

deaf+PLUS Manifesto 2017

British charity deafPLUS calls upon the UK Political parties to support the following measures which, taken together, would transform the lives of D/deaf people and people living with hearing loss. The following measures are designed to end isolation, better integrate deaf people into local communities and improve quality of life.



BSL Bill and Accessible High Street Services

- A Bill should be introduced that would provide formal recognition of British Sign Language throughout England and Wales, and require public bodies to prepare plans for its use.
- All companies to publish what reasonable adjustments they put in place for deaf customers and how these can be requested and accessed



Health & Audiology

- Accessible Information Standards need to be properly resourced and delivered upon, as implementation has been patchy and inadequate. This includes recognition that d/Deaf people have different communication needs, including access to BSL video on NHS websites, patients should be supported where necessary at medical appointments and while in hospital via access to lipspeakers, speech to text reporting and BSL interpreters. Better use of BSL video relay interpreting services should be made to plug gaps in BSL interpreter availability.
- Improved access to specialist mental health services for deaf people. Improved after-care and support for audiology patients.
- NHS hearing aids should not be rationed. Audiology patients should receive the hearing aids they need.
- Routine screening of hearing for people with learning disabilities. Increased research and specialist support for people with dementia who also have age related hearing loss should be provided. This should include specialist language support for those who are BSL users who develop dementia.



Social Care

- Commit to better communication support for deaf people who live in care homes. Where necessary, this should include ensuring that staff members are adequately trained in BSL or other appropriate communication techniques (e.g. lipspeaking).
- All care workers working with the elderly should have general awareness training in sensory loss and deaf awareness.
- Make a commitment for accessibility to be routinely built into public buildings and care homes as a legal requirement – including loop systems.
- Provide free lipreading classes for everyone over 50 who are losing their hearing.



TV & Cinema

- Ensure that all on-demand TV services from the main broadcasters (both streamed and downloaded content) are subtitled.
- Broadcasting legislation, particularly as it relates to subtitling, BSL and audio description, should be updated to reflect advances in technology and the advent of on-demand services. On-demand services should be included in legal requirement to provide accessible content.
- Broadcasters should provide more BSL translation and audio description of programming on TV, and better quality subtitling – particularly of live broadcast TV.
- There should also be more broadcast content delivered by BSL-using presenters (ie directly delivered in BSL rather than translated).
- Support to enable wider availability of subtitled screenings at cinemas/ subtitled / BSL



Employment

- Ensure access to work is properly resourced and legally protected, and it is widely promoted to companies, in order that they understand the support available if they employ d/Deaf people / people with disabilities.

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