



# Evening Proceedings

*...for those who make a difference*



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## NRCPD

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The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) administers professional registers for sign language interpreters, lipspeakers, speech to text reporters, LSPs - deafblind manual and notetakers. The NRCPD was formed in early 2009 but has history dating back more than 25 years.

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## Special thanks to...

Signature Annual Awards speakers and presenters  
Plaisterer's Hall  
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Remark!  
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# Joseph Maitland Robinson Award for Outstanding Contribution

We first presented this award in 1989 in memory of a benefactor whose contribution secured the future of our work at a time of considerable financial uncertainty. Each year, as part of the Signature Annual Awards ceremony, we present the award to an individual who has made a truly outstanding contribution to improving the everyday communication experiences of deaf and deafblind people. The award recognises passion, long-term commitment, service provision, awareness-raising, or campaigning efforts.

The list of people who have received the award over the years reads like a hall of fame. This evening we will add another deserving name to that list.

So, who will be the recipient of the 2011 Joseph Maitland Robinson Award for Outstanding Contribution? You will be the first to know when the announcement is made at the end of the ceremony.

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"I am honoured to have won the Joseph Maitland Robinson Award for Outstanding Contribution. It has been a privilege to campaign for disabled people. The fact is that disability is still equated with inability which leads directly to discrimination. There is still a long way to go before outdated attitudes are eliminated. The role of Signature in countering these prejudices has been an invaluable one and we are, slowly but surely, winning the battle for a more enlightened society, especially in the field of deafness."

**Lord Ashley**

**Joseph Maitland Robinson Award for Outstanding Contribution 2010 Recipient**

## Welcome

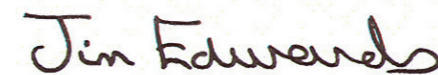
It is my pleasure to wish you a very warm welcome to Plaisterers' Hall for this, the third Signature Annual Awards ceremony.

The Signature Annual Awards recognise and praise individuals and organisations for their dedicated efforts and tireless determination working towards a society that is more inclusive for deaf and deafblind people. The awards have brought to light many inspiring stories that reach every walk of life. This evening we will be witness to many more amazing stories about those who strive to improve communication and raise awareness across our land.

We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to submit one of the hundreds of nominations we received. The success of the awards is made possible by you.

The stories that bring our nominees here tonight are truly inspiring. I urge you to seek them out, share in their experiences first-hand and join us in giving them much deserved recognition for their efforts.

My congratulations to all our nominees. I hope this is a memorable occasion for you and your family and friends.



Jim Edwards  
Chief Executive



# Programme

19.00 Drinks reception

19.30 Seated for welcome speech and dinner

21.30 Presentation of awards

- *Organisational Achievement*
- *Young Learner of the Year*
- *Communication Professional of the Year*
- *Teacher of the Year*
- *Centre of the Year*
- *Learner of the Year*
- *Community Spirit*
- *Joseph Maitland Robinson Award for Outstanding Contribution*

# Shortlists

## Community Spirit

### Deafvision – The Balloon Project

The Balloon Project is an exciting partnership between Deafvision, teachers, parents, the local Deaf Children's Society and volunteers. The project has made huge contributions to the lives of deaf children and their families in Cumbria through the development of support and social networks. Activities and events establish a sense of community and fun. Adventure weekends and retreats help deaf youngsters consider their future and develop confidence and self esteem. Workshops provide families and friends an opportunity to explore deafness, their identity and other topics promoting resilience and responsibility.

### Remark! Community

Not wanting to forget their roots, the deaf-led organisation Remark! understood the importance of giving back to the community and so Remark! Community was born. The charity aims to improve the quality of life for deaf people. Offering advocacy support, arranging regular events for an elderly lunch club, investing in play schemes for deaf and hard of hearing children, and sponsoring projects like the Great Britain Deaf Football Team and Charity Rainbow Trust, are just some of the outstanding things they do. In December 2010, they opened Beckenham Deaf Social Club, revitalising community spirit in the South East of London.

### Rodney Dawson, Scottish Deaf Mountain Trail and Biking

Rodney is the founding member of Scottish Deaf Mountain Trail and Biking. Established in 2006, the club's first venture was a ride from Glasgow to Edinburgh where they raised £1,250 for the Fife Maggie Centre. With 48 members from all over the UK, the club organise many exciting events from visiting beautiful regions to rides for deaf ladies only. The members and their family and friends are welcomed to a weekend of camping and bbqs, encouraging team spirit. Rodney and his wife recently became accredited cycle trainers, creating opportunities for the deaf community to learn more about cycling skilfully and safely.

### Rosemary Morgan

For over 13 years, Rosemary has shown selfless commitment as a youth volunteer leader for the Gloucestershire Deaf Youth Zone. She provides stability for young deaf people during what is often a turbulent transitional period in their lives. Loved and respected by the youngsters and their families, Rosemary organises trips and events, helping to promote friendships which will last a lifetime. Aside from her voluntary work, she supports deaf children at school and advocates on their behalf. Her enthusiasm never wavers, last year she gained a 2.1 degree and is determined to train as a teacher of deaf children.



*"Our winners very much deserve all the praise they receive.  
More than 200 nominations were made across all categories and all our  
finalists deserve credit for their achievements."*

**Jim Edwards, Chief Executive**

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# Shortlists

## Learner of the Year

### **Carolyn O'Rourke, Newcastle College**

Carolyn's ambition is to become a counsellor for deaf people. Studying for both Level 3 NVQ Certificate in British Sign Language and a Foundation Degree in Counselling, she has impressed both teachers and peers with her strength of character and determination to succeed. As a deaf person, Carolyn understands the need for deaf counsellors and despite the obstacles she has faced she is always full of fun and is never known to complain. She is committed to her voluntary work and is extremely popular wherever she goes.

### **Kirsty Davey Roberts, Signite**

Kirsty started to learn BSL when she found out her daughter is deaf. She decided to raise her daughter bilingually and set about developing her signing skills. Kirsty's thirst for learning is plain for all to see, she is currently studying for a Level 3 NVQ Certificate in British Sign Language and an MSc in Deafhood at Bristol University. Through her involvement in the deaf community, she is a member of the Board of Trustees of The Family Centre (Deaf Children) where she hopes to influence and support parents of deaf children.

### **Pat Fox Roberts, Belfast Metropolitan College**

Pat's love of languages first led him to learn BSL and he has progressed to Level 2. Highly motivated and encouraging to his peers, Pat organises social events away from the classroom, and invites students to his home one night each week to practice their signing skills. He plays an active part in the deaf community, volunteering for NDCS, introducing signed song competitions at a local music festival, and attending deaf social events. His future aspirations are to become a teacher of the deaf, and a sign language interpreter.

### **Jack Sirrell, Grantham College**

Jack stood out in his Level 1 BSL class because of his generous and supportive nature. Always willing to help others, Jack's support to his fellow students has been second to none. Well respected by his peers and teacher, he volunteered as a Student Representative to give him an opportunity to support them further, attending BSL meetings in his own time. Jack's teacher says that he would make an excellent sign language interpreter, not just because of his signing ability but because of his attitude towards others.

### **Karen Watkin, Fylde Coast BSL Centre**

Looking for a new challenge in life, Karen decided to join a BSL class and knew instinctively that working with deaf people was for her. Spreading the enthusiasm for learning BSL, Karen offers basic training to new students, leads a fingerspelling practice group, and started a weekly coffee morning for deaf and hearing people. She is a volunteer with Sign Hi and NDCS, and leads the fundraising team of the charity Signing in the Community. An enthusiastic student, Karen is studying Level 3 BSL and plans to continue to Level 6.

# Shortlists

## Organisational Achievement

### **Hearing Dogs for Deaf People**

Getting a hearing dog is all about improving quality of life for deaf people. Hearing Dogs for Deaf People create life-enhancing partnerships that provide independence, confidence and security. When it comes to speaking out on behalf of hearing dog owners, the charity is at the forefront on issues relating to access and inclusion ensuring they have the same opportunities and choices as their counterparts. Hearing Dogs for Deaf People educate workplaces and companies about their legal obligations and are making positive steps in highlighting the needs of assistance dog recipients in the travel and tourism industry.

### **Islington Council/NHS Islington Sign Language Interpreting Service**

The in-house team at Islington Council provides communication support and equal access across council, NHS, and other public and voluntary sector services for deaf residents. Consistently exceeding targets for the speed and quality of interpreting provision, Islington Council is held as a best practice model by other local services. They have worked tirelessly to provide access in areas such as mental health, child protection, homelessness and emergency services. Making a huge impact on the local deaf community, they have introduced BSL to their website and provide training to GP practices and council staff.

### **Significan't**

Significan't is a deaf-led, innovative organisation where communication access is at the heart of everything they do. With state of the art equipment, they provide deaf clients with instant access to family, friends and services. Phone calls can be made through their video relay service and last minute meetings are made possible through their remote interpreting service. Significan't gives back to the deaf community by investing in a variety of projects. They have established partnerships with organisations across the world and promote video interpreting as a solution to many of the communication barriers deaf people face.

### **STAGETEXT**

STAGETEXT provides and encourages access to the arts and culture for deaf people. The organisation's captioning and speech to text transcription services mean the magic and power of live theatre can be an enjoyable experience for deaf audiences. STAGETEXT makes accessible over 200 theatre performances and talks in venues across the UK, provides training and equipment that allows more than 40 theatres to run their own captioning services, and their work in museums and galleries is just beginning. Considered to be a world leader in their field, STAGETEXT has given talks on their work at events all over the world.

"We are extremely proud to have recognition of initially being shortlisted, but to discover that we actually won the award is tremendous news for us. It is a great honour and fantastic recognition of the constabulary's achievements to be acknowledged by Signature."

**Detective Constable Beccy Driscoll, Hertfordshire Constabulary  
Organisational Achievement 2009 Winner**

## Shortlists

### *Young Learner of the Year*

#### **Tara-Eve Forkin, Handsworth**

Sixteen-year-old Tara has made her teachers proud by completing her Level 3 Certificate in British Sign Language at such a young age. Starting her BSL studies when she was just 13 years old, it took her only two years to progress to Level 3. Showing strength of character and amazing commitment, she attended her Level 3 classes at weekends and when her portfolio was complete it didn't stop her from continuing to help others. All this and she still found time to study for her GCSEs. Tara is profoundly deaf and has been an ambassador for deaf children, lobbying the government on deaf issues and promoting positive attitudes.

#### **Ellie Freeman, Sanders Draper School**

Described as delightful and hardworking, 15-year-old Ellie found time to study for a Level 1 Award in British Sign Language as well as studying for 11 GCSEs. Her enthusiasm shines through, encouraging her peers to sign and as a result many have joined the signing club and choir. A valued member of the school signing choir, Ellie loves to perform at local events, including visits to residential homes for the elderly. In dedication to her school's Hearing Impaired Unit, Ellie signed the Head Girl's speech at the school's award ceremony in front of 1,000 people, committing hours of her own time to practice.

#### **Katie Nicholson, [sonus]**

Katie's motivation to learn BSL was so strong that she took it upon herself to take an intensive course during her school holidays. Now, aged 14, she is studying for a Level 2 Certificate in British Sign Language. The youngest and most shy student in class, she goes out of her way to help fellow students and takes the opportunity whenever she can to show friends, teachers and class mates her sign language skills. Growing in confidence, she has passed on her BSL knowledge to her guide group too. In the future, Katie hopes to volunteer in the deaf community and her aim is to continue her studies and work with deaf children.

#### **Harrie Towndrow, The BSL Centre @ Heathlands School**

Harrie's ambition is to work in a special needs school and decided to learn BSL to help her achieve her goal. Despite being a quiet, shy young lady, the 13-year-old enrolled on a Level 1 Award in British Sign Language evening class where most students were adults. A daunting experience for some, Harrie took it in her stride and became a true team player. She is self motivated, supportive to her peers and has shared her BSL skills with her family. Considerate, caring and inspiring are the words Harrie's classmates use to describe her. She is hoping to continue her studies to Level 2 next year.

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## Shortlists

### *Learner of the Year*

#### **Lesley Bellew, CHIC**

After fostering a deaf child, Lesley's main objective was to learn BSL. She immediately enrolled on a course and is now preparing for Level 2. Her enthusiasm fills the classroom and she encourages her family to learn BSL too. Outside the classroom, Lesley is working with her centre and local council to set up a group for parents of deaf children and deaf parents with hearing children. In the future, Lesley hopes to adopt her foster child and her teacher feels she will be a driving force in improving communication in her community.

#### **Lucy Bunting, Lewisham Police Station**

As a Police Officer at Lewisham Police Station, Lucy felt she was lacking a skill when it came to supporting her local deaf community. She quickly joined a class and is now studying towards the Level 2 Certificate in British Sign Language. Colleagues say that Lucy is the kind of person you are proud to work alongside, she is very supportive, positive and friendly. She is now a Deafink Officer and alongside her colleagues has started a drop in centre for local deaf people. She hopes to use her signing skills at the 2012 Olympics.

#### **Eleanor Healy, Bexley Grammar School**

With no previous experience of BSL, Eleanor was curious to learn. She enrolled on a Level 1 BSL class and immediately fell in love with the language. Eleanor is supportive and seems to know naturally when to step in and help her peers. Showing great initiative, she and a friend started an after school class teaching younger pupils the basics and it was a roaring success. Outside the classroom, she volunteered at a BSL summer school gaining experience for the future when she hopes to teach children with special needs.

#### **Georgie Hulme, Handsworth**

Whilst working as a nurse on a mental health ward, Georgie became aware of the importance of good communication between staff and deaf patients. She took it upon herself to learn BSL. Georgie invests her time and money in undertaking her BSL studies, travelling up and down the country showing great determination in achieving her goal. She goes above and beyond expectations and her teacher describes her as an unsung hero. A natural signer, Georgie is now studying for the Level 6 NVQ Certificate in BSL.

#### **Audrey Lindsay, Brasshouse Language Centre**

An inspiration to her fellow students, Audrey's confidence and self esteem has rocketed after enrolling on a Level 1 BSL course. Despite the barriers she faces, learning a new skill has put a positive outlook on her life. Taking an active part in supporting others with disabilities, Audrey volunteers to befriend women with similar issues and empowers them with shared experiences. She plans to take a counselling skills qualification to enhance her support as a volunteer and BSL can be added to the list of her positive skills.

# Shortlists

## Centre of the Year

### City Lit Centre for Deaf Education

City Lit's Centre for Deaf Education has delivered Signature qualifications for over 20 years. With an international reputation, their success is attributed to the high standards of service and the knowledge of their teachers and assessors. As well as being a long standing provider they have been influential in national developments in BSL teacher training. The Centre for Deaf Education has over 200 deaf students attending courses each year. Their annual Deaf Day is a key event for many, and their annual Watch Your Language conference is an opportunity for raising and debating current professional and academic issues.

### Grantham College

With over 20 years offering Signature qualifications, Grantham College invests a lot of time and energy in the support of their students and teachers. The college offers a range of resources, information on careers and voluntary work with deaf people, encouraging students to progress. The professional development of their teachers is of high importance and training opportunities are provided. As part of their commitment to inclusion, the college's reception area shows subtitled information and signed presentations, and they teach short BSL and deaf awareness courses in their local shopping centre, promoting to the wider community.

### Philip Morant School

Philip Morant School became a Signature approved centre in 2004. Set in a mainstream secondary school with a Resource Base for Hearing Impaired Students, their amazing work was recently recognised in an OFSTED report. This highlighted their commitment to the quality of BSL provision and to the inclusion of signing into the school's community. The teachers' and students' dedication to learning BSL helps build new friendships and a positive learning environment. Whilst engaging in the wider community, the school attempted to break the world record for the largest group of people signing simultaneously.

### Sign and be 'Heard'

Sign and be 'Heard' offers Signature BSL qualifications up to Level 2. They have a team of ten deaf teachers throughout Scotland and work closely with other local centres to ensure their students can progress to higher levels. Constantly striving to extend their reach, the centre recently taught BSL to two local supermarkets resulting in a dramatic improvement in communication between the staff and their deaf customers. Sign and be 'Heard' are passionate about BSL and over the last three years have lobbied politicians for BSL to be taught to children from an early age.

"Everyone at Signamic is delighted that our centre has received this prestigious award from Signature. We are extremely proud of this achievement which recognises the high quality of our services. I would like to thank every member of the Signamic team, everyone is an integral part of the success of the whole organisation."

**Stuart Anderson, Director of Signamic**  
**Centre of the Year 2010 Winner**

# Shortlists

## Communication Professional of the Year

### Jules Dickinson

A highly respected sign language interpreter, Jules believes passionately in fairness and equal access. For several years she has trained interpreters at the University of Central Lancashire and continues to provide training, generously giving her time and support. Recently completing a PhD, Jules has produced ground breaking research into the issues around deaf people and interpreters in the workplace. Her commitment to her work has been phenomenal, and her influence on the profession reached a worldwide audience when she ran a workshop during the Supporting Deaf People Online Conference in February this year.

### Jean Gough

Jean has a wide range of experience working as a speech to text reporter (STTR) in the UK and across Europe, supporting countless deaf people and their families. As part of her diverse career, she has provided live subtitling for TV programmes such as the BBC News and Big Brother. A fabulous representative for her fellow professionals, Jean has lobbied for improved qualifications and appropriately skilled professionals to be recognised on the NRCPD. Thanks to Jean, we will see the first new entrants to the STTR register in more than three years and an expanded resource for deaf people to utilise.

### Ann McAllister

Ann is totally committed to her role as a professional sign language interpreter and mentor. She was instrumental in setting up the Hampshire Interpreting Project and was a founding member of the Mid South Coast branch of ASLI where she later became Chair. Ann is held in high esteem by the courts, police service and social services. Her dedication has led to her receiving several awards for her service to the community. Ann also works with many schools, colleges and theatres and was the first to do live on-screen interpreting whilst working for Meridian TV.

### Catherine White

Born in Ireland to Deaf parents, Catherine has worked as an interpreter for more than 20 years. She works tirelessly, setting interpreting standards and raising awareness in many countries. In Ireland, Catherine set up an award winning training course for deaf people to become deaf awareness trainers and was Chair of IASLI and Joint Editor of NEWSLI. She hosted the first Interpreting Agency Standards Forum and has interpreted at the Deaflympics. Catherine's warm and friendly approach has led her to rub shoulders with many celebrities and she even taught Sinead O'Connor sign language for her video 'Am I not your girl?'.

Presented in partnership with

**NRCPD**  
The National Registers of Communication Professionals  
working with Deaf and Deafblind People

# Shortlists

## Teacher of the Year

### **Pauline Bacon, Grantham College**

A hard working professional, Pauline has more than 20 years' experience teaching BSL. She is confident in using the latest technology to support students in her class and encourages them with positive feedback. Pauline takes time out of class to speak to staff about the barriers deaf people face and teaches introductory courses in deaf awareness. Committed to her development, Pauline regularly attends continual professional development updates at the college, maintaining her high standards in the classroom.

### **Bobby Bailey, Action on Hearing Loss**

After more than 20 years of teaching BSL, Bobby still inspires his students. Constantly trying new ways to develop lessons, his approach makes it an enjoyable learning experience. He has played a fundamental part in the success of the partnership between Action on Hearing Loss and Medical School, Queens University Belfast, enabling medical students to learn BSL as one of their modules. Bobby has an infectious personality, and it is because of his reputation that BSL is by far the most popular module on the course.

### **Sandra Boyle, Anniesland College**

Previously a trained barber, Sandra decided to re-evaluate her career and teach BSL. With enthusiasm in abundance, her outstanding people skills are a real advantage and she uses a variety of materials and methods to maintain interest and motivation. Sandra is a fixture in the staffroom promoting deaf awareness and BSL to staff and teachers. Sandra is about to complete her Teaching Qualification Further Education, at Stirling University. Her students describe her as kind-hearted and say she is truly one in a million.

### **Noreen Chaplin, Darlington College**

Known for her warm heart and inspiring nature, Noreen's classes are innovative and full of fun. Encouraging students to take part in games and activities, she is also open about her life experiences and promotes a 'can do' attitude. Keen for her students to learn more about deaf culture, Noreen holds sign sessions at her local Arts Centre on Friday nights, creating a relaxed atmosphere outside of the classroom. She promotes deaf awareness to staff within the college and teaches deaf awareness to school children.

### **Christopher Clelland, Cambridge Regional College**

An extremely focused and pro-active teacher, Christopher exudes passion for his language, making classes highly imaginative. Wanting to promote a better understanding of the deaf community to his students, he encourages them to join deaf clubs and meet outside the classroom to practice their skills. Christopher is committed to his development and supports other teachers in their development too. Never backing down from a challenge, he equally challenges others to maintain high standards of language and delivery.

### **Yvonne Cobb, BSL College**

Yvonne inspires learners with her calm, approachable and fun personality. She has introduced a variety of innovative teaching methods to the classroom and encourages her students to participate in local deaf social events. Committed to improving communication and access for deaf people, Yvonne provides advice on legislation and inclusivity to businesses and organisations. She also works closely with the team at Gloucester Deaf Association, offering her services for free to provide BSL videos on their website.

# Shortlists

## Teacher of the Year

### **Casper Dyne, Overton Grange High School/ SCOLA**

Through his endless energy and support, Casper teaches BSL and deaf awareness to both children and adults. Despite having to overcome obstacles in his personal life, Casper puts his students first every time. He takes a keen interest in their aspirations and takes time out of his busy schedule to develop skills for those struggling students. He regularly keeps students up to date with career information and events, and it is this enthusiasm for getting the best out of his students that makes him such a fantastic teacher.

### **Keith Hughes, Coleg Sir Gar**

With a wide subject knowledge and exceptional communication skills, Keith is well known for devoting his time to his students. Well travelled, Keith has met deaf people across the world and will often recount his experiences of discrimination and differences in deaf culture. Engaging students in debates on his love of deaf culture and language, Keith's outlook and passion rub off on them. His personal development is also important to him, undertaking many courses including Deaf Studies at Bristol University.

### **David Morris, Remark!**

An extremely popular teacher, David brings his classes alive with his sense of humour. Using a wide range of teaching methods, his classes are entertaining and enlightening. David takes every opportunity to improve learners' skills and makes a point of celebrating their successes. He invites students to various activities, from horse racing nights at the deaf club to signed performances at the theatre. A member of the West Ham Deaf Golf Club, David organises quiz nights to raise money for the club and other charities.

### **Ruth Randell, City College Coventry**

Ruth's knowledge of BSL, skilful classroom management and immense patience is hugely admired by her students. She provides constructive feedback and her positive attitude and guidance has boosted their confidence. Broadening students' horizons, Ruth organises trips and events to develop their skills while reinforcing a passion to work in the deaf community. Not only a fantastic teacher, Ruth is a course organiser, where she supports her fellow teachers and promotes the need for high standards.

### **Amanda Smith, York St John University**

Gaining confidence in students through her sense of humour, Amanda believes that positive learning leads to great results. Passionate about BSL, Amanda has worked hard to improve the social lives of deaf students setting up the York St John Sign Café, also allowing students to practice their skills. Integration on campus has greatly improved thanks to Amanda teaching deaf awareness to staff. The only BSL teacher at the university, she received a University Teaching Fellowship in recognition of her outstanding contribution.

### **Gary Taylor, Deafness Resource Centre**

With over 20 years' experience teaching BSL, Gary's impeccable teaching skills make the learning experience worthwhile and enjoyable for his students. Gary goes the extra mile to support his students, managing his own website providing tests, information on careers and links to deaf clubs. His supportive nature has also provided trainee teachers access to his classes for practice and advice. Constantly striving to improve his skills, Gary is juggling teaching with his studies while on a BSL Teacher Training Course.