uk council on **deafness**

access to communication in english for deaf people

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Foreword

Recent legislation demonstrates a real commitment to eliminate discrimination, reduce social exclusion and make services and employment more accessible.

For deaf people whose preferred language is English, this legislation will be all but impossible to implement if there is not a significant improvement in the supply of language and communication access services and an increased awareness of the range of services available.

It is simply unacceptable for deaf people to be denied access to services or to be unable to continue in employment as a result of the dire shortage of qualified professionals that can facilitate access.

This report makes recommendations that are both practical and achievable and that will make a profound difference for the hundreds of thousands of deaf people whose preferred language is English.

I urge all of the agencies, with a responsibility for providing accessible services and reducing barriers to employment, to work collaboratively to ensure that the appropriate resources are made available to implement the recommendations in this report.

The Rt Hon Malcolm Bruce MP

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness

Introduction

One person in seven is deaf. That's nine million people in the UK for whom service providers and employers may need to provide language and communication access services to enable full access. For most, hearing aids supplemented by a loop system are sufficient to enable effective communication. But for many deaf people, additional language and communication access services are needed to enable effective communication. Deaf people who require language and communication access services often receive a service that is far below the standard that they should reasonably expect. This means that there are literally hundreds of thousands of deaf people for whom the provision of language and communication access services is a right that they are denied. This lack of awareness amongst service providers, employers and deaf people themselves is exacerbated by the dire shortage of the professionals that provide language and communication access services.

This report makes recommendations that will lead to an improvement in this situation and will assist service providers and employers in meeting their legal and moral obligations to provide equality of access. The report is the culmination of a collaborative campaign supported by the leading organisations working with deaf people and coordinated by UK Council on Deafness. The participating organisations receive regular evidence of a lack of access to vital public services and barriers to employment as a result of people not receiving the language and communication access services to which they are entitled by law. As a result the organisations commissioned research into deaf people's experiences, the findings of which are detailed in *Access to Communication in English – No Service* and are summarised on page 4 of this report.

The campaign has already recorded a number of successes. In 2003 there were only 12 registered Speech To Text Reporters, there are now 20 with more in the pipeline. The Association of Verbatim Speech To Text Reporters has been set up and the Association of Notetaking Professionals is about to be. The unitisation of qualifications by CACDP is leading to more flexible training opportunities and multi-qualified professionals. The recently merged ACE Registration Panel will promote and protect the essential high professional standards. Leaflets have been produced and distributed by RNID, on behalf of the campaign, that provide careers advice for those considering training to be a Language Service Professional (LSP) and guidance to service providers and employers about their duties under the DDA. A training programme for Cued Speech Transliterators is being established in the UK for the first time. The aim of the recommendations in this report is to develop and build on these successes.

The coordination of the collaborative campaign, and this resulting report, have been made possible thanks to financial support from the Department for Work and Pensions, whose ongoing support during the campaign has made a significant contribution to its success.

Note: Throughout this report 'deaf' is used as a generic term for the full spectrum of deafness including deaf people, deafened people, hard of hearing people, deafblind people, those experiencing Tinnitus and the sign language community. 'English' is used as a generic term to mean the spoken/written language of the deaf person's choice including other community and minority languages in addition to English.

Background

Inaccessible services

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) all public services are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate the needs of disabled people. This includes, for deaf people, the provision of appropriate language and communication access services to enable public services to be accessible to them. The DDA means that a failure to provide adequate and appropriate language and communication access services by any service provider could be viewed as discrimination. The findings of a survey of deaf people across the UK, detailed in the *Access to Communication in English - No Service* report, produced by RNID on behalf of the campaign, illustrates that many public services are failing to meet their obligations under the law. The main findings were:

- 22% of people received the wrong form of language and communication access services either 'often' or 'all the time' when accessing public services
- 26% of people reported that no services whatsoever were provided to enable them to access public services
- 33% of people did not know if any language and communication access services were available at all
- Over half (55%) reported that no information was provided about the availability of any language and communication access services
- A third (32%) reported that their public service provider did not know how to book language and communication access services, while over half (51%) reported that their service providers did not meet the cost of providing language and communication access services
- 46% of people reported that they were unable to interact with their public services 'all the time' or 'often' due to the lack of language and communication access services available

Barriers to employment

There are 3.5 million deaf people of working age. Many feel that their deafness prevents them from progressing in their careers, and sometimes stops them from getting into employment altogether. In a recent RNID survey (May 2006):

- 78% of respondents felt that deafness has held them back on their career path
- 52% of people felt that the main barrier to employment was the lack of provision of language and communication access services and the employer's attitude towards deafness
- 27% of those who took part in the survey who are in work, had not heard of the Access to Work scheme

Comparison to the provision of BSL/English Interpreters

Between 50,000 and 70,000 deaf people use British Sign Language (BSL) as their preferred language. In March 2003, BSL was recognised by the Government as a language in its own right. This announcement combined with the Disability Discrimination Act (Part III) 1995, placed additional strain on already limited BSL/English interpreter resources. Following the Government announcement, the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle MP, announced that £1.5m was being made available to projects to address the shortage of BSL tutors and to raise awareness of BSL. This also acted as a catalyst for other projects funded from additional sources.

This was a very welcome development and has contributed to a doubling of the number of registered BSL/English Interpreters. However it only improved the situation for deaf people who use BSL. To give an indication of the comparative situation between the provision of BSL/English interpreters and English based language and communication access services; there are 475 registered BSL/English interpreters in the UK for approximately 60,000 people, whereas there are only 108 registered English-language based LSPs for the millions of deaf people who may benefit from their services.

Inappropriate provision

Deaf people, when they are offered language and communication access services, are often offered the wrong type of service due to insufficient awareness of the different types of service that are appropriate in different settings. It is often assumed that deaf people are either hard of hearing and use hearing aids or use sign language. There is very little knowledge of the different categories of deafness and the range of language and communication access services.

Case Study – Suzie

When I first applied for Access to Work funding to allow me equal access as part of my job, the differing costs of different types of language and communication access services meant that my Access to Work was restricted to Lipspeakers only, simply because they are the cheapest. This is quite wrong and an incorrect assessment of my needs. I have finally persuaded my Access to Work officer that I need access to 3 types of language and communication access services. In a meeting with BSL users I need to use a BSL/English interpreter, because then that brings me to think and communicate better in BSL. When working with hearing people I prefer to use Lipspeakers, as I get more out of using English and thinking in English. If I was at a conference or an all day meeting, lipreading is tiring so I would then prefer to use a Speech to Text Reporter. It's not just a personal choice, it's the flexibility I need in order to communicate most efficiently as part of my job.

Increasing demand

The Disability Equality Duty, in force from December 2006, is anticipated to be a trigger for service providers to become more aware of their obligation to be accessible. Being accessible includes providing appropriate language and communication access services. Demand for all types of language and communication access services will be increased because service providers have a legal duty to be accessible.

The CACDP QCA-accredited qualifications, Level 1 Certificate in Deaf Awareness and Level 1 Certificate in Communication Tactics, have together attracted over 8,300 candidates in 2005. This means in one year alone, the awareness of deaf people's rights has increased by 8,300 people. In 2006, these qualifications were improved and updated to a new QCA-accredited fit for purpose unit-based qualification called Developing Awareness and Communication with Deaf and Deafblind people. This new qualification will further increase awareness of the different types of language and communication access services, and the rights of deaf people to access this support.

With an ageing population and higher incidence of age related deafness, together with the roll out of this new qualification, the demand from deaf people for LSPs is expected to increase as the awareness of rights increases.

Language and Communication Access Services

Lipspeakers

Lipspeakers work with deaf people who prefer to communicate through lipreading and speech. The lipspeaker listens to what is being said and silently repeats it to the lipreader, using exceptionally clear speech movements, reproducing the rhythm and phrasing of the words used by the speaker, and supporting the meaning with gesture and facial expression. If requested, the lipspeaker will fingerspell the initial letters of any difficult words. If a lipreader requires it, a lipspeaker may repeat the speaker's words aloud, using clear communication techniques. If hearing people are having difficulty understanding a deaf person directly, lipspeakers may be able to relay what the deaf person is saying. There are 34 registered Level Three Lipspeakers and 20 registered Level Two Lipspeakers plus a further estimated 30 unregistered Level Two Lipspeakers.

Electronic Notetakers

Electronic notetakers type a summary of what is said on a computer. This information then appears on a screen for the deaf person to read it, or via a refreshable braille output for a deafblind person. The deaf person, if they prefer not to use their voice, can type a reply which the operator can read to hearing people in the room. Electronic notetakers work with deaf people who are comfortable reading English, as all notes are typed in English. The summarised notes are the property of the deaf person at the end of the meeting. A speech-to-text reporter is more appropriate if a word-for-word account is preferred. There is no registration system for Electronic Notetakers yet.

Manual Notetakers

Manual notetakers are trained to take handwritten notes for deaf people in meetings, on courses or at other events. It is quite common for someone to have a notetaker as well as another language and communication access service, because it can be difficult to take notes and watch an LSP at the same time. Notes are typically read after the event. The notes are the property of the deaf person at the end of the meeting. There is no registration system for Manual Notetakers yet.

Verbatim Speech-To-Text Reporters

A speech-to-text reporter (STTR) will listen to what is being said and key it, word for word, onto an electronic shorthand keyboard (either Palantype or Stenograph), which is linked to their laptop. The text is displayed either on the screen of a laptop for one deaf user, or projected onto a large screen or a series of screens for more users. Unlike a qwerty keyboard, the STTR will not press every letter in a word on the keyboard but will press several keys at once, which represent whole words, phrases or shortforms. The specially-designed software will then convert these phonetic chords back into English, which is then displayed for the deaf person to read. The STTR produces a word-for-word account of what is said at speeds in excess of 200 words per minute (wpm) and will also give extra information, such as {laughter}

or {applause}, to keep the deaf person informed of the mood of the meeting. There are 20 registered Speech-To-Text Reporters plus a similar number of unregistered speech to text reporters who mainly work in Courts but on occasion work with deaf people.

Deafblind Manual LSPs

Deafblind Manual LSPs are trained to use the deafblind manual alphabet, where words are spelt out onto the fingers and hands of a deafblind person. They work in more formal settings and at faster speeds than deafblind communicator guides. Registered Deafblind Manual LSPs have the CACDP Level Four Certificate in Deafblind Manual and can work to speeds of 60wpm. There are 34 registered Deafblind Manual LSPs.

Cued Speech Transliterators

Cued Speech Transliterators (CSTs) silently repeat verbatim (word for word) all that is said using eight different handshapes in four positions near the mouth (called cues) to supplement the lip-patterns of normal speech. This enables a deaf user to see a full visual representation of spoken language sound-for-sound. Uniquely Cued Speech differentiates sounds which look the same on the lips (e.g. ‘b’ and ‘m’) and indicates sounds that are not visible on the lips. CSTs work in any situation but are mainly used in education. Qualifications for Cued Speech Transliterators are being developed so there are no registered qualified CSTs at present.

Other support workers

There are many other professionals working with deaf people who may facilitate communication to varying degrees, but are not classified as Language Service Professionals, including

- Deafblind Communicator Guides
- Versabraille providers (electronic notetakers linked to refreshable Braille reader)
- Communication Support Workers
- Specialist teachers for MSI/Deafblind children
- Teachers of the Deaf
- Social Workers

Note: The numbers given for each type of LSP are taken from the Register of qualified Language Service Professionals in October 2006

Raising Awareness

Deaf people

Many deaf people are unaware of their rights to have language and communication access services made available by service providers and employers; are unaware of the different types of language and communication access services available; are unaware of how to go about booking language and communication access services; and are unaware of whose responsibility it is to book and pay for the language and communication access services.

The National Association of Deafened People have produced, on behalf of the campaign, an information leaflet for deaf people: *Providing Access to Communication in English for Deaf People – Your rights to communication support under the DDA*.

Recommendation: An information campaign targeted at deaf people, conducted through deaf clubs, local and national deaf associations and lipreading classes using the *Providing Access to Communication in English for Deaf People – Your rights to communication support under the DDA* leaflet to raise awareness of deaf people's rights and the options available.

Recently diagnosed deaf people

Many people who could potentially benefit from language and communication access services do not consider themselves to be deaf. They do not consider themselves to be disabled, and are therefore unaware of the support available to them. Many have grown up hearing, and have become deaf over time. Because this has been a gradual process, many people have struggled without support, relying more and more on lipreading and catching up after meetings, when notes are circulated. This means that they miss important information and opportunities to contribute, which can have a detrimental effect on their wellbeing. Many people find they cannot cope with working once they become deaf. The constant battle to follow what is being said often becomes overwhelming and they are left feeling isolated and demoralised.

For most adults, being diagnosed as deaf heralds a period of multiple emotional and practical adjustments. They must explore many fields of knowledge that will be entirely new to them, including hearing aids, loop systems, other amplification technologies, employment options, rights and benefits – and the range of language and communication access services. They must do so at a time when their communication abilities are reduced, and before they have acquired the strategies and skills that can help overcome the difficulties. It is unreasonable to expect them to absorb all this new knowledge in a short space of time, and it is also important to remember that their deafness, and therefore their needs, may change over time.

Recommendation: Comprehensive written guidance on language and communication access services to be routinely issued at the first point of contact with the NHS in the process of diagnosis and to every person attending an audiology clinic.

Service Providers

A very successful project, funded by the Department of Health, is being delivered to provide communication tactics with deaf people training to NHS employees. Another very important area where this type of training is required is the police and the legal system. Since January 2002, the police, courts and other legal agencies in England and Wales work within a National Agreement and a standardised procedure for arranging interpreters in criminal proceedings. Legal agencies are also aware of the importance of using a registered interpreter. This welcome development must be extended to include all types of language and communication access services for deaf people.

Recommendation: The CACDP Developing Awareness and Communication with Deaf and Deafblind people training to be delivered widely with the objective that all those in a 'customer facing' role are deaf aware and able to communicate with deaf people effectively.

For service delivery staff that regularly work with deaf people, such as Social Workers and Audiologists, it is essential that they develop the skills to communicate with deaf people so that unnecessary demand for language and communication access services is reduced. There are new QCA accredited unit-based qualifications available at Level Two for communicating one-to-one with a deaf person as well as updated unit-based qualifications currently being developed at Level Three which will equip the candidate with skills needed to facilitate communication with deaf people.

Recommendation: Staff that regularly work with deaf people to attain further accredited awareness and communication qualifications appropriate to their position.

Those Service Providers that have been positive towards deaf people by including sign language as one of the languages of community access should also include other types of language and communication access services as well. It is equally important for a deaf person whose preferred language is English to get access to information, particularly in a legal or health domain.

Recommendation: Service Providers to widen the scope of their community language interpreting services to include the provision of language and communication access services for deaf people.

Employers

Many employers are just starting to understand how difficult it can be for deaf workers struggling against communication barriers, and the need for language and communication access services to be provided. In addition, employers are beginning to recognise that it is their duty to book and pay for the service.

As the first step to assisting employers in providing appropriate language and communication access services, RNID, on behalf of the campaign, have created a leaflet to provide information for employers to ensure that deaf people are able to get the most appropriate language and communication access service for each situation.

Recommendation: The *Providing access to communication in English for deaf people – Your duties under the DDA* leaflet to be distributed to all large companies and public sector organisations and at trade fairs and similar events throughout the UK. A network of awareness officers to be established to provide expert advice at Job Centres and Trade Union Conferences to explain about deafness and the types of language and communication access services.

The lack of awareness amongst employers and employees of the different types of language and communication access services available means that practical demonstrations are needed to support the distribution of information and work of the awareness officers. This will ensure that employees can make an informed choice about the type of support they require, which will enable them to be more effective in the workplace and in the longer-term, promote workforce stability.

Recommendation: Language and communication access services demonstration days to be held for employees of large companies and public sector organisations as part of their commitment to the well being of their staff. These events to include information about how to book language and communication access services, and how to get support from the Access to Work scheme.

Increasing Provision

Registration

An essential element of increasing provision of services is maintaining the necessary levels of professionalism. This is most effectively achieved through a system of registration for Language Service Professionals. An LSP's registered status informs: the user that they will receive a quality service; the purchaser that they are buying a reputable service; the employer that they are engaging the services of an LSP who has met the national registration standards.

Registered status enables the practitioner to demonstrate to users and purchasers their commitment to the highest professional standards. The registration system provides users and purchasers with a guarantee that if they use a registered LSP they will be using someone who has: appropriate language qualifications; achieved the required standard appropriate to their level of registration; agreed to follow the relevant Code of Ethics and Practice; and agreed to abide by the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

Registered LSPs also have Professional Indemnity Insurance and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Enhanced Disclosure.

Registration protects the interests of: the people who use the services of LSPs; the organisations that employ LSPs; the other professionals with whom LSPs work; the LSPs themselves as practitioners; and the specific LSP professions.

Recommendation: The ACE Registration Panel to develop the Register of qualified Language Service Professionals so that it is fit for purpose for all types of LSP, is accessible and is freely available for all those booking an LSP.

Whilst there continues to be such a dire shortage of LSPs it is still possible for some LSPs to find work without being registered. All LSPs should recognise the benefits to their profession of a robust registration system that provides guarantees and piece of mind to the purchasers and users of their services.

Recommendation: All LSPs to register with a relevant national registration body.

The Agency Steering Group (ASG) has issued recommended Standards of Service to which all agencies providing LSPs are encouraged to sign up and which form a guarantee that the agency follows good practice. These Agency Standards include the following statement:

"All LSPs contracted by the agency, both staff and freelance, must be registered with a relevant national registration body, i.e. either CACDP (through the IRP) or SASLI. All LSPs will be listed under CACDP/SASLI registration categories." Exceptions can be made for categories for which no registration system exists, e.g. notetakers.

Recommendation: All agencies that provide LSPs to sign up to the ASG Standards of Service.

Service Providers and Employers booking a language and communication access service need to be sure that the LSP has the appropriate skills and qualifications and is fit to be working confidentially with vulnerable people. The only way of achieving this is to only use registered LSPs.

Recommendation: All Service Providers and Employers booking a language and communication access service to require the LSP to be registered with a relevant national registration body.

Recruitment

Very few people are aware of the career opportunities available working as an LSP. At present most LSPs start either from a personal experience of deafness, often through a family member, or, in the case of STTRs, through working as a realtime reporter in the courtroom. Working as an LSP requires a range of skills and is varied, interesting and rewarding, with each assignment providing new challenges. There are opportunities for full-time, part-time and sessional work, both as an employed and a self-employed person. As such it should appeal to a wide range of people considering which career to pursue.

To highlight the opportunities of working as an LSP, the RNID, on behalf of the campaign, has produced the *Careers as a Language Service Professional – Working with deaf people* leaflet that gives information about the varied roles of LSPs and the training needed to qualify.

Recommendation: The *Careers as a Language Service Professional – Working with deaf people* leaflet to be distributed widely through Schools, Careers Advisers, Connexions, Colleges and to students of all CACDP courses.

Training

One of the main barriers to training as an LSP is the scarcity of training courses; this is a highly specialist area and relatively few institutions offer courses leading to LSP qualifications. CACDP is the examining body for almost all of the LSP qualifications and has recently introduced a new portfolio of qualifications which provide a clear route of progression for anyone wanting to work as an LSP, offer considerable flexibility allowing movement between professions and the possibility of multi-qualified professionals. There is already a shortage of tutors and assessors and the introduction of new curricula and, in some cases, new qualifications will necessitate a widespread programme of tutor and assessor training. Training will be necessary at all levels so that students can progress from a basic introductory qualification at Level One to the Level Two Certificates in Communication with Deaf and Deafblind People, which are pre-requisites for the specialist Level Three LSP qualifications.

Recommendation: Courses to train tutors and assessors to be held at strategic centres across the UK ensuring a growth in the training and learning opportunities for LSPs throughout the country.

The progression through Level One and Level Two qualifications is similar for most types of LSP. The relatively small number of students for each type of LSP in any given geographical location often means that it is not cost effective to run the course. Combining the training, wherever possible, for all types of LSPs at these levels of qualification will enable sufficient numbers of students to be recruited and will also contribute to more flexible movement between professions when progressing to Level Three.

Recommendation: Level One and Level Two courses to be held at centres across the UK and designed to be accessible to as many types of LSP student as possible.

The availability of LSPs is not consistent across the UK. For example, most registered Speech to Text Reporters are based in the South East of England and there are no registered Lipspeakers in Northern Ireland. It is essential that Level Three courses are offered in locations that will contribute to addressing this imbalance.

Recommendation: Research is undertaken to map existing and forecast supply of and demand for LSP provision and existing location of LSP training.

Case Study – Anne

Anne is a professional manager working in Suffolk. She has a budget which she uses to book Lipspeakers in order to access business meetings. As there are only two full-time registered Lipspeakers based in East Anglia, she regularly has to use Lipspeakers from outside the region. This substantially increases the cost of the service as Lipspeakers are making lengthy journeys or having to stay overnight in order to fulfil many assignments. The increased cost per assignment means that her use of a Lipspeaker is limited, and it is impossible for her to book a Lipspeaker for those meetings that are arranged at short notice, or which are called urgently. She feels that the shortage of local Lipspeakers affects her effectiveness in her role, and is potentially limiting to her personal development and career opportunities.

The financial cost to the student of qualifying to be an LSP is often too great to be justified and acts as a disincentive to potential new LSPs. The courses are often only held at one or two locations and therefore there are travel and accommodation costs to be considered. The equipment needed to operate as a Speech To Text Reporter costs many thousands of pounds and is often beyond the resources of the student.

Recommendation: Level Three training courses for all LSPs to be developed such that cost to the student is not a disincentive to study.

There is a small but growing need for Cued Speech Transliterators (CSTs). Currently there is a scarcity of skilled cuers who are able to transliterate and no qualifications in Cued Speech Transliteration. The consequence of this is that many deaf people whose first choice would be to use a CST opt for another LSP despite the fact that this meets their needs less well. Users of Cued Speech should have the right to access the most suitable LSP. QCA-accredited qualifications for CSTs (and the relevant training) are under development and it is expected that this will be complete by mid-2007. Training for tutors is a priority.

Recommendation: Qualifications for CSTs to be accredited by October 2007; suitable training is made available to tutors and the training and certification of the first cohort of CSTs is completed by 2009.

Case Study – Cued Speech User

"As a profoundly deaf student brought up using Cued Speech I communicate in English; however in education I still need additional support because of the difficulties in lip-reading teachers and lecturers. I've used many different methods to access education including Cued Speech Transliterators (CSTs), electronic notetakers and notetakers. One of the things that highlighted the differences between the support methods was when I visited universities to decide where to take my physics degree. Notetakers can work well in lectures but when touring university laboratories the notetaker struggled to find a surface on which to write and I could not read what she was writing. Also, as no one is capable of writing as fast as people can talk, the note taker had to condense information down and since physics frequently has obscure jargon she often condensed the wrong bits of information.

On two university visits I used a CST and the fact that the CST could cue in any location without being limited by equipment constraints was extremely useful when attending talks in labs and walking around the campus. Also the CST was able to transliterate as fast as people could talk, using exactly the same words, giving me the same access to the subject as a hearing person. In some situations a notetaker is a good choice, but in others only a CST will give me full access. At the moment I can't use CSTs as much as I would like to because of the difficulty in finding or training good transliterators, but in the future I would like to see more available so deaf people can take advantage of the benefits offered."

Career development

Following the introduction of the new portfolio of qualifications, all LSP qualifications are now at Level Three. Those who already hold Level Two qualifications as LSPs are eligible to progress to the new Level Three qualifications but at present there is no system of accreditation of prior learning that will take into account the achievement of their current LSP qualification.

Recommendation: LSPs currently holding CACDP qualifications at Level Two to progress to the new CACDP LSP Level Three qualifications and transition arrangements to be made so that they are given credit for the achievement of a relevant Level Two LSP qualification.

LSPs increasingly find themselves operating in very specialist areas and for clients with complex communication needs. Working in the courts, in Police Stations, with clients involved in sensitive cases involving social services, with clients at Mental Health Assessments all require skills that are not covered by the general LSP qualification. Many of the issues in complex and specialist cases are common across all LSPs.

Recommendation: Training courses to be developed and made available to all LSPs to provide training in specialist fields such as Law, Mental Health and Linguistics.

Professional Associations

Active Professional Associations are vital for protecting and promoting a profession; for encouraging recruitment, training and career development; and for providing opportunities for peer support. The Professional Associations for the different types of LSP are at very different stages of development and it is essential that the most recent ones have the capacity to develop the services they offer to their members.

The Association of Verbatim Speech To Text Reporters was established in 2004 and the Association of Note-taking Professionals will be inaugurated in late 2006. Both organisations cannot expect to raise sufficient operating funds from membership fees alone until they are mature organisations. Both will need to conduct a programme of membership recruitment and promotional activities in order to get themselves established.

Recommendation: Start-up support be provided to the Association of Verbatim Speech To Text Reporters and the Association of Note-taking Professionals.

There is considerable scope for all the Professional Associations to collaborate and share resources. The Association of Lipspeakers, as the most mature of the Associations, is in the best position to lead the collaboration and to provide advice and support to the developing Associations, but cannot be expected to do so from their own resources.

Recommendation: Support be provided to the Association of Lipspeakers to enable them to create an environment of collaboration and maximise resource sharing potential.

At present there are no plans to create Professional Associations for Cued Speech Transliterators or Deafblind Manual LSPs. These professionals are supported in their careers by their sponsoring organisations; Cued Speech Association UK, Sense and Deafblind UK. Once these professions are more developed there will then be a need to consider the creation of further Professional Associations.

Developments in Technology

Smarter delivery

Recently it has become possible for LSPs to deliver their services in ways that are more flexible and in some cases without having to travel to the client. New services offering BSL/English Interpretation via videophone are now available which could be used for other visual communication such as Lipspeakers and Cued Speech Transliterators. Remote access to Speech to Text is now possible using a combination of telephone and internet connections and this could also be used to provide a remote Electronic Note-taking service. These developments will profoundly effect the way that LSPs are able to interact with their clients. Remote access opens up the possibility of assignments of only a few minutes, rather than the two hour minimum at present. It will also be possible for clients in remote areas to be able to access the services of an LSP without the need for travel and overnight stays.

Recommendation: Remote Contact Centres to extend their coverage to include all types of language and communication access services, offering real choice and flexibility for deaf people.

Creating new services

Speech Recognition Software is increasingly used to deliver 'live' television subtitling and is being developed as an alternative to the keyboard methods of producing Speech To Text. This provides the potential Speech To Text student with greater choice of method and potentially a much quicker route to qualification. Remote access to speech to text services is also being made available using operators supported by Speech Recognition Software. It is essential that LSPs operating in new ways receive training and support and are regulated by accredited qualification and registration.

Recommendation: Accredited Level Three courses be developed for LSPs that use Speech Recognition Software.

Replacing human intervention

Future developments in technology present the possibility of computer generated language and communication access services that do not require any input from a human operator. One day we may see handheld devices carried by deaf people that automatically turn any speaker's voice into text. It is the widely held view, however, that it will be many years before Speech Recognition Software is capable of working accurately without having to be tuned to one person's voice.

Speech Recognition Software can be used to facilitate communication for deaf people in one-to-one situations where the person communicating with the deaf person has their own computer and software tuned to their voice. This could be used within families as an alternative to written notes and would be particularly useful for recently diagnosed deaf people.

Recommendation: Speech Recognition Software to be offered to families of recently diagnosed deaf people.

Many of the professionals that work regularly with deaf people could also develop their own 'personal subtitling' facility operating on their computer. This would be of particular benefit within the health service, facilitating communication at GP appointments or at the audiology clinic. This would have the additional benefit of being a practical demonstration to the newly diagnosed deaf person of the types of communication access services that are available.

Recommendation: The NHS to make available Speech Recognition Software and training in its use to all healthcare professionals that have regular contact with deaf people.

Conclusion

The responsibility for implementing the recommendations in this report lies with a wide cross section of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. A successful outcome will depend on considerable collaboration requiring careful coordination. We would, however, be failing hundreds of thousands of deaf people if we allowed this complexity to remain a barrier to progress.

The recommendations have been designed to be achievable within three years. However the lack of provision is so deep rooted that the real solutions needed are much more long-term than that. In many ways we are only scratching at the surface by seeing an increase in LSPs measured in 10s as a success. The recent achievement in increasing BSL/English Interpreter provision illustrates this: a doubling of registered BSL/English Interpreters in three years now gives a ratio of about one registered interpreter per 100 sign language users. Compare this to Finland where there are double the number of registered interpreters for a population a tenth the size of the UK (that's one registered interpreter per five sign language users), and they still consider there to be a shortage of supply.

The ratio of English language based LSPs to potential users in the UK is so high as to be almost statistically meaningless, somewhere in the region of one registered LSP to 100,000 potential users. Such is the magnitude of the challenge we face.

There is considerable commitment among the main stakeholders for progress to be made, and awareness, whilst still very low, is increasing. This commitment needs to be built upon and supported with goodwill and funding from a wide variety of sources.

It has already been demonstrated that demand alone will never significantly drive up the supply of LSPs. Supply will only increase with coordinated strategic intervention from those agencies that have a duty to provide access.

Appendix A

Summary of Recommendations

1. An information campaign targeted at deaf people, conducted through deaf clubs, local and national deaf associations and lipreading classes using the *Providing Access to Communication in English for Deaf People – Your rights to communication support under the DDA* leaflet to raise awareness of deaf people's rights and the options available.

2. Comprehensive written guidance on language and communication access services to be routinely issued at the first point of contact with the NHS in the process of diagnosis and to every person attending an audiology clinic.

3. The CACDP Developing Awareness and Communication with Deaf and Deafblind people training to be delivered widely with the objective that all those in a 'customer facing' role are deaf aware and able to communicate with deaf people effectively.

4. Staff that regularly work with deaf people to attain further accredited awareness and communication qualifications appropriate to their position.

5. Service Providers to widen the scope of their community language interpreting services to include the provision of language and communication access services for deaf people.

6. The *Providing access to communication in English for deaf people – Your duties under the DDA* leaflet to be distributed to all large companies and public sector organisations and at trade fairs and similar events throughout the UK. A network of awareness officers to be established to provide expert advice at Job Centres and Trade Union Conferences to explain about deafness and the types of language and communication access services.

7. Language and communication access services demonstration days to be held for employees of large companies and public sector organisations as part of their commitment to the well being of their staff. These events to include information about how to book language and communication access services, and how to get support from the Access to Work scheme.

8. The ACE Registration Panel to develop the Register of qualified Language Service Professionals so that it is fit for purpose for all types of LSP, is accessible and is freely available for all those booking an LSP.

9. All LSPs to register with a relevant national registration body.

10. All agencies that provide LSPs to sign up to the ASG Standards of Service.

11. All Service Providers and Employers booking a language and communication access service to require the LSP to be registered with a relevant national registration body.

12. The *Careers as a Language Service Professional – Working with deaf people* leaflet to be distributed widely through Schools, Careers Advisers, Connexions, Colleges and to students of all CACDP courses.

13. Courses to train tutors and assessors to be held at strategic centres across the UK ensuring a growth in the training and learning opportunities for LSPs throughout the country.

14. Level One and Level Two courses to be held at centres across the UK and made accessible to as many types of LSP student as possible.

15. Research is undertaken to map existing and forecast supply of and demand for LSP provision and existing location of LSP training.

16. Level Three training courses for all LSPs to be developed such that cost to the student is not a disincentive to study.

17. Qualifications for CSTs to be accredited by October 2007; suitable training is made available to tutors and the training and certification of the first cohort of CSTs is completed by 2009.

18. LSPs currently holding CACDP qualifications at Level Two to progress to the new CACDP LSP Level Three qualifications and transition arrangements to be made so that they are given credit for the achievement of a relevant Level Two LSP qualification.

19. Training courses to be developed and made available to all LSPs to provide training in specialist fields such as Law, Mental Health and Linguistics.

20. Start-up support be provided to the Association of Verbatim Speech To Text Reporters and the Association of Note-taking Professionals.

21. Support be provided to the Association of Lipspeakers to enable them to create an environment of collaboration and maximise resource sharing potential.

22. Remote Contact Centres to extend their coverage to include all types of language and communication access services, offering real choice and flexibility for deaf people.

23. Accredited Level Three courses be developed for LSPs that use Speech Recognition Software.

24. Speech Recognition Software to be offered to families of recently diagnosed deaf people.

25. The NHS to make available the Speech Recognition Software and training in its use to all healthcare professionals that have regular contact with deaf people.

Appendix B

Participating Organisations

The Access to Communication in English campaign is conducted by a coalition of organisations that work with deaf people, coordinated by UK Council on Deafness.

Aberdeen and North East Deaf Society
Provides services for deaf and hard of hearing people throughout the North East of Scotland.
www.aberdeennedeaf.org.uk

Association of Lipspeakers
The professional body that represents lipspeakers.
www.lipspeaking.co.uk

Association of Verbatim Speech-to-Text Reporters
The professional body representing verbatim speech-to-text reporters.
www.deafcouncil.org.uk/avsttr.htm

British Institute of Verbatim Reporters
The professional body representing verbatim reporters.
www.bivr.org.uk

Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP)
UK Awarding body accredited by the QCA offering qualifications in deaf awareness and communication used by deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind people.
www.cacdp.org.uk

Cued Speech Association UK
Provides information about and training in Cued Speech.
www.cuedspeech.co.uk

Deafblind UK
Provides services for deafblind people throughout the UK.
www.deafblind.org.uk

deafPLUS
Provides information, support and training across the range of deafness.
www.deafplus.org

Hearing Concern
Provides advice, information and support, promotes communication access and raises public and professional awareness of the issues associated with hearing loss.
www.hearingconcern.com

LINK Centre for Deafened People
National organisation for late-deafened adults in the UK. Delivers direct services, conducts targeted research, and provides training for professionals
www.linkdp.org

National Association of Deafened People
Provides information and support for people with a profound, acquired hearing loss.
www.nadp.org.uk

RNID
Works to change the world for the UK's 9 million deaf and hard of hearing people by campaigning, lobbying, raising awareness, providing services and research.
www.rnid.org.uk

Sense
A national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind.
www.sense.org.uk

Appendix C

UK Council on Deafness Members

UK Council on Deafness works with and for deaf organisations in the UK by providing information, advice and support and by representing the views of the sector to government and policy makers. The diversity of the members covers the full spectrum of deafness, some are specialist in their work, others cover a defined geographical area. Many of the member organisations that have not been actively involved in the campaign have nonetheless provided support and have assisted in the collection of data. Full contact details can be found in the Members Directory at www.deafcouncil.org.uk

1. The Anne Lloyd Memorial Trust
2. Aberdeen & North East Deaf Society
3. Action Deafness
4. Action for Tinnitus Research
5. Asian Deaf Women's Association
6. Association of Lipspeakers
7. Association of Sign Language Interpreters
8. Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults
9. Association of Verbatim Speech To Text Reporters
10. Auditory Verbal UK
11. BID Services for Deaf People
12. British Association of Audiological Physicians
13. British Academy of Audiology
14. British Association of Community Doctors in Audiology
15. British Association of Teachers of the Deaf
16. British Institute of Verbatim Reporters
17. British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists
18. British Society for Mental Health & Deafness
19. British Tinnitus Association
20. Cambridgeshire Deaf Association
21. Catholic Deaf Association
22. CHANGE
23. Children of Deaf Parents UK
24. Christian Deaf Link UK
25. C of E Committee for Ministry among Deaf People
26. Cochlear Implanted Children's Support Group
27. Co.deaf
28. CACDP
29. Cued Speech Association UK
30. Cumbria Deaf Association
31. Deaf Access
32. Ddeaf Equality Forward
33. Deafax
34. Deafblind UK
35. Deaf Broadcasting Council
36. deafconnect
37. Deaf Connexions
38. Deaf Direct
39. DELTA Deaf Education through Listening & Talking

40. Deaf Ex-Mainstreamers' Group
41. Deaf Lincs
42. dDeafLinks Staffordshire
43. deafPLUS
44. Deaf Studies Trust
45. Deafness Support Network
46. Deafway
47. Deaf Women Against Breast Cancer
48. Deafness Research UK
49. Dorothy Miles Cultural Centre
50. The Ear Foundation
51. Ewing Foundation
52. Hampshire Deaf Association
53. Hartlepool Deaf Centre
54. Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
55. Hearing Concern
56. Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service
57. Hi Kent
58. Home Counties Cochlear Implant Group
59. Jewish Deaf Association
60. Leeds Society for Deaf & Blind People
61. LINK Centre for Deafened People
62. London Ethnic Minority Deaf Association
63. Manchester Deaf Centre
64. Mansfield & North Notts Society for Deaf People
65. Ménière's Society
66. Merseyside Society for Deaf People
67. Merton Hard of Hearing Resource Centre
68. National Association of Deafened People
69. National Cochlear Implant Users' Association
70. National Deaf Children's Society
71. Norfolk Deaf Association
72. North Wales Deaf Association
73. North West Federation of Hard of Hearing Clubs
74. Nottinghamshire Deaf Society
75. Open Ears
76. Oxford Deaf Centre
77. Royal Association for Deaf People
78. RNID
79. Scottish Council on Deafness
80. Sense
81. SIGN
82. Special Communication Needs
83. STAGETEXT
84. Suffolk Deaf Association
85. TAG
86. Usher UK
87. UK Deaf Sport
88. Veet Deaf Centre
89. Walsall Deaf People's Centre
90. West Norfolk Deaf Association
91. West Sussex Deaf & Hard of Hearing Association

References

Access to Communication in English – No Service, ACE Campaign 2005

Providing access to communication in English for deaf people – Your duties under the DDA, ACE Campaign 2006

Careers as a Language Service Professional – working with deaf people, ACE Campaign 2006

Providing Access to Communication in English for Deaf People – Your rights to communication support under the DDA, ACE Campaign 2006

Agency Standards, Agency Steering Group 2006

Recommended Further Reading

Good Practice Guide: Providing Access to Public Services for Deaf People, UK Council on Deafness 2001

A simple cure – A national report into deaf and hard of hearing people's experiences of the National Health Service, RNID 2004 (available from www.rnid.org.uk)

Disability Legislation and Deaf Workers: Some opportunities are more equal than others, George Montgomery 2001

Hidden Lives, The psychological and social impact of becoming deafened in adult life, The LINK Centre for Deafened People 2005 (available from www.linkdp.org)

Hearing Differently: The Impact of Hearing Impairment on Family Life, Ruth Morgan Jones 2001

Working Without Hearing, Mark Weston 2001

Managing Your Hearing Loss: Impairment to Empowerment, Bunty Levene & Val Tait 2006

Hearing Loss: From Stigma to Strategy, Michael Simmons 2004

The Deafblind Helpbook, P J White 2001

These and other useful publications are available (unless otherwise stated) from Forest Books Ltd: www.forestbooks.com

Glossary

ACE	Access to Communication in English
ASG	Agency Steering Group
BSL	British Sign Language
CACDP	Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CST	Cued Speech Transliterator
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
LSP	Language Service Professional
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
RNID	Royal National Institute for Deaf People
SASLI	Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters
STTR	Speech To Text Reporter

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access to communication in english for deaf people can also be obtained from the website at www.deafcouncil.org.uk or supplied electronically by email as a PDF document or as a text document for conversion into alternative formats.