

Meet... a technology consultant

Abul Hussain shares an overview of how his role supports deaf children and young people, and their teachers in the classroom

Ewing Foundation is a national charity specialising in promoting inclusion and achievement for deaf children and young people through listening and speaking. The charity has been providing a range of support to schools and services since 1952.

Here, one of Ewing Foundation's Technology Consultants, Abul Hussain, describes his work.

I joined Ewing Foundation from a hearing aid manufacturer in 2007. As a specialist in this field, I have decades of experience in troubleshooting hearing technology and working with children and young people, and professionals in education.

My days are very busy: travelling from school to school, monitoring and ensuring all audiology and wireless technology provided are working optimally, and delivering any training needed to ensure that the equipment is managed according to best practice. I support many London boroughs and they book me typically for two-to-three days a month, and I am always booked a year in advance!

My first appointment is usually about 9.15–9.30 am. Parking in London is always a challenge; therefore it's good to know in advance the places where there are usually available spaces. Parking restrictions in an area may mean that I can only park for one hour, so efficiency and careful time management is very important in my work.

Over the day, I might visit three to four schools, supporting up to six-to-eight pupils. I also regularly visit three primary school resource bases and one secondary school resource base, with over 20 pupils in each setting. Some of the schools and bases are close, others are further apart, so there's more driving (and parking!) in London.

I normally meet the teacher in the reception, and they take me to meet the pupil in a meeting room or similar space to work. They share their concerns and then I review the technology and management; this includes their hearing instruments. I test and create comparative response curves of the hearing instruments and wireless microphones, running them through my test box for transparency, and carry out routine fault finding. It's important that teachers, children, and young people are familiar with the features of this technology, too. It's very fulfilling work; children and young people are very happy because their audiology equipment can sound clearer after a visit, even if it's a



basic re-tubing of an earmould. I have supported some learners from primary school to college, and in that sense, Ewing Foundation can be one of the constants in their school life.

Most support is face to face, but I am also happy to help over the phone and email. The busiest times of year are September and July, at the beginning and end of the academic year. It's not unusual for me to be contacted by teachers with enquiries during the school holidays, too.

At Ewing, we also take part in university and hospital teaching programmes, helping trainee and Qualified Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People. In schools, we can also train teaching assistants to develop their skills and confidence in managing hearing technology.

It's a dynamic and often challenging role. Every day I meet new people. Over the years, there continues to be advances in technology, and keeping up with the changes is part of the job. The technology can be challenging, but that's what makes it interesting. Ultimately, I know I'm making a difference to a child or young person's listening and learning environment, helping them to achieve at school.

Ewing Foundation is independent, impartial, and unique. As soon as education authorities hear the name Ewing they trust us to carry out the work to a high standard.

Funding available in Northern England and North Wales

Thanks to charitable support, Ewing Foundation is able to expand its technology and education services in the North of England and North Wales. If you are a school or service in either of these regions and would like any support or further information, please contact us at info@ewing-foundation.org.uk to find out more. ■

Further information

Please visit www.ewing-foundation.org.uk to learn more about Ewing Foundation's hearing technology and education services, courses, and free online training and resources.

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