

Feedback from BADHOGS members who have some loss of hearing & wear hearing aids

What are your top priorities when receiving health and care services in your community? (examples- good treatment in hospital, maintaining personal fitness and activity, being able to see GPs easily, good communication, mental health support, shorter waiting times etc)

- Ease of access to services by public transport. More options for buses and timings for return journeys from places like Frimley
- Free parking for those who can't afford it
- Consistent provision of Interpreting services when requested across all health services, hospital provision not perfect but better than provision at GPs which is just not good enough
- Better awareness in health service staff of difficulties faced by deaf people. Speaking slowly will not help, don't write things down as deaf people may not be able to read very well. All of these things heightens anxiety of deaf people when attending appointments. An example of where deaf awareness is excellent, is King Edward audiology service. If they can do it well then so should other services
- As much care as possible closer to home, including blood tests, diagnostics and other treatments
- Correct flagging of all deafness on all health services systems so they are aware and will know that the individual will require an interpreter, that the person is unable to ring up or take a phone call, and ensure their preferred communication method is on the system. Currently it seems not to be the case, or if it is on the system then no attention is paid to it
- All GP surgeries to have 'hearing loop' this is not currently the case.
- Reasonable adjustments for deaf people flagged on the system consistently, for example to flag that a deaf patient may need a longer appointment
- Deaf people to have a named doctor and ability to see the named doctor, communication is difficult and seeing different doctors all the time means patients have to re tell their story/history every time which makes it really difficult; this wouldn't be necessary with a named doctor

Have you experienced any barriers to getting great care?

- Signage that isn't easy to read, not all deaf people read very well
- Inconsistency in the provision of interpreting services across the health system, particularly bad at GPs, this creates health inequality
- Services not consistently asking deaf patients and flagging their preferred communication method
- Real lack of deaf awareness and the difficulties from NHS staff
- Not always clear indication that deaf people who are staying in hospital are deaf. The clinical staff need to know but so do all the other staff including non clinical who might interact with the patient
- When visiting NHS services and waiting in the waiting area, deaf people can't hear when the clinician calls the next patients name.
- Written English is not the first language of deaf people, their care or equality will never be the same as a hearing patient until barriers around communication are solved

What improvements do you think would make the biggest difference to you?

- Consistent provision of interpreters for all health appointments in all health settings
- Correct flagging of all reasonable adjustments for deaf people
- Health records that can be seen by all clinicians wherever that patient receives any health treatment
- Deaf people being involved in the planning process for signage and wayfinding in new build health settings
- Seating areas in hospital that are calmer with less hustle and bustle as this can cause increased anxiety for deaf people who are already anxious about communication at a health appointment
- Blood tests and diagnostics closer to home rather than being sent to any number of locations
- Deaf awareness training for all NHS staff including how to recognise when a deaf patient might be anxious or stressed
- A volunteer to welcome/buddy a deaf person when they arrive at hospital, to help them be relaxed by helping them get to the right place, if necessary by walking with them to the correct place.