

Coronavirus Impact Guidance for Emergency Teams

Deaf people, and people with some hearing loss



There are people whose hearing has a big impact on their communication. Some people are deaf from birth. Others lose their hearing to varying degrees. Around 70% of over 70's will have some form of hearing loss.

Some people may depend on hearing aids and lip-reading. Wearing a mask means that their ability to hear your speech and to lip-read will be made impossible. You may have to use written notes, but they may still be able to talk to you.

Occasionally the deaf person may rely on British Sign Language for effective communication. Use simple written English to ask them what they need – they may be used to managing their communication issues.

If the person needs a sign language interpreter either continue to use your existing arrangements or connect to **bslhealthaccess.co.uk** using a computer to access an online interpreting service run by SignHealth and InterpreterNow. Free for all medical services during the Covid-19 crisis.

What can you do?

- Check you have pen and paper to hand.
- Make sure other colleagues know about the person and their preferred method of communication – this will minimise frustration and save time.
- There may be someone in your hospital/team/unit who has some experience of deafness and hearing loss – ask them to help.
- Your hospital or organisation may have some equipment to help, such as a microphone and loop system.
- Most hospitals and NHS Trusts have links with local interpreting service and support groups – ask your organisation's Equality and Diversity Officer for information.

Our aim is to promote mental health wellbeing for Deaf BSL users and People with Hearing Loss – getting the communication right is often crucial for their wellbeing.

The British Society for Mental Health and Deafness

bsmhd

Promoting Positive Deaf Mental Health