



# Trustee Pack

# Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee at MSDP...

We are a charity with a long history and can trace our roots back to 1864 making us one of the oldest d/Deaf charities in the country. Our communities are central to our services and as a result we are an important part of the d/Deaf and hard of hearing community in Merseyside.

Being a trustee of MSDP is a hugely rewarding role and what makes us different from other charities is our culture and specialisms. Most of our staff team are Deaf and we have frontline staff who are able to communicate in British Sign Language and Deaf-Blind Manual/Hands on. New Trustees will benefit from learning about deafness, the inequalities that exist in access to

mainstream services and the impact of those barriers on our beneficiaries.

Across the sector Covid has had a significant impact on charitable income and how voluntary sector services are delivered. Joining the Board of MSDP at this time will provide skills in change management, governance, people management and service development. We are looking for Trustees that can help us evolve and grow so we are here to support our communities for generations to come.

Our meetings are fully accessible so we welcome the involvement of people from across the d/Deaf and hearing communities.



**Joanne Parr**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Elaine McDonald**  
Chair of Trustees

# Being Deaf in Merseyside

There are 11 million Deaf or hard of hearing people in the UK, and 70,000 British Sign Language (BSL) users. Many Deaf people don't view their hearing impairment as a disability and they are proud to be part of a community with such a rich cultural heritage.

However, Deaf people in the UK are at a huge disadvantage compared to the hearing population, and this disadvantage starts at a young age. The vast majority of d/Deaf children have parents who are able to hear, and as many parents do not learn BSL this can make communication very difficult.

This problem is exacerbated by a lack of support within the school system, the consequence of which is a big gap in educational attainment between Deaf and hearing children. This makes Deaf people less employable and less able to fulfil their potential.

For most Deaf people, BSL is their first language and as such it can be a challenge to engage with written English. This means that there is a huge amount of information that is just not available to Deaf people, which impacts all aspects of their lives.

For example, navigating the benefits system, dealing with utility companies and getting financial advice can be extremely challenging as these services are rarely accessible in BSL. Moreover, a general lack of deaf awareness amongst the general public can also mean that Deaf people feel socially isolated and marginalised.

This is the reality for many Deaf people in Merseyside and across the UK. At MSDP we do not think this is acceptable and we are devoted to helping Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing people achieve a full, active and influencing role in mainstream society.

Membership of the **MSDP Deaf & hard of hearing social clubs**

450

**British Sign Language users aged 16+**

350

Data from ONS 2011

▶ People predicted to have a moderate or severe hearing impairment by **2025**

Age 18-64

75,553

4,626

data from pansi.org.uk

Age 64+

155,994

20,112

data from poppi.org.uk

**Some hearing loss**

**Severe hearing loss**

# A brief history of MSDP

MSDP can trace its routes all the way back to 1864 when George Healey established the Liverpool Adult Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society in order to give Deaf People equal access to the Scriptures. It operated from a single room in the School for the Deaf and Dumb in Oxford Street. It soon outgrew this space and in 1877 the Society started a building fund with the aim of creating more suitable premises. The fund was very successful. In fact, in a remarkable feat of fundraising the Society managed to attract a donation of £5 from Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

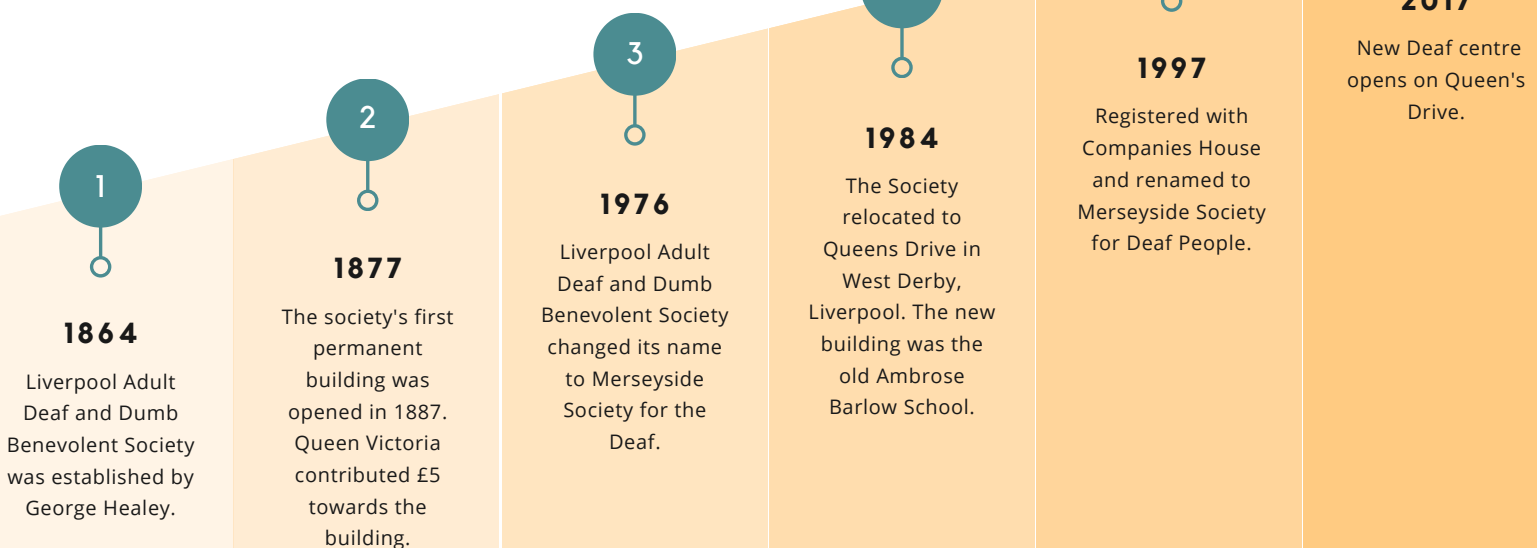
In 1886 the committee got a 2000 year lease from Lord Sefton for the land of Princess Avenue and Parkway. On the land they built a magnificent building in the Gothic style. It served as a venue for lectures, meetings, dances and social gatherings as well as a school for Deaf children. The chapel in the building was used for services every Sunday.

The building was opened by H.R.H Princess Louise on 16th May 1887. The society provided an employment bureau and sometimes employment for the jobless, interpreters for all occasions, social gatherings for the Deaf Blind and financial help for the poor.

In the late 1980s the Society relocated to the old Ambrose Barlow School on Queens Drive in West Derby, Liverpool as this was easier to access via public transport and had more office space.

In recent years the Society has set up services within Wirral and Sefton, and opened a new Deaf Centre on the original Queens Drive site. The services we provide now are very different, you can find out more about what MSDP is like today on the next page.

## Key moments in our history...



# MSDP today

Today Merseyside Society for Deaf People exists as both a Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. We are here to advance equality for people with hearing loss across Merseyside. We provide specialist services in a range of communication methods for people who are d/Deaf, Deaf-blind or hard of hearing.

Our team delivers community based social care, duty drop-in sessions and environmental aids assessments. Our tutors provide specialist training in Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language. We also offer a BSL Interpreter and Communications Agency providing NRCPD Registered communication professionals.

## Our mission statement

*To support our local community and provide vital, specialist services, MSDP is committed to the following mission statement: MSDP working in partnerships, bringing together Deaf\* and hearing communities to create more accessible services.*

*\*Deaf = Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind*

## Our services

### Duty sessions

Since 1980, the Charity has been contracted by three local authorities to deliver support services to Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing People in the Community. The duty service provided includes the translation of letters and making telephone calls for our Deaf community to services such as utility companies, benefits, housing related services and health services. We also provide information, advice and guidance, signposting to other services and work in partnership with statutory and other external agencies.

Our support service delivers individual support packages to the Deaf and Deaf-Blind Community. We have a team of specialised support workers who are qualified and trained to adapt their communication style to meet the individual needs of the Deaf people we Support.

### Environmental Aids

The Environmental Aids Team enables the Society to promote and improve an individual's safety and independence within their own home, safe in the knowledge that they will be alerted to environmental sounds around them. Visiting clients in their home allows the team to discuss and assess their specific needs and lifestyle. Barriers can be removed via the installation of equipment which includes loud ringers, flashing lights or vibrating pagers. Where beneficial, isolation can be removed via the installation of loop systems and television aids.

### Training & development

MSDP offer a range of courses designed to help break down communication barriers and develop confidence in communicating with Deaf people using British Sign Language. In particular, we provide Deaf Awareness Training and British Sign Language Level's 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6. We also provide workplace audits. By delivering these services we aim to improve access to services for Deaf people.

# Who we work with

## Deaf people, their families and carers

MSDP provides services to a diverse section of the community. People who seek services include Deaf people whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL), Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing People who have suffered hearing loss during their lives.

## Employers and service providers

Employers and service providers are also increasingly accessing MSDP's services, requesting advice and guidance on how to support Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing people. The number of people attending Deaf Awareness and BSL courses continues to increase. MSDP also provide

workplace audits and assistance with customised information as well as communication support.

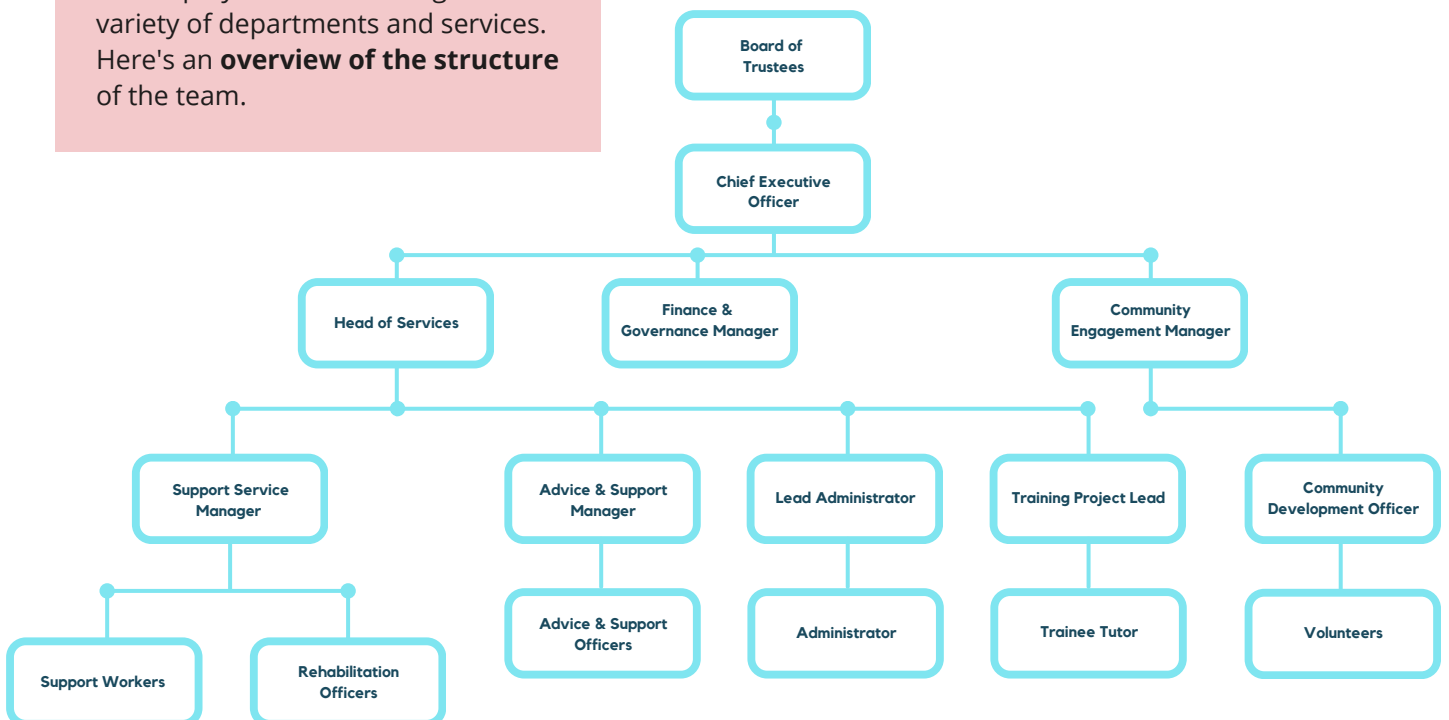
## Community groups

There are a number of groups of Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing people who use the services and facilities provided by MSDP. Each of these Social Groups has designated leaders and deputies, who promote the interests and priorities of their members. MSDP is home to one of the largest Deaf Clubs in the UK. Liverpool Deaf Club has more than 300 members and often receives Deaf visitors from across the globe!

Our communities and many social groups are at the heart of everything we do.

# Our organisational structure

We employ **30 staff** working across a variety of departments and services. Here's an **overview of the structure** of the team.



# Planning for the future

MSDP continues to play a key role in ensuring the Deaf agenda is highlighted across the Merseyside region and will develop a range of partnerships and initiatives to advance Deaf equality and identify and develop opportunities for community empowerment strategies.

## Future Goals

MSDP plans to grow the organisation over the forthcoming years with additional streams of income created by the development of new and diverse activities and targeted bidding for appropriate development funds.

We aim to:

- Deliver good, quality services
- Embed strong leadership and good governance
- Develop and motivate our staff and volunteers

- Grow our services
- Engage our communities and become truly user-led
- Improve technology within the organisation
- Develop services for children and families in partnership with other organisations
- Develop in partnership facilities to support Deaf, Deaf Blind, Hard of Hearing and Deafened People to meet at a safe and accessible location.
- MSDP will proactively seek beneficial partnerships with other organisations to share resources, reduce core costs and create efficiencies of scale where possible.
- Develop new projects for social benefit



Confidence and communication: Supporting d/Deaf children and parents through our Family Sign Language Sessions

# Introducing the trustee role

The continued success of MSDP comes from the people we work with - our communities, our students, our staff and in particular, our trustees. The trustees bring their skills and experience to MSDP and play a vital role in helping to guide the charity's mission. All of our meetings are accessible in English and BSL, so we would encourage both Deaf and hearing professionals to apply.

## Why become a trustee?

- Opportunity to help shape a charity that is making a tangible difference to d/Deaf and hard of hearing people in Merseyside.
- Opportunity to transform and grow our structure, people and services.
- Use your experience in a unique and challenging environment.
- Learn new skills and become more confident in a leadership role.

## Expectations of the trustee

- Helping to formulate strategic, business and corporate partnership plans.
- Guide and consult on matters of strategy, governance and finance.
- Ongoing assessment of the Charity's legal integrity.
- Promoting the Charity's work and reputation amongst contacts.

## Trustee time commitments

- Attend monthly meetings (approx. 2-3 hours) with option to join in person or via Zoom.
- Attend any extraordinary meetings as required.
- Form part of a sub group meeting, which will meet quarterly.
- Plus an additional couple of hours per month at home (email correspondence).





# Essential skills & experience

## **Commitment**

1. Ability to understand and accept the duties and liabilities of being a Charity Trustee
2. Strong leadership to achieve the vision, mission and aims of MSDP
3. A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort

## **Focus**

1. Ability to think and apply knowledge strategically
2. Ability to think creatively
3. Ability to keep mission-focused
4. Ability to analyse and evaluate management information and other evidence
5. Willingness to listen and learn

## **Communication and Team Working**

1. Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively and to take an active part in discussions
2. Ability to influence and engage
3. Ability to work effectively in a group
4. Willing to express their own opinion in a reasoned way, while also listening to the views of others
5. Ability to challenge constructively and ask questions appropriately

## **Accountability**

1. Ability to exercise sound and independent judgement
2. Willingness to make and stand by collective decisions, including those, which may be unpopular
3. Ability to manage difficult and/or challenging situations
4. Ability to maintain confidentiality on confidential and/or sensitive information



# Current requirements

We are currently looking for several new trustees to join the board, in particular a new Treasurer as they are due to step down shortly. As such, we'd specifically like to attract people with experience in:

- Social Care
- Safeguarding and risk
- Finance
- Organisational Development/ Human Resources

## Application process

You can download an application on our website.

For an informal chat about this role and the charity contact:

- Joanne Parr, Chief Executive Officer via email [jparr@msdp.org.uk](mailto:jparr@msdp.org.uk) or telephone 0770 799 0743 or
- Elaine McDonald, Chair of Trustees via email [emcdonald@msdp.org.uk](mailto:emcdonald@msdp.org.uk)

Thank you again for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you soon.



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