

**RNID Cymru study into the inclusion barriers facing
people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales**

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Section 1: Executive Summary

Executive Summary

RNID Cymru received funding through the Welsh Assembly Government New Ideas Fund to undertake a research project into the everyday inclusion barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. The study was carried out between April 1st and December 31st 2009.

Standard research methods were utilised during the study. Elements included a self completion questionnaire and five open forum focus groups held across Wales. 590 people who are deaf or hard of hearing took part in the study.

The questionnaire asked about experiences of:

- Using public services and service providing organisations;
- Using public transport;
- Access to arts, entertainment and leisure activities;
- Employment and training opportunities.

The open forums were held following preliminary analysis of the questionnaires and debated the main issues raised. The forums also provided an opportunity to identify whether people who are deaf or hard of hearing experience isolation, exclusion and prejudice.

Key Findings

Access to public services and service providing organisations

A substantial majority of questionnaire respondents - 84% - believe that being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder to use services. A lack of deaf awareness was identified as the main barrier to using services by nearly 80% of respondents, while nearly two fifths (36%) identified the attitude of services providers.

The majority of questionnaire respondents (over 90%) had accessed services provided by local authorities, the health service, banks and post offices in the past year.

Nearly a quarter (23%) said it was difficult to get information about services provided by local authorities. When discussing local authority services open forum participants raised the need for specialist social workers for deaf people in every local authority, and a lack of lip reading classes across Wales.

About one in six (15%) said it was difficult to get information about health services. However, the figure rose to nearly half (45%) of respondents who use BSL and SSE. When discussing the health service, open forum participants raised a number of barriers to accessing services. Participants with different degrees of hearing loss raised a lack of visual information displays in waiting

rooms, and shared how their hearing loss was not clearly marked on medical records. Participants who use BSL or SSE noted that there was still a lack of understanding regarding the need to provide interpreters for appointments, and a need to consider the interpreter preference of patients within the health service.

One in ten (10%) respondents said it was difficult to get information about services provided by post offices and banks. However, the figure rose to one in three (33%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE. Open forum participants highlighted that induction loop systems were often turned off or not maintained in branches and shared difficulties in conducting enquiries over the telephone.

Overall, a large proportion of study participants, and participants who use BSL or SSE in particular, have difficulty in obtaining information about a range of services provided by public services and service providing organisations.

Access to public transport

Public transport is essential for providing access to employment, social events, health services, education and leisure pursuits. 61% of questionnaire respondents had used public transport provided by local authorities in the past year.

A large majority of questionnaire respondents - 61% - believe that being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder to use public transport, while 66% believe it makes it harder to use public transport alone. A lack of deaf awareness was identified as the main barrier to using public transport by nearly two thirds (65%) of respondents. 28% identified a lack of accessible information, while nearly a quarter (24%) identified the attitude of service providers.

Over two fifths of respondents (41%) have been on a train in the past year. While over a quarter (27%) said it was difficult to get information before travelling by train; over two fifths (42%) find it difficult during the journey. These figures were substantially higher amongst respondents who use BSL or SSE, with 60% finding it difficult to get information before the journey and nearly three quarters (72%) finding it difficult during the journey. Open forum participants highlighted specific barriers to travelling by train. They raised the lack of real time visual information displays not only in stations and stops but also in carriages, and the difficulty in hearing audible announcements. As a result participants often felt reliant on the reaction of other travellers, which also led to confusion and unease when travelling.

70% of respondents have travelled on a bus or coach in the past year. Nearly one fifth of respondents (18%) said it was difficult to find information before travelling, while 28% said it was difficult to get information during the journey. On the whole older open forum participants were comfortable travelling by bus due to the free bus pass provided. However, open forum participants under 30 years old identified a lack of deaf awareness amongst bus drivers as a barrier and their attitudes towards travellers who are deaf or hard of hearing as a result.

Over two fifths (44%) of questionnaire respondents have used a taxi or a mini cab in the past year. Of respondents, one fifth (20%) said it was difficult to find information before travelling, while over a quarter (28%) said it was difficult during the journey. Again a higher percentage of respondents who use BSL or SSE noted that they found it difficult to get information. Open forum participants raised the issue of a lack of deaf awareness amongst taxi drivers and the difficulty as a result in communicating with drivers.

Our study has identified that a large proportion of respondents have difficulty obtaining information before and during their journey when using public transport. Participants identified travelling by train as the most difficult.

Access to art, entertainment and leisure activities

An opportunity to access cultural, entertainment and sporting activities is central to leading a full and active life. 79% of questionnaire respondents believe that being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder to take part in art, entertainment and leisure activities.

Nearly half of questionnaire respondents (46%) noted a lack of deaf awareness as the main barrier to going to the theatre. Nearly two fifths of respondents (37%) identified a lack of captioned / subtitled performances. This figure rose to over half (54%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE. Nearly half (45%) respondents who are hard of hearing identified a lack of induction loops or loops being switched off as a barrier. Open forum participants highlighted these issues further. Participants noted a lack of captioned and signed performances in their local area, while participants who are hard of hearing expressed their frustration that induction loops were often turned off or not maintained.

Over half of respondents (53%) noted a lack of subtitled screenings as the main barrier to going to the cinema. Further, open forum participants' awareness of the availability of subtitled screening was low. However, participants who were aware noted that subtitled screenings were often unavailable at their local cinema and that they had to travel some distance to see a subtitled film. It was also raised that subtitled screenings were often shown at inconvenient times.

Nearly two fifth (39%) of respondents identified a lack of deaf awareness as the main barrier to visiting a museum or art gallery, while one third (34%) believed that there were no barriers. However, 45% of respondents who use BSL or SSE identified a lack of signed tours as a barrier, while a third identified a lack of accessible information.

A lack of deaf awareness was highlighted once again as the main barrier to taking part in sports and leisure activities. However, nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents believed that there were no barriers to taking part. Young open forum participants were on the whole confident in accessing sport and leisure activities such as going to the gym. However, difficulties in communicating with staff were again raised.

Our research has clearly identified a number of barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in participating in cultural and entertainment activities in

particular. It has highlighted the need for venues to ensure that their activities are accessible to all.

Employment and Training

A large proportion of respondents of a working age - 59% - believe that their deafness makes it harder to find a job. While nearly half (45%) identified a lack of communication support as the main barrier to finding a job, about two fifths identified a lack of suitable jobs and the attitude of employers.

These issues were highlighted further during the open forums. A number of young participants noted barriers in accessing services provided by Job Centre Plus. Participants noted a lack of visual information displays in waiting rooms, of not being provided with a BSL interpreter for appointments and a lack of deaf awareness and support from members of staff.

Open forum participants also perceived the attitudes of employers as a barrier to finding work. Some participants noted that their experiences in applying for jobs often made them question if they were being prejudiced as a result of their hearing loss. Some participants also felt that there was a lack of knowledge and understanding amongst employers and employees regarding schemes such as Access to Work.

Study participants in employment shared their experiences in the workplace. Over one third (36%) of questionnaire respondents find it difficult to communicate with colleagues in their workplace. Further, open forum participants shared experiences of feeling isolated and excluded at work. One in three respondents of a working age have received work-related training in the last year. Of those, about two fifths were provided with support or equipment or thought their trainers/tutors were deaf aware.

Our research has highlighted that often the barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in employment and training are not related to their deafness or any limitations this may impose upon them. It is advisers and employers lack of deaf awareness and information regarding the support available for employers and employees that stand between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and the world of work.

Key Recommendations

Our study has identified a number of everyday inclusion barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. RNID Cymru has developed the following general recommendations as key areas where action is needed in order to bring down the barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. Specific recommendations for the four key study areas can be found at the end of every section.

RNID Cymru believe that following and achieving these recommendations and the specific recommendations at the end of every section are vital in order to

ensure that people who are deaf or hard of hearing have equal opportunity in Wales.

1. Accredited deaf awareness training for all frontline staff

The issue of a lack of deaf awareness amongst frontline staff was raised by the majority of study participants when accessing a range of services. Ensuring all front line staff in public services and service providing organisations receive accredited deaf awareness training will help bring down barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing when accessing services. Deaf awareness training can provide staff with a better understanding of the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and basic communication skills. It is vital that training is repeated regularly in order to ensure that staff do not forget the skills learnt and to reflect the possible turn over in staff.

2. Implement the Welsh Assembly Government's, *Delivering in BSL: Advice of Public Services*

Participants who use BSL or SSE identified a number of barriers in accessing communication support for a range of activities, including attending a parents evening, medical appointments, and Job Centre Plus interviews. Poor communication in service settings can lead to a poor quality of service. Participants also raised issues such as a lack of information in BSL, and a lack of understanding regarding booking an appropriate interpreter. We call on the Welsh Assembly Government to promote the advice developed in 2006, *Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services* to public services across Wales. Further, we call on public services to implement the advice provided, and ensure accessible and equitable services for people who use BSL.

3. Induction loop systems fitted, maintained and regularly tested

Participants who are hard of hearing raised the issue relating to induction loops systems. Study participants shared examples of theatres, banks and train stations where induction loops are advertised but are not turned on, maintained, or staff trained in their operation. Participants shared experiences of frustration and isolation as a result. It is vital therefore that public services and service providing organisations ensure that induction loops are fitted, maintained and regularly tested in order to enable more people who use hearing aids to access a range of activities, from enjoying a theatre production to buying a ticket at the train station. Further, all staff should be trained in their operation.

4. More opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to take part in art, entertainment and cultural activities

Barriers identified by the study to taking part in art, entertainment and cultural activities included a lack of accessible performances, induction loops not being maintained and a lack of accessible information on activities. We call on art, leisure and entertainment venues across Wales to review the opportunities offered to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We also call on venues to engage with people who are deaf or hard of hearing regarding the activities, opportunities and events they would like to see held in their area.

5. Public services and service providing organisations aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

Through the study it has become evident that a number of public services and service providing organisations are breaching the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in their provision for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Clear examples were provided when 'reasonable adjustments' were not being made when providing services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We call on all public services and service providing organisation to be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing are met by the services they provide.

Section 2: Introduction and Background

Introduction

We're RNID Cymru, the charity working to create a world where deafness or hearing loss do not determine opportunity and where people value their hearing. We work to ensure that people who are deaf or hard of hearing have the same rights and opportunities to lead a full and enriching life. We strive to break down stigma and create acceptance of hearing loss. We aim to promote hearing health, prevent hearing loss and cure deafness.

There are an estimated 480,000 people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. It is estimated that 1 in 7 of the general population has some degree of deafness ranging from people with mild hearing loss to people who are profoundly deaf. The most common is age-related hearing loss with more than half of people over the age of sixty with some degree of noticeable hearing loss.

British Sign Language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of approximately 3,000 people in Wales. BSL is a visual, spatial language that uses movements of the hands, body, face and head. It has its own grammar, syntax, idioms and regional variations. Citizens who use BSL are often comfortable and confident when communicating face-to-face in BSL. It may be their only language, as many BSL users do not speak or lip read English or Welsh effectively. BSL users can also find understanding written English or Welsh difficult.

Background

RNID Cymru received funding from the Welsh Assembly Government's New Ideas Fund to undertake a 9 month research project into the everyday inclusion barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales.

In the last ten years, legislation has aimed to improve social inclusion and equal access to service provision for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people, including people who are deaf, in the workplace, in education and when accessing goods and services. Service providers include theatres, cinemas, conference halls, banks, supermarkets, shopping centre's and bus and train stations. Fundamental to the anti-discrimination provisions in the DDA is the duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to their services to ensure people who are disabled can make use of them. 'Reasonable adjustments' can include, providing additional aids or services such as providing BSL interpreters or installing an induction loop system.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED) was created by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) and came into force on 4 December 2006. The main aim of the DED is to help public authorities think about disability equality, plan how to achieve this and incorporate it into their work. The DED aims to help public authorities see where unnecessary barriers stop equal participation on the part

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of disabled people who use their services, as well as current or potential employees who are disabled.

In Wales, a number of devolved policies have aimed to improve the opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2002, digital hearing aids were made available to all on the NHS following investment by the Welsh Assembly Government in Audiology services. Newborn hearing screening was introduced in 2003, the first national newborn screening programme in the UK.

The Welsh Assembly Government formally recognised British Sign Language as a language in its own right in 2004. In the same year, the Welsh Assembly Government provided £1.6million to BSL Futures; a further £2.7million was also provided for the project through a partnership initiative supported by the European Social Fund. The project succeeded in increasing the BSL teaching capacity in Wales and trained more than 40 MRSLLI registered interpreters. In conjunction with the project, the Welsh Assembly Government published ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** in 2006, clear advice for public services on how to provide inclusive and equal access to public services for BSL users in Wales.

However, little research specific to Wales has been conducted in recent years to explore the current levels, and experiences, of social exclusion, isolation and prejudice experienced by people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Research therefore into the inclusion barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales is timely and appropriate.

Section 3: Methodology

Objectives

The research project had the following overall objectives:

1. To identify the experiences of people who are deaf or hard of hearing when accessing public services and service providing organisations.
2. To identify whether people who are deaf or hard of hearing experience isolation, exclusion and prejudice.
3. To produce a research report that draws together the results of the project with a series of recommendations.

The research project was completed over a 9 month timescale and ran between April 1st and December 31st 2009.

Methodology

In order to complete the study, standard research methods were utilised, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, including a self-completion questionnaire and 5 open forum focus groups.

Self-completion Questionnaire

A simple, easy-to-read, questionnaire was developed (Appendix 1). The questionnaire was available in British Sign Language (BSL), English and Welsh. Respondents were able to view the questionnaire in BSL on DVD and the RNID Cymru website. The bilingual questionnaire enabled respondents to respond in Welsh or English. A freepost envelope was provided to ensure questionnaires could be returned easily and efficiently.

The questionnaire asked about experiences of:

- Using public services and service providing organisations;
- Using public transport;
- Arts, entertainment and leisure activities;
- Employment and training.

A total of 1800 questionnaires were distributed and disseminated to people who are deaf or hard of hearing across Wales as follows:

- 750 questionnaires were sent directly to RNID Cymru members;
- 100 questionnaires were distributed to RNID Cymru service users and clients;
- 800 questionnaires were distributed and disseminated by social service teams in the following 9 local authorities:
 - Bridgend

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- Cardiff
 - Carmarthenshire
 - Denbighshire
 - Gwynedd
 - Merthyr Tydfil
 - Newport
 - Powys
 - Torfaen
- 150 questionnaires were distributed to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clubs, at RNID Cymru events and information stands.

543 questionnaires were returned, a 30% response rate. All responses were entered into SPSS, a specialist data analysis package designed for social science research. Percentages in the tables presented in the report may not equal 100% due to rounding or due to respondents selecting multiple answers. The number of people who did not answer questions has been noted where possible.

Open Forum Focus Groups

Following preliminary analysis of the questionnaires, 5 open forum focus groups were held between September and November 2009 to debate the main issues raised. The open forums also provided an opportunity to identify whether people who are deaf or hard of hearing experience isolation, exclusion and prejudice.

In order to examine the experiences of different age groups, one open forum was held with young people between 16 – 25 years old, while another was held with older people over the age of 65.

To reflect a spectrum of socio-economic and geographic areas, the open forums were held in the following 5 locations.

- 8th September – Cardiff
- 26th October – Aberaeron, Ceredigion
- 5th November – Dolgellau, Gwynedd
- 6th November – Wrexham
- 27th November – Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent

In total, 47 people attended the open forums and shared their views. One open forum was hosted by a Deaf Club, another by a Hard of Hearing Club. One open forum was held with the support of Michelle Quayle, British Deaf Association Wales Deaf community support officer. Two were held in conjunction with other activities organised by RNID Cymru. The majority of open forum participants were BSL users.

As noted, BSL is a visual, spatial language that uses movements of the hands, body, face and head and has its own grammar, syntax, idioms and regional variations. When open forum participants who use BSL are quoted, I have used the words of interpreters used during forums. Their quotes may therefore not follow English grammatical structures.

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We are extremely grateful to all participants for taking the time to share their thoughts, views and experiences with the study by responding to our questionnaire or participating in an open forum.

Section 4: Demographics

Demographics

543 questionnaires were returned, giving a 30% response rate. 98% responded in English and 2% responded in Welsh. 47% of respondents are male, while 53% are female. Of the respondents, the overwhelming majority (98%) stated that they were white British.

Figure 4.1 indicates the age range of questionnaire respondents.

Figure 4.1: Age Range of Respondents

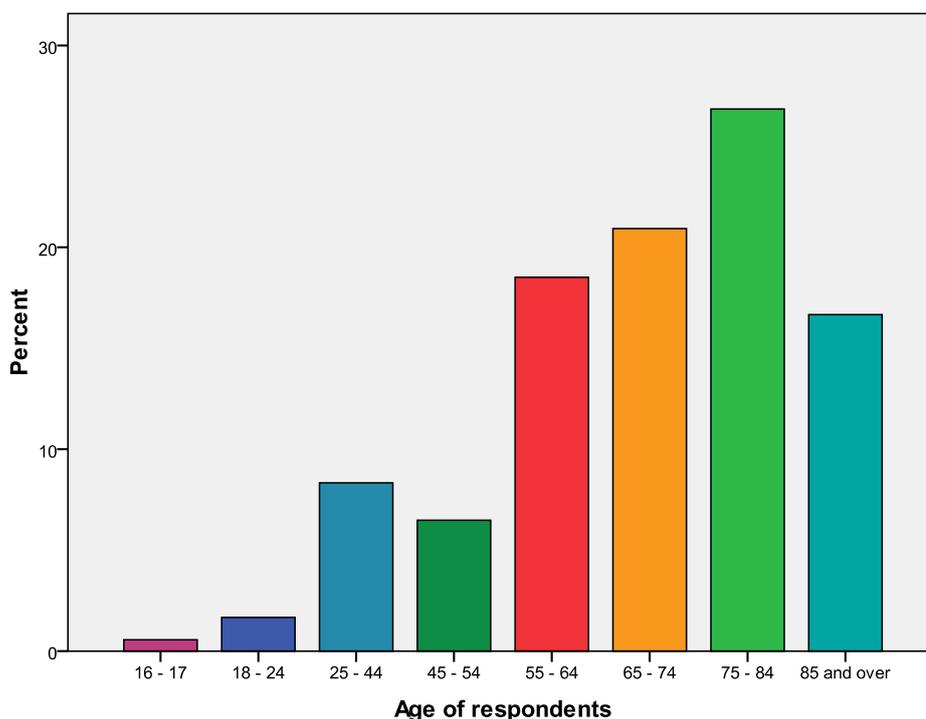


Figure 4.1 indicates that:

- 2% of respondents are between the ages of 16-24;
- 8% are between the ages of 25 – 44;
- 25% of respondents are between the ages of 45 – 64;
- Over 65% of respondents are over the age of 65 years.

The high response rate by respondents over 65 years of age reflects the fact that hearing loss affects 55% of people over 60.¹ In Wales, it is estimated that there are 352,000 people over 60 years of age with some degree of deafness while 123,000 people under 60 years of age.²

Questionnaires were returned from every local authority in Wales, with the highest response from Carmarthenshire (13%) and the lowest response from

¹ Davis, A (1995) Hearing in Adults

² RNID Fact sheet: Facts and figures on deafness and tinnitus

Neath Port Talbot (0.6%). However 40% of respondents did not state in which local authority they lived.

Deafness and Hearing Loss

Table 4.1 indicates how respondents describe their hearing loss. 39% of respondents describe themselves as deaf, while 58% of respondents describe themselves as hard of hearing. 9% of respondents stated that they use British Sign Language (BSL) while 2% of respondents stated that they use Sign Supported English (SSE).

81% of respondents wear hearing aids, while 2% wear a Bone Anchored Hearing Aid (BAHA). 4% of respondents have a cochlear implant.

It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive, i.e. it is possible to be hard of hearing and a hearing aid user.

Table 4.1: Respondents Hearing (n=4)

Response	Total number of respondents	Percent of Cases
I am deaf	210	39%
I am hard of hearing	313	58%
I use BSL	50	9%
I use SSE	12	2%
I have a cochlear implant	21	4%
I wear a hearing aid(s)	436	81%
I wear a BAHA	9	2%
I have no hearing loss	2	0.4%
Other	17	3%

Of respondents:

- 12% had been deaf or hard of hearing from birth;
- 29% had become deaf or lost their hearing between 0 – 35 years;
- 43% had become deaf or lost their hearing between 36 – 64 years;
- 16% had become deaf or lost their hearing when over 65 years.

Section 5: Access to services

We wanted to identify the experiences of people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing public services and service providing organisations. We asked questionnaire respondents whether they thought their deafness made it harder for them to use services:

Table 5.1: Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to use services (n=9)

Response	Percentage
Agree strongly	49%
Agree slightly	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%
Disagree slightly	3%
Disagree strongly	1%
Don't know/not applicable	2%

This table shows conclusively that there is a strong perception that deafness can make using services harder. 84% of respondents agreed to some extent with the statement, while only 4% said they disagreed.

Table 5.2 indicates what respondents consider to be the main barriers to using services. Respondents were asked to tick two options

Table 5.2: In your experience, what are the main barriers to using services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing? (n=43)

Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of deaf awareness	78%
The attitude of service providers	36%
A lack of induction loops / loops switched off	32%
A lack of accessible information	17%
A lack of communication support	12%
Other	8%
There are no barriers	5%

Table 5.2 therefore shows that the single most important barrier, identified by nearly 80% of respondents, is a lack of deaf awareness, while nearly two fifths of respondents (36%) identified the attitudes of service providers as a barrier.

We also identified the barriers facing respondents by degree of deafness. While nearly half (46%) of respondents that use BSL or SSE noted a lack of communication support as a barrier, 36% of respondents who described

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themselves as hard of hearing identified a lack of induction loops / loops switched off.

The questionnaire also asked which services provided by local authorities participants had used in the past year.

Table 5.3: Services used provided by local authorities (n=28)

Response	Percent of Cases
Public Transport	61%
Electoral Services	57%
Libraries	47%
Waste	45%
Social Services	40%
Sports and recreation	18%
Education	15%
Housing	10%
Environmental Health	8%
Registrar	7%
Planning	6%
Other	3%

In the past year about 60% of respondents had used public transport provided by local authorities or contacted electoral services, while nearly half had visited a library or used waste services. Two fifths had accessed social services.

Respondents were also asked which services provided by public services and service providing organisations they had used in the past year.

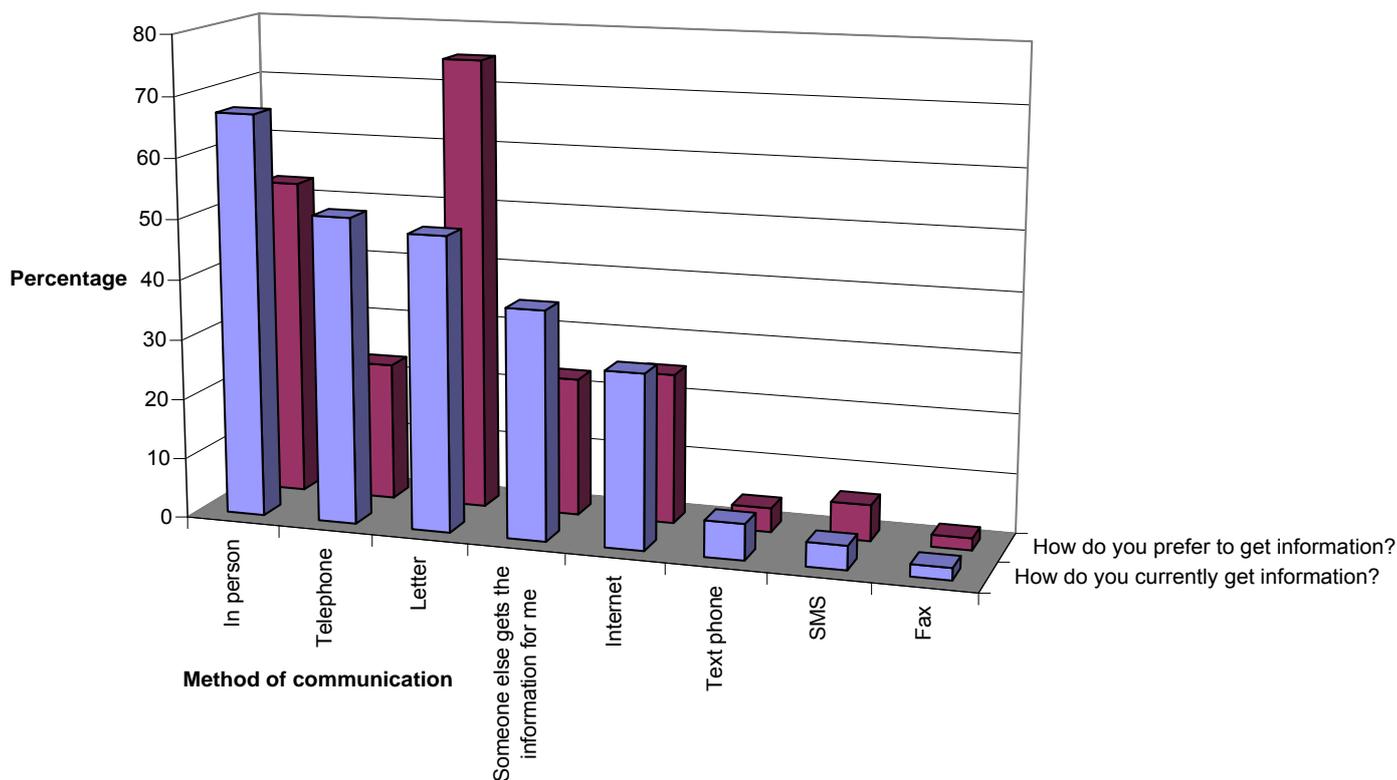
Table 5.4: Services used provided by public services and service providing organisations (n=3)

Response	Percent of Cases
Health Service	96%
Bank	91%
Post Office	86%
Police	10%
Citizens Advice Bureau	10%
Fire Services	7%
Other	4%

Nearly all respondents (over 90%) have used health services and bank services in the past year, while over 80% of respondents had used a post office. Fewer than 10% of respondents had contacted the police, Citizens Advice Bureau and fire services.

Further, respondents were asked how they usually get information about these services and how they would prefer to receive information about these services.

Figure 5.1: Getting information on services



Nearly 70% of respondents currently get information in person; however this is the preference of only about half of respondents. Barriers faced in getting information in person were raised by a number of open forum participants. The difficulty in using intercom entry systems to buildings was raised. Participants also raised the lack of deaf awareness amongst staff, in particular the difficulty in lip reading staff when they look away, look down or speak quickly. As a questionnaire respondent summarised:

“Very few people know how to speak and listen to deaf persons – and often show their impatience.”

Male, over 60, hearing aid user, south Wales

The majority of respondents (75%) would prefer to get information about services by letter, however only half of respondents currently receive it. However by analysing the data by age, we found that only 45% of respondents

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under 65 year of age would prefer to get information by letter. This suggests that older respondents over 65 like to receive information in writing.

Some open forum participants who use BSL noted that written information provided by public services and service providing organisations was often difficult to understand.

“Who provides the English and Welsh written information? Because I’m wondering if it would be worth going direct to those people and saying, look we need more sign language accessible information.”

Female, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

There was also frustration that although BSL has been recognised as a language in its own right by the Welsh Assembly Government, more information was not being provided in BSL.

“I mean BSL has been recognised as a language and yet everything you get, all the information you get is bilingual, English and Welsh. You don’t get anything in sign language even though it’s a recognised language now.”

Female, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

Over half of respondents currently receive information by telephone; the preferred choice of only 23% of respondents. A number of hard of hearing participants raised the difficulty in receiving information over the telephone. Automated switchboards and background music can make it difficult to understand the instruction provided, while other shared difficulties in communicating with callers. As a questionnaire respondent summarised:

“Everyone nowadays wants to communicate by telephone. I have great difficulty with this medium. I always tell the caller I am hard of hearing. Sometimes (not often) they adjust. Mostly they say ‘no problem’ and take no notice.”

Male, over 60, hard of hearing, area not noted

Over 50% of respondents under 44 years old currently, or would prefer to use the internet to get information, about 25% higher than the questionnaire average, demonstrating that the internet is accessible particularly to younger people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Services provided by local authorities

96% of questionnaire respondents had used services provided by local authorities in the past year. Respondents had accessed a range of services from electoral services to environmental health.

Of respondents:

- 56% said it was either quite or very easy to get information about local authority services, while 23% said it was quite or very difficult.
- However, only 24% of respondents who use BSL or SSE stated that it was quite or very easy, while 53% said it was quite or very difficult.

Over one in five respondents therefore find it difficult to get information about local authority services, while over half of respondents who use BSL or SSE find it difficult.

Social Services

40% of questionnaire respondents had accessed services provided by Social Service departments in the past year. This figure rose to 67% amongst respondents who use BSL or SSE, while the figure lowered to 34% amongst hard of hearing respondents.

While some open forum participants were positive about the levels of support received from social services, other participants with different degrees of deafness, felt that they do not receive enough support. It was noted that not all local authorities have specialist social workers for deaf people. As a result, participants perceived a lack of understanding in some local authorities of the issues people who are deaf or hard of hearing face.

In one open forum, participants who use BSL noted that their social service department had started to use interpreters for the first time in 7 years. However, often they felt that interpreters were only booked for long meetings and not short appointments. As a result, some decisions made in appointments were unclear. Participants also noted that it was difficult to make appointments with social workers and that they were often unavailable.

A number of hard of hearing study participants also felt that they were not being provided with adequate support after their hearing loss had been identified. Some participants felt that they had not been told about the range of equipment and support available to them.

"...There is a total lack of information regarding hearing aids and services available to deaf people, particularly from social services. When I was initially provided with hearing aids there were no mention of home loops, phones that amplify or any other aids."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, area not noted.

There was a general feeling that social service departments in some areas of Wales could do more to support people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Education and Learning

15% of questionnaire respondents had accessed education services provided by local authorities. However, this figure rose to 40% amongst respondents between 16 and 44 years of age.

One open forum discussed education services provided by local authorities. One participant at the forum felt that education was the most important issue in bringing down the barriers to inclusion for people who are deaf.

"It's education really for people. If the results for this research are that there needs to be more subtitles, there needs to be more interpreters, but I think the crux of it is the education of Deaf people and that's at the bottom of it really. There needs to be more sorting out of education of Deaf people."

Male, 50-60, BSL user, north Wales

One participant shared her experience as a parent who is deaf and the barriers she faced in accessing information regarding the educational achievement and wellbeing of her children:

"It's really important for me to have access to communication at my daughters school, like parents evenings because it's obviously important for me to know where she's up to in school. The teachers are not deaf aware really because we are the only two parents that have got children at the school, so really I think the school should be more proactive, and book interpreters, they know that we are deaf. What happens is that the school contacts my mother and I feel kind of pushed to one side, because obviously they are my children and I feel a bit as if I'm relying on my mother. I want the information first hand about my children, the school needs to wake up and smell the coffee really."

Female, 30 – 40, BSL user, north Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government's advice ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** is intended for use by public services such as schools. The advice states in point 3.5:

*"BSL Users can expect a good service to have BSL as an integral consideration when organising meeting and events."*³

Further, the advice notes in point 3.2 that services should also prepare for contact by SMS text message, textphone and fax which BSL users commonly use as a method of communication. The participants experience suggests that the school is not following the Welsh Assembly Government advice on delivering in BSL and as result not providing an equitable service for the parents.

³ Welsh Assembly Government (2006) Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services, p.7.

Lip reading classes

Lip reading is a valuable communication skill, which involves watching the lip shapes, gestures and facial movements of the person talking in order to get a fuller understanding of what they are saying. Most audiologists recommend that people of all ages, with any degree of deafness, learn how to lip read.

Only 5 local authorities in Wales provide lip reading classes at present.⁴ Questionnaire respondents from across Wales including Swansea, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Gwynedd and Newport raised the need for lip reading classes and teachers in their areas. As one respondent summarised:

"There is an urgent need for many more lip-reading tutors and classes. With the advent of an ageing population with its increase in hard of hearing people the next few years will see an increase in the problems."

Male, over 60, hard of hearing, south Wales

The open forum held with people over the age of 65 discussed lip reading classes. Some participants had attended lip reading classes in the past, however there was no class currently held in their area. They noted that classes had not only helped to develop valuable skills but had also improved their confidence. Participants also felt that classes provided an opportunity to meet other people who are deaf or hard of hearing and share experiences. The cost of lip reading classes was also raised. There was a general feeling that it was unfair that classes had to be paid for. Participants felt that classes should be provided by the NHS as it is vital to develop the skill when living with a hearing loss.

"If you break your leg, you get physiotherapy and all this free. But you don't get our physiotherapy free."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

Health services

96% of respondents had used the health service in the past year. Of those:

- 67% of respondents said it was either very or quite easy to get information about health services, while 15% of respondents said it was either quite or very difficult.
- However, only 28% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was either very or quite easy, while 45% of respondents said it was difficult.

Good communication is essential to the quality of care and services patients who are deaf or hard of hearing receive. While over one in ten of respondents

⁴ RNID Cymru local authority Freedom of Information request November – December 2008

said it was difficult to get information about the health service, nearly half (45%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE stated it was difficult.

GP services

On average each GP practice in Wales has nearly a thousand patients with a hearing loss on its register.⁵ The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires GPs to make reasonable adjustments to the way they provide their services, if necessary, to enable people who are deaf or hard of hearing to use services effectively. Reasonable adjustments include changing the way a service is provided, providing an additional aid or service if this will enable someone to access the service (for example an induction loop or communication support), providing the service in an alternative way, and removing or altering physical features (for example glass screens or lighting).

In the waiting room

A number of participants raised the issue of their name been called out in waiting rooms. Some participants shared their frustration that their name was often called out when they had specifically told surgery staff of their deafness. As a questionnaire respondent summarises:

“One of the more frustrating and unsettling situations in my experience of public services is the widespread use of having your name called out as the only (or main) form of communication. This is common practice at GPs surgery, hospital appointments, clinics. It leads to embarrassment when you cannot hear your name above the clatter of conversation... On one occasion I “missed” hearing my name called, and on another had a dispute with another patient who accused me of queue-jumping, when in fact I thought my name had been called.”

Male, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

Some open forum participants discussed how their GP practice had in recent years installed visual information displays in the waiting room. Participants with different degrees of deafness were positive about such developments:

“It’s brilliant. Previously they did use to shout your name, but now they’ve got this new system, and it’s really, really good. The name is up for about three minutes so if I miss the buzzer that tells you that the information has changed, I’m able to catch up with it.”

Female, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

A hard of hearing participant shared a similar view at another open forum:

“Having a visual at the GP makes such a difference. A little bell rings that attracts your attention, and then you can look at the visual.”

⁵ RNID Cymru (2004) A Simple Cure: Hearing the Doctor

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

It clearly shows that simple, cost effective improvements to communication can make a real difference to patients who are deaf or hard of hearing experience of accessing services. However, our study highlights that a number of GP practices in Wales still have made no adjustment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and may be in breach of the law by failing to make their services fully accessible.

Communicating with the GP

Being able to explain a health problem to a GP or nurse is vital in order to access health services provided. One open forum participant who uses BSL shared the difficulty he had experienced in trying to communicate with his GP.

“I didn’t have an interpreter on this occasion, and I tried to explain to the doctor what the problem was and the doctor couldn’t understand what I wanted.”

Male, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

The ramifications for the NHS of a failure to provide adequate communication support for those who need it are serious.

Even when interpreters are provided by a GP practice, the needs and preferences of the patient are not always considered. One young participant who uses BSL shared her experience of not being provided with a female interpreter for an appointment.

“I asked the medical centre to arrange a female interpreter. They refused and explained that if it was a personal problem they could arrange a female interpreter but other than that I had to have the male interpreter that works for NHS. I explained that I didn’t feel comfortable having a male interpreter for medical appointment but no success. I gave up and saw the GP with my partner who was able to give support. I was just lucky his employer allowed him time to do this.”

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

As the Welsh Assembly Governance advice ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** states in point 2.4, to guarantee service quality, service providers should note BSL users’ individual interpreter preference. Further, the advice states that when a BSL user asks to use a family member, friend or colleague for communication support instead of an interpreter, staff should explain sensitively that this would be inappropriate. Staff should suggest allowing a family member, friend or colleague to act as buddy, advocate, or support, in addition to using an interpreter as an appropriate adjustment to the service.⁶

⁶ Welsh Assembly Government (2006) Delivering Services in BSL: Advice for Public Services, 2.4, p3.

Hospital services

Participants shared their experiences of accessing hospital services. In particular, participants with different degrees of deafness raised barriers to communicating with hospital staff. Hard of hearing participants raised the issue of having to remind hospital staff constantly about their hearing loss:

"In the beginning, they don't remember [about her hearing loss], but when you tell them and tell them off, they remember."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

One participant questioned why her hearing loss could not be marked clearly on her medical records:

"Couldn't something like that be down on your hospital records? So that it's on the cover, that you are hard of hearing, or above the bed. Because you have to explain all the time that you're hard of hearing. It's no good inside your records; it needs to be on the cover so when they pick it up they say 'Oh right'."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

Open forum participants who use BSL also shared difficulties in communicating with hospital staff. One young participant shared her experience of having to rely on a parent for support as an interpreter wasn't provided for a hospital appointment:

"I feel very injustice because I need interpreter in case what they say to me, or if a nurse turn to interpreter and interpreter will explain to me what they've been saying to me, what she is saying. So if Mum is not with me, I got to have an interpreter."

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

As noted previously, the ramifications for the NHS of a failure to provide adequate communication support for those who need it are serious.

With regards to communicating with hospital staff one participant who uses BSL suggested that one of the difficulties was that staff are not seeing patients who are deaf on a regular basis, and as a result forget their basic deaf awareness training and basic sign language skills:

"Talking about staff, in hospitals for example. You might bombard them with deaf awareness and sign language training, but I think you've such a huge turnover in staff, that's one problem. They might not come across a deaf person in 4 or 5 months so they'll have forgotten what they learnt, forgotten their finger spelling, forgotten their basic sign language."

Male, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

This highlights the need for deaf awareness training to be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training. Ensure that training is tailored to the specific roles of staff members would also enable staff to identify barriers that people who are deaf or hard of hearing face in accessing the health service.

Post offices and banks

91% of questionnaire respondents stated that they had used a bank in the past year. Of those:

- 76% said it was either quite or very easy to get information about bank services, while 10% said it was quite or very difficult.
- However, only 46% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said that it was either quite or very easy, while 33% said it was quite or very difficult,

One in ten (10%) of respondents therefore find it difficult to get information about bank services, while one third (33%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE find it difficult.

86% of questionnaire respondents stated that they had used a post office in the past year. Of those:

- 75% of respondents said it was either quite or very easy to get information about post office services, while 11% said it was quite or very difficult.
- However, only 48% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was either quite or very easy, while 17% said it was quite of very difficult.

Again, one in ten (10%) of questionnaire respondents therefore find it difficult to get information about post office services, while nearly one fifth (17%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE find it difficult.

When discussing the use of bank and post office services, open forum participants who are hard of hearing in particular raised a number of issues. For security reasons it is vital that cashier desks have thick plastic screens. However the screens can make it difficult to communicate with staff. Induction loop systems are therefore vital for people who use hearing aids to hear sounds clearly by reducing or cutting out background noise. Participants shared their experiences of using loop systems:

"Often these loops aren't switched on. You have to depend on staff."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

"I tell them it's so I can hear better, your loop, she looks for it and it makes a difference."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

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According to participants, staff are often unaware of induction loop systems and of their importance. As a result, staff can react impolitely when asked to turn on the loop system:

"They've got a loop and you tell them to switch it on, they look stupid at you, as if to say what are you talking about?"

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

"Lots of places have 'loop' signs but they never switch them on. If I ask the staff they do not know what they are."

Male, 55 -64, hard of hearing, mid Wales

Simply installing a loop does not constitute compliance with the DDA. The induction loop has to be present, operational and accessible.

Developments in technology have provided some new opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to access services. As one young participant stated:

"The bank I use has recently put in electronic things to do any transaction on the computer, like putting in a check, you don't need to interact with people which I'm quite nervous about."

Male, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

However, changes in the way banks communicate with customers can make it difficult for participants to access services. Banks are increasingly asking customers to contact their call centres rather than visit their local branch. Getting information about services by telephone is the preferred option of only 23% of respondents:

"I have noticed when I'm ringing up for information, I have to ask them to repeat it two or three times because I'm not picking it up."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, mid Wales

"It's difficult, you're listening so hard to what they are saying, and you forget what they're saying in the end."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

One participant shared her frustration at having to access information by telephone:

"The bank, they wanted us to phone them about this account. It was so jumbled; press this, then there was a whole list. I put the phone down twice."

Female, Over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

Open forum participants discussed whether it was possible for banks to mark people who are deaf or hard of hearing's accounts and note their preferred method of communication.

Conclusion

A substantial majority of questionnaire respondents - 84% - believe that being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder to use services. A lack of deaf awareness was identified as the main barrier to using services by nearly 80% of respondents, while 36% identified the attitudes of service providers.

When accessing local authority services, over one in five (23%) of questionnaire respondents said it was difficult to get information about services. The need for specialist social workers for deaf people and lip reading classes was raised specifically.

About one in six (15%) of respondents said that it was difficult to get information about health services. However, nearly half (45%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was difficult. Through the open forums the lack of information visual displays in waiting rooms, difficulties in communicating with medical staff, and hearing loss not clearly recorded on medical records were identified as barriers to equitable services.

When accessing services provided by banks and post offices, one in ten (10%) of respondents said it was difficult to get information. However, one third (33%) of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was difficult to get information from the bank, while nearly one fifth (17%) said getting information from the post office was difficult. Issues raised in the open forums included induction loops turned off or not maintained, and customers asked to contact by telephone.

Overall, a large proportion of study participants have difficulty in obtaining information about public services and service providing organisations. Public services and service providing organisations must consider the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is vital that accredited deaf awareness training is provided for front line staff, equipment such as induction loops provided, maintained and turned on and advice issued by the Welsh Assembly Government on delivering services in BSL implemented.

Recommendations for public services and service providing organisations

RNID Cymru advocates the following recommendations and actions to bring down the barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing public services and service providing organisations.

Recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government

- Further promote the advice issued in 2006, ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** to all local authorities and public services in Wales.
- Develop a lip reading strategy for Wales that would provide clear guidance on providing lip reading classes in local authorities across Wales.
- Ensure all NHS organisations appoint a board level champion for those with sensory loss.

Recommendations for the Local Authorities

- Aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.
- Implement the advice issued by the Welsh Assembly Government, ***Delivering Services in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** in order to ensure that all local authorities deliver prompt and effective services in BSL.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Appoint a single point of contact within each department for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Ensure induction loop systems are fitted in all local authority buildings and facilities where interaction is required.
- Ensure all induction loop systems are clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff trained in their operation.
- Take active steps to involve people who are deaf or hard of hearing in the development of services.

Recommendations for NHS organisations and services

- Aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.

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- Implement the advice issued by the Welsh Assembly Government, ***Delivering Services in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** in order to ensure that the new local health boards deliver prompt and effective services in BSL.
- Appoint a board level champion for people with sensory loss.
- Ensure patients who are deaf or hard of hearing have an opportunity to develop a personalised communication plan with NHS staff, and individual needs are clearly marked on medical records.
- Ensure the use of existing technology such as loop systems for hearing aid users and visual displays in reception areas, GP surgeries and consulting rooms.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Ensure that training is tailored to the specific roles of staff members, helping them to identify barriers that people who are deaf or hard of hearing face in accessing the health service.

Post Offices and Banks

- Aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.
- Ensure that induction loop systems are fitted in banks and post offices.
- Ensure that all induction loop systems clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff trained in their operation.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.

Section 6: Public Transport

Public transport is essential for providing access to employment, social events, health services, education and leisure pursuits. The transport industry is diverse and represents various modes of transport, private companies, government departments and associations. It is subject to legal obligations through the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and various technological specifications relating to disability.

61% of questionnaire respondents had used public transport provided by local authorities in the past year. We asked respondents whether they thought their deafness made it harder to use public transport:

Table 6.1: Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to use public transport (n=23)

Response	Valid Percent
Agree strongly	27%
Agree slightly	34%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Disagree slightly	8%
Disagree strongly	4%
Don't know/not applicable	8%

61% of respondents said that they agreed strongly or slightly with the above statement, while 12% said they disagreed slightly or strongly.

We also asked respondents whether they thought their deafness made it harder to use public transport alone:

Table 6.2: Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to use public transport alone (n=25)

Response	Valid Percent
Agree strongly	37%
Agree slightly	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	15%
Disagree slightly	7%
Disagree strongly	6%
Don't know/not applicable	6%

66% of respondents said that they agreed strongly or slightly with the above statement, while 12% said they disagreed slightly or strongly.

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Over two thirds (66%) of respondents perceive that their deafness makes it harder to use public transport alone. These figures were reflected in comments made by younger and older participants with different degrees of deafness:

"I don't like to travel alone now, not with my hearing gone."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

"Sometimes I'm really nervous on my own on a bus or train so I ask someone to come with me."

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

Table 6.3 indicates what respondents consider to be the main barriers to using public transport. Respondents were asked to identify tick two options.

Table 6.3: Main barriers to using public transport (n=76)

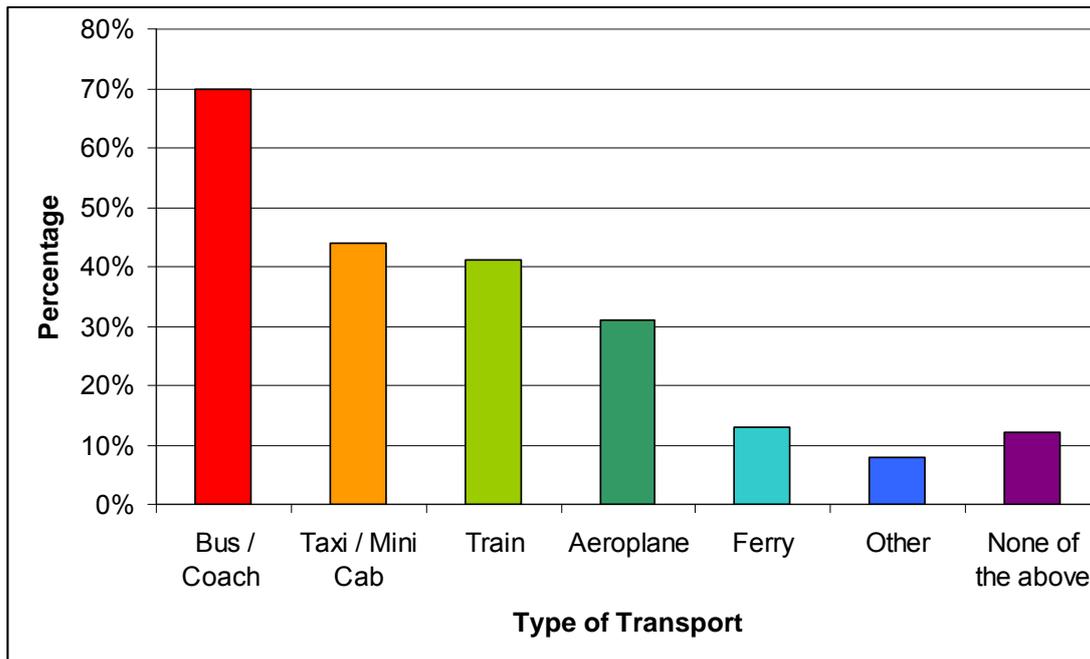
Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of deaf awareness	65%
A lack of accessible information	28%
The attitude of service providers	24%
A lack of induction loops/loops switched off	21%
The attitude of other travellers	15%
Other	10%
A lack of communication support	9%
There are no barriers	12%

The majority of respondents (65%) identified a lack of deaf awareness as the main barrier to using public transport. 28% of respondents identified a lack of accessible information, while nearly a quarter (24%) identified the attitude of service providers as a barrier.

Respondents who use BSL or SSE also identified a lack of deaf awareness as the main barrier to using public transport; however other barriers identified were significantly different to the general questionnaire response. About two fifths (40%) identified a lack of accessible information and a lack of communication support as barriers; while a third noted the attitudes of service providers.

The questionnaire asked respondents to note the types of transport they had used in the past year.

Figure 6.1: Types of Transport used in the past year (n=21)



Respondents were also asked how they currently obtain information prior to travelling and how they would prefer to receive information. Over half (56%) of respondents would prefer to get information by letter, however only 20% currently receive it. This highlights the preference by older participants perhaps for receiving written information. Two fifths (40%) currently or would prefer to get the information in person. This highlights that when obtaining information about travelling many people still prefer a personal service.

One third of respondents currently receive information by telephone, however this is the preferred choice of only 23%. This demonstrates again how difficult using the telephone can be for people who are hard of hearing in particular.

Similar numbers of people, over one third, currently, or would prefer to use the internet to obtain information, demonstrating that the internet is accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Bus and Coach Services

70% of respondents had travelled on a bus or coach in the past year. Of these:

- Nearly two thirds (65%) said it was either quite or very easy to find information before travelling, while 18% of respondents said it was quite or very difficult.
- 45% said it was either quite or very easy to find information during the journey, while 28% said it was quite or very difficult.

The data collated therefore indicates that nearly one fifth (18%) of respondents find it difficult to find information before travelling, while 28% find it difficult

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during the journey. This highlights the need for up-to-date visual information systems in bus stops and on buses.

In the open forums, older hard of hearing participants shared positive experience of using bus services, and made particular reference to their free bus pass:

"You show your card to the driver, and then that's it, you can sit down."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

"You don't have to speak very much; you can just show your card."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

However, the experiences of using bus and coach services for younger participants with different degrees of deafness were not as positive. Barriers were identified in communicating with bus or coach drivers:

"When I was in college I used the bus service. The bus drivers I find very annoying because they're facing away from me and they don't understand me, they just point and I find it very belittling, very rude."

Male, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

Another young participant shared her experience:

"...When I've got people calling to me and they keep going can't understand you, you're not even English, and I say deaf people can't speak in proper English. They laugh at the things I'm trying to tell them. I'm getting frustrated as well and I'm getting in a bad temper saying "For God sake this is deaf people round here and round the whole world, deaf people don't understand when people talking to them face to face." People don't know about deaf people at all."

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

Another participant said that her experiences were often dependent on the attitude of the bus or coach driver:

"Where I get my local bus the person at the front doesn't look at me. They keep looking down. I try and get their attention. I think they don't know about deafness. Some are OK. But there are some that aren't. It really depends."

Female, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

These experiences highlight not only the need for bus drivers to be deaf aware, but also the frustration and isolation passengers who are deaf or hard of hearing can experience when traveling by bus.

Train services

Two fifths (41%) of respondents have been on the train in the past year. Of these:

- 60% said it was either quite or very easy to find information before travelling, while 27% said it was quite or very difficult.
- However, only 29% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was quite or very easy to find information before travelling, while 59% said it was either quite or very difficult.

However during the train journey:

- Only 38% said it was either very or quite easy to find information during the journey, while 42% said it was quite or very difficult.
- Further, only 17% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was either quite or very easy to find information during the journey, while 72% said it was quite or very difficult.

Overall therefore, questionnaire results indicate that over a quarter (27%) of respondents find it difficult to find information before travelling by train, while over two fifths of respondents find it difficult to find information during their journey.

However, a higher proportion of respondents who use BSL or SSE find it difficult to find information before and during their journey, with almost 60% finding it difficult before travelling and nearly three quarters finding it difficult during the journey.

A number of hard of hearing study participants raised audio announcements made in train stations. They noted that background noise and poor quality sound systems often make announcements difficult to hear.

“PA systems that lack clarity, cause echoes and / or are masked by excess background noise (e.g. engine noise).”

Male, 65 – 74, hard of hearing, north Wales

“Tanoy messages, which are difficult enough for people with good hearing to hear, impossible to hear with my hearing loss. I know they are saying something, but have NO idea what!”

Female, 25 – 44, hard of hearing, south Wales

Open forum participants noted that changes to train platforms and time tables are often made by audio announcements and shared their experiences:

“Quite often there are announcements over a tanoy system, changes to platform, changes to connections what have you, but we always

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miss out. And it's only when you notice everyone else getting off the train that you realise something is going on here."

Male, 40 – 50, BSL user, north Wales

"I know that I was at Crewe station once and I kind of guessed that there had been an announcement when I saw everybody moving upstairs. It was quite frightening to honest because I felt completely helpless, I was completely relying, just guessing that I was supposed to follow everybody else. It was quite frightening."

Male, over 60, BSL user, north Wales

Having to rely on the reactions of other travellers can also lead to further difficulties:

"What happened to me once was that I followed everyone else, thinking that there had been a change. When the train took off, I realised it was going in the opposite direction, I knew it was going in the wrong direction, but I'd followed everybody else and done the wrong thing in the end because I'd got on the wrong train."

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, north Wales

Even when there are no changes to the planned journey, participants can feel vulnerable when travelling alone if unfamiliar with the route:

"...if you go on a really long journey, like I was going up to Scotland once, I was so conscious that I had to stay awake the whole journey, and yet everybody in the carriage was having a little nap or whatever, but I was thinking, must stay awake, must stay awake in case anything changes."

Male, over 60, BSL user, north Wales

Under the Disability Discrimination Act passenger train and station operators must make reasonable adjustments to the way their service or facilities are provided to ensure access for disabled people. Rail companies have until 2020 to make all their passenger vehicles accessible. A number of participants had seen visual information displays on some, but not all trains:

"The Cambrian line is very good; it has visual signs to show the next stop."

Male, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

"I know some trains do have a rolling display screen telling you where the train is going, and when the next stop is. I saw it on a Virgin train; I think if our local network did that it would be really useful."

Female, 40 – 50, BSL user, north Wales

Some open forum participants across North Wales were aware of travelling companion schemes offered by some rail companies, which provide a companion to meet travellers at the station and travel with them to their destination. Participants who had used the service noted that the service had been useful and effective.

Taxi or mini cab

Currently, accessible taxi policies are the responsibility of individual licensing authorities, generally the local authority. 44% of respondents had used a taxi or mini cab in the past year.

Of those:

- 67% said it was either quite or very easy to find information before travelling, while 20% of respondents said it was quite or very difficult.
- However, only 38% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was either quite or very easy to find information before travelling, while 48% said it was quite or very difficult.
- 52% said it was quite or very easy to find information during the journey, while 28% said it was quite or very difficult.
- However, only 31% of respondents who use BSL or SSE said it was quite or very easy to find information during the journey, while 52% said it was quite or very difficult.

Questionnaire results therefore indicate that one fifth (20%) of respondents find it difficult to find information before travelling by taxi or mini cab, while 28% find it difficult during the journey. Further, about half of respondents who use BSL or SSE find it difficult to find information before and during the journey.

The need to communicate directly with a taxi or mini cab driver regarding journey destination and can make using taxis or mini cabs difficult for travellers who are deaf or hard of hearing:

"With taxi drivers you know you get in the back of a taxi and they start a conversation they've got the back of their head to you and I don't know what they are saying so I ignore them, I find that difficult."

Male, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

Participants in one open forum noted that in the past year a taxi driver had assumed a group of people who use BSL were drunk and refused to pick them up. Another taxi driver had picked them only as a result of personal awareness of deafness and the use of BSL.

Conclusion

61% of questionnaire respondents perceive that being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder to use public transport, while 66% of respondents perceive it makes it harder to use public transport alone. A lack of deaf awareness was identified as the main barrier to using public transport by nearly two thirds (65%) of respondents.

Of all modes of transport, using the train was identified as the most difficult by participants. Over a quarter (27%) of respondents said that it was difficult to find information before travelling by train, while over two fifths (42%) said it was difficult during the journey. Nearly 60% of respondents who use BSL or SSE stated it was difficult to find information before the journey and nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents said it was difficult during the journey. In the open forums, participants raised the need for real time visual information displays in trains and railway stations, deaf awareness training for frontline staff and difficulties in hearing audible announcements.

Nearly one fifth of respondents (18%) said it was difficult to find information before travelling by bus or coach, while 28% said it was difficult to get information during the journey. Young open forum participants in particular identified a lack of deaf awareness amongst bus drivers and their attitudes as a result towards passengers who are deaf or hard of hearing as a barrier.

One fifth of respondents (20%) said it was difficult to find information before travelling by taxi or mini cab, while over a quarter (28%) said it was difficult to get information during the journey. Again a higher percentage of respondents who use BSL or SSE stated that it was difficult to find information with half of respondents stating that it was difficult before and during the journey. Open forum participants raised the issue of a lack of deaf awareness amongst drivers and the difficulty as a result in communicating.

Overall, a large proportion of respondents have difficulty obtaining information when travelling by public transport. Transport providers must therefore be encouraged to ensure that information is available through various methods, including ensuring frontline staff are deaf aware, providing visual real time information displays in stops, stations and vehicles, and a providing a range of information available in accessible formats.

Recommendations for public transport providers

RNID Cymru advocates the following recommendations and actions to bring down the barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing public transport.

Recommendations for Welsh Assembly Government

- Bid for a proportion of the £300 million budget set aside by the UK Government to update railway stations, and use the fund to ensure that railway stations are accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Recommendations for rail and bus companies

Ticket Booths

- Review the design and use of ticket booths, and remove barriers to communication where possible.
- Ensure induction loop systems fitted in ticket booths.
- Ensure all induction loop systems clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff trained in their operation.

Visual and real time information

- Ensure real-time, visual information displays in vehicles, carriages, stations and stops, notifying passengers of next stops, final destinations, as well as any voice announcements made by staff.
- Ensure that audible announcements are as easy to hear as possible, replacing systems that have poor quality sound.
- Ensure all audible announcements are spoken by someone who has been trained and is clearly understandable.

Staff Training

- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Ensure that training is tailored to the specific roles of staff members, helping them to identify barriers that people who are deaf or hard of hearing face on transport networks.

Taxi or Mini Cab Firms

- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.

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- Ensure visible taximeter so that the cost can easily be seen by the passenger.
- Install loop systems in taxis where possible to enable easier communication between hearing aid users and drivers.

Section 7: Art, entertainment and leisure activities

An opportunity to access cultural, entertainment and sporting activities is central to leading a full and active life. The study collated data on the experiences of respondents in accessing art, entertainment and leisure activities.

We asked questionnaire respondents whether they thought their deafness made it harder to take part in art, entertainment and leisure activities.

Table 7.1: Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to take part in art, entertainment and leisure activities (n=19)

Response	Valid Percent
Agree strongly	47%
Agree slightly	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%
Disagree slightly	5%
Disagree strongly	3%
Don't know/not applicable	5%

This table shows conclusively that there is a strong perception amongst respondents that their deafness can make taking part in art, entertainment and leisure activities harder. 79% of respondents agreed to some extent with the statement, while only 8% said they disagreed.

The questionnaire asked which of the following venues respondents had visited in the past year.

Table 7.2: Venues respondents had visited in the past year (n=14)

Response	Percent of Cases
Shops	95%
Cafe/restaurant	84%
Library	48%
Museum	31%
Theatre	31%
Cinema	30%
Sports and leisure centre	28%
Art Gallery	21%
Sporting event	13%
Other	7%

Nearly all respondents, (95%) had been shopping in the past year, 84% had been to a café or restaurant, while nearly half (48%) had visited a library. However, under a third of respondents had been to a cinema, theatre, museum or sport or leisure centre in the past year.

As over 65% of respondents are over 65 years of age, the data suggests that a high percentage of older people with hearing loss are not taking part on in art, entertainment and sporting activity. However, it should be noted the low percentage of respondents visiting art and cultural activities could also be related to other issues related to being older such as health and mobility issues. In order to ensure a fuller understanding of the barriers to inclusion facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing of all ages, data was also analysed by age and is included in the relevant section.

Theatre

Nearly a third (31%) of respondents had visited a theatre in the past year. By breaking down the data collated by age we found that:

- 28% of respondents between the age of 16 and 44;
- 40% of respondents between the age of 45 and 64;
- and 28% of respondents over 65 had visited a theatre in the past year.

Two fifths of respondents between 45 and 64 years of age had visited a theatre in the past year, 9% higher than the questionnaire average. Interestingly, the percentage of respondents under 44 and over 65 years old who had visited the theatre are the same at 28%.

Respondents were asked what in their experiences, were the main barriers to going to the theatre (Table 5.3). Participants were asked to tick two options.

Table 7.3: Main barriers to going to the theatre (n=174)

Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of deaf awareness	46%
A lack of induction loops / loops switched off	39%
A lack of captioned / subtitled performances	37%
Not enough advertising of accessible performances	16%
A lack of signed performances	10%
A lack of accessible information	9%
Other	9%
The attitude of others at a performance	7%
The attitude of staff	6%
There are no barriers	6%

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46% of respondents identified a lack of deaf awareness as barrier to going to the theatre, while nearly a fifth identified a lack of induction loops / loops switched off and a lack of captioned performances.

By breaking down the data by description of deafness, we found that only 18% of respondents who use BSL or SSE had visited the theatre in the last year. Of those respondents, nearly half identified a lack of captioned / subtitled performances as a barrier, while nearly two fifths (39%) identified a lack of signed performances. Of respondents who are hard of hearing, 45% identified a lack of induction loops/loops being switched off as barrier.

Some open forum participants had been to a signed or captioned theatre production and had enjoyed the experience. However, it was noted that they had to travel some distance to attend an accessible performance. Participants in North Wales in particular noted that they'd like to see more accessible performance in their local area:

"I want to see more, I want to take my children. But sometimes there is no interpreter available, because that's how it is mostly. What I'd like to see, although we've got Mold and Llandudno, we've got nothing in my area, I want things in my area so that I can go with my children."

Female, 30 – 40, BSL user, north Wales

Again, hard of hearing open forum participants highlighted specific barriers when induction loops are not maintained. Barriers ranged from a lack of understanding by staff of how loop systems work to loop systems not being maintained fully.

"The loops are not always switched on, and if they are switched on, they don't always work."

Male, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

"Nobody there understands it. Sometimes it's on, sometimes it isn't."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

Participants shared their frustration that induction loop systems were not maintained and staff not trained on how to use them, particularly in theatres:

"Surely loop system should be checked on a regular basis as you do in a health and safety situation. They have fire checks and things like that so people are aware of what they should be doing and where exits and things are. Surely they should have a system in place to check loop systems on a regular basis."

Female, over 60, hard of hearing, mid Wales

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If customers cannot use a loop system because staff have not been trained to use it, service providers could be in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

When an induction loop system works effectively, going to the theatre on the whole was a positive experience for hard of hearing open forum participants:

"Llandudno is very good, if you go, they give you a contraption that you put round your neck and you give it back at the end of the show, and there is no charge for it."

Male, over 60, hard of hearing, north Wales

Cinema

Under a third (30%) of respondents had visited a cinema in the past year. By breaking down the data collated by age we found that:

- 55% of respondents between the age of 16 and 44;
- 44% of respondents between the age of 45 and 64;
- and 21% of respondents over 65 had visited a cinema in the past year.

Half of respondents between 16 and 44 years of age and 44% of respondents between 45 and 64 years of age had visited a cinema in the past year. This suggests that a higher percentage of younger respondents are going to the cinema than the questionnaire average.

Respondents were asked what in their experiences, were the main barriers to going to the cinema. Participants were asked to tick two options.

Table 7.4: Main barriers to going to the cinema (n=174)

Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of subtitled screenings	53%
A lack of induction loops/loops switched off	33%
A lack of deaf awareness	31%
Other	12%
Not enough advertising of accessible screenings	11%
A lack of choice of time	9%
A lack of accessible information	8%
The attitude of staff	6%
The attitude of others at a screening	5%
There are no barriers	10%

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Over half of respondents said that the main barrier to going to the cinema was a lack of subtitled screenings, while nearly a third identified a lack of induction loops/loops being switched off and a lack of deaf awareness as a barrier.

Many cinemas are now equipped with digital projection equipment, with built in subtitle readers. Subtitle 'files' are available for almost all popular cinema releases, which can be 'read' by digital projection systems. The one stop website for accessible cinema, www.yourlocalcinema.com, lists 18 cinemas across Wales that show subtitled screenings.⁷

However, open forum participants' awareness, of subtitled screening was low, with some young participants not even aware that cinemas provide such screenings.

"I've only just found out there are subtitles on at cinemas. I would definitely go more. I need subtitles when I watch the television. I've grown used to it now."

Male, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

"Every time my friend comes to the cinema with me, I have to sign to her what they're saying on the screen and sometimes I find it quite difficult to understand to sign for her, so I think it would be good to have subtitles at the bottom and not me trying to translate it to her."

Female, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

Some participants stated that they had to travel long distances to see a subtitled film, and noted the need for subtitled screenings at their local cinema:

"The local cinema needs to have subtitles, [subtitled films] they're a distance away."

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

"We need more subtitling. My son's partner went to the cinema, there is no subtitling in Wrexham and if you want subtitles you've got to travel miles to get there. It's not an easy thing to do because you've got to travel so far."

Female, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

Participants also discussed how subtitled screenings are often shown at inconvenient times, which makes it difficult for participants to attend:

"Well I've got a family to look after and I can't go to the cinema at 12:00 o'clock at night and I'd be too tired anyway. So I think it should be equality with subtitles on all the films, whatever the time of day or night."

Female, 30 – 40, BSL user, north Wales

⁷ Listing are available at www.yourlocalcinema.com

Museums and Art Galleries

Under a third (31%) of respondents noted that they had visited a museum in the last year. By breaking down the data collated by age we found that:

- 21% of respondents between the age of 16 and 44;
- 44% of respondents between the age of 45 and 64;
- and 28% of respondents over 65 had visited a museum in the past year.

21% of respondents had visited an art gallery in the past year. By breaking down the data collated by age we found that:

- 12% of respondents between the age of 16 and 44;
- 28% of respondents between the age of 45 and 64;
- and 20% of respondents over 65 had visited an art gallery in the past year.

Our data highlights that a higher percentage of respondents between 44 and 64 years of age had visited a museum or art gallery in the past year, while the percentage of younger respondents was about 10% lower than the questionnaire average.

Respondents were also asked what, in their experience, were the main barriers to visiting museums and art galleries. They were asked to tick two options.

Table 7.5: Main barriers to visiting museums and art galleries (n=199)

Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of deaf awareness	39%
There are no barriers	34%
A lack of induction loops/loops switched off	27%
A lack of accessible information	15%
Not enough advertising of accessible tours	10%
A lack of signed tours	10%
The attitude of staff	7%
The attitude of others at a museum	6%
Other	6%

While nearly two fifths (39%) of respondents identified a lack of deaf awareness as the main barrier, over a third (34%) believed that there are no barriers to visiting a museum or art gallery. Again, over a quarter (27%) noted a lack of induction loops / inductions loops being switched off.

By analysing the data by description of deafness however, we found that 27% of respondents who use BSL or SSE had visited a museum, while only 15% had visited an art gallery in the past year. Of respondents who use BSL or

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SSE, 45% stated that the main barrier to going to a museum or an art gallery was a lack of signed tours, while a third (33%) stated a lack of accessible information.

Access to museums and art galleries was raised in one open forum. One participant shared her experience of visiting museums and galleries:

“You might go to a gallery or an exhibition and it’s a recorded description. Again, we pay full price. I remember going to Llangollen, paid full price to go in and they handed me some earphones and a tape recorder, and you know I don’t need them, I can’t use them and still I had to pay full price to go in. Now OK visually, it was very interesting, the exhibition was very interesting but I missed out on so much because I couldn’t hear the tape recorder. And yet I’m really interested in history and exhibitions like that.”

Female, 50 – 60, BSL users, north Wales

Sports and Leisure Activities

28% of respondents had visited a sports or leisure centre in the past year. By breaking down the data collated by age we found that:

- 56% of respondents between the age of 16 and 44;
- 35% of respondents between the age of 45 and 64;
- and 21% of respondents over 65 had visited a sports or leisure centre in the past year.

Our data highlights that over half of respondents between 16 and 44 years of age and over a third of respondents between 45 and 64 years of age have visited a sports or leisure centre in the past year, higher than the questionnaire average.

Respondents were also asked what, in their experience, were the main barriers to taking part in sports and leisure activities. They were asked to tick two options.

Table 7.8: Main barriers to taking part in sports and leisure activities (n=222)

Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of deaf awareness	50%
There are no barriers	23%
A lack of induction loops / loops switched off	18%
Other	15%
The attitude of others at the sports or leisure centre	11%
A lack of communication support	11%
A lack of accessible information	10%
The attitude of staff	10%

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Over half of respondents stated that the main barrier to taking part in sports or leisure activities was a lack of deaf awareness. However, 23% of respondents stated that there were no barriers.

As over half of respondents under 44 years of age had visited a sports and leisure centre in the past year, access to facilities was discussed in the open forum held with participants between the ages of 16 and 25. The majority of participants were comfortable using sports and leisure facilities as they mainly visited alone or with friends:

“I don’t really interact with people there. I go myself and do my stuff. When it comes to using a machine they usually have instructions on there so I don’t have to interact with anyone so communication is not a problem.”

Male, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, South Wales

However, communicating with staff was identified as a difficulty, particularly for people who use BSL. One participant shared her experience of visiting the leisure centre with a friend who uses BSL:

“I find it quite easy with staff there, but if there is a deaf person I know, talking to another person is going to be difficult for her to say what she wants to say.”

Female, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

Conclusion

While the majority of respondents of all ages have been shopping or to a café or restaurant in the past year, the number of respondents who have taken part in art or cultural activity are significantly lower. This is highlighted further as 79% of respondents perceive that being deaf or hard of hearing makes it difficult to take part in art, entertainment and leisure activities.

By analysing the data collated by age we identified the activity preference of different age groups. While half of respondents between 16 and 44 years of age had visited a cinema or sports and leisure centre in the past year, two fifth of respondents between 45 and 64 years of age had visited a theatre, cinema, museum or art gallery. Only about one fifth of respondents over 65 years of age had visited a cinema or a sports or leisure facility, about 10% lower than the questionnaire average.

A lack of captioned performances was highlighted as a clear barrier to going to the theatre by respondents with different degrees of deafness, while hard of hearing respondents identified induction loop systems not fitted or maintained as a barrier. These issues were also highlighted in the open forums where participants noted that they'd like to see more accessible performances held locally in their area.

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Over half of respondents (53%) noted that the main barrier to going to the cinema was a lack of subtitled screenings. Open forum participants' awareness of the availability of subtitled screening was low. However, participants who were aware of the provision were disappointed at the lack of subtitled screening in their local area. It was also felt that subtitled screenings were being shown at restrictive times.

Although one third of questionnaire respondents felt that there are no barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to visiting art galleries and museums, respondents who use BSL or SSE responded differently. 45% stated that the main barrier was a lack of signed tours, while one third noted a lack of accessible information.

Half of respondents noted a lack of deaf awareness as the main barrier to taking part in sports or leisure activities, while over one fifth believe that there are no barriers. When discussing sports and leisure activities in the open forum for participants between 16 and 25 years of age, participants were on the whole confident in accessing services. However, difficulties in communicating with staff were raised.

Our research has clearly identified a number of barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in participating in cultural and entertainment activities in particular. It has highlighted the need for venues to ensure that their activities are accessible to all and to engage with people who are deaf or heard of hearing regarding the opportunities and events they would like to see held in their area.

Recommendations for Art, Entertainment and Leisure providers

RNID Cymru advocates the following recommendations and actions to bring down the barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing art, entertainment and leisure activities.

Recommendations for theatres and the theatre industry

- Be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Ensure loop or infrared systems fitted throughout the building, including the foyer, theatre and refreshment area.
- Ensure all loop and infrared systems clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff trained in their operation.
- Increase captioned and signed performances held in theatres across Wales.
- Increase public awareness of how to access captioned and signed performances.
- Promoted accessible performances directly to deaf and hard of hearing clubs and deaf organisations.
- Involve people who are deaf or hard of hearing in the development of theatre programmes.

Recommendations for cinemas

- Be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Loop or infrared systems fitted in all cinema screens and public areas where interaction is required such as the ticket office and refreshment counter.
- All loop and infrared systems clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff trained in their operation.

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- Increase in the number of cinemas with digital subtitling equipment in Wales.
- Increase in the number of subtitled films shown at more convenient times across Wales.
- Promote subtitled screenings directly to deaf and hard of hearing clubs and deaf organisations, and websites such as www.yourlocalcinema.com

Recommendations for museums and art galleries

- Be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Ensure more signed tours of exhibitions and galleries.
- Promote signed tours of exhibitions and galleries directly to deaf and hard of hearing clubs and deaf organisations,
- Induction loop systems fitted in all public areas, including front desk and refreshment area.
- All loop systems clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff are trained in their operation.
- Ensure information about exhibitions are available in a range of accessible formats, including BSL videos, information leaflets and panel information prepared in Plain English / Cymraeg Clir.

Recommendations for sports and leisure centres

- Be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of service users who are deaf or hard of hearing are assessed properly and met in full.
- Ensure all frontline staff receive accredited deaf awareness training. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Induction loop systems fitted in all public areas, including front desk and refreshment area.
- All loop systems clearly advertised, maintained and regularly tested, and all staff are trained in their operation.

Section 8: Employment and training

We wanted to identify the experiences of people who are deaf or hard of hearing in employment and training. However, as over 65% of questionnaire respondents were over the age of 65, the questionnaire data collated on the subject is lower.

Table 8:1 identifies the number of respondents in employment or education.

Table 8:1: Respondents in Employment (n=18)

Response	Total number of respondents	
I am retired	383	73%
I work full time	58	11%
I work part-time	30	6%
I am unable to work	32	6%
I am unemployed	22	4%
I am in full-time education	6	1%
I am in part-time education	4	0.8%
Other	16	3%

73% of respondents are retired; while 11% work full time and 6% work part time. 6% of respondents stated that they were unable to work, while 4% stated that they were unemployed. Fewer than 2% of respondents were either in full time or part time education. It should be noted that these categories are not mutually exclusive, i.e. it is possible to work part-time and be in part-time education.

In order to ensure that data collated on employment and training is relevant and provides a clear picture of the experiences of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, only data collated by respondents under the age of 64, i.e. respondents of a working age was analysed.

The questionnaire asked respondents whether they thought their deafness made it harder for them to find a job:

Table 8.2: Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to find a job (n=390)

Response	Percent
Agree strongly	46%
Agree slightly	13%
Neither agree or disagree	9%
Disagree slightly	4%
Disagree strongly	3%
Don't know / not applicable	9%
Retired	15%
In full time education	1%

A large proportion of respondents of a working age - 59% - perceive that their deafness makes it harder to find a job. Only, 7% disagreed slightly or strongly with the statement. 15% of respondents under 64 years of age had retired.

Further, respondents were asked what in their experience of looking for work, are the main barriers to finding a job for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Respondents were asked to tick two options.

Table 8.3: Main barriers to finding a job for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (n=409)

Response	Percent of Cases
A lack of communication support	45%
A lack of suitable jobs	42%
The attitude of employers	39%
A lack of skills and training	18%
The attitude of employment advisers	11%
The attitude of disability employment advisers	10%
The state of the economy	7%
Other	5%
A lack of English language skills	6%
Low pay relative to benefits	8%
A lack of Welsh language skills	3%
There are no barriers	5%

Table 8.3 indicates that 45% of respondents of a working age identified a lack of communication support as the main barrier to finding a job. Communication support, such as a BSL interpreter, a speech-to-text reporter, a lip speaker or note taker, is often vital for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing when

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looking for a job. Communication support should be available at all stages of the process, from advice and support at Job Centre Plus to the interview.

Over two fifths (42%) of respondents of a working age noted a lack of suitable jobs as a barrier to finding a job. This could be a reflection of the current economic climate. It could also be a reflection of a lack of awareness and a narrow understanding by employers and advisers of jobs suitable for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Nearly two fifths (39%) of respondents of a working age, noted the attitude of employers as a barrier. It is disappointing that nearly 15 years after the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), employers in Wales are still perceived as unwilling to take on staff who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Job Centre Plus

Job Centre Plus is central to supporting people who are looking for work and claiming benefits. It aims to help more people into paid work and provides personalised advice for disabled people looking for employment. During the open forums a number of participants shared their experience of attending and accessing services provided by Job Centre Plus. A number of issues were raised. Participants stated that in some Job Centres there were no visual displays to indicate the next appointment which made waiting for an appointment particularly difficult.

"Problem I've got is when you go there you have to sit in a lounge area and when it's your name they call you out. I'm very conscious I have to listen really hard, they could be over there, behind me, if I don't hear them then I might miss my appointment. What I need is a visual indicator telling me when I need to go up there."

Male, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

45% of questionnaire respondents noted that a lack of communication support was a barrier to finding a job. Access to BSL interpreters for appointments and meetings was raised by a number of open forum participants who stated that they had not been provided with an interpreter for interviews and meetings:

"I know that I've been to the job centre and have gone in and said, can I make an appointment and I'll need an interpreter please. Twice I asked, and they didn't do anything about it. I don't know whether they think because I've got a hearing aid that I'll manage."

Male, 20 – 30, BSL user, north Wales

One participant noted that her mother attends appointments with her, as she finds it difficult to communicate without an interpreter, and that staff provided often have only basic BSL qualifications:

"I got appointment down the job centre, I got to have an interpreter and every time I go to sign on, I'm sorry I'm deaf, I got to have an

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interpreter. But they're completely not deaf aware and every time I look at them they're not even signing to me. I went: "What are you trying to tell me?" The woman telling me, "Oh I got one sign language." I'm waiting for them to sign to me. They're not good with sign language so my Mum still has to come with me so I have to look at her. "

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

The Welsh Assembly Government's advice ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** states clearly that BSL levels 1 and 2 are basic level qualifications. In point 2.5 the advice states that staff with Level 1 and 2 are likely to be competent only to meet and greet people who use BSL in person. Staff with level 2 are likely to be competent additionally to arrange appointments. Staff with basic level qualifications are not adequate or appropriate substitutes for qualified, professional interpreters.⁸

One in 10 of respondents of a working age stated that the attitude of employment advisers was the main barrier to finding a job. The attitudes of Job Centre Plus staff were explored further in the open forums. A number of participants felt that staff were not aware of the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing and as a result not providing adequate support.

"They gave me some information that was really, really difficult for me to understand. I'm really not happy with the job centre, they seem to make things so much more difficult for me and if they just simply booked an interpreter for my appointment it would save all this stress. I don't know why they've got such a problem with booking an interpreter."

Male, 20 – 30, BSL user, North Wales

"I think for me, and I've told my parents about this as well, I've had enough of the stupid job centre, they should be focussing on the people and trying to help, one to one support. And my parents say I have to go back to the centre and I do I have to go back because of my benefits."

Female, 20 – 30, hearing aid user, south Wales

Participants felt that the majority of staff were not deaf aware. As result participants felt that their lack of understanding had led to an unhelpful and at time negative attitude. One participant said that when she asked for support as she was unable to use the phones provided to request application forms and enquire about jobs, she was told to turn up the telephone volume. Another participant shared a similar experience:

"I go there and say I need to apply for a job, could you possibly ring the prospective employer for me and they go, "No, no, sorry I can't help you." And I say well I know your job, you should be there to support because I can't use the phone."

⁸ Welsh Assembly Government (2006) Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services, 2.5, page 3

Female, 20 – 30, BSL user, south Wales

Another participant, having found a post of interest was told by a member of staff that as she was entitled to benefits, she shouldn't apply for a job as so many other people are unemployed. She applied for the job without support and was successful.

The attitude of employers

Nearly two fifths of questionnaire respondents noted the attitude of employers as the main barrier to finding a job. Open forum participants also identified the attitude of employers as a barrier. Some said that their experiences in applying for jobs had often made them question if they were missing out on job opportunities because of their deafness.

“I've been applying for jobs and recently went for a job interview. I got myself all suited and booted, and prepared, and although the employer was very nice to me, and said “Oh we'll get back to you” I wasn't successful. And I often wonder is it because I'm deaf? I'm quite capable of doing the job; just because I'm deaf it's not going to impinge on that in anyway.”

Male, 20 – 30, BSL user, north Wales

“When I was made redundant from my job it took a while. I had to apply for all kinds of jobs; I had an application for a fast food chain. I sent off for the initial application and they sent off this huge form for me to fill in, and there was a part of the form that was asking if you had any disability, visual impairment, etc, etc. I ticked the box saying I was deaf and didn't hear a single thing back. So you do often wonder if people or employers are put off.”

Male, 50 – 60, BSL user, north Wales

One questionnaire respondent shared a similar experience:

“...I have been unemployed since April 2009. Being a 2:1 Business Studies graduate with A-Levels and further education... I have been shocked and saddened that none of the agencies in Cardiff have found me, in their words, “any suitable employment.” This is when I'm willing to work ‘below my education’ e.g. filling, data entry etc. Therefore are all the agencies sub consciously discriminating? – I think so.”

Male, 25 – 44, deaf, south Wales

Further, questionnaire respondents were asked if they felt being deaf or hard of hearing had affected their chances of promotion in the workplace. Of respondents of a working age, 42% said yes, 17% said no, while 41% noted that they didn't know. Two fifths of respondents of a working age

therefore clearly perceive their deafness is effecting their career progression.

Access to Work

The Westminster Government’s Access to Work scheme exists to provide financial assistance to employers and disabled employees to meet the costs of some of the adjustments that may be needed in the workplace. These adjustments may take the form of physical alterations, technology, help with paying for travel to and from work and personal assistance such as communication support.

Access to work is a highly effective and important scheme that not only assists disabled people into work, but also allows employers to experience the skills and abilities of disabled workers. Some open forum participants and questionnaire respondents felt that there was a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the scheme, not only amongst employers but also employees who are deaf or hard of hearing. Information regarding the scheme was noted difficult to access:

“I have found it very difficult to access information to help me during my working day. For example, update on my hearing aids, funding for aides in the classroom (I am a primary school teacher). I have heard of “Access to Work” but have no address or contact number.”

Female, 25 – 44, deaf, south Wales

Communication

Effective communication with colleagues is vital in the workplace. The questionnaire asked how easy respondents find it to communicate with colleagues. In order to ensure the data collated on communicating with colleagues is relevant, only data collated by respondents who noted that they were in employment or education were analysed. Data analysed if therefore lower.

Table 8.4: How easy is to communicate with colleagues? (n=391)

Response	Percent
Very easy	8%
Quite easy	30%
Neither easy or difficult	20%
Quite difficult	36%
Very difficult	6%

New Ideas Fund

Over two fifths (42%) of respondents in employment or education find it difficult to communicate with colleagues, while under two fifth (38%) find it easy. A fifth stated that it wasn't easy or difficult.

Participants with different degrees of deafness shared their experience of communicating with colleagues in the open forums and through the questionnaires. A number of participants shared difficult experiences and felt that they were being teased by colleagues as direct result of their deafness:

"I work with hearing people and I get very frustrated because of the lack of communication. Quite often I get teased at work you know, people seem to think it's a big joke being deaf. 'Oh it's alright for you, you can't hear your neighbours arguing or you can't hear this going on.' That seems to be the attitude of some hearing people; I don't find it very funny... I just wish that we had totally equality, and I do try and make my work colleagues aware but I can't communicate, or if they can't communicate with me we'll never get the message across."

Male, 40 – 50, BSL user, north Wales

"I feel there is a lack of sympathy and awareness of the problems people who are hard of hearing have in the workplace. I often feel that I'm the butt of jokes. There is no support from managers – they just laugh at me more often than not."

Male, 55-64, hard of hearing, area not noted

Other participants expressed their unwillingness to share communication difficulties in the workplace with colleagues:

"I have been enabled to work by using hearing aids but there have been many occasions where communication has been very difficult and fraught with anxiety. I have not shared my difficulties with my work colleagues. I have developed strategies to cope with stressful situations."

Female, 55-64, hard of hearing, mid Wales

One participant stated that it was the social aspect of work that she found most difficult:

"Most difficult things in work not to do with doing the job, but socialising with colleagues. Position of desk inappropriate, unable to move because of fixed position of telephone point and would cost money to move."

Female, 45-54, Hard of Hearing, south Wales

Although the social aspect of work may not appear to be the most important aspect of work life, interacting with colleagues can have a significant effect on morale and teamwork.

Training

The study also collated data on the training experiences of people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. Only 32% of questionnaire respondents of a working age had received work related training in the last year. Of those respondents, nearly two fifths (40%) of respondents were provided with support or equipment, while over two fifths (43%) of respondents said trainers or tutors were deaf aware.

Participants also shared their experiences of attending courses and training. One questionnaire respondent who had attended a training course noted the difficulty in trying to follow what was being said:

"I tried to do a training course but all my energy was taken up in trying to "hear"/ follow what was being said that I was tired most of the time – it was a struggle to keep up."

Female, 55-64, deaf, area not noted

Another participant noted that although he was receiving support while attending a course, the support wasn't meeting his needs.

"I'm actually a student training and there is no BSL support for me there. There are two people that do note taking for me, because I find it really hard to lip read the tutors and sometimes the students as well, that's a problem really."

Male, 20 – 30, BSL user, North Wales

It is vital that course and training providers consider the communication needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing that want to attend courses in their area.

Conclusions

59% of respondents of a working age feel that their deafness makes it harder for them to find a job. Further, 45% of respondents of a working age stated that a lack of communication support was the main barrier to finding a job. This was highlighted also in the open forums where participants shared their experiences of not being provided with BSL interpreters for appointments at the Job Centre Plus. Further, there was a general feeling amongst open forum participants that Job Centre Plus staff were not deaf aware and did not provide adequate support for clients who were deaf or hard of hearing.

Over two fifths (41%) of respondents of a working age noted a lack of suitable jobs as a main barrier to finding a job. This could be a reflection of the current economic climate or perhaps a reflection of a narrow understanding of jobs suitable for people who are deaf or hard of hearing by advisers or employers.

New Ideas Fund

39% of respondents of a working age noted that the attitude of employers was a barrier to finding a job. The issue was also raised in the open forums. Some participants noted that their experiences in applying for jobs often make them question if they were missing out on job opportunities because of their deafness. Participants also felt that there was a lack of awareness by employers and employees of schemes such as Access to Work.

Although the social aspect of work may not appear to be the most important aspect of work life, interacting with colleagues can have a significant effect on morale and teamwork. Over two fifths (44%) of respondents in employment or education noted that communicating with colleagues was difficult. Some study participants shared experiences of being teased by colleagues, of a lack of understanding of their deafness by colleagues and managers, and of being unwilling to share their difficulties.

Our study shows clearly that the barriers for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in employment and training are often not related to their deafness or any limitations this may impose upon them. It is advisers and employers lack of deaf awareness and support that stands between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and the world of work.

Recommendations on Employment and Training

RNID Cymru advocates the following recommendations and actions to achieve greater equality for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in employment and training.

Recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government

- Promote further the advice issued in 2006, ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** to all local authorities and public services in Wales
- Promote the Access to Work scheme amongst employers and employees across Wales
- Work proactively with employers to promote the recruitment and retention of people who are deaf and hard of hearing while continuing to publicise the existence of the Disability Discrimination Act and employers duties.

Recommendations for Job Centre Plus

- Ensure specialist accredited deaf awareness training for all Job Centre Plus staff. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.
- Implement the Welsh Assembly Government advice, ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services*** in order to ensure that all job centres deliver prompt and effective services in BSL.
- Ensure all Job Centre Plus staff are aware and promote of Access to Work scheme to both employers and potential employees.

Recommendations for employers

- Be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of their deaf employees are assessed properly and met in full.
- Seek to encourage people with a wide range of disabilities, including hearing loss, to apply for jobs, and ensure that the application process is accessible for all.
- Ensure deaf employees are not being discriminated against, and take active steps to involve staff who are deaf within the workplace culture to avoid feelings of isolation.
- Ensure accredited deaf awareness training for all frontline staff. Deaf awareness training should be included as part of staff's induction and continuous training.

Section 9: Conclusion

Our study has identified a number of everyday inclusion barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales. Barriers were identified in a wide variety of everyday activities from accessing public services, to travelling by train, from visiting the local cinema to going for an interview at Job Centre Plus. Further, participants shared experiences of isolation, exclusion and prejudice.

What became evident, through the open forums in particular was that although legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 has been passed and BSL formally recognised as a language in its own right, a significant number of participants from across Wales, feel that nothing has changed in the last 10 years. A number of participants feel that they are still facing the same or similar barriers, raising the same issues and sharing the same experiences with studies such as ours. A number of participants felt that sharing their views would not change their situation, as they'd seen similar studies held in the past which they believed had not brought about any changes.

One of the main barriers highlighted by participants with different degrees of deafness is the lack of deaf awareness in our society. A significant number of questionnaire respondents identified a lack of deaf awareness as a barrier to accessing a range of services and everyday activities. Open forum participants shared their experiences of being unable to communicate with public facing staff in a range of situations. Participants noted that public service and service providing organisation staff are often unaware of basic communication skills such as the importance of speaking clearly and enabling people to lip read as they speak. The number of public facing staff with basic sign language skills was also identified as low. Further, participants felt that there was a lack of understanding of the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing amongst public service and service providing organisations. Participants shared examples of their name being called out in waiting rooms, of being told to turn up the volume in order to use telephones provided at the job centre and having to constantly remind hospital staff of their deafness. A lack of deaf awareness by frontline public services and service providing staff has led participants to feel excluded and isolated and examples were shared of clear discrimination towards people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Welsh Assembly Government formally recognised BSL as a language in its own right in January 2004. Further, in September 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government issued ***Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services***. The advice is intended for use by the Welsh Assembly Government, and other devolved public services. The document provides advice on areas such as correspondence, delivering services, meeting and events and providing information. As the advice states in section 1.5:

"Implementing the Advice will enable public bodies to move towards prompt and effective service delivery in BSL. This will be in line with the Core Principles published in Making the Connections: Building Better Customer Service. Core principle four states "Citizens who prefer to access and use services in [...] British Sign Language will be able to do so." It will also help

*them to meet in respect of those citizens who use BSL, the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Human Rights Act 1998."*⁹

However, clear examples were provided by participants that highlight that public services such as hospitals, schools and local authorities are not providing an adequate service in BSL. Participants shared experience of not being provided with an interpreter for parents evening, of a GP surgery unwilling to provide a patient with a preferred female interpreter. Participants raised the fact that although BSL has been recognised as language in its own right, information available in BSL is minimal. Further, participants felt that public services needed more information on how to book interpreters, and work with an interpreter, information which is provided in the advice. Three years after the Welsh Assembly Government advice was issued, it is clear that not all public services are following the advice provided or may not even be aware of the advice. As a result, BSL users across Wales are still not gaining equitable access to public services as was aimed when the advice was issued.

Induction loops can provide vital support for people who use hearing aids who may find it difficult to hear the spoken word in places where there is high ambient noise or poor room acoustics. Open forum participants shared how working induction loop can help break down communication barriers between staff and people who use hearing aids. Loop systems have enabled study participants to partake in a range of everyday activities, from accessing services at the post office to attending a theatre production. However, open participants identified induction loops not fitted, maintained or switched on as a barrier to inclusion. Participants who are hard of hearing provided a number of examples of induction loop systems being advertised, but not being maintained in banks, post offices, theatres and cinemas. Further, participants felt that staff are often not trained on the need for, function and usage of induction loops. As a result participants noted that when enquiring about a loop system, staff can respond impolitely to questions raised. If customers cannot use a loop system because staff have not been trained to use it, service providers could be in breach of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

Our study has identified that people who are deaf or hard of hearing face a number of barriers when accessing cultural, entertainment and leisure activities. Barriers identified by participants included a lack of captioned performance in the theatre, a lack of subtitled screenings at the cinema and a lack of deaf awareness at museums and art galleries. Participants in North Wales and South East Wales in particular raised a lack of accessible events in their local area. An opportunity to access cultural, entertainment and leisure activities is central to leading a full and active life. It is clear that art and leisure facilities need to ensure that their venues and activities are accessible to all, including people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The study has clearly highlighted that a number of service providers across Wales could be breaching the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), which suggests that they are unaware of their duties with regards to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Clear examples were provided by participants of

⁹ Welsh Assembly Government (2006) Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services, 1.5, p1

reasonable adjustments not being made, such as induction loop systems not being fitted, maintained and turned on in venues, BSL interpreters not being provided for appointments, and visual information displays not available. Service providers need to be aware of their duties and ensure that the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing are met by the services they provide. Being aware of their duties could lead to more adjustments being made and bring down inclusion barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales.

This study demonstrates that people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales still face a number of barriers to everyday inclusion. If these inclusion barriers are to be removed, the Welsh Assembly Government, public services and service providing organisations need to act. RNID Cymru believes that only by ensuring that these recommendations and the specific recommendations presented in this report are implemented that people who are deaf or hard of hearing will achieve more equality of opportunity in Wales.

Key Recommendations

1. **Accredited deaf awareness training should be ensured for all frontline service providing staff.**

A lack of deaf awareness was highlighted by the majority of study participants. Ensuring all front line service providing staff receive accredited deaf awareness training will enable people who are deaf or hard of hearing to have equitable access to public services and service providing organisations. Deaf awareness training will provide staff with basic communication skills and gain awareness of the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing when accessing services, information and products provided. It is vital that training is repeated regularly in order to ensure staff do not forget how to communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing and to reflect the possible turn over in staff.

2. **The Welsh Assembly Government's, *Delivering in BSL: Advice of Public Services* should be further promoted and implemented.**

Clear examples were provided by participants that indicate that not all public services are currently delivering effective and equal services for BSL users in Wales. Quality information sharing is critical to the effective delivery of services. Poor communication in service settings between those who use only Welsh or English and those who use only BSL leads to poor quality of service. We call on the Welsh Assembly Government to further promote the advice developed in 2006, *Delivering in British Sign Language: Advice for Public Services* to public services across Wales. Further, we call on public services to ensure that services provided follows the advice developed, and ensures accessible and equitable services for people who use BSL or SSE.

3. Induction loop systems should be fitted, maintained and regularly tested.

Ensuring induction loops are fitted, maintained and regularly tested will enable more people who use hearing aids to participate in a range of activities, from enjoying a theatre production to buying a ticket at the train station. Although a number of services advertise the availability of induction loop systems, they are often not maintained, while staff are not trained in their operation. Participants who use hearing aids shared experiences of frustration and isolation regarding the frequency of the situation. Not maintaining and ensuring induction loop systems are accessible breaches the Disability Discrimination Act.

4. More opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to take part in art, entertainment and cultural activities.

Our study has identified that people who are deaf or hard of hearing face a number of barriers when accessing cultural, entertainment and leisure activities. Barriers identified included a lack of accessible performances, induction loops not being maintained and a lack of accessible information. We call on art, entertainment and cultural venues across Wales to review the opportunities provided for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We also call on venues to engage with people who are deaf or hard of hearing regarding the activities, opportunities and events they would like to see held in their area and how best to make these events accessible.

5. Public services and service providing organisations aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

Through the study it has become evident that a number of services providers could be breaching the Disability Discrimination Act. Participants provided clear example where 'reasonable adjustments' are not being made when providing services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We call on all public services and service providing organisation to be aware of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing are met by the services they provide.

Barriers facing people who are deaf or hard of hearing in Wales: A questionnaire

Getting to know you

Appendix 1

We're RNID Cymru, the charity working to create a world where deafness or hearing loss do not limit or determine opportunity, and where people value their hearing.

At RNID Cymru we want to learn more about the barriers that you face as a person who is deaf or hard of hearing and living in Wales. Using funding from the Welsh Assembly Government we are studying your experiences of:

- using services
- using public transport
- arts, entertainment and leisure activities
- employment and training.

Can you help us by filling in this questionnaire?

By sharing your experiences, you will help us and the Welsh Assembly Government find out more about the issues that affect you most.

It takes less than 30 minutes and the information you provide will remain confidential.

This questionnaire is available in BSL (British Sign Language) at www.rnid.org.uk/wales

Simply:

- Tick the answer that applies to you. Or more than one answer where we ask you to.
- Leave any questions you would prefer not to answer blank and go to the next one.
- Send your completed questionnaire in the freepost envelope provided by 17 September 2009.

If you have any questions, please contact Mari Siôn:

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A Your hearing

1. Which of the following statements apply to you? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am deaf | <input type="checkbox"/> I wear a hearing aid(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am hard of hearing | <input type="checkbox"/> I wear a BAHA (bone anchored hearing aid) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use BSL (British Sign Language) | <input type="checkbox"/> I have no hearing loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use SSE (Sign Supported English) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use SSW (Sign Supported Welsh) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a cochlear implant | |
-

2. How old were you when you became deaf or started to lose your hearing?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> From birth | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-49 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-64 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-15 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 years and over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-35 years | |

B Using services

We would like to find out about your experiences of using services.

3. Which of the following local authority services have you used in the past year? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electoral services (e.g. voter registration) | <input type="checkbox"/> Registrar (e.g. births, deaths and marriages) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport and recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Social services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> Waste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
-

Appendix 1

4. Which of the following services have you used in the past year? (please tick all that apply)

- Health service (e.g. GP, hospital)
- Police
- Fire service
- Post Office

- Bank
 - Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
 - Other (please give details)
-

5. In general how easy is it to get information about these services?

- Key**
- 1** Very easy
 - 2** Quite easy
 - 3** Neither easy nor difficult

- 4** Quite difficult
- 5** Very difficult
- 6** Not applicable

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local authority services	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Health services (e.g. GP, hospital)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Police	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Fire service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Post Office	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Bank	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>					

6. Thinking about these services only, how do you usually get information?
(please tick all that apply)

- In person
- Letter
- Telephone
- Textphone
- Fax
- SMS (text message)

- Internet
 - Someone else gets the information for me
 - Don't know/not applicable
 - Other (please give details)
-

Appendix 1

7. How do you prefer to receive information about these services? (please tick all that apply)

In person

Internet

Letter

Someone else getting the information for me

Telephone

Other (please give details)

Textphone

Fax

SMS (text message)

8. Do you agree with the following statement?

Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to use services.

Agree strongly

Disagree slightly

Agree slightly

Disagree strongly

Neither agree nor disagree

Don't know/not applicable

9. In your experience, what are the main barriers to using services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (please tick two options only)

The attitude of service providers

Other (please give details)

A lack of communication support (e.g. BSL interpreters)

A lack of deaf awareness

A lack of accessible information

A lack of induction loops/loops switched off

There are no barriers

Don't know/not applicable

We would like to find out about your use of public transport.

10. Which of the following types of transport have you used in the past year?
(please tick all that apply)

Aeroplane

Train

Bus/coach

Other (please give details)

Ferry

Taxi/minicab

None of the above (go to question 13)

Please answer questions 11 and 12 if you have used one of the above types of transport in the past year.

11. How easy is it to find information about your journey before travelling?

Key 1 Very easy

2 Quite easy

3 Neither easy nor difficult

4 Quite difficult

5 Very difficult

6 Not applicable

Aeroplane

Bus/coach

Ferry

Taxi/minicab

Train

Other (please give details)

Appendix 1

12. How easy is it to find information during your journey?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Key</p> <p>1 Very easy</p> <p>2 Quite easy</p> <p>3 Neither easy nor difficult</p> | <p>4 Quite difficult</p> <p>5 Very difficult</p> <p>6 Not applicable</p> |
|---|---|

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Aeroplane	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Bus/coach	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Taxi/minicab	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Train	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Other (please give details)						

13. Thinking about these forms of transport only, how do you usually get information before travelling? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> In person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Letter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Telephone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Textphone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fax</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SMS (text message)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Internet</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Someone else gets the information for me</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/> |
|---|---|

14. How would you prefer to receive information before travelling? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> In person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Letter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Telephone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Textphone</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fax</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SMS (text message)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Internet</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Someone else getting the information for me</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/> |
|---|--|

15. Do you agree with the following statement?

Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to use public transport.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree strongly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree slightly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/no opinion |

16. Do you agree with the following statement?

Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to use public transport alone.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree strongly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree slightly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/no opinion |

17. In your experience, what are the main barriers to using public transport?
(please tick two options only)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of communication support
(e.g. BSL interpreters) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of deaf awareness | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of accessible information | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of induction loops/loops
switched off | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of service providers | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of other travellers | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not applicable |

D Art, entertainment and leisure activities

18. Which of the following have you visited in the past year? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports and leisure centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cinema | <input type="checkbox"/> Sporting event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Café/restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> Theatre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shops | _____ |

19. Do you agree with the following statement?

Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to take part in art, entertainment and leisure activities.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree strongly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree slightly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/no opinion |

20. In your experience, what are the main barriers to going to the theatre?
(please tick two options only)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of signed performances | <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of others at a performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of captioned/subtitled performances | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of deaf awareness | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of accessible information | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of induction loops/loops switched off | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough advertising of accessible performances | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not applicable |

Appendix 1

21. In your experience, what are the main barriers to going to the cinema?
(please tick two options only)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of choice of times | <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of others at a screening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of subtitled screenings | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of deaf awareness | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of accessible information | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of induction loops/loops switched off | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough advertising of accessible screenings | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not applicable |

22. In your experience, what are the main barriers to visiting museums and art galleries?
(please tick two options only)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of signed tours | <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of others at a museum/
art gallery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of deaf awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of accessible information | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of induction loops/loops switched off | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough advertising of accessible tours | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not applicable |

23. In your experience, what are the main barriers to taking part in sports or leisure activities?
(please tick two options only)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of communication support
(e.g. BSL interpreters) | <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of others at the sports or
leisure centres |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of deaf awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of accessible information | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of induction loops/loops switched off | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not applicable |

We would like to find out about your experience of employment and training.

24. Are you in employment? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I work full-time | <input type="checkbox"/> I am in full-time education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I work part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> I am in part-time education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to work | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am retired | _____ |

25. Do you agree with the following statement?

Being deaf or hard of hearing makes it harder for me to find a job.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree strongly | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree strongly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/no opinion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree slightly | <input type="checkbox"/> In full-time education |

26. In your experience of looking for work, what are the main barriers to finding a job for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (please tick two options only)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of communication support | <input type="checkbox"/> The state of the economy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of suitable jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of skills and training | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of English language skills | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A lack of Welsh language skills | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low pay relative to benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no barriers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of employers | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/not applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of disability employment advisers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The attitude of other employment advisers | |

Appendix 1

27. How easy do you find it to communicate with your colleagues?

Very easy

Quite difficult

Quite easy

Very difficult

Neither easy nor difficult

Don't know/not applicable

28. Do you feel being deaf or hard of hearing has affected your chances of promotion in the workplace?

Yes

No

Don't know/not applicable

29. Do you feel being deaf or hard of hearing has affected your chances of going on work-related training?

Yes

No

Don't know/not applicable

30. Have you had any work-related training in the last year?

Yes

No (**go to section F, question 35**)

If yes, please answer questions 31-34

31. What kind of training did you attend?

Full-time course organised by my employer

One-day course organised by my employer

Full-time course attended for personal reasons

One-day course attended for personal reasons

Part-time course organised by my employer

Other (please give details)

Part-time course attended for personal reasons

Appendix 1

32. During your training, were you provided with support/equipment?
(e.g. loop system, printed notes)

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

33. During your training, were the trainers/tutors deaf aware?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

34. What improvements could be made to the training you received?

- Communication support
 Loop system
 Deaf awareness

Other (please give details)

F About you

35. What sex are you?

Male

Female

36. How old are you?

16-17

55-64

18-24

65-74

25-44

75-84

45-54

85 and over

37. Where do you live?

38. Which of these groups do you belong to?

White

British

Irish

Any other White background
(please specify)

Black or Black British

Carribean

African

Any other Black background
(please specify)

Mixed

White and Black

White and Asian

Any other mixed background
(please specify)

Chinese or other ethnic groups

Chinese

Any other ethnic group
(please specify)

Do not wish to answer

Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background
(please specify)

39. What is your first language?

- British Sign Language
- English
- Welsh

Other spoken or sign language
(please specify)

40. Do you have any other comments?

If you would like to take part in an open forum to discuss your experiences further, make sure that you fill in your contact details below.

Title _____ First name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Textphone _____

Email _____

Preferred method of communication

Telephone

Fax

Textphone

Email

Letter

Thank you for taking part in this survey

By completing and returning it to us, you will help us tell the Welsh Assembly Government about the experiences of people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the freepost envelope provided by **17 September 2009.**

We're RNID, the charity working to create a world where deafness or hearing loss do not limit or determine opportunity, and where people value their hearing.

To find out more about the study

go to

www.rnid.org.uk/wales

Contact our Information Line

Telephone 029 2033 3034

Textphone 029 2033 3036

Or write to us

rnidcymru@rnid.org.uk

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