

Signed consultation for the My Deaf Story Youth Heritage project

Deaf young people in West and South Yorkshire are going to meet deaf comedians, poets and historians to learn about their culture and heritage in a fun way. This is because there are approximately 45,000 deaf children in the UK who are socially excluded and do not understand their deafness. This is largely due to the policy of assimilation in education, as approximately 90% of deaf children attend hearing mainstream schools, with the majority having no other deaf peer in their school. So there is a dire need for young people to understand their deaf heritage by understanding how their past affects their present and future.

95% of parents of deaf children are hearing and know little or nothing about deaf issues, so it is vital that they receive full information about the needs of deaf children in order to deal with the new issues arising from having a deaf child. Deaf young people will make a video, explaining that not only have they compiled the script and been involved in making the film, but what they have learnt over the course of the project. This will engage parents in their learning, and they will act as positive role models for parents to see what is possible for their deaf child to achieve.

The barriers deaf young people have to understand their heritage, and recording and interpreting it, are due to mainstream society's attitudes to sign language, the resulting limited education and English skills due to these attitudes, and because it is hard to learn when not able to hear, even with hearing aids and cochlear implants. This project will address the members' needs by ensuring that all learning opportunities are presented in British Sign Language.

Explaining the significance of the awards, Fiona Spiers Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “It is so important for young people to learn about their past and understand where they have come from. This project will give young people from the DEX Deaf Youth Council a host of new skills, boost their confidence and share their heritage with more people.”

Notes to editors

Deaf Ex-Mainstreamers Group (DEX) is a deaf-led organisation set up to support deaf people educated in mainstream education by: campaigning based on its research, auditing and mapping, feasibility study and literature reviews for a national sign bilingual framework; providing information and support for parents with newly identified deaf children with understanding the effects of normalisation; Influence government policy on sign language and bilingualism. DEX uses the term 'deaf' to mean all levels of hearing loss, from mild to profound. FInd our more on the DEX website.

DEX Deaf Youth Council (DDYC) is a group of deaf and deafblind people that has recently affiliated to DEX which currently is a focus group for participation with the Department for Education and local service providers to ensure deaf children have a voice in service development.

Young Lives Consortium Wakefield is a national organisation with local membership groups working with children and young people aged 0-25 years, across the Wakefield District to ensure that every child is able to meet the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Further information

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