

**SOUTHWARK HEARING  
SUPPORT SERVICE (SHSS)**

**SPRING  
NEWSLETTER  
2025**

*Welcome to the  
**Southwark Hearing  
Support Service  
(SHSS) 2025  
Spring Newsletter.***



## WELCOME

### Welcome to the Southwark Hearing Support Service (SHSS) Spring One Newsletter (2024/25).

Some of you will now have met our new team member, Sean, so we thought this edition would be a good opportunity to let him introduce himself and also for the whole team to remind you all who we are. We are also going to give you a glimpse into our days as Teachers of the Deaf. Ever wondered what we get up to over a typical day? Or what we get up to when we are not with you? Well, here is your opportunity to find out.

**We will start with our new member Sean Priestley...**



**SEAN PRIESTLEY**

Hello, I am Sean. I joined the team in November last year. I have been working in deaf education since 2015 and qualified as a Teacher of the Deaf

in 2021 after completing a Postgraduate Diploma at Birmingham University.

I have eight years of experience working at a school for deaf children in St Albans. I also hold a BSL Level 4 qualification. I feel that I bring both professional expertise and personal experience to my role being deaf myself with a bilateral severe/profound sensorineural hearing loss. I joined the team to explore a new side of deaf education. So far, I have found the work both challenging and rewarding, enjoying the opportunity to learn from my knowledgeable team. The best part of the role is sharing my own experiences with the children and young people, helping them build confidence, stay curious about life, and follow their dreams.

I am originally from the Midlands, so I am also getting to know London, often with the help of Google Maps! As a dedicated Leicester City fan, I am hoping they hold their place in the Premier League.

A usual day for me sees me getting up at 6 AM for my commute into London! I'm grateful for my vibrating alarm watch-without it, I wouldn't hear a regular alarm. At this time of year, the early mornings are dark and cold, and I can't wait for the British summer to arrive. My journey begins with a short drive, followed by a bus, train, tube, and finally, one of London's famous red buses. It's quite the trek, but every mile is worth it to support the deaf children and young people of Southwark.

During my commute, I make good use of

the time by catching up on emails and listening to a podcast. One of the great things about modern hearing aids is being able to stream media via Bluetooth no need to listen to the rumble of the train as it speeds down the track!

My first stop of the day is to support a young person new to our service. We begin with a listening check of his hearing aids and fit some new tubing together. Then, we work on vocabulary and discuss his aspirations for the future-he dreams of becoming a pilot! What an incredible career, traveling the world. It makes me wonder-are there any deaf pilots out there today? After our session, I meet with the SENCO to check in and schedule my next school visits.

Back out on the streets of London, I use Google Maps to guide me to my next stop while multitasking with more emails. The sun has finally come out, making the day feel a little brighter despite the lingering chill.

Next, I meet a young person and their parent at a library for an initial visit. He's a promising cricketer, and we discuss opportunities for him to get involved in deaf cricket. There's even the possibility of joining the GB Deaf Cricket Team-imagine traveling the world doing something you love!

After that, I head to the office to write up notes from my visits, tackle my to-do list, and collaborate with colleagues. A quick trip to Tesco for a meal deal gives me a well-earned break before our team meeting. There's plenty of discussion about the support we are providing and the next steps to take.

As the day draws to a close, I pack up my things and step outside into the London evening. It's dark again, but the city's dazzling lights guide my way home-ready to do it all again tomorrow.

**Next up is our Team Leader, Arthur.**



### ARTHUR CEFAl

I qualified as a Teacher of the Deaf seven years ago and have worked for Southwark Hearing Support Service during all that time. Every day I feel

very lucky to have found my dream job and am really honoured that the families who I have worked with have entrusted me and opened their doors to me.

I look forward to continuing working with all my fantastic families and their children for many years to come.

An example of a day for me; I started my day writing annual reports for students I saw the day before; I am always glad to get these done and sent out. It's really good to get reports out quickly so parents, schools and the audiology team can see the results of assessments and progress children make.

At ten I joined a meeting of Heads of Service from around the country to discuss hearing support services policies. The discussion was very lively and lots of new information was presented, and different opinions expressed. Common themes were very evident such as money and staffing but also a discussion of British

Society of Audiologists position and the difficulties faced by rural services.

I then packed my bags ready to visit a young year 9 person at school. I wanted the lesson to be about the world of work, so I prepared lots of resources to start the conversation. I only had to mention work and the young person had such a clear idea about what they wanted to do that the lesson went by really quickly. It gave me the chance to talk about different routes through education that would help them achieve their goal. Only when I got back to the office that I realised I hadn't used my best resources which I will now save for the next visit. I was also able to arrange postage of a piece of the equipment student that needed repairing.

Back at the office I sorted post, shared relevant information with the rest of the team, prepared Team meeting agenda for the next day, answered emails and returned calls that I could not respond to earlier. I even managed to have IT support to resolve a problem I was having on my computer. This is not a joke; it was resolved with the advice of; turn it off then on again!

Then it was onto preparing for the next day seeing a baby first, then a year 2 student and finally a team meeting.

**Now we have Kevin.**



### KEVIN JEWELL

I have been working at the Southwark Hearing Support Service for two years now. Time has flown by! I currently am establishing

partnerships with local theatres to offer our community accessible performances across the age range of the caseload.

I have started my Sign Interpreting diploma recently. I am also starting some new projects this year to use my sign language. In amongst the busy days, I try to do yoga, gym and dance in my spare time.

I had a day recently in a Special school in Southwark where I see many students with varying needs and hearing losses. I woke up at 6.30am to get ready and into the school early for their arrival and to greet parents at the door, so we could catch up at drop off. Not all students are dropped off, others come on buses, and we enter the school with music playing and staff smiling to get them ready for the day.

Today there is swimming and a theatre show on for selected students. I visit one child who has Auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder (ANSD), and we play with building blocks that light up in different colours and use visuals and auditory highlighting to develop joint play. The child's joint attention has improved so modelling and play can be focussed now on language and communication. Unfortunately, they are sick on me, so a

quick clean up and discussion with the teacher about targets, then off to see someone next door.

The child wears a Bone conduction hearing aid (BCHA), and I use the multi-tool to connect them to the I-pad to submerge him into the world of song. Great to see the smiles, rhythmic tapping and rocking to the music, practising stop and go on the screen, so they can learn to control it themselves. I showed staff how to do this and created a guide for them to follow when I am not there. Another child was away last time I visited, so I manage to see them as well. A small look of recognition and also time to run round after them to put the BCHA on (not all young people like it and accept it). It takes a few goes then singing to distract them and they start to rock to the song. Using the sand pit next to us we start to use language to reflect our play (dig, hole, push, squash, up, down, here, there). There are a few more children to see that day, but having a chance to see part of the signed, multi-sensory theatre company performing that day and the chance to feel, hear, touch and smell the aspects of the performance is very engaging for these young people.

The afternoon is wrapping up, and I have a visit with another young man at the local library to support his transition to London. A big change in living and educational placement. My signing comes in useful for this as we problem-solve and discuss the variety of developments in their life. It is 5.15pm, and time for home, after a busy and varied day! **Next, it's Heather's turn.**



**HEATHER LATTER**

I have had the privilege and opportunity of doing a number of very satisfying careers, such as midwifery, musicianship and

teaching. I completed my MEd as a qualified Teacher of Young People and Children more than 15 years ago.

I've worked in a resource base in both primary and secondary schools. Working in the SHSS team at Southwark has given me the possibility of combining my previous experience of infants and children as they grow to adulthood. I really enjoy this job as every day is different.

One day last week I attended a Post 16 college where a pupil of mine was having an Annual Review for his Education Health Care Plan. His mum, the young man, the Head of College, his tutor, an administrator and I were there. It is always good to meet as many people as possible who are involved in the education of our pupils.

After this meeting, I was due to see another pupil at the same college, but unfortunately, she was absent. This gave me a little time to complete the notes I had to make concerning the meeting I had attended.

My next appointment was to do some training at a nursery. The nursery has accepted a little boy with a hearing loss into their care and they are keen to make sure all the staff understand hearing loss, how to communicate with him the best way, when to use his hearing aids, how to put them in when he pulls them out and how to change the batteries.

My last visit of the day was to a young lady who is being educated at home. I was able to chat to her mum about her education, do some activities around improving her vocabulary, helping her to express what she wants and encourage her to wear her hearing aids all the time. I was able to talk to her mum about her hearing loss and the plans that she needed to make to help her daughter progress.

After the visits I wrote up my notes on all my visits, as well as follow up some actions that I needed to do such as contact audiology about an appointment and send an email regarding some education questions.

Being a Teacher of the Deaf allows me to help both parents and children to ensure they can access the best education for their needs.

**And finally, it's Emma.**



**EMMA FORD**

I have been with the team since Easter 2020 when I had an unusual start to peri work with the world being in lockdown. I am a qualified Teacher

of the Deaf and before joining the team I worked in resources bases in primary schools in London and Bromley.

Before qualifying I was a mainstream primary school teacher and a SENCo. As well as my job I am a Mum to two teenagers with GCSE's and A-levels coming up this year. Some of may have seen me cycling around the borough on my bike between visits. I also like to go to Yoga and walk my dog. I love my job and feel very privileged to be part of the journey with those I support.

A typical day for me starts with my alarm going off at 6:30. I get up and wake the teens before getting myself ready for the day. I double check that I have the resources I need for the day's visits, pack them in my bike bags and set off. As I do not live in the borough, I have a little cycle to start my day on my way to my first visit.

Today is the day we have our Under Fives group. I arrive at 1st Place and sign in. I grab the key to the cupboard where some of our resources are kept. I then head to the creche room to set up. I have also brought things along with me for today's

session, winter. As I am setting up the rest of the team start to turn up and I allocate jobs to help me out. As parents and the little ones arrive, we get busy introducing ourselves and encouraging everyone to enjoy what is on offer. The group is a great group, and we have fun doing the activities and finish the session with some songs and a story. When the session is over, we clear away and all head off to start our afternoons.

As it's not too cold I eat my lunch on a bench in Burgess Park. I like watching everyone going about their days. Then I jump on my bike and head to do a visit. It is to meet the Mum of a new little one that has come onto my caseload. The mum wanted to chat to me 1:1 about the hearing loss, its impact etc. We looked at the audiogram and compared it to a speech banana. Mum had lots of questions and I try my best to answer them all. We talk about a plan moving forward for support and I will book to see the child at nursery soon.

My last visit is to a nursery. This nursery involves some big hills! The child is pleased to see me. I ask staff for any updates, and we have a chat. I check the child's hearing aids to make sure that they are working as well as we would like. The moulds are not seeming to fit right so I decide to change the tubing to see if this helps. Luckily for me it seems to solve the problem. He is happy for me to pop them back in. Our sessions involve working on matching sounds to animals

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and focusing on the difference between long and short sounds. We play a little game with the cows and the pigs to see if we can make and match the sound. We then do some drawing, again using long and short sounds to mimic the patterns we are drawing. He soon begins to copy what I am doing. Once he has got the hang of it, I allow him to take the lead and I copy him. We are also working on encouraging him to make requests using his voice rather than just pointing to things he wants. He loves bubbles so I blow some bubbles, then I encourage him to say more/more bubbles.

*Best wishes*

**Southwark Hearing Support Service**

Session finished its now time to jump on my bike one last time and head home. Once home my laptop and phone come out. It's time to feedback to parents from my visits, answer any messages/emails I have missed and to complete notes from the children I have seen today.

I check my diary to see where I am tomorrow and make sure I plan and prepare my resources. And then it's time to close the laptop and start getting tea ready.

We hope that you have enjoyed this little look into our days.

**A REMINDER OF HOW TO GET IN CONTACT WITH US**

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