

DEAF FRIENDLY FOOTBALL CLUB PROJECT 2006 - 2009

Training & empowering deaf people through football



What is the Deaf Friendly FC project?

The NDCS Deaf Friendly FC project is designed to remove the barriers to participation in football that many deaf children and young deaf people face. These barriers include –

- lack of appropriate communication support (e.g. BSL communicators)
- lack of local football opportunities for deaf children to participate in
- myths & misconceptions about deafness
- lack of qualified deaf football coaches, officials and administrators
- insufficient and inaccessible information about football opportunities
- lack of structured player pathways for progression for young deaf players

By working at all levels of the game over the three years of the project, NDCS will address each of these barriers through the development of information and resources, the provision of training and the setting up of a youth deaf football infrastructure in England.

How is the project funded?

NDCS has been awarded £251,646 towards the three year project. The funding has come from a number of organisations with 80% from the Football Foundation and the remainder from Phonak UK Ltd (a hearing aid manufacturer) and Sportsmatch (an organisation that matches funds given by companies for sports projects)

How will we provide deaf children with playing opportunities?

There are two ways that deaf children and young people can get involved in football through our project:

1. *Mainstream football* – Football clubs can sign up to our **Deaf Friendly Football Club Pledge** and agree to include and support deaf children within their existing teams, coaching sessions and other activities. The NDCS will support these clubs through our resources (DVD, information booklet, website), providing clubs with places on our *Coaching Deaf Footballers course* and *BSL for Football course* and promoting their new status in local media, on our website and by contacting groups, schools and individuals we know of in their region.
2. *Deaf specific football* – Each year we work with four professional football clubs and deaf football clubs (if there is one in the area) to develop a one day deaf friendly football festival for deaf children and young people. Once this event has taken place, we aim to create sustainable, regular coaching sessions delivered by the professional club for deaf children to attend. The long-term aim is to develop a deaf youth team for children to represent at tournaments at both local and national level. Coaches from the professional club will gain access to all our resources and will be offered places on our courses mentioned above. We will also promote the festival and coaching sessions to the local media, on our website and by contacting groups, schools and individuals we know of in the region.

What are the priorities for year three?

Continue the success of the first two years of the project. Reach all targets, particularly ensuring there are 46 Deaf Friendly Football Clubs and ensure there is such a club within every County FA region in England. We will continue to provide clubs with our resources and courses to ensure they feel confident when coaching deaf footballers. We will also be developing new ideas to ensure we can continue with the funding for the project from 2010-12 and continue to provide support and organisation to clubs who become part of our project. (PTO for our targets and contacts)

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What do we aim to achieve by the end of the project?

- 46 FA Charter Standard / Football in the Community schemes to sign up to the *Deaf Friendly Football Club Pledge* (one per County FA)
- Worked with 12 professional football clubs and deaf football clubs to deliver deaf friendly football festivals and subsequent regular coaching sessions
- Trained 24 deaf young people to FA Level 2 coaching standard
- Delivered our Coaching Deaf Footballers course to over 70 Football in the Community Officers, FA coaches and County Development Officers
- Engaged over 300 deaf children & young people in football festivals
- Engaged over 200 deaf children & young people in regular football opportunities
- Produced resource toolkit for both mainstream & deaf football clubs to develop football for deaf children and young people (*Coaching Deaf Footballers course* and *BSL for Football course*)
- Produce DVD resource designed to help coaches, clubs and football in the community schemes include deaf children within their existing football activities (called the *Introduction to Coaching Deaf Footballers DVD*)
- Hosted 3 annual Deaf Youth Football Tournaments
- Hosted Deaf Youth Football Conference to share good practice, developments and training
- Recruited & sustained the post of NDCS Football Development Officer

What is the DFFC Pledge?

The Pledge is designed to give Charter Standard clubs guidelines on how to ensure their club is 'deaf friendly' and enables deaf children and young people to take part fully in playing, coaching and social opportunities in their club.

Clubs will receive an A3 poster that can be displayed in their club house and will include the named contact that anyone can get in touch with to discuss deaf football opportunities at the club. They will also receive an A5 leaflet that acts as the Pledge itself and this includes some guidelines regarding how to become a 'deaf friendly' club. The Pledge will also be signed by a club representative to show they are committed to the project.

By signing up to the Pledge, clubs can access support from the NDCS Football Development Officer and their coaches can attend the various deaf awareness courses organised by the NDCS.

Clubs will only need to complete an occasional monitoring form so we know how many deaf children have accessed their services since joining. There is no need for clubs to hold deaf specific activities, they only need to be welcoming to all deaf children should they wish to join a club side.

What is the Coaching Deaf Footballers course?

Based on the FA Coaching Disabled Footballers course and an NDCS publication called Deaf Friendly Schools, the course is designed to give coaches a basic awareness of deafness and also communication tips and advice. As deaf footballers are just as able as their hearing peers, there is no need for coaches to change their coaching sessions, merely the way they communicate their ideas and instructions. All coaches will receive a certificate of attendance and will undertake both theory and practical work.

It is an NDCS course with the FA officially recognising and supporting it at this stage. In the future, the plan is to role it out as an official FA course and County FAs will be able to organise and run their own courses.

What is the BSL for Football course?

Most BSL Level 1 courses take place over one evening a week for between 15 and 28 weeks. This is a big commitment for busy coaches and FitC staff so we have developed our own, one-day BSL course designed with football coaches in mind. The course has been developed with an outside company called Communication Plus.

Initially, the course will only be run in areas where our partner clubs are based. This may change in the future and we aim to run the courses across the country.

Who to contact?

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