

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



WELCOME

Welcome to the Southwark Hearing Support Service (SHSS) Spring Two Newsletter (2024/25). We hope that you are all enjoying the bits of sunshine we keep seeing. Let's hope for more of the same as we move fully into Spring.

Over the past few months we have been lucky enough to have been given groups of tickets to certain theatres. It has meant that some of you have been along with your young ones to see plays. These plays have been captioned and accessible. We have had lots of great feedback from families and the children following these visits.

The plays they have been to see were **Run Rebel Run**, **There's a Bear in My Chair**, **Odd and the Frost Giants** and **Pig Heart Boy**. These have been captioned performances. The next show is **Beegu** at The Unicorn Theatre which is a BSL performance.

Theatre is such a great experience for children. Going to the theatre can offer deaf children numerous benefits, including increased confidence, enhanced communication skills, broadened horizons, and opportunities for creativity and fun, while also fostering a sense of community and belonging. It exposes deaf children to different cultures, perspectives, and stories, enriching their understanding of the world. It can help deaf children explore and understand their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others, through engaging with different characters and stories. Also, watching theatre can boost self-esteem and encourage deaf children to express themselves more.

We have so many great theatres here in London and lots that offer shows geared to younger children through to young adults.

The Southbank Centre not only has shows but also lots of child friendly activities.

Welcome to the Southbank Centre – an engine of creativity

The Unicorn Theatre What's on | The Unicorn Theatre

The Blue Elephant Home page | Blue Elephant Theatre

Southwark Playhouse Southwark Playhouse

And this is just a few. You can check on their websites for any accessible performances that they have/or that are coming up.

There are ways theatres make performances more accessible for deaf children and adults. Some plays have captions. They tend to be on specific dates. There are two kinds of captioned plays: open and closed. Open captions are visible to everyone in the audience. Closed captions can only be seen by people with the appropriate equipment.

Captions might be available on:

- a handheld device
- a small screen on the back of the seat in front
- smart glasses your child can wear.

You will need to request this when you book your tickets. It's a good idea to check the accessibility section of the theatre's website to see what's available and make sure it will work for your child.

Some theatres have a hearing loop system installed. Some venues may be able to provide a personal neck loop. If your child's hearing aid or cochlear implant has the 'T' or 'MT' setting enabled, sounds will be amplified and sent directly into their hearing device.

Lots of theatres offer several signed performances of each production. This means a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter will stand on the side of the stage and interpret the script used by the performers at the same time as it's being performed. Most theatres will reserve seats close to the interpreter for anyone who needs to see them, so make sure you specify this when booking your tickets.

There are also several theatre companies based in the UK which use BSL as a central part of their productions, such as **Deafinitely Theatre**, **Taking Flight** and **Handprint Theatre**. You could also search for 'deaf theatre companies' online for shows in your area.

If you find a show you would like to go to it might be helpful to think about where to sit in order to give your child the best possible listening conditions. This is especially important if your child is unable to make use of a loop system, but still needs to access sound. You could phone or email the venue when booking your tickets to ask about this. Most venues will be happy to accommodate a request to reserve seats.

Prepare before you go by encouraging your child to ask questions about the film or play. It might help to use these prompts to prepare:

- Is the plot likely to be very complicated?
Could you give a simple explanation beforehand?
- Will there be any new or unusual vocabulary?
- Will there be lots of noisy action scenes? Your child might like to have the option of taking out their aids or processors if parts of the play are very loud.
Make sure you have a plan on how to do this safely so they don't get lost.

If any of you do go on any theatre trips we would love to hear how you got on. Look out for more opportunities coming your way. Kevin will send out any future dates once we have any to pass on.

We'd also like to give a big thank you to Kevin. Thanks to him, we now have connections with some of the local theatres and have been able to offer you free tickets to come along and enjoy the shows plus the opportunity to meet other families on our caseload. Thanks Kevin.

Best wishes

Southwark Hearing Support Service

A REMINDER OF HOW TO GET IN CONTACT WITH US

NAME	JOB TITLE	PHONE	EMAIL
ARTHUR CEFAI	Team Lead Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07540 152 935	Arthur.Cefai@southwark.gov.uk
HEATHER LATTER	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07751 741 630	Heather.Latter@southwark.gov.uk
EMMA FORD	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07395 372 558	Emma.Ford@southwark.gov.uk
KEVIN JEWELL	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07849 311 926	Kevin.Jewell@southwark.gov.uk
SEAN PRIESTLEY	Qualified Teacher of the Deaf	07708 291 350	Sean.Priestley@southwark.gov.uk