***What it feels like being deaf***

***I was born deaf.***

I had lots of operations before I was given hearing aids. The operations were to have Grommets fitted. I had seven lots of Grommets and one set of titanium Grommets. The grommets were not successful because my body keeps rejecting them.

When I was younger, because I was deaf, I couldn’t really speak and so I had lots of speech therapy. I went to the hospital for this therapy. I did not really like doing this therapy because I struggled to pronounce certain letters, e.g., r and m.

As I got older, I got better at pronounce the m’s but not the r’s.

I was 10 years old when I was given my hearing aids. I was at primary school and they gave me lots of help with improving my speech. It was very loud when I first used the hearing aids.

***I could hear my own voice for the first time, I could even hear my own footsteps when I was walking.***

My hearing gets worse as I get older. I was originally told that my hearing will get better, however when I turned 19, I found the doctor was wrong.

The **worst thing about being deaf** is that I am super sensitive to loud noises. For an example; fire alarms, emergency services and people talking loudly etc.

The **best thing about being deaf** is going to bed as it feels amazingly great to take my hearing aids out and the other best thing about being deaf is listening to music. Even though I can’t hear some songs, I just feel the vibrations as I love not wearing hearing aids.

I call my hearing aids my tabs. Tab1 and tab2. As when my batteries die, I say, “I am taking my tab 1 out” or “my tabs are broken”.

It is annoying and it distracts my when my batteries run out during a lesson. I miss things while I change my batteries in a lesson.

When my hearing aids are broken, I let the people know that I am not wearing my hearing aids. That has happened lots of times, if I am getting on the bus, I use my phone and go on notes to let the driver know where I want to go.

***I taught myself sign language for when I don’t wear my hearing aids.***

Also, when I am not wearing my hearing aids, I don’t like talking. Without my hearing aids some people make fun of me and like when I was 15 in secondary school I got bullied. I then went to Pre16 College, and the bulling stopped.

When I was at Pre16 College all the staff worked hard to help me get better at English and Maths, it took for ever but they understand that I am deaf.

***It feels like no one understands what being deaf is.***

People think that I am faking being deaf and it affects me badly, and when I was being bullied, they kept name calling me and it knocked all my confidence out of me. So I still don’t like talking without my hearing aids.

Some things that I don’t like doing are: knocking on doors, ringing people that I don’t know, and making an appointment for my hearing aids. Instead, I just send them an email and they send me one back but if I need to make any other appointments, I will ask someone else to do it for me. If I am fancying a takeaway I will use the app or the website and order my food.

When I am not wearing my hearing aids, it affects my balance because it makes me feel off balance and I don’t feel even, and I trip over my feet or fall into a hole.

The last time I broke my hearing aids was last year in October 2021 and I was deaf for 5 weeks and I just slept for those 5 weeks because it makes me feel sleepy all the time.

***When I am not wearing my hearing, this is what it makes me do:***

* Talk loudly
* Sleeping
* Tired
* Not eating
* Not changing my batteries
* Can’t hear some things

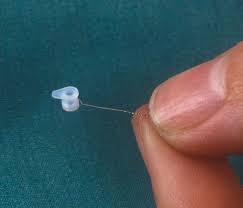
***What happens when I am wearing my hearing aids:***

* Eating properly
* Not sleeping during the day
* Hear a lot more
* Changing my batteries once a week

My batteries are supposed to last for 2 weeks as that’s what the doctor told me, but he was wrong and it lasted for a week. Sometimes I put in a dodgy battery and it only last one or two days. When I am at home, I struggle to hear my TV and my phone, so I have my all my electronics loud so that I can hear it.

My hearing aids are not water proof and not toilet proof, as I accidently dropped my hearing aid down the toilet before, and it stopped working.

I have to change my tubes for my hearing aids every 2-3 months, and I must clean the mould every day. I am prone to get bad ear infections and I can’t wear my hearing aids until the infection has cleared up



***This is a hearing aids***

***This is a grommet***

***The hearing aids come in different colours and different moulds.***