

# Don't miss out

How to access communication  
support services if you are  
deaf or hard of hearing

**RNID** • )))

Changing the world for deaf  
and hard of hearing people

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](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

This leaflet is for you if you are:

- deaf and want to find out about different communication support services
- hearing and want to find out more about a particular service for deaf and deafblind people.

We use the term 'deaf people' to refer to deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people throughout this leaflet.

In this leaflet we 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](http://www.rnid.org.uk/bridgingthegap) or contact the Information Line (see back page for contact details)

## 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

Deaf people 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.

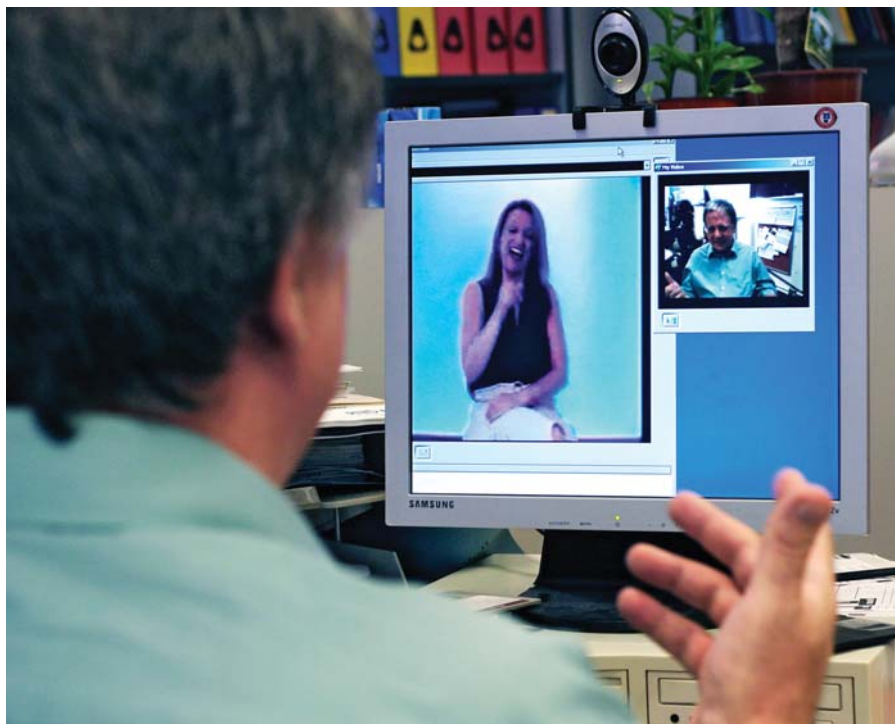
Make sure you book an interpreter who has completed approved interpreter training and is registered with either the Independent Registration Panel (IRP) or the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI).

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 they may help you with an everyday activity like shopping.

Make sure you book a deafblind interpreter who is registered with the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (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 deaf and hearing people 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 the CACDP.

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

## Speech-to-text reporters

Speech-to-text reporting is suitable for deaf people who are comfortable reading English, often at high speed and sometimes for up to a couple of hours at a time. Speech-to-text reporters (STTR) 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're spelt. This is 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 on to a big screen or on to smaller screens around the room. This makes it easier to view.

Make sure you book a STTR who is registered with the CACDP.

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



## Electronic notetakers

Electronic notetakers work with deaf people who are 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 special software, like RNID SpeedText® or Stereotype. They use two laptop computers – one for the deaf person and one for the operator. 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 CACDP Level 2 in Electronic Notetaking (pre 2007) or the CACDP 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 deaf people who are comfortable reading English. Notetakers are trained to take handwritten notes for deaf people in meetings, on courses, or 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 with as much notice as possible.

When you book, give as much information about the assignment as possible, 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](mailto: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 a deaf or hearing 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 the CACDP.

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.

## Confidentiality

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.

## Can I get help with paying for a service?

If you are deaf or deafblind you shouldn't have to pay for the communication support you need. This is because the DDA says that employers, service providers and others need to make reasonable adjustments – including communication support. This also means that doctors and hospitals need to provide communication support.

The government scheme Access to Work may help to pay for the communication support you need for work or at interviews. You might 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 to pay for it through a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

The new Disability Equality Duty (DED) can also mean public authorities need to provide support.

## Want to know more?

Make sure you continue to get up-to-date information about deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus by joining RNID.

Our lively, bi-monthly, award-winning magazine, *One in Seven*, is packed full of useful information and advice, including product reviews, reader views and news and events.

## How to join

Anyone can be a member, and it costs from £12.50 a year.

To join:

- visit [www.rnid.org.uk/join](http://www.rnid.org.uk/join) or
- call **0845 634 0679** (tel/textphone) or
- fill in the coupon over the page.

## You can save money by paying by direct debit

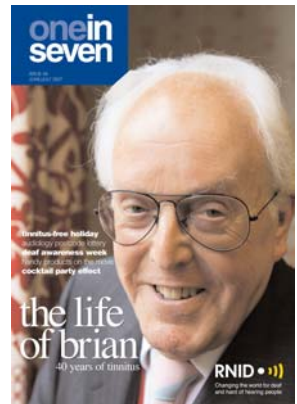
Contact us for more information:

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

Tel/textphone **0845 634 0679**

[membership@rnid.org.uk](mailto:membership@rnid.org.uk)

[www.rnid.org.uk/join](http://www.rnid.org.uk/join)



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# 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 (or £17.50 if you pay by direct debit)

£15 if you are retired, unwaged or a full-time student  
(or £12.50 if you pay by direct debit )

I would like to make a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Card number (Visa/Mastercard/Maestro/CharityCard)

Issue no

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

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

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.

From time to time we would like to contact you by email. Please tick here if you would like to receive emails from us.



## 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](http://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](mailto:informationline@rnid.org.uk)**

19-23 Featherstone Street  
London EC1Y 8SL

Fax 020 7296 8199



2927/0807 Photography Philip Meech, Simon de Trey-White,  
Stuart Freedman

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.  
Registered Address 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL.  
Registered charity No. 207720. A company limited by guarantee in  
England and Wales No. 454169.

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