**CASE STUDY – TARA HAYES**

Tara Hayes is from Wolverhampton, West Midlands.

Tara sees being deaf as being normal like everyone else, but is aware of barrier she faces on a daily basis, especially with lockdown due to COVID; “*I am more restricted with social interaction from family and friends*”. Tara uses British Sign Language on a daily basis and says she lip-reads too. Tara says it can be difficult at times but being deaf is “*part of who I am and my identity, I would not change it*”.  Tara has Asthma.

Before COVID-19 lockdown, Tara would push herself to go to the gym 2-3 times a week and a general walk. Now, she goes for 45min- 1 hour’s walk daily and she tries to do some home workout sessions via videos in her spare time.

Through #DeafActiveOnline Tara participated in James’s Leg Bum & Tum class, which was easier to access because James is deaf. By being able to understand the class through BSL, it a resulted in lowering her level of anxiety reduces; as there is no need to worry about trying to understand and follow the exercises. This meant she can enjoy and focus on her fitness properly, rather than panicking about not following instructions correctly.

Tara feels that it has been useful having other deaf people join the class as she is aware that a lot of deaf people avoid going to the gym/classes in the outside world due to communication barriers. Tara feels that non-participation by deaf people can affect their mental well-being and physical levels.

Tara says she struggled at first to join in the online classes but now she has it all set up at home, using her spare room as there is more room and to access the class via her laptop. Tara has a yoga mat, her partner’s arm weights, resistance bands and a chair for some of the exercises.

Tara has taken part in James’ leg, bum and tum classes, and some of his live classes (funded by RAD) on a daily basis. The classes are challenging! But Tara loves how James makes sure everyone is following and “*if people struggle he will clarify and make you feel included in the class*”.

Tara does the classes on her own at home, she feels supported by James as he can answer any questions after the class.

*“My advice to other deaf people is to take this opportunity to use the classes especially in the comfort of your own home, with accessible language by James who is deaf which is very rare. Thank you UKDS, for providing the grant to allow James to provide the classes it has been really effective and popular”.*