



**SO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE  
ABOUT COMMUNICATION  
SUPPORT**

This fact sheet covers information about the provision of communication support in English, such as note-taking and lipspeaking. If you want information on services available for Deaf Sign language users, please contact us for alternative publications.

**Who would benefit from communication support.....?**

People who have lost their hearing due to age or an injury may experience difficulties communicating with other people. This can be especially true for people whose hearing deteriorated suddenly or traumatically, and they have therefore had difficulty adjusting to life within an essentially aural world. Frustration and isolation can occur, as they may feel unable to access services or support they would otherwise be able to utilise. The provision of appropriate communication support could reduce this, and enable the user to enjoy equal access to services.

Many such deaf people are competent and happy to access information via the written form of English. These people can benefit from note taking services, such as those outlined below. Other deaf people prefer to lipread, but there are often barriers to this, which are outlined below; they may appreciate a lipspeaking service in order to access information and services confidently. Some deaf people with an additional sight loss may also benefit from communication support tailored to their needs, using perhaps a note taking system with additional visual support such as magnification.

## **What support is available.....?**

- Lipspeaking.....

Everyone can lipread to a varying degree, but people with a hearing loss may rely on it more than others. It is however not always an effective method of communication; it is estimated that only 30% of the English language can be understood by lipreading alone. Factors such as poor lighting, multiple or wandering speakers, beards and obstructions covering the mouth can all render lipreading impossible. A trained and experienced lipspeaker will facilitate communication by conveying a speaker's message accurately and without sound, in a clear and accessible way. They may use facial expression and natural gesture to aid comprehension where necessary. Please contact us for a leaflet on using lipspeakers if you would like to know more.

- Note taking.....

Note taking is a very useful way of ensuring effective communication is achieved. Note taking creates a written record of the spoken meeting, but unlike minutes the notes are comprehensive and allow access to the full range of information being discussed. Notes may be used as a record for after the event; to support comprehension during the meeting; or to be followed simultaneously during the event. There are two main forms of note taking: electronic and hand written. The most common form is still hand written notes on paper, but electronic note taking using a computer or laptop is becoming popular. Whichever form of note taking is required, Deaf Direct Communication Services will always try to match the most appropriately qualified note taker.

- Speech to text.....

Speech to text reporting endeavours to provide a verbatim rendition of the spoken information, while note taking provides abbreviated yet comprehensive notes. Speech to text reporting is a specific skill using technology which allows the sounds of speech to be typed, rather than the letters, and so enables a speedier translation of information. They are usually employed for conferences or lectures, where a large screen is used to display the text as it is input.

## **Where can I use these services.....?**

In any situation where support is necessary. This could be a one to one meeting, such as a doctor's or solicitor's appointment, through to larger meetings such as conferences. Support is available for most domains, including education, legal, medical, corporate, social services and benefits; it is always best to contact us to ask if we can provide you with the service you require.

## **How do I access this support.....?**

Contact Deaf Direct Communication Services. We can arrange the provision of the support you require, and can advise you on this if you are unsure. It will help us if you can give as much information as possible when you contact us; we can then provide the most appropriate service to fulfil your requirements. Please do not leave it to the last minute, as there are few suitably trained and experienced practitioners in this field, and we need notice in order to find someone available for the date you require. A minimum of two weeks is usually recommended.

## **Who pays for the support.....?**

As a general rule, the service user does not pay for the support they receive to access information on an equal level with people who have full hearing.\* The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires service providers to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to access their services. One such adjustment could be the provision of communication support for deaf and hard of hearing people. In order to advise you on who would be responsible for paying for support for a specific event, please call us. The advantage of contacting an established agency such as Deaf Direct Communication Services is that we have knowledge and expertise about matters such as payment and appropriate provision for the client's needs. (\*There may be a charge for social or leisure activities)

## **How do I find out more.....?**

Deaf Direct can provide information about a range of issues relating to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. Please feel free to contact us for further information or publications.