

THE DEAFBLIND PROGRAMME

INTERVENOR VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

*The Singapore
Association
For The Deaf*





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01 About This Handbook

We are elated to have you in the Deafblind Community!

As an intervenor volunteer, you are an important asset to us in supporting and extending our services to our clients.

We crafted this handbook to guide you in this journey as an intervenor. It serves as an overview of the Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf)'s policies, procedures for the Deafblind Programme (DBP).

Through your involvement, we hope you resonate and find growth with our organisation's mission and vision to empower individuals with Deafblindness and their families in Singapore.

Unique circumstances and necessary legislation may require changes in the policies and processes over time. Existing policy and legislation will take precedence over unintended inaccuracy or obsolete content in this handbook.

Please take the time to read and understand this handbook. If you have any questions, please contact the DBP team at deafblind@sadeaf.org.sg. Alternatively, you may contact our main office at 6344 8274 on weekdays from 8.30AM to 5.30PM, except Wednesdays from 8.30AM to 9.30PM.

02 Introduction of SADeaf

Established in 1955, the Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf) has been serving the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing community for the past six decades. SADeaf is a member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), and is supported by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Ministry of Education (MOE).

For six decades, individuals like yourself have helped SADeaf fulfill our mission to serve the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing. In 2020, we have also expanded our services to the Deafblind in the community and extend our invitation to you to be an intervenor to serve this pool of individuals with both vision and hearing loss.



Mission

To assist the Deaf, Hard-of-hearing (and Deafblind) to achieve a better quality of life and to enable them to integrate and contribute to society.

Vision

To be the leading organisation in advocating equal opportunity, in all aspects, for the Deaf, Hard-of-hearing (and Deafblind), and supporting them to reach their full potential.

Values

Included | Empowered | Valued



03 The Deafblind Programme

SADeaf initiated the Deafblind Programme in 2021 with the objective to assist the Deafblind community in achieving independence and empowerment in their everyday lives.

As part of Community Services (CS), the Deafblind programme provides counseling, case management and other services for persons with hearing and visual loss through an understanding of Deafblind culture and needs. The services include:

Independent Living

- Collaboration with Guide Dogs Singapore (GDS) to learn daily living skills and encourage independence at home.

Independent Traveling

- Collaboration with GDS for orientation & mobility (O&M) training such as using the white cane and handling a guide-dog.

Education and Employment

- Advocacy and assistance in pursuit of one and the community's goals and aspirations of meaningful growth.

Communication

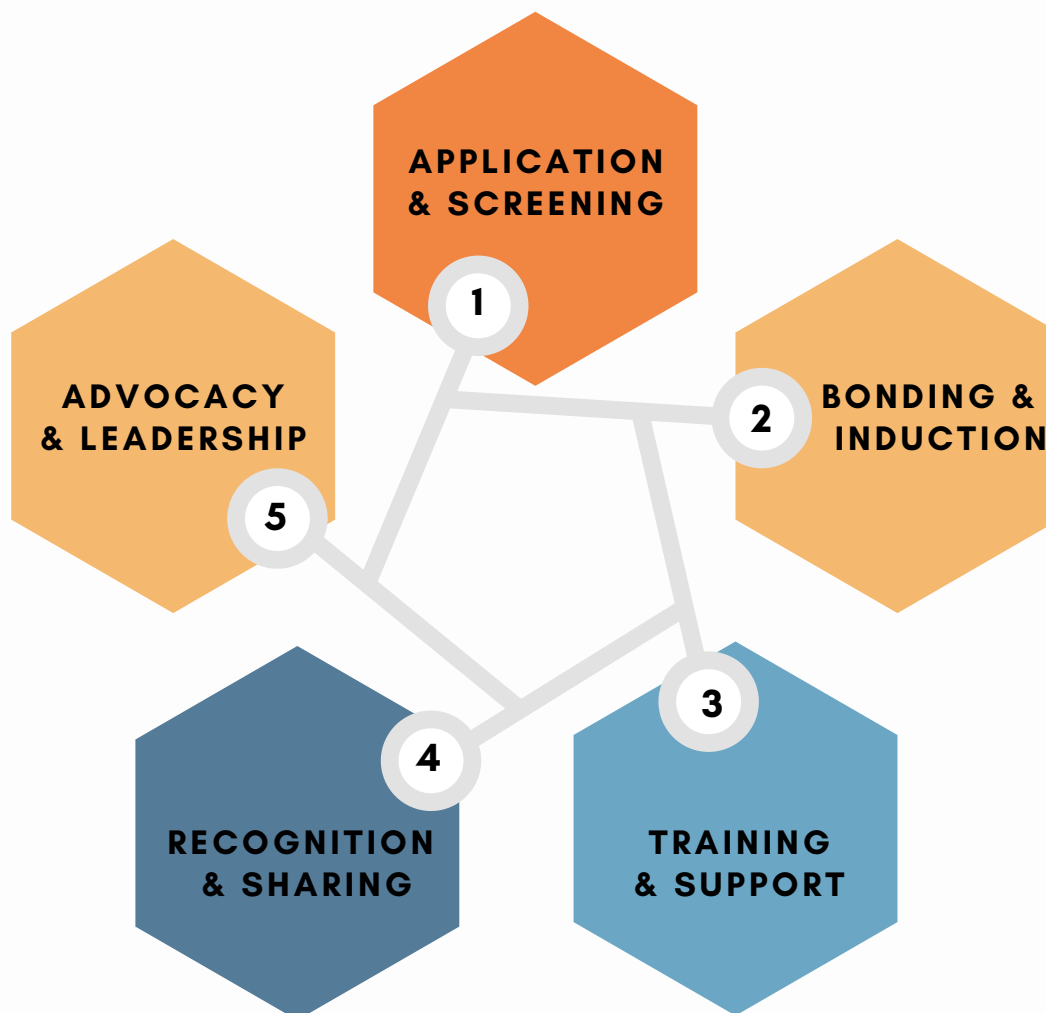
- Provision of ProTactile Sign Language (PTSL) training and Deafblind Manual Alphabet, otherwise known as Tactile Fingerspelling.
- Collaboration with the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) for United English Braille.

Intervenor Service

- Training and matching with intervenors, performing the role of communicator-guides supporting the pillars of Independent Living, Independent Traveling, Education & Employment and Communication

04 Becoming an Intervenor

The Intervenor Volunteering Journey



1. Apply to be an intervenor through the online [Intervenor Registration Form](#). This provides us with basic information about you. We will then contact you to get to know you better, and consider the experiences you are looking for as an intervenor.

2. Through bonding and induction, you will meet fellow like-minded intervenors in society sharing the same passion to support the Deafblind community.

3. Fret not, you will receive training and support in beginning your intervenor journey. We are always ready to listen to potential ideas and concerns you may have.

4. With your growing experience, you can look forward to opportunities to share your learning and be recognised in your efforts in the Deafblind community.

5. Develop your potential to advocate opportunities for individuals who are Deafblind and take the lead to enhance their quality of life.

4.1 Intervenor's Roles & Responsibilities

DBP will continue to develop every intervenor volunteer's role in becoming a meaningful contributor to the Deafblind community. Intervenor volunteers work hand-in-hand with the DBP team in supporting individuals with Deafblindness.

To gain a better understanding of your role, please do not hesitate to speak with the DBP staff.

As intervenors, our vision is to connect beyond sight and sound. Our mission is to enhance the level of understanding and bonding among people without or with Deafblindness, and sharing a better quality of life.

Our motto is, "Enjoy being here and it is more than enough."

4.2 Intervenor Values

Included: Staying true in supporting our service users of the organisation. Ensuring everyone can feel seen and heard.

Empowered: Advocating our service users' contributions to society and believing in their capacity to reach their fullest potential.

Valued: Cherishing one another and recognising everyone's inherent value as human beings in the wider community network.

4.3 Working Together with Staff

Every service user and family supported by the DBP is unique in their profiles and needs. Our team of DBP and Community Service case managers and social workers would thus develop intervention and care plans to better assist them.

As an intervenor volunteer, you commit to collaborating with our staff and helping to practice consistency with intervention and care plans for the respective service users. Should you have any concerns, do seek the DBP staff as per the Feedback process.

4.4 Escalation Policy

The interests, safety and well-being of our service users, intervenor volunteers and staff are of utmost priority. You are figuratively and literally the eyes and ears of the community. Your prompt escalation will ensure that the right people are notified for you and the service user to receive support and prevent problems.

Please inform our staff as soon as possible in any matters or emergencies and we will assist you as necessary. Do find the contact details under, "SADeaf Staff & Contact Details."

Some red flags to look out for:

- Signs of Harm/Potential Harm (to self and/or others)*
 - e.g. Depression, Physical/Sexual/Emotional/Financial Abuse, Neglect, Burns, Falls/Injuries, Self-Harm, Plans to Harm Self/Others
- Medical Emergencies*
 - e.g. Health or safety of a person is under immediate threat and the situation demands swift and appropriate medical attention
- Criminal Activities*
 - e.g. Any act against the law such as Substance Abuse, Theft, Harassment or Endangering Persons or Property, etc.
- Fundraising & Publicity*
 - e.g. Any unauthorised use of the name/logo of SADeaf for fundraising or for personal, commercial, religious and/or political gains
- Handling Donations
 - e.g. Any misappropriation of donations in cash or in kind

*For these, do assess the situation and call for ambulance or the police to support as needed. Also inform SADeaf's DBP staff about the emergency immediately or by the next working day so we can support you and the service user. You may refer to the guidelines in dealing with emergencies.

In safeguarding our service users' interest, please seek the advice of SADeaf's DBP staff in the event of below:

- A service user has limited capacity for decision-making or consent
- Situations where a vulnerable adult's rights, welfare and best interests might be threatened
- A service user may require or benefit from other services in SADeaf's Community services or other social service providers

4.5 Being a Strong Advocate

As an intervenor volunteer, you are also a strong advocate, role model and ambassador to our service users and association. Please find some guidelines below to help you in becoming a successful intervenor volunteer.

Ambassador of the Association

You play a critical role in helping SDeaf maintain a good reputation in the community and facilitate our work with the Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Deafblind. Kindly conduct yourself in a positive manner that abides by and reflects SDeaf's values, professionalism and dedication to quality service for our service users.

Model Values

As an intervenor volunteer, you identify and agree to model SDeaf's values in your interactions with others.

Dress Code & Appearance

Kindly dress appropriately, neatly and modestly for your tasks. You can approach and check with the respective DBP staff for concerns.

Language Use

The way you communicate can help shape the success of care plans for our service users. As such, you agree to:

- Use appropriate, wholesome and positive communication. This includes voice, signs and body language.
- Exercise appropriate assertiveness in a considerate and caring manner when necessary.

4.6 Maintaining a Safe Environment

Health & Safety

Your health and safety, as well as that of our service users and staff, are important to us. As such, you commit to:

- Do your part to ensure a safe environment for all e.g. keeping a lookout for the safety of everyone, including service users, fellow intervenor volunteers and staff.
- Not be in possession of alcohol, drugs or any flammable and dangerous chemicals.
- Adhere to relevant health and safety protocol e.g. proper hand washing, fire safety, infection control and proper equipment use.
- Seek medical treatment and take time to rest if you are unwell. You will also inform the DBP staff as early as you can, so that they can make alternate arrangements. You agree not to report for duty under the influence of drowsy medication.
- Refrain from entering restricted areas, if any.
- Should any injury, accident, security breach or unforeseen event occur, you will report the incident to the DBP staff at the soonest possible and will assist in the incident reporting, inquiry and any future risk prevention strategies as needed.
- Avoid contact with body parts/items with body fluids e.g. tissue, bandages, bedsheets, clothing.
- For safety considerations and avoid misunderstandings, you agree not to use your own vehicle for volunteering nor transport service users in them unless prior approval was given by SADeaf.

Food Allergies, Consumption & Safety

- Do inform our staff if you have any known food or other allergies. Do also be mindful of our service users' allergies when working with them.
- Do check with the DBP staff regarding giving of food to service users and obtain prior approval before doing so as there may be medical, hygiene or other considerations. If approval has been given, also take care of personal or cultural restrictions (e.g. for Muslims – halal certification and no pork, for Buddhists and Hindus – no beef, for vegetarians – no meat etc.)

Involvement of Others in Volunteering

- For the safety and confidentiality of our service users and to protect all parties involved, do not bring along anyone with you to meet with service users, either at their homes or outside if:
 - They have not been registered as an intervenor volunteer with SADeaf
 - No prior approval/consent has been given by the DBP Staff
- Instead, do direct them to our staff to guide them through the intervenor volunteer application process.

4.6 Maintaining a Safe Environment (cont.)

Handling Valuables

- To avoid the loss and damage of valuable items, please keep all valuable close to you and refrain from leaving them unattended during engagements/assignments.
- To avoid any misunderstanding, do not handle any of the service users' valuable items. As necessary, do inform our staff who will take the appropriate action to support their needs.

Working With Medication

- Do not administer medication to service users. Please contact the DBP staff for further clarification as needed.

Smoking, Drugs & Alcohol

- Refrain from smoking or consuming alcohol or other habit-forming substances within our premise and in sight of our service users.

Right to a Safe Environment

- Our intervenors and staff have the right to a safe environment free of violence, harassment, intimidation and aggression. In the event where you feel that this right has been threatened, please inform the DBP staff immediately so SADeaf can take the necessary actions to support you.

Arranging to Meet Service Users Outside

- Your role may require that you meet your service users outside of SADeaf. If this is so, please do observe the following safety guidelines:
 - Ensure that you are well rested before your appointment with your service user.
 - Make arrangements with the service user and your fellow intervenor prior to the appointment and remind them again before the appointment.
 - Where possible, arrange to meet in an accessible, open and well-lit area.
 - Inform the DBP staff at the start and end of your appointment with your service user.
 - Depending on programme requirements, you may be required to meet your service user in pairs.
 - Honour the time for the appointment and be punctual.
 - For home visits, please refer to the DBP staff for clarification in consideration of each service-users' preferences/needs.

4.6 Maintaining a Safe Environment (cont.)

Dealing with Emergencies

- When you feel that the health and safety of a person is under immediate threat (see examples in list below), swift and immediate medical attention can make a difference in recovery and between life and death.
 - Dizziness with fainting
 - Chest pain
 - Unstoppable bleeding (3 - 5 minutes)
 - Seizure
 - Trouble breathing
 - Unresponsive / Unconscious
 - Sudden slurred speech (where relevant)
 - Weakness in limbs opposing to one's usual function
- It is important to stay calm and follow the following protocol:

Monday - Friday, 8.30AM - 5.30PM, except Wednesday, 8.30AM - 9.30PM

- Contact SADeaf office. A staff will come over to assist in assessing the situation.

Any other times:

- Dial 995 for ambulance.
- Follow the instructions of the operator and be prepared to inform them of:-
 - Your location
 - The emergency
 - And any known medical history of the service user
- While waiting for the ambulance, you can perform CPR (only if you are trained) or open the door and ensure path to the service user is clear.
- Inform any family members as necessary.
- After the ambulance has arrived, contact SADeaf office or the DBP staff to inform them about the medical emergency as soon as possible or by the next working day.
- In the event where you feel that your personal safety is threatened:
 - Establish clear boundaries
 - Maintain eye contact but do not stare
 - Protect your head from injuries
 - Say no in a respectful but assertive manner
 - Speak slowly in a lower pitch voice
 - Do not put your hands on an aggressive person
 - Never turn your back
 - As necessary, leave immediately
 - Seek help from the surrounding where possible
 - Report the matter to SADeaf and the police as necessary

4.6 Maintaining a Safe Environment (cont.)

Self-Care

- You matter to us as our intervenor volunteer. You play an amazing role of caring and helping people and of building our community. However, as an intervenor volunteer, you may become acquainted with the emotionally challenging stories of the service users and/or journey with them through difficult times. As such, it is crucial that you care for yourself too.
- Here are some guidelines to help you practice self-care:
 - As you round up your session with the service users or your preparation of your befriending report, mentally put aside the session as you return to the various activities of your life.
 - Should you face rejection from the service user, understand that it may not be personal and that it may be a coping response to the challenge they are facing.
 - You may wish to keep a journal where you can jot down your feelings and thoughts as you process your experience.
 - Engage in activities that you enjoy.
 - Spend time with loved ones and friends. Should there be any concerns, do allow us to support you by speaking with the DBP staff.



05 Delivering Service Quality

We endeavour to provide quality services to help build our service users, help them overcome their challenges and strengthen our communities. As such, all intervenor volunteers and staff commit to the following:

5.1 Respect

- You commit to the well-being of the service users that you work with.
- You will be non-judgmental about differences between yourself and those you meet e.g. cultural, religious, value and lifestyle differences. You will treat everyone, including service users, staff and fellow intervenor volunteers, with dignity, respect and worth.
- You will seek to understand the service users' choices (e.g. which part of the house to clean during house cleaning), be respectful of the choices and views of service users that are different from your own; You will not impose your views on them nor promote or propagate beliefs e.g. political or religious but help them to build resilience by allowing them to make their own decisions.
- You will fulfil your roles as an intervenor volunteer without discrimination and partiality.
- You will visibly wear any identification tags, where applicable, so others can identify you as a SADeaf intervenor volunteer.

5.2 Fulfilling Commitments

- You will be punctual for your intervenor duty.
- You will consider the requirements of your intervenor role and your availability carefully before committing to it. You will also prepare and submit, in a timely manner, any required reports. The reports will allow us to support you and the service users better.
- You will honour your commitments as an intervenor e.g. you will keep appointments made with the service users. If you are unable to keep the commitment, you will contact the other party to make alternative arrangements.
- You will be committed to the well-being of the service users you are working with.
- You will prepare for your intervenor duty.
- You will ensure that all activities you engage in with the service users are aligned to care plans, organisational regulations and the law.
- You will exercise good stewardship of resources (e.g. IT assets) issued to you.
- You will not engage in advice-giving or in the dissemination of unverifiable negative information.

5.3 Conflict of Interest

- Conflict of Interest refers to situations which may arise where it may be perceived that you use your capacity as an intervenor volunteer to take action or make decisions to derive personal benefit. In view of the multiple roles we play, please declare any Conflict of Interest to our DBP staff so we can help you navigate and prevent any misunderstanding or situations of such conflicts.
- As an intervenor volunteer of SADeaf DBP, you will exercise care in your interaction with others. When approached by media, you agree to direct them to the respective corporate communications staff of SADeaf and will in no way represent the association in making statements.
- You agree not to promote or sell products and/or services such as health supplements, insurance, or others to the service users.

5.4 Continuity of Care

- In the event you are unable to continue with your intervenor role, please do communicate this to the DBP staff, giving at least ONE month notice, so we can make alternative arrangements and ensure continuity of care for the service users.
- You will not contact the service user for a period of ONE year after your role ends.

5.5 Fundraising Matters

- To ensure that SADeaf can provide the necessary support for intervenor-initiated fundraising projects, all such projects will need to be reviewed and approved by SADeaf prior to commencement. This would include, but is not limited to, review of the fundraising mechanisms and publicity materials which makes reference to SADeaf.
- To prevent misunderstandings, all intervenor volunteers are not to handle cash but are to direct all donors to deposit their donations into the appointed donation receptacles.



06 Maintaining Safe Boundaries

6.1 Contact with Service Users

- Where required, another staff or fellow intervenor of the same gender as the service user is around whenever you interact with the service users.
- You will not engage in inappropriate physical contact e.g. having service users such as children sit on your lap, kissing or touching or intimate/personal care of the service user such as toileting and bathing.
- Unless otherwise required by your intervenor role as indicated in the Intervenor Role Description, you will not exchange contact information with your service user. Where necessary, you could make arrangements with the DBP staff to call your service user from SADeaf office.
- You will not meet with your service user outside of the scope of your duty without approval from the DBP, i.e. as friends. Where necessary and as required by your intervenor role, you will discuss this with the DBP staff and seek approval prior to arranging to meet them or becoming friends. For meetings with children/youth service users outside of the centre and their homes, upon seeking approval from the DBP staff, they will help to facilitate the liaison with the parent/guardian and inform you.

6.2 Gifts, Loans & Agreements

- To avoid conflict with care plans and prevent disparity between service users, you will not give gifts or loans to service users. In the event where you may feel this is needed e.g. giving of small gifts to encourage a child, please do discuss this with the DBP staff prior to giving the gift. Do inform staff should a request be made.
- In the event a service user or their family present you with a gift, you will declare any such gifts (of value above \$10) to SADeaf. You will not accept any cash from service users.
- You will not enter into any agreement on behalf of your service users.

6.3 Decision Making

- You will respect the service users' choices in decision-making and their views on all matters except for those mentioned in section 4.4 Escalation Policy. You will not impose your views on them or forcefully influence them in their decision-making.

07 Safeguarding Rights

7.1 Confidentiality & Consent

- You will be considerate of others' right to privacy and confidentiality and helping to safeguard confidential information that is shared with you; you will not disclose this information to third parties without prior approval from SADeaf.
- You will carefully review the need to collect any personal data prior to collecting it and will take the necessary measures to ensure it is collected, stored and used in the rightful manner, in accordance to the Personal Data and Protection Act.
- You will ensure that you have obtained consent from any persons you collect personal data from, including taking of photographs. Where necessary, you will ensure that the relevant appearance release form(s) is/are signed. For more information, please contact the DBP staff.
- You agree not to disclose any personal and confidential information (e.g. photos) or use it for purposes other than required for your intervenor role e.g. on social media or to third parties

7.2 Harassment, Aggression & Abuse

- SADeaf adopts a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment, aggression and abuse.
- In the event of any harassment, aggression or abuse, SADeaf will conduct relevant investigations and work with the relevant authorities accordingly.

7.3 Whistle Blowing Policy

- SADeaf is committed to a high standard of compliance with good governance and legislation.
- As such, in the event of any observation of potential wrongdoing, individuals can raise their concerns with the reassurance that they will be protected from any reprisals or victimization for whistle blowing in good faith.
- They may do so by sending an email on the concern with relevant information to our Executive Director at info@sadeaf.org.sg

7.4 Copyright

- The copyright of all works created during the course of an intervenor's involvement with SADeaf DBP in fulfilment of the role, unless otherwise stated in a Memorandum of Understanding between DBP and the intervenor, will be owned by SADeaf.

7.5 Suspension & Termination

- Intervenors are expected to follow the rules of conduct that protect the interest and safety of all service users, intervenors and staff of SADeaf.
- Intervenors who do not adhere to the rules of their services may be asked to suspend their activities.
- In the event of suspected misconduct, investigations will be conducted. Intervenors found to have engaged in inappropriate conduct will be terminated.

08 Growing with SADeaf DBP

We value your time and commitment becoming an intervenor with us and endeavour to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed to develop in your role.

8.1 Supporting You with a Positive Experience

- SADeaf DBP ensures the matching and placement of intervenors with service users to receive the best care and likewise for intervenors to have a positive and meaningful experience. As such, we will collaboratively explore the placements with you at the beginning and throughout your stay with SADeaf DBP.
- SADeaf DBP shall reserve the right to change the placement of intervenors to roles as well as to conclude the services of a intervenor volunteer e.g. due to breach of this code of conduct.
- We also believe in supporting you so you can be effective in your role. Should there be a need for support or for further clarification about your role/task, please do approach the DBP staff.
- Should you wish to address any grievance, please contact the DBP staff as necessary.
- SADeaf DBP will also commit to appropriately recognising your service.

8.2 Training

- To be equipped to be effective in your role, you will make reasonable effort to attend intervenor training recommended by SADeaf DBP. In the course of volunteering as an intervenor, if you come across areas for growth or helpful resources, you can share these with the DBP staff.

8.3 Attendance

- To help us support you as well as manage staff or intervenor volunteer movement, including documentation purposes, you agree to taking attendance as required by SADeaf DBP, when you serve as an intervenor volunteer.
- Should you require certification of your involvement as part of your school or corporate requirements, kindly inform DBP staff upon joining as our intervenor or when you are aware of the need.

8.4 Changes in Personal Particulars

- You will notify SADeaf DBP of any changes in your personal details via phone or email, to continue to receive important updates.

8.5 Feedback

- Openness to 2-way feedback and dialogues will help us to build trust and stronger partnerships with you, our intervenor volunteer, foster positive and meaningful experiences together for the community we serve.
- As such your feedback is important to us. If you have any ideas, suggestions or concerns, always feel free to approach SADeaf DBP staff.

8.6 Deafblind Programme (DBP) Staff Contact

Office Address:

The Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf)
227 Mountbatten Road, Singapore 397998

Opening Hours:

Monday – Friday, 8.30AM – 5.30PM (except Public Holidays)
Wednesdays, 8.30AM – 9.30PM
Saturdays, 8.30AM – 5.30PM (for Hearing Care Centre only)

Tel: 9226 7621

Phone: (65) 6344 8274

Email: deafblind@sadeaf.org.sg

Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SADeafSG/>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sadeaf_sg/

Telegram: <https://t.me/sadeaf>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheSADeaf>

SIGNAL Newsletter: <https://sadeafsignal.wordpress.com/>

Website: <https://sadeaf.org.sg/> , <https://sadeaf.org.sg/the-deafblind-programme/>

Thank You

*The Singapore
Association
For The Deaf*



www.sadeaf.org.sg

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