact and in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). He has been deaf from birth and has signed (BSL) for three years. He was mainstream schooled as a child/young person and achieved a C in Maths and E in English at GCSE. He sees BSL as his first language.

He says, "I began looking for a job as soon as I left education as I was keen to stand on my own feet, it took me 10 years to become a machinist making ladies clothes. It is really hard finding work where I live and it certainly does not help being deaf.

"I do not like not working and being on my own, alone, and my health deteriorated. I became stressed, had dizzy spells, became upset and didn't know what to do. I had no one to talk to and it was a lonely world. I just wanted a better future.

"I tried using organisations such as CAB (Citizens Advice Bureaux) and the Jobcentre, but there were communication issues and they did their best, but they just weren't reliable and didn't really provide the type or level of support I needed at that time. For example, it was hard to get interpreters to support me and I never found it easy accessing emails, or sending out letters when making job applications.

"I heard about RAD Deaf Achieve through a friend and decided to give them a go. What can I say – they have been great and have a 'Let's say yes' approach.

They help me with loads of practical things at the Job Club with things like building my CV, looking for a number of jobs online, completing and submitting job applications. They have helped me to build up my IT skills and use of the English language.

"I am much more confident using and accessing emails and understand the importance of good communication skills – which I certainly lacked before I had support from RAD and the Job Club in particular.

"On another level, RAD Deaf Achieve has helped me make new friends who are also deaf and we meet in our own homes as well as go out. I now have a social circle, which makes me feel so good about myself. As friends we help and support each other and continue to make new friends and new people."

What difference has the Deaf Achieve Project made to my life?

"I now feel my health and well-being has improved and I am no longer so stressed about things, and I am certainly no longer depressed and so worried about my life.

"I have things to look forward to and through RAD I have the skills and experience to get a job and better myself."

Team Leaders' update:

"We are delighted to report that Steward started his new job in October 2017. He was ecstatic and was really looking forward to having his first 'proper' job with a real full time income!"



CASE STUDY 4: Priya

Priya is 41 years old, single, originally from Asia and currently living in Croydon with her father. She has no GCSEs, but is educated to Level 1 in English and Computers. She is currently unemployed and in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

She says, "I certainly do want to get back to work – yes please! But it is hard finding work at the moment, as there are not lots of suitable jobs out there for me, and it's even harder when you are deaf.

"Fortunately, I am receiving support from RAD Deaf Achieve, and come to the Job Clubs, where there is so much practical support with things like advice and support with job searching, using emails and things like life skills.

"They help with my English and the use of good grammar, which helps with being understood by others.

"I have also joined the Travel Club and travelled around lots. As a result, I have met new people and made new friends, and have get out of the house lots, rather than staying in. For example, I go to church regularly and have even joined a gym."

What difference has the Deaf Achieve Project made to my life?

"I have so much more confidence! My self-esteem has grown and I feel so much better about myself.

"As a result, I am looking at self-employment, which is something I never would have considered before I received support from Deaf Achieve. We are looking at how to manage my money and accounts and things."

Team Leaders' update:

Priya was a regular client who attended Deaf Achieve activities. At the start of the Project, she felt nervous to travel outside of her own area so often met Deaf Achieve staff at tube stations to be supported to find workshop venues. Over time, she became much more confident and the Deaf Achieve staff identified her as someone who had the potential to become a volunteer with our Project.

Priya started her volunteering in early 2016 supporting at the Job Clubs, Health/Skills Workshops and Tube Travel Group; since then her confidence has grown.

Priya has gained her First Aid qualification which is part of her development. We had Deaf Achieves Celebration event and Priya confidently delivered the presentation on this project in front of 50 people which is a massive achievement for her.



The views of partner agency members

Summary of findings

There can be no doubt that the Project has been a success in terms of its achievement of the outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery.

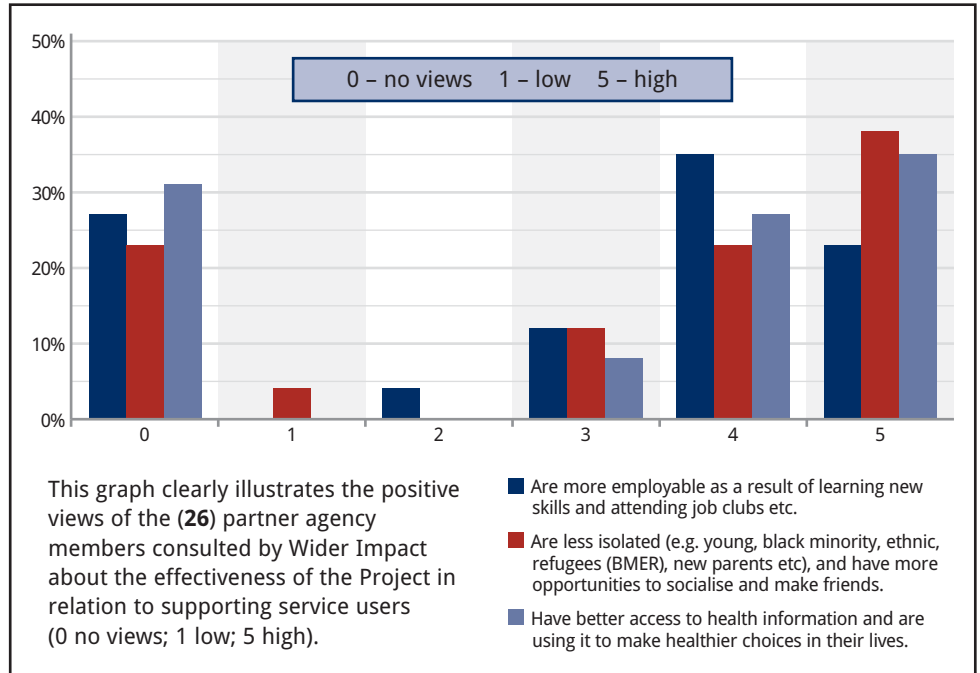
This is supported by quantitative evidence that includes Project indicators agreed with the Big Lottery having on the whole been met, and, in a number of cases impressively surpassed.

In terms of qualitative evidence there is likewise strong supporting evidence that Project objectives have been achieved.

Good practice

In no particular order, the following good practice is noted:

- RAD's delivery model and vast experience in providing support and services that Deaf people **want** and **need**, which includes all front line workers being fluent in sign language.
- RAD's wide ranging 'offer' to Deaf people.
- Linked to RAD's vast experience and knowledge coupled with impressive research carried out by RAD prior to Project implementation, they have established a clear and unambiguous 'need' for the Project.
- Good practice and lessons learned from successfully delivering the previous Big Lottery funded Deaf Achieve Project.
- Realistic and appropriate Project outcomes agreed with the Big Lottery.
- A flexible approach, supported by highly competent Project Managers with an 'hands on' understanding of the value of learning from and adapting to 'on the ground' feedback from service users and circumstances as they occur.
- Multi-Agency links, with positive examples of multi-agency partnership working/two way referrals.
- Innovative Job Clubs, workshops and initiatives, delivering what service users need and value.
- Positive evidence of the delivery of an inclusive Project, regardless of characteristics such as gender, ethnicity or age of service users.
- Positive evidence of reaching those most in need of the Project, such as those who are unemployed.
- Friendly, supportive, committed, caring, highly experienced and trained RAD staff, workshop leads and support staff, who have a clear and empathetic understanding of Deaf peoples' needs, challenges and aspirations.
- Excellent and innovative use of accessible and cost effective local community based locations such as local libraries to deliver Project activities.



Recommendations

Based on research findings the following recommendations are tendered:

1. Building on service user, partner agency and Project Managers' feedback and findings highlighted in this report, **RAD** should continue to utilise its vast experience alongside excellent in-house skills to understand, monitor and offer feedback on 'what works' in relation to meeting the ever changing needs and demands of Deaf people.
2. Building on the success of the Project, and demands from service users, consideration should be given to the continuation of the model of providing bespoke support to Deaf people in areas associated with health, wellbeing, employability and general 'life skills'.
3. Such support should continue to be aimed at small groups and be delivered in local communities; in venues such as local libraries and other easily accessible meeting places.
4. Opportunities should be taken to share the successes of the Project, with an emphasis on:
 - a. Congratulating and thanking Project staff, support staff, volunteers, workshop contributors, partner agency members and service users for a 'job well done' in relation to the successful delivery of Project outcomes;
 - b. Sharing Project achievements and good practice with other organisations, projects and initiatives at local, regional and national levels.



"This has proved an excellent opportunity for Deaf sign language users to be involved and have access to topics/resources to promote and enable their independence. There was a workshop on the topic of 'cancer'.

It is essential that Deaf people have access to health awareness with BSL interpreters. This client group miss out on essential information that the 'hearing' population have access to in an everyday life. Please consider funding this Project for the future."

**Colm McGerigal Social Worker for Deaf people,
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) Social Services**

Helping Deaf people face their every-day challenges

We have been proud to deliver the Deaf Achieve project from March 2015 to February 2018 under The Big Lottery funding. Over the duration of the project we delivered a variety of skills workshops, health groups, job clubs, travel groups, social activities, financial capability training and one to one support, all of which were delivered in British Sign Language (BSL), meaning our clients had full access to information and experiences.

Our skills workshops were carefully tailored with an aim to support our clients to become more work ready through the provision of English, Maths and IT workshops (using a deaf tutor where possible), alongside these workshops, specialist learning such as Barista and First Aid took place.

Each month we set up health workshops that were delivered by specialist presenters from organisation such as Diabetes UK, Bowel Cancer UK and Thyroid UK, these were interpreted allowing our clients to benefit from the specialist health learning empowering them to make better lifestyle choices for themselves. Our opportunities gave our clients a meaningful reason to leave their homes and help to reduce isolation, build confidence and meet new friends.

We have seen the improvement in confidence amongst our clients through their engagement with the project; some that were not confident to travel have now become able to make new journeys on their own, others who have been long term unemployed have managed to secure employment.

It is extremely difficult for members of the Deaf community to access training/education/information due to communication barriers – this is a challenge that they face each and every day. To be able to remove some of these under of lottery funding has been hugely successful and beneficial and has definitely had a positive impact on our clients lives.

We would like to thank everyone that has been involved with the Deaf Achieve project, and also extend a big thank you to Wider Impact for creating a meaningful and robust report and evaluation of our project achievements.

Natalie Creevy and Lorraine Oaten
Deaf Achieve 2 Project Leaders



Natalie Creevy



Lorraine Oaten

Royal Association For Deaf People (Head Office)

Century House South, Riverside Office Centre,
North Station Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 1RE
Tel: 0300 688 2525

info@royaldeaf.org.uk • www.royaldeaf.org.uk

[facebook.com/groups/royaldeaf](https://www.facebook.com/groups/royaldeaf) twitter.com/royaldeaf

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widerimpact
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Wider Impact Consultancy Limited,
Newport House, Newport Road, Stafford ST16 1DA
0845 165 0491 • edwin@widerimpact.com
www.widerimpact.com @EdwinLewis
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Helpful, friendly service to grow my confidence and be offered a job

I have been unemployed for eight years and I have in the past attended the Jobcentre Plus to sign on every two weeks. They have tried their best to support me, but there were communication barriers and as a result I have felt so lonely; and no one was really helping me to find a job.

In June 2015 my Jobcentre told me about the Deaf Achieve Project and that they had a Deaf Job Club in Chelmsford, which ran twice a month. My confidence at that time was very low. Since I have attended the Deaf Job Club, my confidence has grown every time, because the Deaf Achieve staff were able to communicate with me using British Sign Language (BSL), which made me feel comfortable. They were able to translate the English into BSL when I asked for support with a job application, for example, or a job description – sometimes I did not understand what these meant, because of the wording, or what's involved. At the end I understood clearly. They provided a BSL interpreter who attended regularly and she supported with telephone calls to contact external organisations.

I have had several job interviews since the Project started. I was invited to an interview with a local store, the Deaf Achieve staff were aware of this and supported me with interview practice to help build my confidence.

Finally, I have been offered a new job and I was so shocked, I cannot believe it. I cannot wait to start. I would like to say many thanks to the Deaf Achieve staff for their support and very helpful friendly service. If it was not for this project I would never have had their support to help me to find employment.

Dawn Cuffley, Deaf Achieve 2 Service User



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