

**Joining Forces
New Perspectives**
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Deaf Professionals: Fit for Future

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How it all began ...

- No recorded Deaf professionals in mental health care prior 1970s
- Dr Kitson inspired by Gallaudet university to employ deaf in healthcare
- The battle began to train Deaf professionals and funding for hearing staff to learn sign language
- First unqualified staff “Deaf therapists” employed
- Deaf Gain – positive impact on service users in their recovery
- First deaf psychotherapist qualified
- Fully funded by NHSE so patients do not have to pay

*‘It is a very sophisticated language capable of expressing everything you can say in English.’
(Kitson, 2015)*



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Great idea, good start

- Establishing more deaf adult mental health services
- National Deaf CAMHS to follow
- Wider engagement with other organisations, agencies, commissions, local authorities, voluntary sector
- More unqualified deaf staff were employed and first qualified deaf mental health nurse in 2003
- Nursing pathway was then well established, and we encouraged to get more qualified deaf nurses

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... but it was not smooth sailing

- Limited access to clinical training/ funding
- Inadequate sign language interpreter provision
- Education (entry) requirement
- Lack of placements, supervision, professional development
- Audism
- Attitude
- Hearing leadership



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Opening Doors

Deaf Professionals

- More Deaf professionals qualified (nurses, nursing associates, social workers, clinical psychologists, OTs, ward managers)
- Developmental pathways dependable on service/trust availability and entry criteria
- Low turn over in deaf workforce compared to hearing (Kim, 2021)

Service Users

- Shared lived experience
- Respect to their language and communication preferences
- Cultural capital
- Co-production towards shaping our deaf mental health services
- Inclusive tailored care



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Deaf led service

Competent services

- Cultural and linguistic competency in shaping deaf MH services
- Improving attitudes and minimising biases
- Lesser dependency on sign language interpreters
- Deaf leadership
- Empowering professionals

What we need to do?

- Psychological safety
- Allyship
- Professional development
- Collaboration
- Co-production



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Making Difference with us



Allyship
Coaching
Marketing

Growth continuum and
shaping deaf mental
health
Increased deaf workforce
Accessible and inclusive
opportunities



Deaf community
Education
Research
Network

Cultural and linguistic
competency
Inclusive workplace
Nurturing environment



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Thank you!



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