

DEX Newsletter

June 2009

It's a long time since we let you know what DEX has been doing because we have been very busy !! The first thing to let you know is that our address changed last year :

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Committee member Serena Blackburn won a bronze medal in the Marathon at the World Deaf Athletics Championships in 2008 at Izmir in Turkey. She was also awarded Sportswoman of the Year from the Federation of Disability Sports Organisations and is seen here the awards ceremony :



Progress with our BSL campaign and the DCSF

DEX met Malcolm Bruce, MP, who has a long-standing interest in BSL law, several times to discuss how to introduce a British Sign Language Bill into Parliament, and DEX drafted a Bill. The Private Members Bill was not selected in 2008.

DEX met Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, to ask him to lead on a Ministerial Bill. Although he was unable to comment on taking forward BSL law, Ed Balls did ask what the core problem is for deaf children, to which DEX replied that the status of BSL is low, and professionals do not promote it to parents. We had a detailed meeting with his Senior Advisor for SEN shortly afterwards.

Consequently, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) announced that it was looking for deaf organisations to apply for £800,000 for a two year project to raise the status of BSL. It is clear that DEX has played a major part in the release of this funding and we advised DCSF on the specification for the tender.

Deafinitions and the Islington Deaf Campaign, two other Deaf-led organisations, kindly joined DEX for the purpose of a consortium bid for the BSL Status project. The DEX-led project proposal was based on the DEX Best Value Review findings and other subsequent work, and in particular focused on how to encourage parents to support their deaf children to be bilingual.

An RNID – led consortium, which focuses on BSL service delivery, won the contract with the DCSF, and DEX was said to have come a close second.

After discussions with the DCSF, DEX has been invited to be a member of the DCSF's project Steering Group, and we have accepted the position. This will mean that we can monitor the project's outcomes and be involved in discussions about a national roll out at the end of the project. We also hope to be able to continue our dialogue with the Government about the pressing need for BSL legislation, to ensure that all deaf children are educated in BSL and English (and Welsh or Gaelic) in the UK.

Our thanks and congratulations to Jill Jones of Deaf Quality for all her hard work in successfully pursuing DEX's agenda.

New website

The website has been revised and we hope you find it helpful. Please do send on the link to your friends, family- and colleagues : <http://www.dex.org.uk/index.html>

Education

This year DEX contributed twice to the Teacher Training course at Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, which is a higher education academy. We taught mainstream teachers and support teachers on their Diversity module, teaching about barriers to participation for deaf children and discussing the importance of deaf identity. This was well received and there was a recommendation that we do more of this work with non-specialist staff.

Please do contact us if you work in education or if you are a family member of a deaf child.

We may be able to assist with advice and support.

Brian Daltrey, Chair, completed a sponsored 110 mile walk last summer along the Dalesway and into the Cumbrian hills raising £746 for DEX funds.



The next meeting of the committee is on the 11th July at the office.
Let us know if you are interested in finding out more about our work
and plans for the future.

Changes on the Committee

Sarah Eaton and more recently Ian Wilkins have joined us on the
Committee. Serena Blackburn, who was in at the beginning of DEX,
is back on (when not running all over the place !).

Here we are, with the exception of Ian Randall :

