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Deaf Charities Win National Diversity and Inclusion Award

Bolton Deaf Society and Deafway, two charities supporting deaf and hard-of-hearing people, have won the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) Diversity and Inclusion Award at the CTSI Hero Awards, held this year in the House of Lords.

The award recognises individuals or teams that have taken positive action to advance inclusion and ensure that all communities and businesses can access protection and support. It celebrates work that breaks down barriers, improves access to essential information or services and strengthens inclusion across organisations, communities and the wider Trading Standards profession.

Bolton Deaf Society has worked to support deaf inclusion for more than 150 years and continues to lead efforts to widen access across the local area. The team works closely with partners in domestic abuse support, mental health, sport and leisure to help them adapt their policies, environments and communications so that deaf people can participate on equal terms. Their practical expertise and sustained partnership work have strengthened confidence among service providers and increased trust within the deaf community.

Deafway is based in Preston and has charitable roots going back 130 years. It provides specialist residential services for deaf BSL users with complex needs including mental health and learning disability. They also provide support to deaf and hard of hearing people across Lancashire and campaign for equal access to services and information. Their facilities include a community hub and sports hall which are accessed by residents and the deaf community. Additionally, it is the home of Preston Deaf Club.

CTSI recently welcomed Bolton Deaf Society and Deafway to Blackpool, where then CTSI Chair Nikki Pasek MBE worked with both charities to promote greater understanding of deafness and hearing loss among Trading Standards professionals. They supported sessions on practical ways to be more deaf aware when dealing with consumers and businesses. Delegates also took part in the 'Chair's Challenge', which invited them to learn how to introduce themselves by name in British Sign Language (BSL), encouraging people to think more inclusively in their work and in everyday settings.

Moreover, Bolton Deaf Society and Deafway collaborated with consumer experts to produce information videos in BSL. These resources initially focus on product safety issues and help to improve access for people who may otherwise face barriers to essential information. The project reflects the team's wider approach to inclusion, combining professional insight with co-produced design to ensure that services and information meet the needs of deaf users.

Chartered Trading Standards Institute Chief Executive John Herriman said:

"The commitment shown by Bolton Deaf Society and Deafway has been instrumental to improving access and inclusion in a lasting way. Their work with partners and their contribution to new British Sign Language resources have removed barriers and helped ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing people can engage with services on equal terms. We were pleased to be able to work with them at our annual conference this year and the award recognises the scale and value of their impact."

Nikki Pasek MBE, CTSI Past Chair

"I am absolutely delighted to see Bolton Deaf Society and Deafway recognised with this award. Working alongside both charities has been inspiring and their dedication to breaking down barriers and creating inclusive access has helped Trading Standards work with the communities we serve."

Deafway Chief Executive Officer, Teresa Dawson said:

“We are very proud to receive this award. We value our partnership with CTSI and Bolton Deaf Society and look forward to developing more accessible resources for deaf and hard of hearing people, to enable them to make safe and wise decisions.”

Michael Stead, Advocate and Accessible Information Lead at Bolton Deaf Society said:

We are very proud to receive this award. We greatly value our partnership with CTSI and Deafway and look forward to continuing to develop more accessible resources for deaf and hard of hearing people, enabling them to make safe and informed decisions. Linked to the work of BSL Consumer Rights, this milestone represents an important step forward, and we hope it will inspire others to follow and continue to expand access and inclusion across the sector.

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Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)

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