

# THE DEAF HEALTH CHARITY SIGNHEALTH



Annual Review

**2018**

## Who we are and what we do

SignHealth exists to improve the health and wellbeing of Deaf people.

We provide a range of services that improve the health and wellbeing of Deaf people. We also campaign to remove the barriers Deaf people face when trying to access health services.

SignHealth is proud that the majority of staff are Deaf. That means services are delivered by people who are Deaf or fluent in sign language.



Our work is varied and aims to give Deaf people easier access to health, social care, and information – as well as providing services which are not provided elsewhere. Our work is funded by the NHS, local authorities, grants from trusts or statutory bodies, and by donations from people like you.

Deaf people have poorer health than hearing people, largely because access to health services and health information isn't routinely provided in sign language. **We think it's time for change.**

**70%**  
OF DEAF PEOPLE  
WHO HAVEN'T BEEN TO THEIR GP  
RECENTLY WANTED TO BUT DIDN'T  
GO MAINLY BECAUSE  
THERE WAS  
NO INTERPRETER

**ONLY 3% OF DEAF PEOPLE  
WANT TO COMMUNICATE  
WITH THEIR DOCTOR  
BY LIPREADING  
BUT 40% ARE FORCED TO**

**8 IN 10  
DEAF PEOPLE  
WANT TO COMMUNICATE USING BSL  
BUT ONLY 3 IN 10  
ARE GIVEN THE CHANCE**

## Message from the Chair



It has been a very important year in SignHealth's journey and I am proud to have been elected as Chair of the Board of Trustees to lead this much-needed Deaf people's organisation.

This year we have supported hundreds of Deaf people to improve their health, whether in our care homes, through our community based outreach teams, by receiving psychological therapy from Deaf therapists in BSL (British Sign Language) or through our many other excellent services focused on removing barriers to health and wellbeing.

During the year we have completed a very thorough governance review and have updated our constitution, amended our committee structure and welcomed five new trustees onto the Board. This now means that, for the first time in SignHealth's history, a Board with a majority of Deaf people is leading the organisation – a vital development to ensure 'nothing about us, without us'.

On behalf of my board, I would also like to sincerely thank the fabulous SignHealth staff for their concerted efforts this year in bringing SignHealth to the strong foundation we now enjoy. An organisation is only as extraordinary as its people, and we are blessed with some extraordinary talent.



Jackie Driver, Chair

## 2017/18 at a glance



Our CQC registered  
care homes



Our **Outreach  
services** provided

**11,973**

hours of support

- 6,513 hours  
in London
- &
- 5,460 hours  
in Manchester

## Summary of achievements

Over the past 12 months we have had many successes. This annual review focuses on some of the highlights.

**1**

**Changes at SignHealth**  
Becoming more Deaf-led

**2**

**Launch of online therapy**  
Making therapy in BSL available UK-wide

**3**

**Continued progress at DeafHope**  
New partnerships and further funding

**4**

**Proven effectiveness in care homes**  
Anthony's amazing journey

**5**

**Another successful sign2sing**  
Ambassador Tony shares why he volunteers

**6**

**Fundraising for SignHealth**  
Marathons, mountains and more



# 1 Changes at SignHealth

During 2017/18 some major changes took place at SignHealth, which helped us continue on our mission to become a more Deaf-led organisation.

In July 2017 we decided to relocate our head office to London.

This means that staff from finance, fundraising and HR now sit next to colleagues from our award-winning domestic abuse service, DeafHope, and our London Outreach team.

As a national organisation, it is great to have a London home.

We are already seeing the benefits of being nearer to partners in the NHS, government departments



SignHealth is forming new partnerships, including with Bien Venue.

and other national third sector organisations.

“SignHealth already has strong links in London, and has run services there for many years. We want to build on these and continue to improve the health of Deaf people in London and beyond,” James Watson-O’Neill, Chief Executive.



Sadhona Sheffield from the Finance Team

for each client so they can get online more easily and explore the wide variety of timesaving apps available, from online banking to shopping.

## All staff signing

Our head office is moving towards being a signing environment. Staff have fully embraced this and a record number of hearing staff gained their Level 2 BSL certificates this year.

This equality is also seen in the appointment of our new trustees, with five out of eight board members being deaf. This includes our new chair Jackie Driver who is also Deaf.

With the move behind us we now look forward to an exciting year ahead in our new home.

“ Here in Balham I have got to know my colleagues a lot better, since everyone mixes at lunchtimes; and many hearing staff are learning BSL and can communicate in sign language.”

*Alison France, Office Manager and PA to the CEO*

## Online

The move has also given us the opportunity to review our record keeping and the new office is almost completely paperless. Across our projects, staff and clients are being encouraged to take more processes online.

Our care homes have recently been given a Samsung tablet



## 2 Launch of Online Therapy

SignHealth has been at the forefront of providing therapy in BSL. However, lack of funding has made it difficult for us to support everyone who needs our help.

This year we have made therapy more accessible by taking our award-winning face-to-face service online.

Online therapy has enabled Amir\* to access counselling in BSL for the first time in his life, despite experiencing issues with his mental health for many years.

He frequently suffers panic attacks and is unable to leave home unaccompanied, which has made attending appointments very difficult.

Being able to access therapy through our online platform means Amir can see a therapist without needing to leave the house. He no longer has to rely on people to take him to an appointment.

The online therapy sessions take the same format as conventional face-to-face sessions, and are provided by the same highly qualified, signing therapists. The main difference is that by providing the service online, therapy sessions are available to Deaf people throughout the UK.

### Positive

This move to online provision has been made possible by funding from the Clothworkers Foundation and the BUPA Foundation, as well as a £49,150 grant from the 'Tech for Good' Comic Relief in April 2017.

So far feedback from our clients and therapists has been very positive. The service will continue to grow and develop over the coming year. This will reduce some of the practical barriers Deaf people face when wanting support.

### Commissioning

Meanwhile we have been working hard to reduce some of the barriers caused by the way the NHS commissions services.



Because the Deaf community is geographically dispersed many NHS commissioners do not think there are enough Deaf people in their area to justify commissioning our service.



**Online therapy helps us address the lack of primary care provision available for Deaf people experiencing mental health issues."**

*Dr Sarah Powell, Clinical Lead*

This leads to delays and extra costs as we have to get funding approved from different commissioners in every part of the country.

Nobody wins in this situation but this year we have made progress and hope a solution is now within reach.



# 3 Continued progress at DeafHope

Over the last 12 months our award-winning domestic abuse service, DeafHope, has continued to go from strength to strength.

We have formed new partnerships and secured funding from a variety of sources. This has enabled us to reach even more people, including previously unsupported groups such as Deaf men who have experienced abuse.

Our Young DeafHope service has continued to support and educate young people in the Deaf community through our

work in schools.

We have supported people like Ryan\*, who learnt about sexual consent during one of our Healthy Relationship workshops at his secondary school.

Immediately after the session he disclosed to us he had been raped. The workshop made him realise that what had happened was wrong.

We liaised with his school, his parents (with his permission) and the police about the incident.

We supported him in meeting the police, liaised with the police during the case and referred him to other agencies that could further support him.

We visited him for 1:1 sessions after his disclosure until he was safe and supported. We still liaise with his school to check he is safe and remind him we are here to help.

Expansion this year has been made possible through the support of organisations like the People's Postcode Trust, who awarded us **£19,100** to fund a specially trained Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) and increase our work across Sussex.

We were also awarded **£200,000** from the Tampon Tax Fund to expand our work in Manchester.

Our DeafHope service is only made possible through donations and grants, like those from our largest funder London Councils, who fund much of our work in London. We are very grateful to everyone who



Vicki Trapps, DeafHope IDVA

funds the service and could not continue without this support. The DeafHope team are regularly recognised and commended by external organisations, most recently by SafeLives who named our IDVA Viki Trapps as 'Star of the Month!' The Home Office consulted the service about the new domestic abuse bill and a recent report by Women's Aid praised the work we do.



**DeafHope provides a vital service to some of the most marginalised service users and they are a great resource to have within the sector."**

*Women's Aid report*



# 4 Proven effectiveness in our homes

Claridge Road is a CQC-registered care home in Manchester. It is home to six Deaf people, all of whom experience complex mental health problems.

It provides a supportive signing environment where the communication needs of the residents are paramount, with all staff being either Deaf or hearing but fluent signers.

Our residential homes provide people with the opportunity to develop key life skills that enable them to live more independently. This is achieved through a very individualised, person-centred approach,

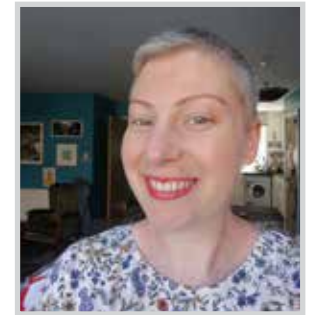
which has proved highly effective.

This effectiveness was recently highlighted by the incredible progress that Anthony\*, one of the residents living at Claridge Road. Anthony has experienced mental distress for many years and has found it very difficult to access the support he needed in the hearing world.

In 2011 Anthony was referred to SignHealth’s outreach team in Manchester and this was when his life began to change.

In 2014 Anthony moved to our residential home in Claridge Road and this was another big and positive change. Finally he was in a supportive, signing environment with people who understood his needs.

With the support of staff, Anthony began to address his weight. Paranoia and anxiety had



Heather Docherty, Support Worker

Staff worked closely with Anthony to devise a healthy eating plan and supported him to go shopping twice a week. Anthony’s key worker, Heather, was determined that Anthony should lead these changes.

## Operation

Anthony has now lost five stone, which has enabled him to have the much needed hernia operation. He now loves swimming and walking with staff. Healthy eating and exercise has become a way of life for him.

**“ I made very sure that Anthony was involved in every aspect of his support planning, as we are always keen for him to NEVER be simply following staff advice – but to understand about his own body and health.”**

*Heather Docherty, Support Worker*

previously prevented him from leaving the house and a diet of ready meals had caused him to become overweight. Anthony also needed a hernia operation, which couldn’t be performed until he lost weight.

The people who live in our care homes all come to us with very individual experiences and at SignHealth we pride ourselves on providing a person-centred approach that is appropriate for each of them.



# 5 Another successful sign2sing

In February 2018, people in schools, community halls and offices from across the UK came together to take part in our annual fundraising event sign2sing.

Between 5th and 11th February approximately 50,000 school children, firemen, brownies, Lord Mayors, journalists, parents, teachers, office workers and choirs held events across the UK to sign, sing and raise money for SignHealth.

Part of the event's success is its ability to bring together communities, and we couldn't

do this without the support of our fantastic sign2sing ambassadors.

These volunteers are located across the UK and visit local schools, community groups and businesses to spread the word about sign2sing.

Together, they raised an amazing £30,000 – with the total still increasing.

One of these volunteers is Tony Wawryk, who recently retired after 39 years in business and wanted to use the public speaking skills he'd acquired to promote a cause whose good work "flies under the radar".

Tony visited a number of schools during sign2sing week and was struck by the high levels of excitement wherever he went.



**I hope I can use some of the skills acquired in my career to contribute in some small way to helping make music and sports more accessible to people."**

*Tony Wawryk,  
sign2sing ambassador*

"Raising the awareness amongst children is really important to me. The enthusiasm they show for [sign2sing] is so touching."

Tony successfully signed up a number of new schools for



Tony Wawryk, sign2sing ambassador

sign2sing and is looking forward to increasing that number next year.

We also received a fantastic response to sign2sing from the Portsmouth Music Hub, who encouraged the whole of Portsmouth to sign, sing and raise money for SignHealth.

They also made a wonderful film which you can see on the sign2sing website. If you are interested in becoming a sign2sing ambassador, or taking part in sign2sing, then please see our website [www.sign2sing.org.uk](http://www.sign2sing.org.uk).

Next year will be very special, as we have been given permission to use Greatest Day by pop legends Take That. It's going to be the greatest sign2sing yet!



# 6 Fundraising for SignHeath

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This year our supporters have raised money for SignHealth in a variety of different ways – thank you to all of you! Below are just a few of the people who have made a difference this year.

We were delighted with a Radio 4 Appeal in April 2017. Oscar-winning film producer and actress Rachel Shenton presented the appeal for us and raised **£10,510**.



Thank you Rachel (and congratulations once again on your Oscar win for The Silent Child!).

And thank you to all the wonderful people who donated.

**WAITROSE & PARTNERS** Between June and August 2017 SignHealth was chosen to be part of the Waitrose Online

Community Matters scheme. Customers were asked to choose a charity to support and an overwhelming 73,063 chose SignHealth! This meant that altogether SignHealth received an amazing **£12,398** from Waitrose!



On 25th August 2017 Sean Lucas, Michael Woods and Todd Garner, three Deaf friends known as The Summit Seekers, raised **£520** for SignHealth by doing the National Three Peaks Challenge.

They climbed Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafell Pike in England and Snowdon in Wales, all in 24 hours! The team will be taking

on more challenges in the future, preparing for their dream – climbing to Mount Everest Base Camp.

On 25th February 2018, Wayne Barrow (BSL Campaigner/TV Presenter/Founder of the Wayne Barrow Academy) undertook an incredible challenge to raise money – 12 hours non-stop exercise.



Despite the cold weather and exhaustion the sign2sing ambassador pressed on and completed all 12 hours – raising in total over **£1,000!**



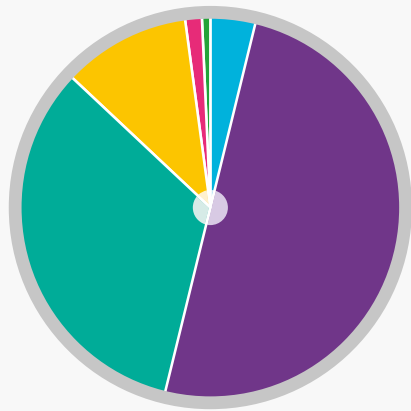
On 23rd April 2017 four amazing people ran the London Marathon for SignHealth raising an incredible **£19,000!**

Our heartfelt thanks to David Winchcombe and all at DPD, Andy Walsh, Sophie Kendrick and Jesal Thakker for all of the training, dedication and fantastic fundraising.

# Our finances 2017/18

Despite ending the year with a deficit, after a financial restructure and a head office move, we now have a healthier balance sheet and are working towards a balanced budget for 2018/19. For a copy of the full Audited Financial Statements for 2017/18 please contact us at [info@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:info@signhealth.org.uk).

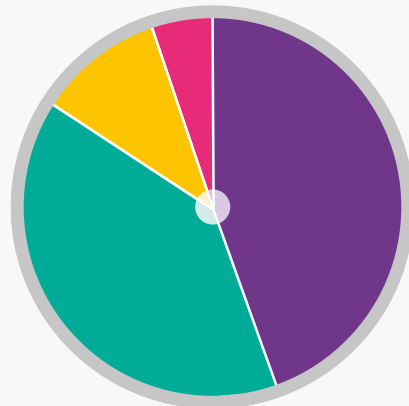
## Income £5,018,823



- Residential services  
£2,507,676
- Support services  
£1,675,788
- Interpreter Now  
£546,204
- Donations & legacies  
£189,210
- Fundraising events  
£59,750
- Investments  
£40,195

## Expenditure £5,463,781

- Residential services  
£2,433,691
- Support services  
£2,168,011
- Interpreter Now  
£580,456
- Raising funds  
£281,624



# Thank you from SignHealth

Thank you to everyone who has supported our work. You have made a real difference. We couldn't do it without you!



Just some of supporters and staff who have made it such a wonderful year.

# How you can support us

There are lots of ways to support SignHealth's work. For more information on how you can get involved email:

[fundraising@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@signhealth.org.uk)

You can also make a donation on our website:

[signhealth.org.uk/donation-form](https://signhealth.org.uk/donation-form)

SignHealth is a charity registered in England & Wales (1011056) and Scotland (SC044122).

## Registered address

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