<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRzqPNs0FfE&t=1s>

**Laura-Jane Rawlings:**

Hello, and welcome to this webinar with Youth Employment UK, as we look at supporting young people to fulfill their potential.

My name is Laura-Jane Rawlings and I'm the CEO of Youth Employment UK and I am being joined today by Martin Maclean Education Policy Advisor for the National Deaf Children Society and his colleague Damien Ball, the Youth Development Officer, also from the National Deaf Children Society.

Both Martin and Damian are deaf themselves and they're using support services today to participate in this webinar.

So, Damien is working with two interpreters, we've got Brandon and Ryan working with him, and he's using British Sign Language to communicate through this webinar, and Martin is using text to speech to text service.

So there may be a slight delay.

As we have this conversation today, it's really important that they're able to communicate with us and share their experiences. As we talk about this really important issue of how employers can support more young deaf people into employment.

So, through the webinar, I'm going to give a brief introduction to Youth Employment UK for those and colleagues who've joined us, who do not yet know who we are.

And then we're going to hand over to colleagues from the National Deaf Children’s Society as they talk about the work, the society is focused on around young people

I've got some big questions that I want to put to both Martin and Damian so we’ll get into some of the support questions that we've got around employer and access and contact with young people and then we'll finish up with looking at how employers can become and be recognized as Youth Friendly Employers with the Youth Employment UK mark

So, just very briefly Youth Employment UK is an independent not for-profit social enterprise.

We set up back in 2012 to tackle Youth Unemployment over those years we’ve spent that time researching and evaluating and talking to young people and employers to really understand these very difficult and complex issues that create barriers to employment for young people . Our service really evolved, because we want to put young people at the heart of everything that we do

A quarter of our services are young people's voices and young people Co-create and develop those services that we offer now, nationally across the UK.

Really important to that is the fact that most young people struggle with knowing what skills, and they need to move on into work, and what it is that employers are offering in terms of the different career opportunities the routes into different careers.

So we've now got a huge comprehensive careers and skills website online that young people can access to free.

And in 2019 team we had over a million people access those resources which shows us that young people are really committed to developing the skills and the understanding about the different careers that exist.

We also support employers to help them develop and be recognized for youth and employment practice.

And a lot of that is about changing the way that employers think about onboarding and supporting young people, and helping them to connect with some of those young people who are furthest from the labor market.

And in today's case, that includes a better understanding of how you might support deaf people into employment, and we connect those youth friendly employers to our young people through that website mechanisms that I've already talked about.

Employers that work with us can also access a huge range of advice and guidance and supporting resources on our website, employers that work with us also are able to pick up the phone and speak to a member of our team about any of their Youth employment needs, and opportunities.

So without further ado, let's get us into hearing more about the national deaf children society and I'm going to hand over to Martin who's just going to talk to us a bit about that work.

**Martin**

I will actually hand over to Damien to start off with the induction to the charity

**Damian**

So, I'm Damian.

I am a Youth development officer and I’m profoundly deaf.

So, we are the UK’s leading charity for deaf children young people, their families and professionals.

We work to overcome the social and educational barriers, you know, that hold off deaf children, young people back through the, you know, all that's going on.

So we are here to provide expert advice, raise awareness, and we campaign for their rights.

We're here for every deaf child, every young person regardless it doesn't matter what their level of deafness is or even how they communicate.

We offer a range of services, including a helpline, children and family support officers, Information resources and activity weekends.

We have recently just launched a new campaign, which is called, “deaf works everywhere”.

So im marking as I lead on post 14 policy and practice and actually adapt children's society

And I've been leading on this campaign which just launched this week, a new exciting campaign for us that aims to get more deaf young people into work and into jobs that inspire them.

Many deaf young people believe their career options are limited, however, with the right support that deaf people can work everywhere yet there are twice as likely to be unemployed compared to their hearing peers.

We know from a case study that we've been collecting, we found that deaf people are working in a wide wide range from musicians, doctors and electricians and the list is endless

However that information is not cutting through to deaf young people unfortunately and in the campaign we are going to be fighting for better career support for deaf young people and more work experience and volunteering opportunities and most importantly challenging the important of what deaf young people can actually achieve

So this week, we launch a video which is aimed at deaf young people aged 11 to 15

Is being co produced with members from our young people advisory board , and it's designed to introduce young people to our campaign through that.

We hope to inspire and broaden their aspiration by showcasing the range of jobs that people do.

**Martin:**

Laura-Jane, should we have a look at the video now?

**Laura-Jane Rawlings**

Absolutely. Let me take us there.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cizsAPnrn6s>

**Laura-Jane Rawlings**

That is such an amazing video and because of the technology we're using, we don't know how much of that sort of glitched as we moved it from YouTube and into goto meeting.

So there will be a link to that video on our website so that you can access it and beyond

And please do make sure you share that video within your networks too, and so thanks for the introduction both of you that was great.

So I want to ask a few questions if I may, about some of those experiences and challenges that young people are facing and what we can do about it.

So if I can start with asking you what types of deafness are there and what terms definitions my employers need to become aware of.

**Martin:**

Ok, well I will try to answer that.

So, there are a range of different levels of deafness.

So you can have more deafness right through to profound deafness.

Some people may just be deaf in one ear

Some may be born deaf, others, deafness developed later in life

Some people have high frequency deafness and are not able to hear sounds of a high pitch or not vise versa low frequency and deafness will impact people in different ways and its important to take away from this webinar that no two deaf people are the same.

Damien and I both have found that everyone has different ways we which we prefer to communicate, Damien is using British Sign Language and I wear a cochlear implant, Damien isn't using any hearing technology today and yes, I mean just because I have a cochlear implant, which stimulate sounds for me does mean that i've got perfect hearing. I'm ok lip reading people one to one in a quiet room and I can understand what someone is saying to me but if it's noisy or in a noisy room or if there are lots of people speaking then it can be really difficult to follow.

So it's important to not assume that just because someone is wearing a hearing aid that means their hearing is correct.

You asked about the definitions, some people will just describe themself as deaf, I do, Damien does but others will say I have hearing loss or a hearing impairment they might not make that comfortable really with the term tone deaf as it feels perhaps too strong for them.

We at the National Deaf Children’s Society use the term deaf to describe deaf people at all levels of deafness and yeah I think the main thing is to understand how that the person you are talking to prefers to be called/understand having that way to communicate and avoid making too many assumptions.

**Laura-Jane Rawlings:**

Great! That's really clear.

Thank you.

And talk to me about the landscape for deaf young people, what are the sort of barriers that young people are facing as they are in education, and perhaps moving on then into employment.

**Damian:**

So what I found most deaf young people is there is a lot of confidence issues in terms of trying to gain employment, you know, gaining employment, there's a lot of barriers in regards that are trying to become successful at gaining employment because there's not enough deaf awareness.

There's a number of different reasons for these barriers actually, I'm gonna explain some of them now.

So there's actually issues with opportunities and accessing education in terms of apprenticeships, university, etc.

Deaf young people trying to, you know, find courses and things, there's difficulty having accessibility to these courses, you know, making sure that information is clear for deaf young people.

Secondly, we have difficulties in terms of limited access to volunteering and work experience opportunities.

Some employers don't actually think about how they're going to provide communication service support for deaf young people.

You know, it might mean that people don't have much confidence, you know, to make sure they're achieving these opportunities. Also, a major barrier is obviously communication.

Deaf young people can be anxious in terms of communicating in a workplace.

They might be unsure what sort of support is available, how to register for such support.

Maybe, they might be unsure about, you know, in the workplace, if they have deaf awareness at all or not.

So there's many different reasons why there are opportunity barriers for deaf young people.

**Martin:**

But just to add to that, you're asking about, bias to education and it will probably mean although deafness is not a learning disability but we do see an attainment gap between deaf and hearing young people at GCSE and there is an attainment gap of 30 percent points in proportion of young people that are achieve by GCSE pass and that inevitably will limit off some options at the age of 16 and deaf young people may need longer to progress through the levels and its important to us to remember that when we look at a level of attainment or that btec and at that level we do see a similar gap but deaf young people do make up ground at that sort of GCSE level that level 2 level closing the attainment gap and that is just really having that time progress and actually finding the right and options to the right course and at the age of 16 they do make good progress.

**Laura-Jane Rawlings:**

Martin. And when you were talking about the new campaign, you did talk about careers advice, and aspirations.

Is that another barrier when you think about the education setting?

**Martin:**

Yes.

Our young people as advisory board carried out some research last year where they interviewed people who are responsible for careers provision for schools and they also ran various focus groups with deaf young people around the UK and what we are finding that deaf young people are not getting good careers advice and when they do see a careers advisor often the careers advisor is not deaf aware they don't have an understanding of support that is available for deaf people in the workplace. Unfortunately some deaf young people are getting some quite negative messaging which is impacting their thinking and the choices they make and this is the stage that you know young people are making important choices for example year 9 your choosing your options at GCSE and we believe there is no support available to the workplace supporting that is incorrect and that may well be influencing the decisions you make and it's just not good enough and we would like to see a better system in place for careers provision.

**Laura-Jane Rawlings:**

Absolutely, thank you and thanks for sharing that and Damian. What do you think employers can do and to create better opportunities for deaf young people thinking about work experience or early career opportunities?

**Damian:**

It's important, you know, the employers know that they'll have a good attitude. It's important to remember about, in terms of deaf awareness , it's not only just about communication, there's more to it than that. It's about understanding the needs of deaf people as well.

You know, it's early prevention to think about them as an individual.

Employers need to find the information about how to support their staff as individuals, you know, about the employer in the workplace, as well and make that accessible.

You know, they need to think about how to train the wider organization as well.

That's also important.

You know, here at the NDCS , you know, we have training as well, and that's called accessibility for deaf people in the workplace.

That's the one day training course that we have, and the focus of that course is you know, in terms about the recruitment process as well as a whole, thinking about the workplace and how to make that more deaf friendly.

Employment also has to think about as well promoting that opportunity as well that's also important.

You Know, in the deaf community, as well on how to publicize that for four people and thinking about how to make relationships with deaf people directly.

**Laura-Jane Rawlings:**

Great so if an employer is listening to this webinar today, once it's in it, find out more information see what support is available, what would you recommend Martin?

**Martin:**

We look at slides 11 Laura-Jane then there is 3 links on that , the first one is to an information booklet that has been republished for the employer just a short straight to the point guide that has provided practical guidance of visible needs means that employers can make these adjustments that don't cost anything for example small in depth meetings that are booked in in advance incase any support need to be arranged ensuring that colleagues corresponding on email rather than telephoning.

So that is available to download free of charge to any employer and we plan to update that resource and the last link is the access to work scheme. Which is a work scheme that is really valuable for deaf people and it will cover the cost of communication support at work so like the interpreters you have today also part funding for technology such as radio waves which sock and beyond hearing aid amplifying better sound and making it clearer and cutting out background noisy which will be helpful for some deaf people in meetings for example. So this scheme is a really essential scheme for deaf people and it's not, I have to say, the easiest thing to apply for sometimes with young people needing some support with either the application process but once you have the support package in place it's yeah it’s really helpful.

And the last link is the disability confidence scheme which is a government scheme which employers can sign up to and say they are a disability confident employer that allows them to display a logo that says you're disability confident and that shows disable applicants that this organisation has thought about accessibility to disabled people. So to be disability confident you agree to start with deaf to get the first level and you have to do something like for example have a guaranteed interview scheme for disable applicants that actually met all of the job criteria that helps to overcome some of the disadvantages that disable people might face. So there are loads of pre interview useful forms that support employers about what they should be aware of.

Our info booklet for employers: [www.ndcs.org.uk/documents-and-resources/breaking-the-sound-barrier-a-guide-to-recruiting-and-supporting-deaf-colleagues/](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/documents-and-resources/breaking-the-sound-barrier-a-guide-to-recruiting-and-supporting-deaf-colleagues/)

Access to Work - info for employers: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers/access-to-work-factsheet-for-employers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers/access-to-work-factsheet-for-employers)

Disability Confident scheme: <https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/>

**Laura-Jane Rawlings:**

That's great and all of these links are available on our website to access.

So please do make sure you do download those booklets, particularly.

And you've provided us with a top 10 tips for communication tips for employers.

Do you want to walk us through these and what they mean?

**Damian:**

Ok, so the first tip is to find out about the deaf person's, you know, communication needs, what their preferences are. Some may prefer to sign, and so to speak.

You know, some perhaps, maybe use both.

Secondly, we have to think about how to get the deaf person's attention.

You know, some people may waive their hands in there or they may tap on the shoulder perhaps.

You always have to ask the deaf person, as well, that is important.

Number three.

Making sure that you're facing the deaf colleague, when you're talking to them, you know, because if you're looking around, turning away from the dead person , you know, they need to be able to lip read you clearly.

Number four.

So making sure that you're speaking clearly and naturally.

Number five, watch your mouth.

Some people, like to cover their mouths or might have chewing gum as well perhaps and that can change the lip pattern of the mouth which is really distracting for deaf people

Number six, make sure that you're being really visual as well for the deaf person.

You could point to things that you could be talking about, or you can gesture as well in these body movements for that.

Number seven: make it clear what topic it is you're actually talking about in the conversation.

You know, perhaps you're in a group, and the deaf person decided to join in on the conversation. You have to stop the conversation and make sure you are making sure that they know what the conversation is actually about.

Number eight: Make sure that you're standing facing the light.

Though, because then, that means your face is clearly facing the deaf person, then I can see you clearly if there's a light behind you, your face will darken, and it'd be quite difficult for deaf people in terms of communication.

Number nine: like I said before, if you're having a group conversation, make sure that any one person is talking at a time. You know, if there is any overlapping when talking it can become very confusing for the deaf person and it can really disorient them in conversation.

And finally, number ten.

Make sure that you're reducing background noise, you know if it's a noisy environment.

That can really distract a deaf person, you know, so if you can reduce that noise that would be brilliant as well.

**Martin:**

Just back that up not all of these tips would apply to every deaf person at one time and for example if you are using communication support you know an interpreter i think that some of these won't apply and some deaf people for example might just like to have a quiet environment but don't provide that much on lip reading so when you get to know a deaf colleague you will just naturally find out how they best communicate and you know which of these tips will be most useful.

**Laura-Jane:**

That's great, I think it's important for employers to know that they can and should be looking to find that information out, so they can make the engagement, communication experience much better for everybody

Great, so thank you so much for that that's really helpful and we know we are going to put lots of links on our site to the National Deaf Children's Society to make sure that our Youth Friendly Employers and organisations who want to learn more can find out where they can go and do that.

A really important link for us is to have those employers that do want to become more inclusive and make sure they are offering good quality opportunities to all young people to make sure that those employers are easily identified and we do that through the Youth Friendly Employer Mark.

With that mark you are able to show young people that you're an employer of choice and an employer that is committed to providing that inclusive and quality opportunity. So take time please to go and have a look at what joining up to the employer mark means and all of the benefits that come with the membership to us including as i said right at the beginning the ability to telephone and call to speak to an expert here and to find out any answers to any questions you might have regarding your Youth Employment Strategy and none of us can do this alone and we want to make the world a better place for all young people. Youth Unemployment has been a problem for far too long with too many groups, especially those vulnerable groups, experiencing multiple barriers to employment so we work in collaboration with a great number of organisations and encourage more partners to get involved with our work so that we can really work together to make a difference for young people so a big nod and thanks to all the partners we've been able to list here.

Finally, for those of you who would like to find out more about working with Youth Employment UK or if you would like to be put in touch with either Martin or Damian and colleagues from the National Deaf Children's Society than please do drop me and email at [ljr@youthemployment.org.uk](mailto:ljr@youthemployment.org.uk) and i'll happily pass your details onto the guys and answer questions you might have about our work and how you can get involved in supporting what we are doing.

That just leaves me to say a really big thank you to everyone that's supported this webinar to happen today, to Martin and to Damian, to Brandon and to Ryan and to Kate who is doing the speech to text support for Martin.

Thank you all for joining us, I have really appreciated this opportunity and the work that you are doing and a big final callout to your campaign and congratulations on the launch that we will be supporting as much as we can. Thank you everybody

**Martin:**

Thank you Laura-Jane, it's been a pleasure

**Damian:**

Thank you