

# Park Inn by Radisson #Signtember pushes the hard-of-hearing agenda

Park Inn by Radisson Cape Town Newlands, in partnership with the Deaf Federation of South Africa (Deaf SA), will once again dedicate itself to pushing the hard-of-hearing agenda during September with its #Signtember campaign for International Month for Deaf People. With more than 5% of the population having some form of hearing loss, the hotel has dedicated 19% of its staff compliment to hard-of-hearing crew members.



Currently, 51% of Park Inn by Radisson Cape Town Newlands is owned by Deaf SA, which acts as the national research, information and community action organisation on behalf of approximately 600,000 Deaf South Africans.

"Our strategy is to get more companies and in various sectors to employ Deaf people," says Jabaar Cassiem Mohamed, Western Cape Deaf SA director. "If this can be done in Cape Town, it can be replicated in the rest of the country."

The #Signtember campaign has not only empowered the hard-of-hearing but has also educated their hearing staff in sign language and hotel guests too. "It is important to us to support Deaf people in our employ and across South Africa – not just in September, but all year long. The number of hard-of-hearing employed by the hotel serves as our commitment to uplifting the deaf community and leading by example," says Carly de Jong, Park Inn by Radisson Cape Town Newlands general manager.

## Sign language sharing in SA

According to Mohamed, about 80% of the South African population do not know sign language. Furthermore, 1.6 million people in South Africa are either deaf or hard-of-hearing while the deaf population faces an array of challenges ranging from poor education to extreme poverty and unemployment. The methods deaf people use to communicate include not just sign language, but lip reading and writing down their thoughts.

From 1 September 2018, Park Inn by Radisson Cape Town Newlands will be releasing a series of educational videos or GIFs to their blog and sharing them across social media. Each GIF will include one word or phrase that has been translated into South African Sign Language (SASL) and a new GIF will be released daily to raise awareness and teach followers the basics of SASL during International Month for Deaf People.

Support can be shown for #Signtember by following the hashtag on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.