

Communication support services

How to ensure you get the
communication support
you're entitled to

We're RNID, the charity
working to change
the world for the UK's
9 million deaf and hard
of hearing people.

www.rnid.org.uk

This leaflet is for you if you are:

- deaf and want to find out about different communication support services, and what you are entitled to by law
- hearing and want to find out more about a particular service for people who are deaf and deafblind, who should pay, and how to book it.

Throughout this leaflet, we use the term 'people who are deaf' to refer to people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

We will explain about your choice of communication support service and the different types of language service professionals (LSPs):

- British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreters, including video interpreting services
- deafblind interpreters and communicator guides
- lipspeakers
- speech-to-text reporters (STTRs)
- electronic notetakers
- manual notetakers.

This leaflet also covers:

- how to book a service
- help with paying for a service
- confidentiality and other service standards.

You should always make sure the LSP you book is suitably qualified and registered with a recognised, professional association. We explain more about this later.

For more information on communication support services, go to our website at www.rnid.org.uk/bridgingthegap or contact the Information Line (see back page for contact details).

What am I entitled to?

If you need support when communicating at work or when you access public services, the law is there to help you. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) means that you should expect the same access to goods, services and work as a hearing person. At work or when accessing public services, this means that communication support should be booked when required – in addition to other adjustments, which might include induction loops and textphones.

What kind of communication support service can I choose?

You should choose a service that suits you and your needs. If you're not sure, ask for advice when making a booking. We have factsheets on all the services described in this leaflet. See page 15 for a list.

What types of communication support are there?

BSL/English interpreters

People who are deaf and whose first or preferred language is BSL use BSL/English interpreters. They make it easier for a deaf sign language user and a hearing person to communicate with each other by interpreting from BSL to spoken or written English, or vice versa.

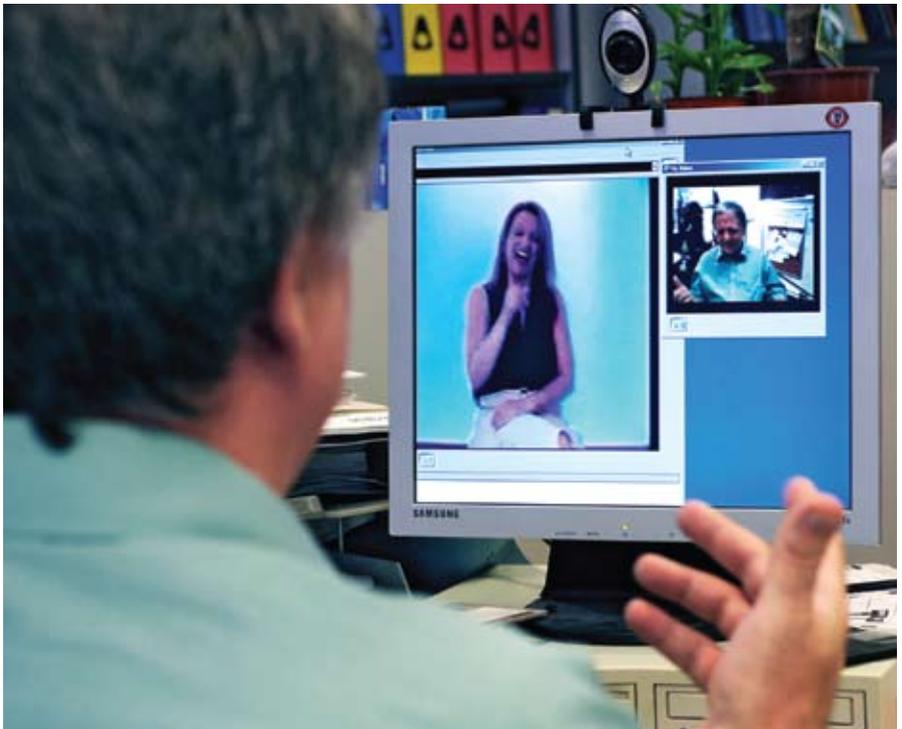
Make sure you book an interpreter who has completed approved interpreter training and is registered with either the Independent Registration Panel (IRP) or the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI).

See our factsheet **Working with a BSL/English interpreter**.

Video interpreting

Although most interpreting is done face-to-face, some providers now offer video interpreting services. Video interpreting is not a replacement for face-to-face interpreting. But it has been set up to try to solve the problem of getting an interpreter at short notice or for brief appointments.

Anyone with access to a webcam or videophone can use a video interpreter. Some councils, hospitals and police stations have these.



Deafblind interpreters and communicator guides

Deafblind people and hearing or sighted people use deafblind interpreters or communicator guides to communicate with each other.

Interpreters and communicator guides work with a range of communication methods including BSL, hands-on-signing, clear communication, the Block Alphabet, the Deafblind Manual Alphabet and speech-to-Braille. Deafblind interpreters work in formal settings, such as training courses. Communicator guides work more informally – for example, they could help you write a letter or do an everyday activity such as shopping.

Make sure you book a deafblind interpreter who is registered with Signature (formerly Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People or CACDP).

See our factsheet **Working with an interpreter/communicator guide for deafblind people**.





Lipspeakers

Lipspeakers work with people who prefer to communicate through lipreading and speech. You should be a confident lipreader with good English skills to use one. Both people who are deaf and people who are hearing can use lipspeakers to help them communicate with each other.

Lipspeakers repeat what is said without using their voice, so that you can lipread them easily. They produce the shape of words clearly, with the flow, rhythm and phrasing of speech. They use natural gestures and facial expressions to help you follow what is being said. They may also use fingerspelling if you ask them to.

Make sure you book a lipspeaker who has completed approved Level 2 or Level 3 training and who is registered with Signature.

See our factsheet **Working with a lipspeaker**.

Speech-to-text reporters

Speech-to-text reporting is suitable for people who are deaf and comfortable reading English, often at high speed and sometimes for up to a couple of hours at a time. Speech-to-text reporters (STTRs) use systems called Palantype® or Stenograph®.

The reporter uses a special keyboard to type every word that is spoken by a speaker. They type words phonetically – how they sound rather than how they are spelt. They are then converted back into English on your computer screen. By typing in this way, the reporter can keep up with the speed of spoken English. The resulting English is usually spelt at least 95% correctly and the remaining words are spelt roughly how they sound.

At large events, information can be projected onto a big screen or onto smaller screens around the room. This makes it easier to view.

Make sure you book a STTR who is registered with Signature.

See our factsheet **Working with a speech-to-text reporter**.



Electronic notetakers

Electronic notetakers work with people who are deaf and comfortable reading English.

Electronic notetakers type a summary of what is being said on a laptop computer. This information appears on the deaf person's screen. Electronic notetaking means you have fewer words to read compared with speech-to-text reporting, but it does mean you won't get a full word-for-word report. If you would rather have a transcript of everything that is said, you may prefer to use a speech-to-text reporter.

Electronic notetakers use software such as RNID SpeedText®, Stereotype or Microsoft Word. They normally use two laptop computers, but they sometimes use just one. As well as reading the summary of what is being said on your screen, you can also type a reply, which the operator can read to hearing people in the room.

Make sure you book someone holding either the Signature Level 2 in Electronic Notetaking (pre 2007) or the Signature Level 3 Certificate for Language Service Professionals Working with Deaf and Deafblind People (notetaking).

See our factsheet **Working with an electronic notetaker**.

Manual notetakers

A notetaker works with people who are deaf and comfortable reading English. Notetakers are trained to take handwritten notes for people who are deaf in meetings, on courses and at other events. Notetakers can write notes in a way that suits you.

It is quite common to use an electronic or manual notetaker as well as another communication service. For example, if you are watching a BSL/English interpreter or lipspeaker, it is impossible to take notes and follow what is being said at the same time.

Notetakers may specialise in a particular field. If you are taking a science degree at university, for instance, it's important that your notetaker knows something about the subject. If you have very specific needs, you may need to spend time finding the right notetaker to support you.

See our factsheet **Working with a notetaker**.

How do I book a communication support service?

Communication support services are in great demand across the UK, so it's best to book as early as possible.

When you book, give as much information about the assignment as you can, including dates, times and the full address of the venue. It also helps if you can supply some background information. Is it a meeting, an interview or a conference. How many people are involved? How long will it last?

You usually need to book a communication service for at least two hours. For assignments that are more than two hours long, you may need to book two LSPs. They will also need a break roughly every 30 minutes but check with them beforehand to confirm this.



To book communication support through RNID Communication Services, please contact:

RNID Communication Services

Telephone **0845 685 8000**

Textphone **0845 685 8001**

Fax **0845 685 8002**

SMS **07624 818778**

communication.services@rnid.org.uk

The Plaza, 100 Old Hall Street
Liverpool L3 9QJ

How can I be sure I'm getting a good service?

At the moment, there is no legal 'safety net' in this area, so choosing a registered professional is a way of protecting yourself as someone who is deaf or a hearing-aid user.

BSL/English interpreters based in England, Wales and Northern Ireland register with the IRP. Those based in Scotland register with the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI). Lipspeakers, speech-to-text reporters and deafblind interpreters register with Signature.

LSPs who are registered:

- work to recognised standards
- follow a formal code of ethics
- are subject to a complaints procedure
- have generally undertaken Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks
- are generally covered by professional indemnity insurance.

Are services confidential?

Yes, registered LSPs follow a strict code of ethics that means they should not tell anyone else what is said in an assignment. They are also impartial, which means they are not allowed to offer opinions while working.

Who pays for a service?

In most circumstances, you should not have to pay for any communication support you need. **If you need it for an interview, a work meeting, or a consultation with a public official or authority such as your doctor, council or police officer, the organisation should book and pay for your communication support.** This provision is considered a 'reasonable adjustment' under the DDA.

The government scheme, Access to Work, may help to pay for the communication support you need for work or interviews. You might also be able to claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA) if you need help communicating with others.

If you are a student, your education provider may have to provide communication support under the DDA or you may be able to get help paying for it through a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

If you need the communication support for a private event, such as a family celebration (for example, a birthday), you will need to book and pay for it yourself.

Want to know more?

Are you affected by hearing loss or tinnitus? Joining RNID is a great way to keep updated on developments, the new products that can help, details of accessible entertainment in your region, latest information and advice, and much more. You'll also be able to share your experiences of hearing loss with other members.

As a member we'll update you six times a year, through our award-winning membership magazine, *One in Seven*.

If you're retired, membership costs just £15 a year.

How to join

Complete the form on the reverse and send to our Freepost address.

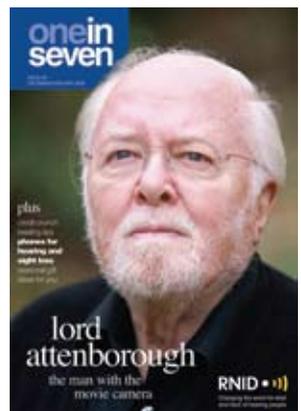
Alternatively:

- visit www.rnid.org.uk/leafletjoin or
- call **0845 634 0679** (tel/textphone) or
- email membership@rnid.org.uk.

Contact us for more information:

Membership Team
RNID
19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL

Tel/textphone **0845 634 0679**
membership@rnid.org.uk
www.rnid.org.uk/leafletjoin



Yes, I want to join RNID

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss) _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Email _____

Telephone _____ Textphone _____

Please accept my membership payment: (tick relevant boxes)

£22 standard rate £15 if you are retired, unwaged
or a full-time student

In addition, I would like to make a donation of £ _____

Payment method:

I enclose a cheque/PO made payable to RNID (delete as appropriate)

I prefer to pay by credit card/debit card/CharityCard (delete as appropriate)

Card number:

Start date: / Expiry date: /

Issue number (if present): Security number:

Signature: (last 3 digits on signature strip)

Please return this form to:
RNID, FREEPOST LON13186, London EC1B 1AL

Please tick here if you **would like** to receive emails from us including your membership email every two months.

Occasionally, we may want to let you know about the work we are doing. If you would **prefer not** to be contacted in this way, please tick this box.

Occasionally, we will allow other organisations to contact you, but if you would **prefer not** to be contacted, please tick this box.



Where can I get further information?

You might find some of our other publications useful:

- Working with a BSL/English interpreter (factsheet)
- Working with a communication support worker (CSW) in education (factsheet)
- Working with an interpreter/communicator guide for deafblind people (factsheet)
- Working with a lipspeaker (factsheet)
- Working with a speech-to-text reporter (factsheet)
- Working with an electronic notetaker (factsheet)
- Working with a notetaker (factsheet)
- Training as a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter (factsheet)
- Careers with deaf people (factsheet)
- Fingerspelling alphabet (bookmark)
- Fingerspelling alphabet (card)
- Fingerspelling alphabet (poster)
- Communication tips (card): a double-sided card with tips if you're deaf or hard of hearing, or if you're hearing and speaking to someone who's deaf.

Please contact the Information Line for free copies of these. And let us know if you would like any of them – or this leaflet – in Braille, large print or audio format.

We're RNID, the charity working to change the world for the UK's 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people.

There are a number of ways
to support us. To find out more:

Go to

www.rnid.org.uk

Information line

Telephone 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

SMS 0780 0000 360

(costs vary depending on your network)

Or write to us

informationline@rnid.org.uk

19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL

Fax 020 7296 8199



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in England and Wales No. 454169.

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and hard of hearing people