

## **Deaf Awareness Week 2024**

Deaf Awareness Week takes place from 6 – 12th May. Deaf Awareness Week is about raising awareness of deafness and hearing loss and encouraging people to be more deaf friendly.

### **What is deafness?**

Deafness or hearing loss means that one or more parts of someone's ear or ears are not working as well as they need to.

There are different types of deafness:

- Sensorineural deafness which is when the inner ear is not working effectively. This type of deafness can be permanent.
- Conductive deafness is when sound is not able to pass through the ear effectively due to blockages caused by wax or fluid. Conductive deafness can be temporary or permanent.
- Unilateral deafness is when a person has deafness in only one ear.

And there are different levels of deafness or hearing loss. One person could have mild hearing loss while another person could have profound hearing loss.

People who are deaf or have hearing loss use different ways of communicating with others. Some people who are deaf speak. Some people who are deaf use sign language. And some people who are deaf speak and use sign language.

### **Rose Ayling-Ellis**

Rose is a British actor who has been deaf since birth. Rose wears a hearing aid and uses speech and sign language to communicate with others. Rose is famous for appearing in the television programme EastEnders and winning Strictly Come Dancing in 2021. During her time on Strictly Come Dancing, Rose raised awareness for the deaf community and encouraged people to be more deaf friendly.



## **How can you be more deaf friendly?**

Here are some top tips to use when speaking to a person who is deaf or has hearing loss:

- Get the person's attention so that they know that you would like to talk to them. You could tap them lightly on the arm or hand, or wave at them.
- Reduce any noise in the background such as turning the television down or closing a window if there is lots of noise from outside.
- Face the person when you are speaking to them so that they can hear your voice and see your lips if they need to lip-read. Also, try not to cover your mouth while you are talking.
- Then just talk to the person. You do not need to raise your voice or speak slowly.
- You could point to things when you talk about them to make it easier for the person to understand what you are talking about.
- If you are struggling to communicate with the person then you could write a message down, or write a text on your phone for the person to read.

## **Further information**

Further information about deafness or hearing loss can be found here:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/>