

Hear Hear

News from Hearing Help Essex

Winter 2021 – Issue 56

Review of 2020

“Wow! What a year 2020 was for us all. In some ways the year passed us by so quickly, but at other times it was difficult when time seemed to pass by so slowly. We have all had our own unique experience of the pandemic, but I am relieved and pleased to say that the Hearing Help Essex family of staff, volunteers, and friends seem to have made it through in good health, continuing our mission as best we can. I am so proud of the way that the whole team has pulled together to keep our charity’s services running, and I am certain this hard work and dedication will continue throughout the duration of the pandemic.

It is now time for me to say a temporary ‘Farewell’ as I head off on Maternity leave; I am so pleased to be handing the reins to the Todorina Hammond who joins us from the National Deaf Children’s Society as our Interim CEO whilst I am on leave. Todorina will introduce herself below, but I feel certain she will be a valuable addition to the HHE team, and feel lucky to have recruited her. I look forward to catching up with you all again when I return in late 2021.”

Best wishes, Sophie Ede, CEO



It’s official...

Hearing Help Essex is very excited to present the newest member of our family - Sebastian Benedict Ede, born on the 14th January, he weighed 10lb 4oz. Sophie, Dom and Rusty are all doing great.



'Hello' from Todorina

'I am a firm believer that deaf people have a hearing heart, despite the fact that deafness is still underrepresented and misunderstood by many.

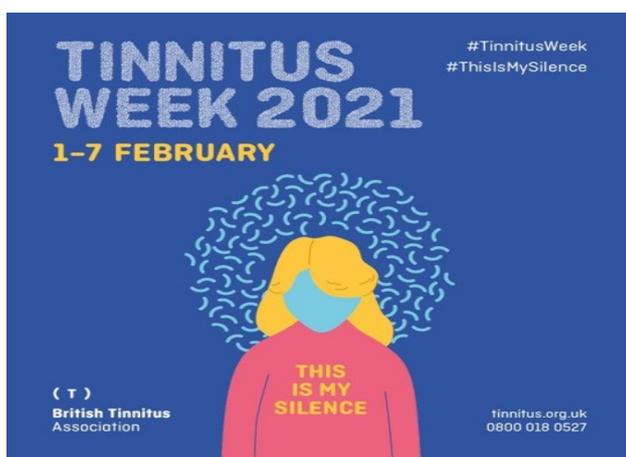
My dream as a child was to be a radio journalist, I can recall as a youngster pretending to have interviews with my teddies. As I grew to become a teenager, I realised that I was never going to be able to fulfil my dream as I had struggled with speech problems. I went to university and graduated with a degree in journalism; the only option for a career after this was to progress within the field of printed press. By the time I finished at university I was already successfully working for a local newspaper and later I would become a correspondent for a national newspaper in my native country of Bulgaria.



I never considered myself to be deaf enough to reach out for help, finding contentment in my own way of managing my hearing problems. As with any disability it did impact on my confidence and the choices I made; this changed when in my late 30's I started volunteering for a local charity. I found this new environment enabled me to find my own voice, become more confident and I discovered I loved helping others. I am now very passionate about helping others to develop their own unique deaf identity; to take back control and not allow a disability to limit their choices or dreams.

I am looking forward to being part of the Hearing Help Essex family until Sophie's return.

Tinnitus awareness week: Let's talk tinnitus!



The beginning of February marks the Tinnitus awareness week. Tinnitus affects one in eight people in the UK and like most 'invisible' illnesses is a huge challenge for people living with the constant noise in the head, which could be perceived either in one or both ears and could affect dramatically every day activities. Finding the right support could be a struggle for many people who are going through the emotional process and can cause stress and anxiety.

A new research, published by A.R.U. recently has found that 40% of people displaying COVID-19 symptoms has simultaneously experienced a worsening of their tinnitus (A.R.U, 2020).

As we are becoming more aware of the condition through the great education work of many charity organisations, it is now easier to find support. If you need more information about tinnitus, you can visit the British Tinnitus association website: <https://tinnitus.org.uk/>

Do not forget to reach for help! We are here for you: info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk

Hearing aid support service update

As we enter another difficult and challenging period with full lockdown, we are committed to meeting urgent needs for hearing help whilst also ensuring that we keep our clients, volunteers and staff as safe as possible throughout the resurgence of the pandemic.

Following the Government guidelines, we are pleased to say that we are able to operate a COVID-19 safe service for **NHS hearing aid cleaning and re-tubing** currently at five venues across the County. These are strictly **by appointment only** and we cannot accept any 'walk-in' service users. The venue locations are:

Hearing Help Essex Resource Centre in Central Chelmsford

St Michael's Hospital, Braintree Plantation Hall,

Heybridge

Dipple Medical Centre, Pitsea

Stansted Free Church, Stansted

We are continuing to offer contact free

door-step visits for those who are extremely vulnerable, or unable to travel.



Our dedicated volunteers at the Heybridge session

VIRTUALLY SPEAKING!

Like many organisations we have needed to adapt and deliver online educational sessions via Zoom. We are delighted to have delivered a significant number of presentations on living with hearing loss to community groups, such as the WI, Rotary, Luncheon and Social Clubs, which have been met with great success. Below are some of the feedback that we received:

"Your talk was very well received - everyone was very impressed by your preparedness and the professionalism of your presentation. Thank you"

"A note to say how much we enjoyed your talk this evening. We all found it very interesting and informative"

Are you a member of a group or club that requires a Guest Speaker over Zoom? Or do you know anyone who would? Please contact us, we would love to hear from you. Tel: 01245 496 347 or email: info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk

Information, Advice & Guidance Service

ACCESS FOR ALL - STAGETEXT

We are passionate about supporting accessible solutions for people with hearing loss and are delighted to co-partner with Stagertext, in raising awareness of how, as an organisation, they make theatre and culture accessible to deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people.

The performing arts is something that we all enjoy. Stagertext provides captioning and live subtitling services to theatres and other arts venues to make their activities accessible to people who are d/Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. In these challenging pandemic times, digital, online platforms are available for us all to engage and still enjoy the arts.

On Tuesday 2nd March we are opening the doors to invite our team of Volunteers to find out more about Stagertext as a platform to highlight its fantastic services!

This promises to be an enjoyable and educational 1 hour-session, with live subtitling and time for Q & A. The session is planned to start at 6.30pm. It is particularly beneficial if:

- You ever chat with friends and family about their hobbies especially about arts and culture and how they can enjoy the arts, despite deafness
- You ever talk about the fear of missing out on arts/culture and entertainment because of deafness
- You ever wonder how captioning or live subtitling can maximise an individual's experience at live **performances even with any hearing devices.**
- You want to know more about engaging with arts and culture during the pandemic.

Hearing Help Essex Volunteers & Supporters who are interested in joining us at this highly rewarding session will need to register their interest by latest 23rd February.

Tel: 01245 496347 or email: info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk

Further **Stagertext** sessions are being planned. If your organisation or anyone you know would benefit from participating and finding out more, please contact us.



ASSISTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

ECL CARE SOLUTIONS

We are delighted to advise that our friends at ECL Sensory are now suppliers of assistive equipment for people with hearing loss. They are offering a substantial range of product solutions through an online shopping facility (ECL Care Solutions), which is aimed to meet many hearing loss requirements. Alerting devices, TV listening, personal listening devices and telephones all feature at competitive prices.

You can find out more about the products and view things through this link:

<https://www.eclcaresolutions.co.uk/sensory>

ECL also have a helpline where you can speak to an adviser personally. Tel: 0333 920 8722

Thank you to all our amazing Super-Hear-O's!

We are lucky to have so many dedicated volunteers that help us deliver our work and we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone. It has been such a difficult time, as many of the volunteers have had to shield themselves due to their age, underlying health conditions, or to protect family members.

During the pandemic, we have seen those who are still able to support us taking an enormous challenge, for which we are very grateful, and we have received so many acts of kindness from the people that we support.

We had to quickly adapt how we would deliver our hearing aid support sessions and home visits, and all of our volunteers have helped make it work and been incredibly supportive of the changes, and they still go above and beyond to help our clients, despite the COVID-19 hurdles. In a normal year we would have had regular catch ups through coffee mornings and training days, unfortunately we have not been able to all get together for some time, but instead have had some virtual catch up's via Zoom. It has been great to keep in touch and we hope we can meet in person again in the not-too-distant future.

Although, we are unable to take on new volunteers until restrictions ease if you would like to register your interest in volunteering with us as either a Hearing Aid Support Service Technical Volunteer or Meet and Greet host in the future please email:

sarah.johnson@hearinghelpessex.org.uk



ACCESS TO WORK

Did you know that 'ACCESS TO WORK' can help you with your employment if you have a hearing loss?

In these difficult and challenging pandemic times, if you are experiencing worries around your employment, then hear this....

You are protected by the Equality Act 2010. It requires employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' for deaf and hard of hearing people so that they are not disadvantaged.

Under the Equality Act 2010, you have the right to 'Access to Work', a government funded grant that can assist your employer with the costs of providing practical support in the workplace such as equipment or support workers.

More information and how to apply is found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Fundraising News

A Very BIG Thank you to all our Friends and Supporters who have given so generously during 2020. Our collection tins have raised over £3,476 since April which is a fantastic amount.

Thank you to all groups who have given significant gifts this year, enabling us to continue expanding our services.

Fun Walk 2020

Back in September the office team walked their socks off for the virtual Billericay Fun Walk. We aimed to walk 200km throughout September between us, but we smashed our target and collectively walked over 300km!

The Fun Walk was held virtually in 2020 and everyone had to keep a log of the miles they clocked up and submit them to the Fun Walk.

We do have to admit a lot of them were completed by our CEO Sophie Ede whilst on her holiday in Cornwall with her gorgeous Hearing Dog Rusty by her side, all whilst being pregnant! Hats off to Sophie!



We raised an amazing £714 for the charity, surpassing our target of £500! The Fun Walk Trust bonus pot donated a further 50p for every £1 raised which is amazing and really helps us to continue to make a difference to those living with hearing loss across Essex. We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who donated to us for completing the walk ... were already looking forward to 2021's walk!

ECF Essex Coronavirus response and recovery grant

We are extremely grateful to Essex Community Foundation for the COVID-19 funding, which has helped us to stay open during the entire lockdown periods. The funding helped us to cover the unexpected cost associated with running the services in a safe and secure environment. With the grant we were able to extend the help line opening hours and sustain the delivery of our contact free door-step visits. We have received many positive feedbacks, but the one that summed up everything we do, is from the son of one of our clients who contacted us very worried that



**Essex
Community
Foundation**

he is unable to reach his mother, as he lives in a different County! With the help of our experienced staff, we have managed quickly to offer the best possible telephone solution to keep the family connected! We received the following message: A massive thank you HHE! You are making a real difference in people's lives.

Useful contacts:

Partner Organisations

ECL Sensory Service

03330 133 262

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

0300 303 0088

Royal Association for Deaf People

0300 688 2525

Independent Ear Wax Removal:

Please mention HHE when booking

Christ Church Clinic, Braintree

T. 01376 329524

W. christchurchclinics.co.uk

Digiclear Gt Dunmow/Bishop's Stortford

T. 01279 757077

W. digiclearhearing.co.uk

Click Hearing, Chelmsford/Billericay

T. 0800 6121 345

W. clickhearing.com

Dr M Carmaciu, Chelmsford

T. 01245 801234

W. phoenixhospitalchelmsford.com

Hearing Care Centre, Colchester and North East Essex

T. 01206 760839

W. thehearingcarecentre.co.uk

County Hearing Care, Brentwood

T. 01277 264938

W. countyhearing.co.uk

Essex Ears, Billericay/Shenfield

T. 07444 016163

W. essexears.com

NHS Audiology Departments

Addenbrooke's Hospital

01223 217797

Basildon Hospital

01268 394732

Broomfield Hospital

01245 513237

St. Margaret's Hospital

01279 827126

Colchester Hospital

01206 744532

Southend Hospital

01702 385019

Purchasing Equipment?

The following companies send us a donation if you mention our name when ordering. For further advice please contact the Resource Centre.

Hearing Products

Please quote HHE/REF

Telephone: 01614 808003

www.hear4you.com/shop

Sarabec – quote HHE

Telephone: 01642 247789

Text phone: 01642 244148

www.sarabec.com

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support:



Uttlesford District Council



The Edward Gostling Foundation

To contact the team at Hearing Help Essex:

Phone: 01245 496347

Text: 07950 406 173

Email: info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk

www.hearinghelpessex.org.uk



Hearing Help Essex

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