

# Youth Service Handbook



**Everything  
you need  
to know**

## Introduction

**Welcome to Deaf Action's Youth Service. We are delighted to have you as part of our Youth Service team. This handbook will help you understand what our Youth Service and Deaf Action are all about. And, for all of us to follow the same information and rules. Enjoy reading the handbook and please feel free to ask any questions.**

# The future in action



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# Aims & objectives of the Youth Service

## Youth Service

Our Youth Service supports deaf young people aged 10-18 at every stage of their development, helping them build confidence and shape their future.

When young people join our Youth Service, they can build their confidence, meet new friends, and share experiences with other young deaf people. We provide a wide range of support and activities to equip young deaf people with the right skills for a bright future. Regardless of their level of hearing or preferred communication, no one is left out. The most important thing of all, they get to have fun!

## From caterpillar to butterfly

It is common for young people to experience issues during transitional periods in school, but these challenges can be heightened for young deaf people. Our youth support service aims to help young people as they develop, increasing social inclusion and supporting equal access to education and employment opportunities.

We want to make sure every young person can reach their greatest potential, so we have developed a range of support, social groups, and workshops to help young people flourish.

## Peer support

Being around other young people with similar experiences can help shape a young person's self-identity. We want to create an environment where young people can truly express themselves without fear of judgement, to excel in their development and inclusion. Children of deaf adults and siblings of deaf children are welcome too.

Joining the club is a great way for deaf young people to gain experience with likeminded people and make friends for life.

## Supporting families through our parent and toddler group

Our parent & toddler group provides support and advice for deaf families. And by deaf families, we mean anyone experiencing deafness within the family unit. Our aim for the service is to provide a model of support for families with children aged 0-5yrs impacted by deafness to address issues such as language deprivation and other barriers to key developmental stages, encourage familial attachment, and foster a positive deaf identity from a young age.

This service is open to all deaf families with toddlers. Whether that's a deaf parent or a deaf child, everyone is welcome. Siblings of deaf children are welcome too. This group is suitable for anyone who uses British Sign Language (BSL) or English, and interpreters will be provided. By joining the group, deaf families will get to meet people, gather tips and advice, and learn new things.





## Youth Service events

We offer regular activities and events throughout the year for deaf young people. We also run special one-off events and workshops.

### Our events

- Youth Club events (every two weeks - [see dates](#))
- Board games
- Friday Online club (once a month)
- Deliver workshops in young people's schools related to deafness
- Annual Camp (once a year)
- Parent And Toddler group (every Thursday & last Saturday of the month)
- Family British Sign Language class
- Mental Wellbeing support (counselling)

### Have a look at our website for more information:

- [Youth Club - Deaf Action](#)
- [Parent and toddler group - Deaf Action](#)
- [British Sign Language courses - Deaf Action](#)





# Communication

## Languages

Our young people have variety of communication styles. Some young people just use speech and other use BSL, or both speech and BSL. Our Youth Service believes that all staff, volunteers, and Youth Workers should be experienced in working with young people or toddlers. It would be great to have British Sign Language to Level 2 or more to remove barriers to communication for young people.

We will let parents know whether we can offer the free basic Family Sign Class as this is dependent on funding.

If you want to know more about learning BSL, you can find this information on our website:

- [British Sign Language courses - Deaf Action](#)

## Staying in touch

We send a regular email to parents and schools once a month detailing what is on in the Youth Service and upcoming events. We have a closed Facebook group for the Youth Service, our Parent and Toddler group, and for our volunteers, all in separate groups.

- For [Youth Club – \(20+\) Deaf Action Youth Club](#)
- For [parent and toddler group- \(20+\) Deaf Action Parent & Toddler Group | Facebook](#)
- For [volunteer/youth worker - \(20+\) Deaf Action volunteer/youth worker/interpreter team | Facebook](#)

We will text parents with information about anything related to their children.

We will invite new volunteers and Youth Workers to a WhatsApp group where we will share information and any updates.

Similarly, on the closed Facebook groups, we will post upcoming events, we ask that all volunteers access and comment which day or event they want to attend and be a part of, whether that is the Youth Service or toddler group.

Having the appropriate number of adults to young people proportion is particularly important to Deaf Action's Youth Service. If we have a trip planned, we may require more adults to support. This is why the WhatsApp group and closed Facebook group is an important communication channel and useful to stay connected.



# New youth members

Our process for young people who want to join as a member of our Deaf Action's Youth Service is as follows:

We welcome young people who are 9.5+ years old to join the Youth Service to know what to expect before they can start at age 10. Depending on the activity, they will be able to get involved. Not all activities are appropriate for all ages.

New members are welcome to turn up to one of our Youth Service events, or a parent can send an email to the to inform us of who would like to join. We will send and ask all new members to fill in the 'new member form' through Microsoft Forms, which has a BSL video as well.

- <https://forms.office.com/r/LpQd1nUFna>

When parents have completed the form, we will add their contact details and child's information to our systems. All information is held securely within GDPR guidelines at Deaf Action and will not be shared with any other services or used for anything other than Youth Service business.

Parents will receive regular emails about what is going on at the Youth Service. Young people can then visit the Youth Service.

We can provide support with travel. We will try our best to find someone who will be happy to support travelling between Glasgow and Edinburgh. We always post on Facebook to see who needs any support with travel then arrange the details through text.







# New parent & toddler members

Our process for joining our Parent & Toddler Group is as follows:

We welcome both deaf and hearing toddlers (with deaf parents) aged 0 to 5+ years to join our Parent & Toddler Group, part of Deaf Action's Youth Service. Older siblings are welcome too, but they must be mindful and responsible around younger children to ensure everyone's safety.

The Parent & Toddler Group meets every Thursday and on the last Saturday of each month.

New members are welcome to attend one of our Youth Service events, or parents can send an email to inform us of their interest in joining. We will then ask all new members to complete the 'new member form' through Microsoft Forms, which has a BSL video as well.

- <https://forms.office.com/e/X3gPRagVW3>

When parents have completed the form, we will add their contact details and child's information to our systems. All information is held securely within GDPR guidelines at Deaf Action and will not be shared with any other services or used for anything other than Youth Service business.

Parents will receive regular emails with updates about what's happening within the Youth Service.







# Process for recruitment

## For Volunteers and Youth Workers

You can apply through the Deaf Action website:

- [Volunteer – Deaf Action](#)

Volunteers must have:

- an interest in working with deaf young people
- have BSL signing skills
- be over age 18
- be a confident individual with strong teamworking skills

Once you have applied through our website, we will send a Microsoft form to get more information from you. We will then invite you to attend an informal interview online, via Zoom. We follow the same process for all volunteer applications using the same selection criteria and interview questions for everyone.

Deaf Action's Youth Worker posts are advertised via our website careers page. For these roles you must apply when we advertise for new members of the team. You apply through the job advert, where your application is successful you would then be invited to attend a formal interview either online or face to face.

After the interview, the panel will decide whether you are successful or not, and let you know by email.

If you are successful at interview, then you must also apply for a PVG. The PVG must be returned successful before you are given a start date. The People Advisor from Deaf Action will be in contact with you to process your application for the PVG and you will need to provide 3 forms of ID to office.

PVG is an external scheme, and receiving your certificate could be up to 4 to 6 weeks. As soon as you receive your PVG certificate, please let us know. If it arrives at Deaf Action first, we will notify you. Once you have a clear PVG certificate then we can issue start date. Then you will be able to join the team, and we will invite you to join the WhatsApp and Facebook groups to keep in touch and have clear communication.



*"Deaf Action is a place where I can be myself. I have hearing friends but they do not understand the difficulty of not being able to hear. Meeting other people in similar situations to myself is something that I will always be grateful for because I know that I am not alone."*



# Rules for our Youth Service

These rules are for everyone, whether you are a youth person, leader, staff or volunteer. We want our Youth Service to be the best place it can be.

- Respect others as individuals.
- Build respect.
- Take turns.
- Be friendly.
- If you want something, need anything, or are having problems, ask a member of staff.
- Do not swear or be rude to staff or other members.
- Listen.
- Do not bully or abuse anyone either physically, verbally, or emotionally.
- Participate and get involved in any new activities.
- Share.
- Have fun and work to the best of our ability.
- Respect other people's possessions
- No alcohol or drugs.
- No sexual misconduct, including harassment or discrimination.
- No violence and no gang activity.
- No weapons (knives included) or fireworks.
- Not allowed to wear any football clothes. If you do you will be sent home

Any time a rule is broken, this will count as a mark against the young person. Once a young person has broken the rules and has three or more marks against them, then we move to the following stages:

1. Warning - a formal spoken warning, given to the young person
2. Call to parents and final written warning
3. Expulsion from the youth group

For volunteers and Youth Workers – you must inform the Youth Coordinator if any of young people behave badly in the Youth Service. You can text or send an email to them. Do not talk to parents yourself without permission from the Youth Services Coordinator or the Assistant Youth Service Coordinator.



## Meet the team

Say hello to our Youth Service team! These are the people who keep the service running smoothly.



***Mitchell Graham***  
***Youth Services***  
***Coordinator***

***Charlotte Addison***  
***Assistant Youth***  
***Service Coordinator***

## Visiting Deaf Action

Want to know what to expect when you head to Deaf Action's offices in Edinburgh? Watch the video for a sneak peek!





## Roles & responsibilities

Deaf Action staff are responsible for:

- Conducting first aid
- Practicing food hygiene
- Following child protection laws
- Completing forms
- Planning for the youth service
- Creating policies
- Applying for any funding
- Budgeting
- Opening up and locking building, and
- Youth Service related paperwork

The Deaf Action team have the training and qualifications to do so.

Only the Youth Services Coordinator and Assistant Youth Service Coordinator are allowed to contact parents. If they are absent and someone else such as a Youth Worker is leading the event, then the Youth Services Coordinator or Assistant Youth Service Coordinator will inform parents of who will be responsible. Deaf Action plan to offer regular meetings and training for parents/volunteers/Youth Workers.

The Youth Worker's role is:

- To encourage young people to get involved in the Youth Service,
- To support them to build their confidence
- To observe individuals and groups and report any concerns to the Youth Service Coordinator and Assistant Youth Service Coordinator
- To be a role model to the young people
- Opening up and locking building, and
- Taking part in brainstorming sessions to share ideas for the Youth Service and events

We also have lots of volunteers and their role is an extremely rewarding way to spend their time. Volunteers can attend regularly or as a one off to Youth Service events to support and they are keen to learn about deafness and our service. Deaf Action value the contribution volunteers bring to the service giving amazing support to our young people, building their confidence by being strong confident individuals themselves bringing their invaluable own experiences to Youth Service.

We provide a BSL/English Interpreter at each Youth Service event to ensure smooth communication for everyone and to make sure everyone feels included. The interpreter is there to relay the communication, BSL to spoken English or spoken English and into BSL. The interpreter is an independent professional, attending events to help with communication they are not involved in the Youth Service in any other way. If you would like to talk to someone about the Youth Service, or if you are a parent looking to pass on information, you should speak directly to a volunteer, Youth Worker, or Deaf Action team member.





# Deaf Action building

## Front door access

- Always enter Deaf Action via the front door at 49 Albany Street, Edinburgh.
- Ring the doorbell and someone will come and open the door for you.
- Please bear with us to wait for someone to open door as we always lock the door for safety.
- Young people are not allowed to open the door.

## Car parking

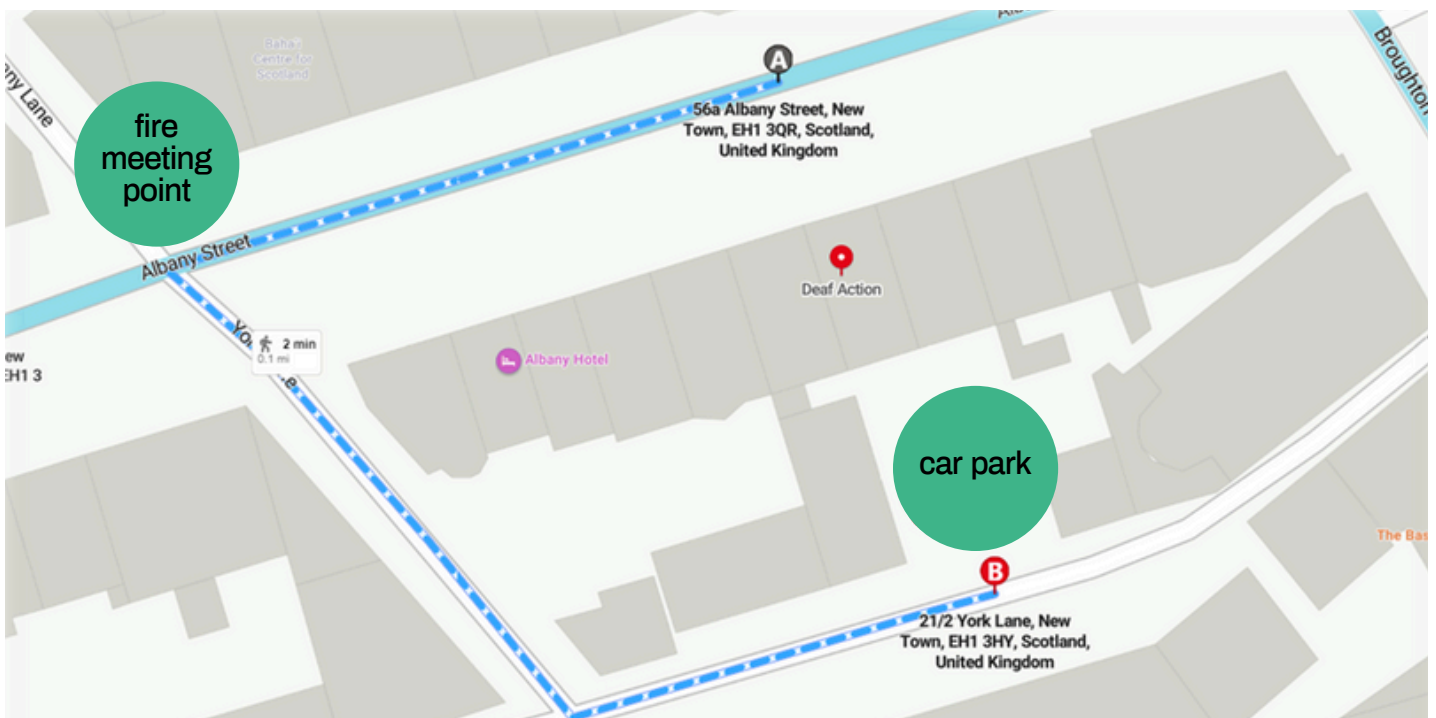
We only have three car park spaces for everyone, and so car park spaces must be booked in advance. Please note that our car park spaces are secured by locked poles which you will require the wall safe code. There is on-street car parking available on Albany Street and surrounding streets, but it is expensive. If you need to use the car park spaces behind Deaf Action's building, please ask and we can arrange it for you. We will confirm whether you are able to park.

## Fire exit

We hold fire alarm drills regularly, usually every Friday at 10am

If the alarm sounds/flashes when you are in the building, please leave immediately, following the instructions given to you and use the nearest fire exit.

- Basement - front Albany Street (A)
- Basement kitchen – go to Deaf Action's back garden and toward to York Lane to Deaf Action's car park then walk to meet others in Albany Hotel corner. (B)
- Church – exit out the back to Deaf Action's car park on York Lane then walk to meet other in Albany Hotel corner. (B)
- Do not use lift when there is a fire alarm.





# Duties for everyone

The basement and Church are not solely used by the Youth Service, other Deaf Action services or external hire use these spaces too. So please keep all spaces clean and put back everything in the exact same place as before.

Make sure you clean up after all activities.

Vacuum cleaners are available on each floor. You will find a Hoover in the basement office cupboard and for the learning centre you will find a Hoover in the small cupboard opposite the media room.

Cleaning materials are available in the cupboard on the ground floor next to the media room. There is a key to open this cupboard.

Remove any rubbish and place in big black bin in back garden near the car parking space (York Lane).

As part of our aim to build respect and responsibility, we expect our young people to take some responsibility in helping to with keeping the Youth Service clean and tidy. Adults are the key role models to young people in taking care of the building and leaving it as you would your home/ school/ Youth Service.

If anyone tells you, or you notice broken/ damaged wall or faulty light/door/switch and or other things, please report to a Deaf Action member or report it to resources team to investigate it.





## Dress code

All staff, Youth Workers and volunteer will wear the black t-shirt with Deaf Action logo. If adults do not have black t-shirt with Deaf Action logo do not worry, just wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriate.

No one is allowed to wear any football clothes in the Youth Service.



## Important information

### Confidentiality agreement

When volunteers or Youth Workers begin with the Deaf Action Youth service, they are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Please ask Youth Service Coordinator or Assistant Youth Service Coordinator for more information about this if you are interested. This agreement covers any discussion about the Youth Service members outside of the Youth Service who are interested in activities or behaviour of their young person at the club should contact the Youth Service Coordinator or Assistant Youth Service Coordinator, and not a Youth Worker or volunteer. Volunteers and Youth workers should not discuss the young people, their behaviour or attitudes or activities with anyone outside of the club. This includes on WhatsApp, or other social media. This is considered a breach of the agreement.

### Expense form

All expenses you incur for travel to Youth Service and your expenses will be covered. Please only buy items for the Youth Service if you are asked to do so by a member of the Youth Service staff team. If you have purchased something for Youth Service please keep the receipt as evidence of the expense, complete the expense claim form and send to the youth team for processing and payment.

### Meetings and training

All young people have the chance to contribute to the meeting at every event, where they can bring their own ideas for what they want to do in the Youth Service. Parents are welcome to share their ideas too. For all volunteers and Youth Workers, we will have a regular meeting for any updates or to brainstorm ideas to improve Youth Service and Parent & Toddler group. Training will be offered regularly. Please let us know if you want any specific training and we will be happy to offer it where it is related to the Youth Service.



# Protecting young people

## Child protection policy

The Youth Service Coordinator is the child protection policy officer in Deaf Action.

If you have any concerns whether small or big, regarding young people, please report them to the Youth Services Coordinator.

## Concerns and incident reporting

Our concern / incident report form is available through digital Microsoft forms. Please remember to write down everything that you saw, listened to, what you discussed or when you had to give first aid to young people. Use this link > <https://forms.office.com/r/PrVCfeVUiA>

Once you fill the information in the form then we may ask you questions or need to clarify the information.

The Youth Coordinator is responsible for the process of raising concerns or incidents.

It is important for all volunteers and Youth Workers to use the link to fill in the form straightway after event. Please do not wait, complete the form as quickly as possible. If you prefer to use BSL instead of written English, that is fine. We are happy to accept a BSL video transfer sent directly to the Youth Coordinator.

## Data protection

Deaf Action's Youth Service will keep all young people's information confidentiality and in a safe place. Parents will fill in the new member form, where we ask about your permission to take photo/filming of young people. If later, you change your mind about consent to photo and filming please let the Youth Services Coordinator or Assistant Youth Service Coordinator know.

For all volunteers, Youth Workers, or parents who participate in the Youth Service as supporters, please let us know if you do not want to participate in photography or filming. Deaf Action's Youth Service will not share your personal information, photographs, or filming with other organisation without your permission.

Please note we post on Deaf Action's social media channels e.g., website, closed Facebook and keep for our funding evidence and reporting.

## Conducting research

If volunteers, Youth Workers, or parents want to survey the young people, or ask them questions for any research purpose, these requests must be agreed by go through Youth Services Coordinator or Assistant Youth Service Coordinator first. You should not treat the young people as research participants without the explicit consent of the Deaf Action staff. It is not ethical to conduct research (no matter how informal the questions are) on young people at the Youth Service, and there are data protection concerns if this data is collected at the Youth Service.





## Policies and complaints

### Policies

Deaf Action have many different policies which are followed as best practice. Please feel free to ask if you would like further information on a specific policy, but the following policies are of more importance when managing the Youth Service.

- Whistleblowing
- Abusive behaviour
- Smoking
- Safeguarding
- Complaints

### Complaints

In the first instance please talk to Youth Services Coordinator or Assistant Youth Service Coordinator about your complaint or concern. They may need time to investigate your complaint. Please allow them to do any further investigation, and they will respond to your complaint email or text within 2 days.

To raise a complaint, please email us at [youthservice@deafaction.org](mailto:youthservice@deafaction.org)

If there is no action about your complaint after more than two weeks, then please contact our Community Services Manager: [lauren.mcanna@deafaction.org](mailto:lauren.mcanna@deafaction.org)





# Thanks for joining us!



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