

Access to Information

SCoD is concerned that because deaf people's language and communication needs are not always met, they do not have equal access to information, so are not always able to participate fully and make informed choices.

Scottish Council on Deafness recommends that:

1. Information should be easily available.
2. Information should be full and appropriate.
3. Information material should be produced in plain English and in British Sign Language (BSL) and with appropriate illustration where possible.
4. Information should be available in formats accessible to deaf and deafblind people.
5. Print information should be prepared in a sans serif font such as Arial, minimum point size of 12.
6. When organising meetings where the general public will be present and/or where deaf people may attend, then professional registered language and communication support should be provided as well as a working induction loop system.
7. Meeting organisers must fulfil their responsibility under the Equality Act to book and pay for communication services.
8. Where possible, deaf people should receive complete sets of meeting papers, including handouts in appropriate media/format at least a week before the meetings.
9. Meeting rooms should be well lit and equipped with working loop systems. Walls should be plain. These rooms should not be overlooked or overheard. There should be little background noise – this includes traffic noise if the windows have to open for ventilation.

Contact SCoD:

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10. Telecommunications should be accessible, so that deaf people can contact service providers via email, SMS, textphone or fax. If there is a direct textphone number, then this should be publicly available. Where a mobile number is given, it should be made clear as to whether or not the public can make contact via SMS.
11. Websites should be accessible with non-text versions. Wherever there are audio clips, they should be supplemented by video clips with captions and BSL interpretation.
12. All staff, especially frontline and reception staff, should receive accredited Deaf, deafblind and deafened awareness training;¹ this should be provided for new staff during their induction as well as on a regular basis for all staff in the organisation. Trustees, Board members and other volunteers associated with the organisation/service/agency should also receive annual deaf awareness training. All staff should also receive equality training so that they understand the legislation.
13. Staff working directly with deaf people should have skills in communicating with deaf people and know how to book appropriate language and communication support services as required.
14. All public information videos and DVDs should be signed and captioned.
15. All print advertisements should have an email address, an SMS number and fax number as well as a telephone number.
16. Deaf people should have full and real involvement in the planning, priority setting, provision and monitoring of information services.

¹ See our Information Sheet on Deaf Awareness Training