

THE DEAF PATIENTS EXPERIENCE IN ACCESSING HEALTH SERVICES

St Helens & Knowsley Hospitals Trust

Southport & Ormskirk Hospitals Trust

Aintree Hospital

GP & Dental services St Helens, Knowsley, and Sefton.

October 2024

INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by Deaf people from communities across St Helens, Knowsley, Southport & Ormskirk to share their experiences in accessing hospital, GP, and dental services. The consultation and report was supported by Signing Solutions CIC.

This piece of work concluded in early 2024, however recent reports from Deaf communities accessing St H & K Hospitals and Southport & Ormskirk Hospitals, now Mersey & West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, is that nothing has changed.

We are aware however, that as this consultation was being carried out, Aintree Hospital changed its interpreter service provider, so we accept that this needs to be taken into consideration when reviewing the data from Aintree hospital.

METHODOLOGY

To help with data collection a survey (appendix 1) was developed and distributed to capture experiences and gather a better understanding of what good practice and support is in place, as well as looking at areas that need to be improved to support the needs of the deaf community.

From July 23, information was shared via the Healthwatch Knowsley website, e-bulletin and social media, as well as through partner and stakeholder communication routes.

A British Sign Language (BSL) video was also produced to promote the survey and encourage feedback.

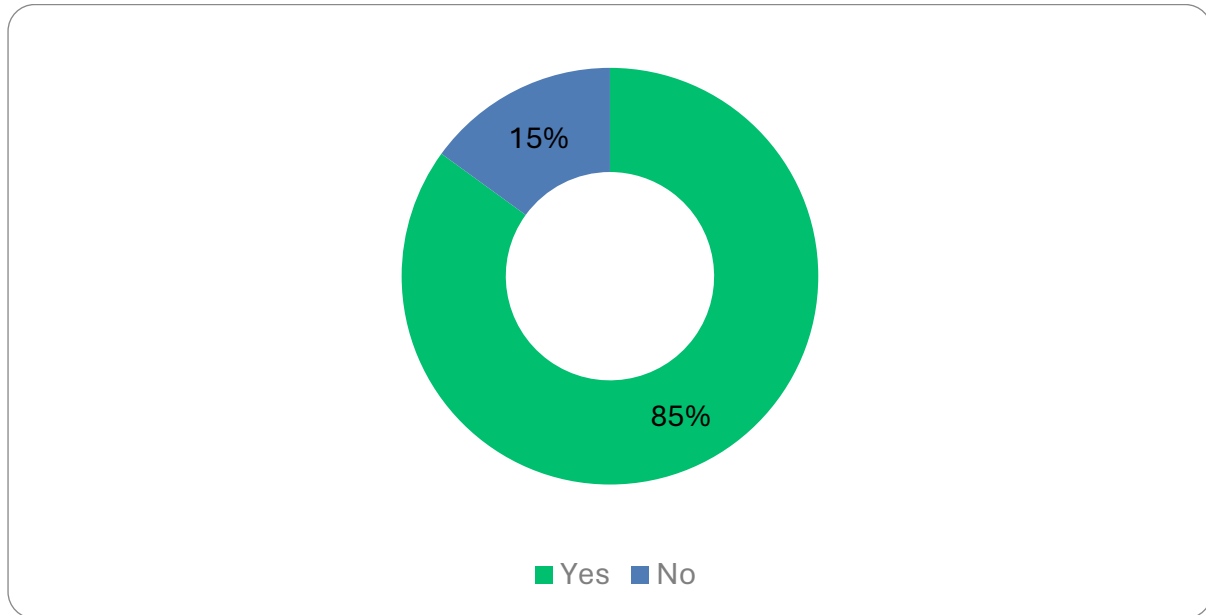
The greater part of the information was collected via in person consultation events. We would like to extend our gratitude to the interpreters who volunteered to support these events.

72 responses were received, providing details about peoples experiences of accessing hospital and other health services. All comments used within the report are the actual words of the people who shared them and have not been changed.

SURVEY RESULTS – ST HELENS & KNOWSLEY HOSPITALS

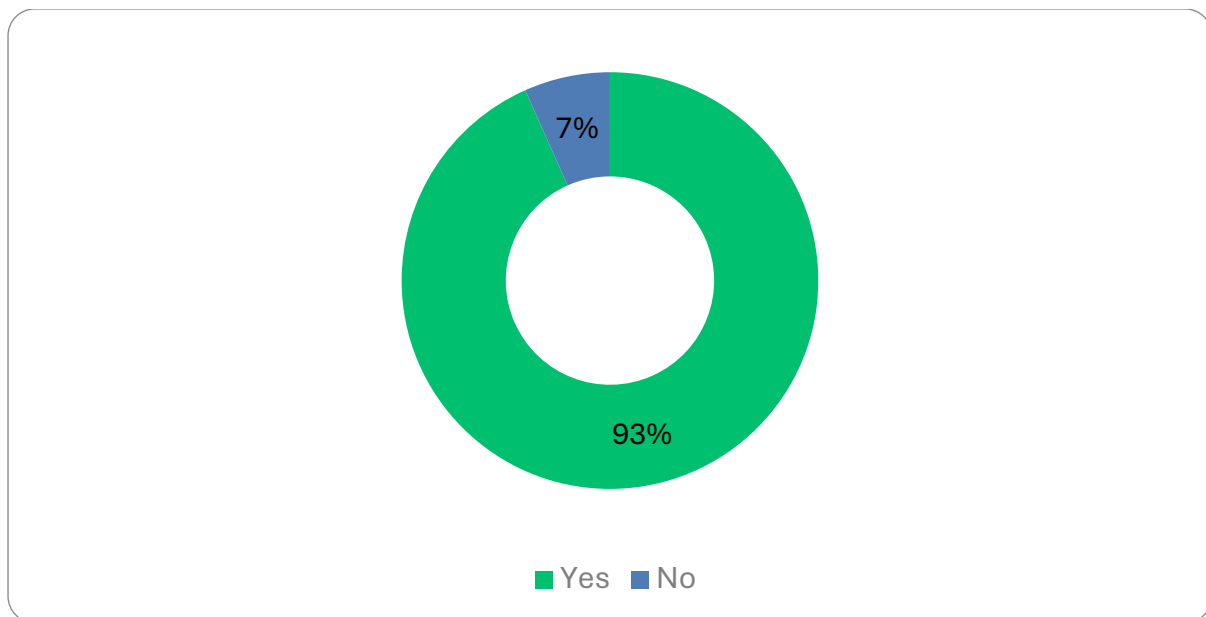
Q1: Do you need an interpreter for hospital visits?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



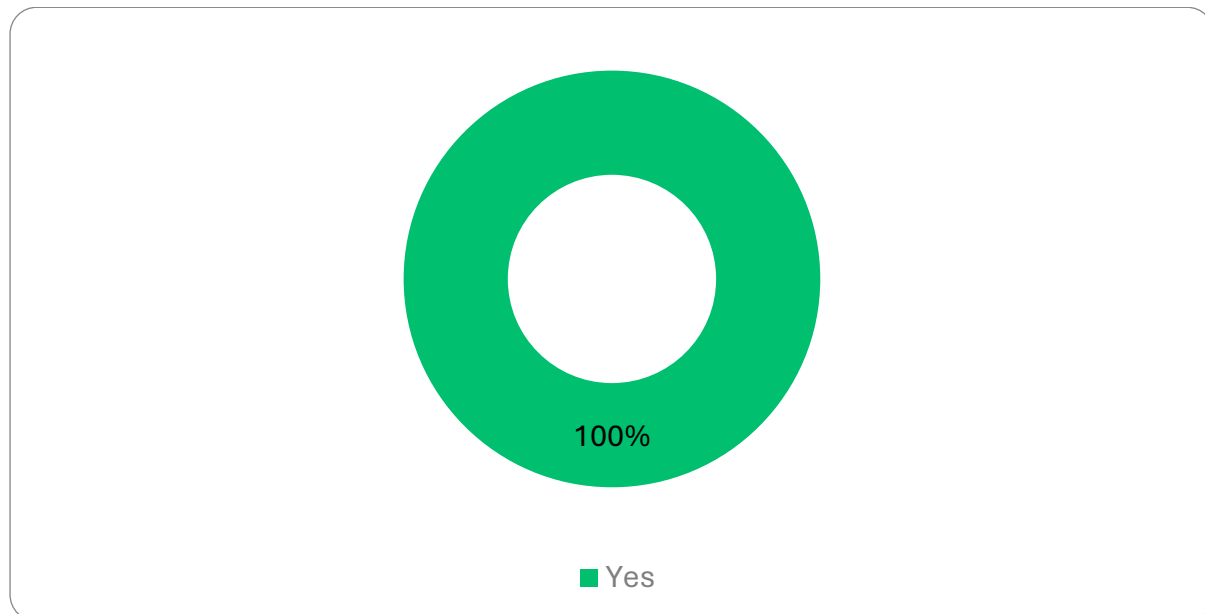
Q2: Have you attended an appointment at hospital where there has been no interpreter?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5



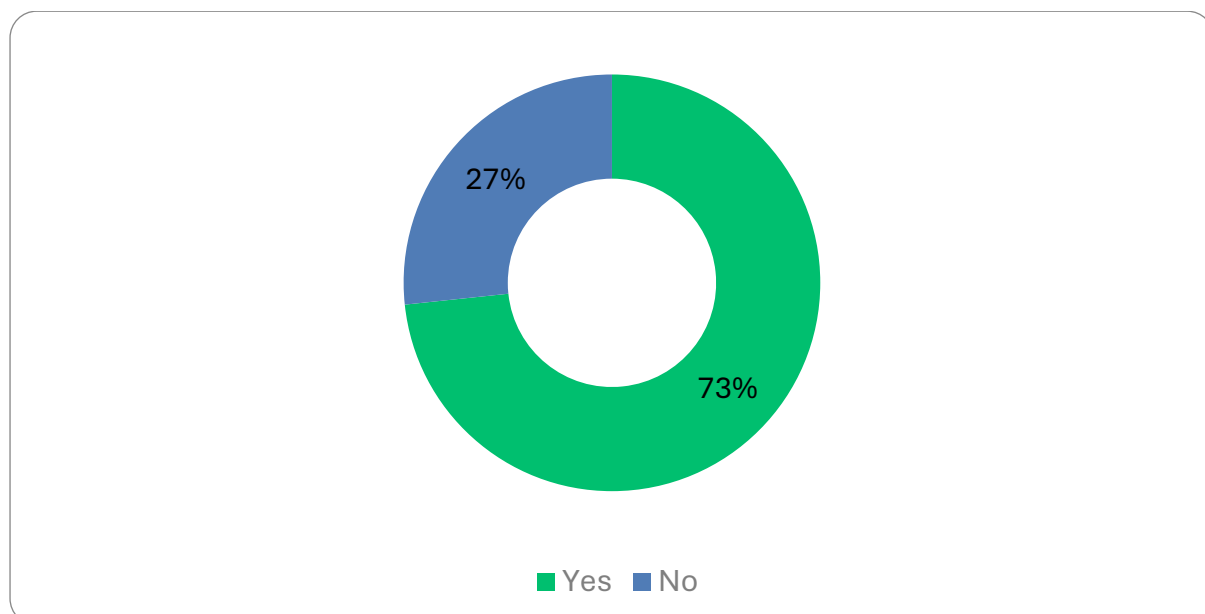
Q3: If Yes, has this happened more than once?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 6



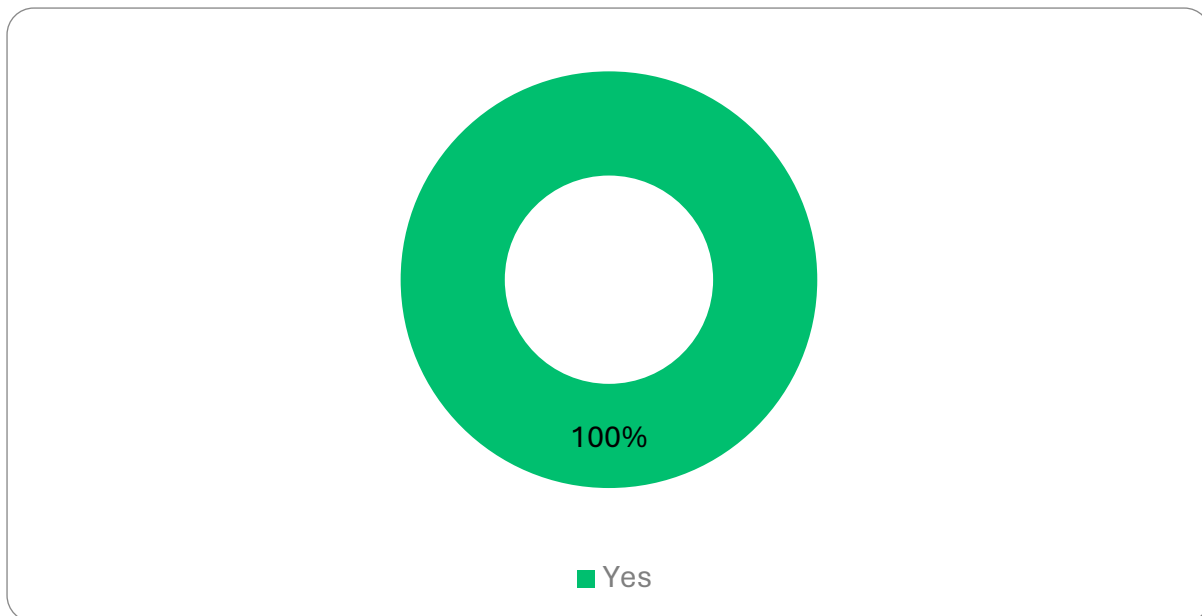
Q4: Have you had a hospital appointment cancelled because there was no interpreter arranged?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5



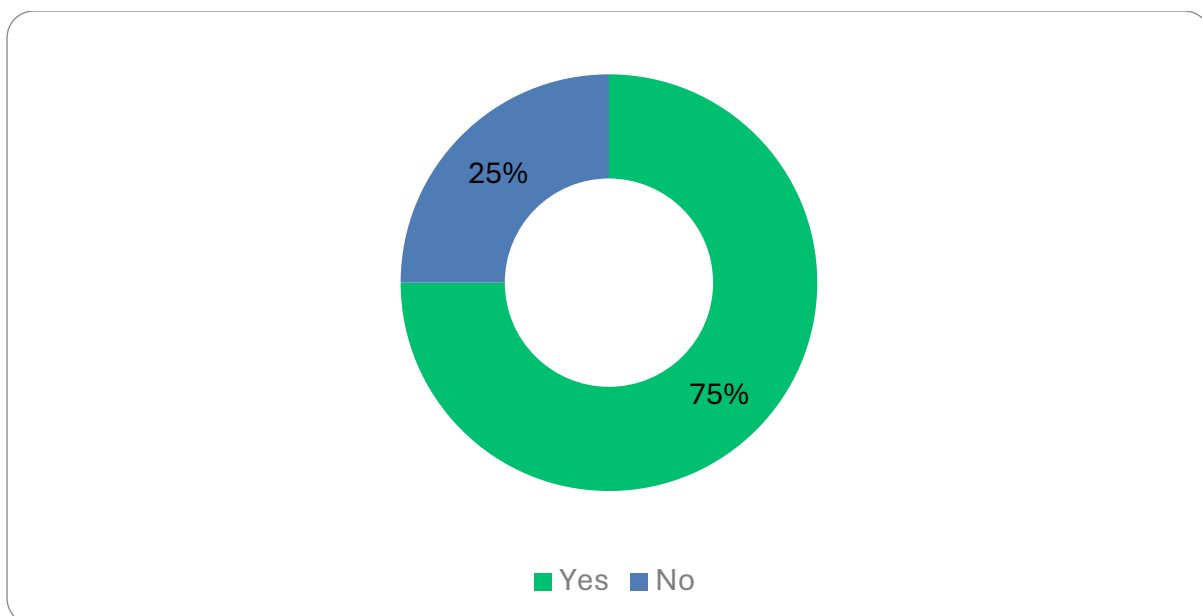
Q5: If yes, has this happened more than once?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 9



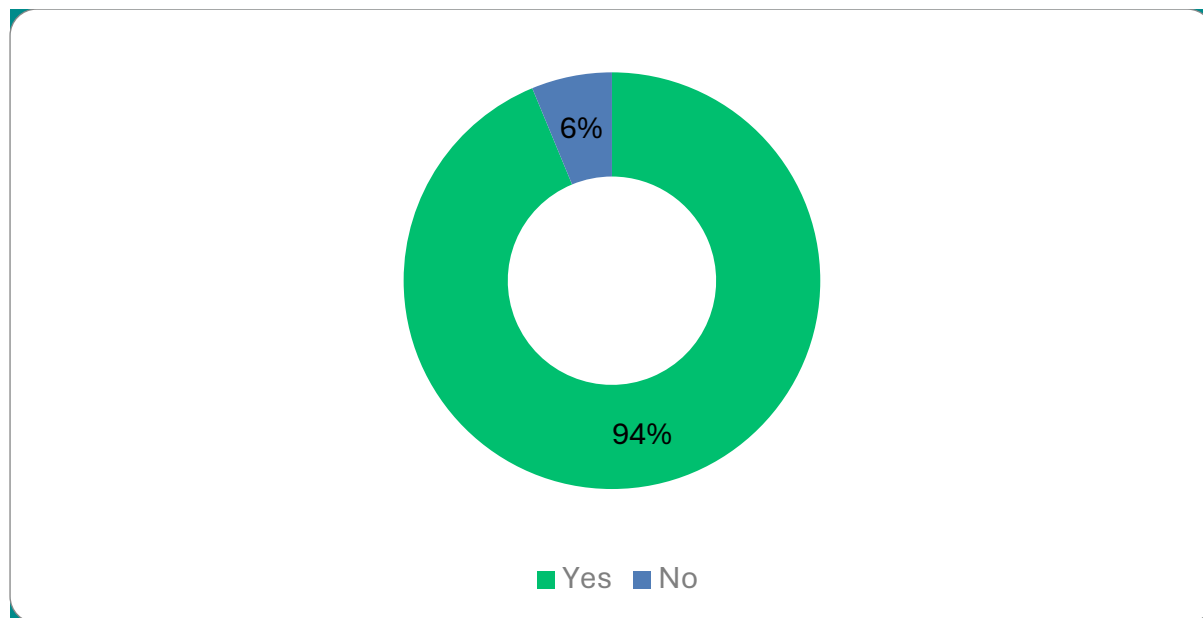
Q6: Do you need support with hospital letters?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 4



Q7: Would it be beneficial if your hospital, GP, and dentist provided information and health advice in British Sign Language? For example on videos in surgeries or in BSL videos through QR codes on letters and posters etc.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 4



Comments and Suggestions

- The hospital has an interpreting agency that is unable to uphold the contract and let down so many Deaf people at Whiston Hospital. The hospital must check if all Deaf patients are provided with BSL interpreters. My daughter first officially complained around 2010. 13 years later Deaf people are still facing the same poor provision. A better interpreter agency such as Signalise Co-op.
- I had lifesaving contact with BSL 999, and after this I experienced several failings at Whiston's A&E department. They did not provide a BSL interpreter whilst in the hospital or at discharge. It was not until my daughter (an Interpreter) interpreted the medication provided by the hospital she pointed out that there was a mix-up in understanding usage and dosage. At this point, I was near death's door. The lack of interpreter provision is awful at this hospital. The staff do not know how to contact the agency and the agency did not always have the 24/7 mobile available.
- Very good 9
- Struggling communicate. they need understand about deaf people. stay calm.
- Please read red flag Arrangement for interpreter.

- Only issues I have had is when using A&E and next day appointments. In the past, my mum and dad (who are Deaf) have had issues when staying on the ward as no one would communicate what was happening when doctors were doing their rounds, which I thought was very rude.
- Some staff still using masks. No communication between reception staff and nursing staff when I informed them I am Deaf
- When waiting for hospital appointments, the person shouting you to go to clinic never gives it a second thought or realises that you have a hearing problem and shout from behind a wall or post and then turn their back on you. or don't shout loud enough for those partially deaf.
- It is good when I tell staff I am deaf and to come and tell me when my appointment is starting
- Need a male interpreter, sometimes a female interpreter is booked and I am uncomfortable with that
- Should be a qualified interpreter - not level 2!
- In emergency situations - A&E - never call out an interpreter - had to use family
- Attitudes of doctors and nurses towards deaf people. On one occasion they refused my Daughter access to my procedure so I refused until my Daughter convinced me to go ahead, Daughter interpreted the consent form which is stressful for her (Has ticked Whiston and Aintree Hospital)
- Expecting family to interpret. Family not giving all information so unaware of own health needs - Safeguarding - At present there is no support for deaf people in Knowsley. MSDP have said no drop in on alternate Friday's for Knowsley residents. DRC do not help with letters etc, only equipment (attend Prescott Town Hall every 2 weeks) Many appointments and even surgery without interpreters - doesn't know what procedures were for. Signing consent forms without knowing what for. Wife not allowed to go to hospital (also deaf). Family take him and neither know what's going on.
- Staff shouting patients name - can't hear. Need visual screens for names when being called to an appointment.
- I have been let down many times by Whiston Hospital - no access to interpreters. This makes me angry

- The hospital to book interpreters (suggestion)
- Warrington Hospital always have an interpreter based there means would not worry about lack of interpreter
- I find the Outpatients department is very busy and noisy, the check in is problematic because I can't hear the receptionist speaking. In the waiting areas there is always music playing and I'm panicking in case I don't hear when my name is called. Sometimes the staff walk off while speaking to you which is difficult.
- Data systems
- My wife and I have been let down by Whiston hospital and DRC the agency for many, many years. It puts our health at risk. I am fed up with being 2nd class. Enough is enough! Whiston hospital should now change the agency to a BSL only provider who deals with 24/7 requests.
- The 24/7 line to call the interpreter agency hasn't always been available and hospital staff don't always know how to call them.
- Signing consent forms without interpreter. Explained in English by Dr, not understanding
- Need to improve contact between hospital and interpreter service. Hospital need deaf awareness. Get to appointment, sitting in waiting room and don't know what is going on
- The hospital need to book BSL interpreters. Deaf interpreter - confirmed booking by text (Whiston and St Helens)
- Hospital are patient. Interpreter can be late or no interpreter meaning catch up on information
- I have to attend the audiology department at St Helens Hospital frequently. I have to take my mother with me so she can listen for when my name is called - the waiting room is large and relatively bare (bad acoustics, no carpet etc to deaden the noise). There is a radio playing loudly, the clinic room doors bang shut, staff and other patients carry out loud conversations. The audiologist peeps around a corner and calls my name in a normal quiet voice. Even my mother strains to hear! The old audiology dept had a number system which was flashed up on a big screen

which was much better. Plus why does the receptionist talk to me like she's hilda baker? I'm deaf, not daft.

- Interpreters should be booked and arrive before the patient and stay until the appointment has finished

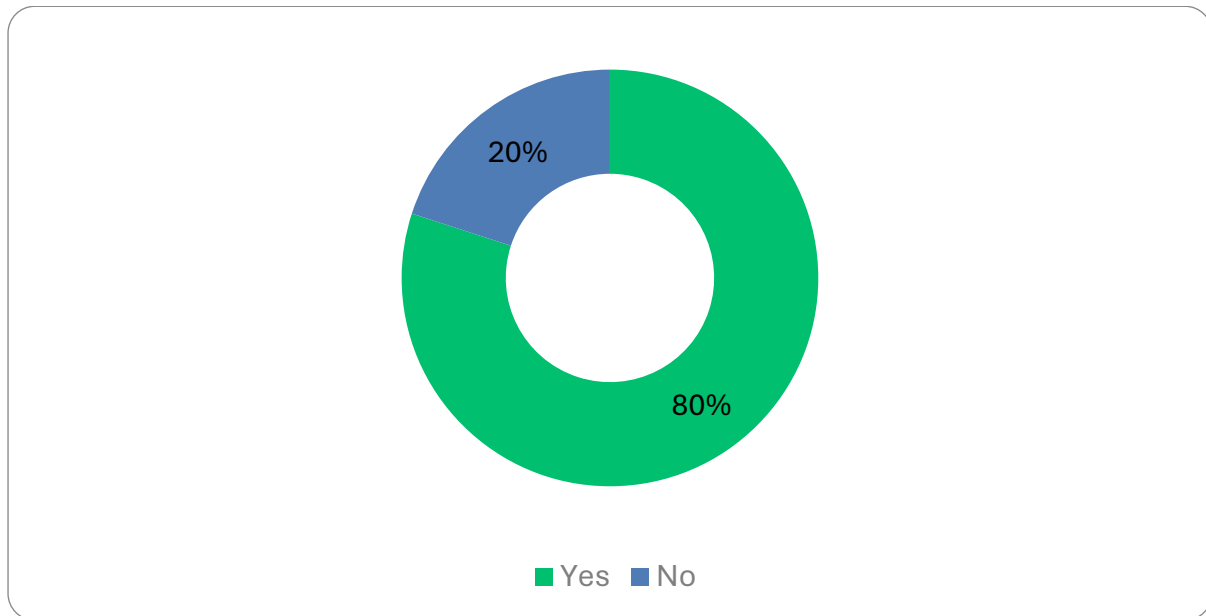
Suggestions about better ways the hospital could contact Deaf people

- Text message. Email
- Letter
- I rely on my hearing Daughter and don't access MSDP services. I rely on my Daughter who is also my 24/7 carer
- Video call in BSL and confirming interpreter. Currently no support with letters. MSDP and DRC do not support.
- My communication should go through a third party - e.g. the interpreter service and they should contact me via whatsapp video with appointment etcAlso send photo of interpreter to reduce anxiety - know when arrive they are there as can see them
- SMS and letter. Would be useful to have confirmation that they have booked an interpreter. Also must be a fully qualified interpreter.
- My son interprets for me
- Don't phone - Text
- Send text message
- In BSL. Interpreter or BSL video translation.
- All contact must be in BSL via an interpreter or a link to a video BSL translation. BSL is our language, not English!
- Text only. They always try to ring. They should read the notes that state text only.

SURVEY RESULTS SOUTHPORT & ORMSKIRK HOSPITALS

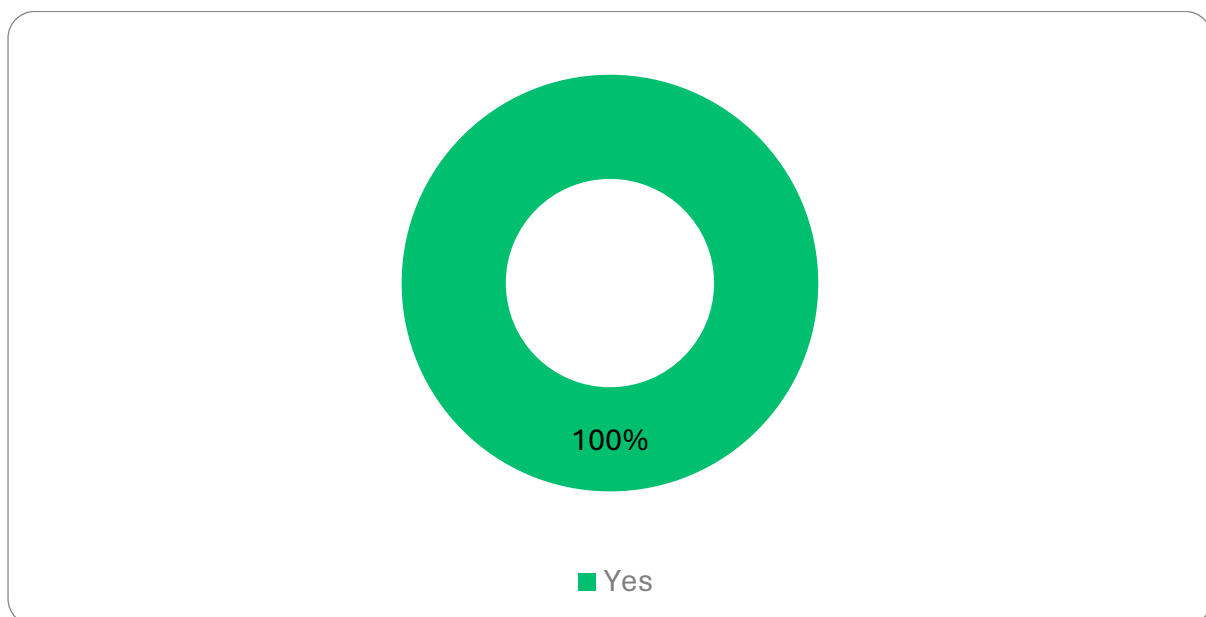
Q1: Do you need an interpreter for hospital visits?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



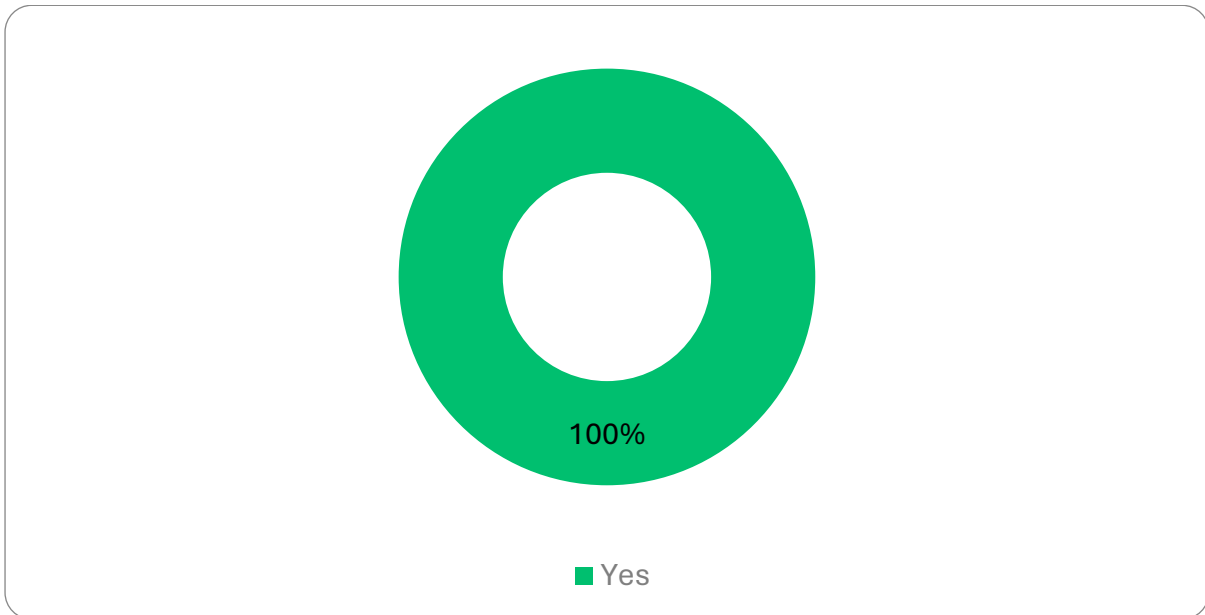
Q2: Have you attended an appointment at hospital where there has been no interpreter?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5



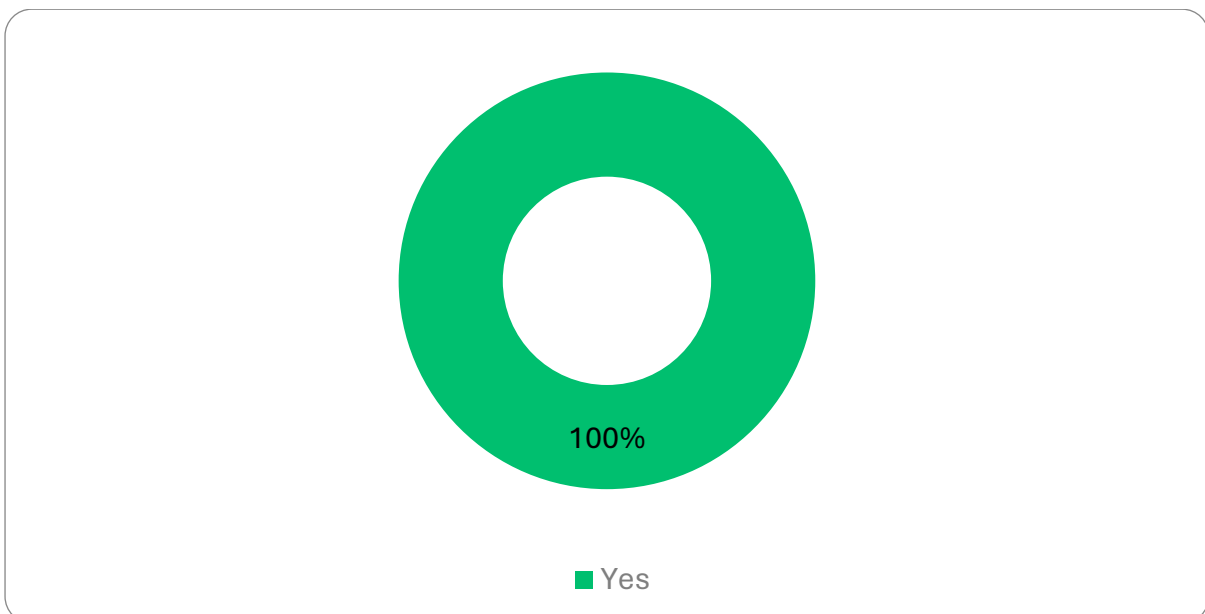
Q3: If Yes, has this happened more than once?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5



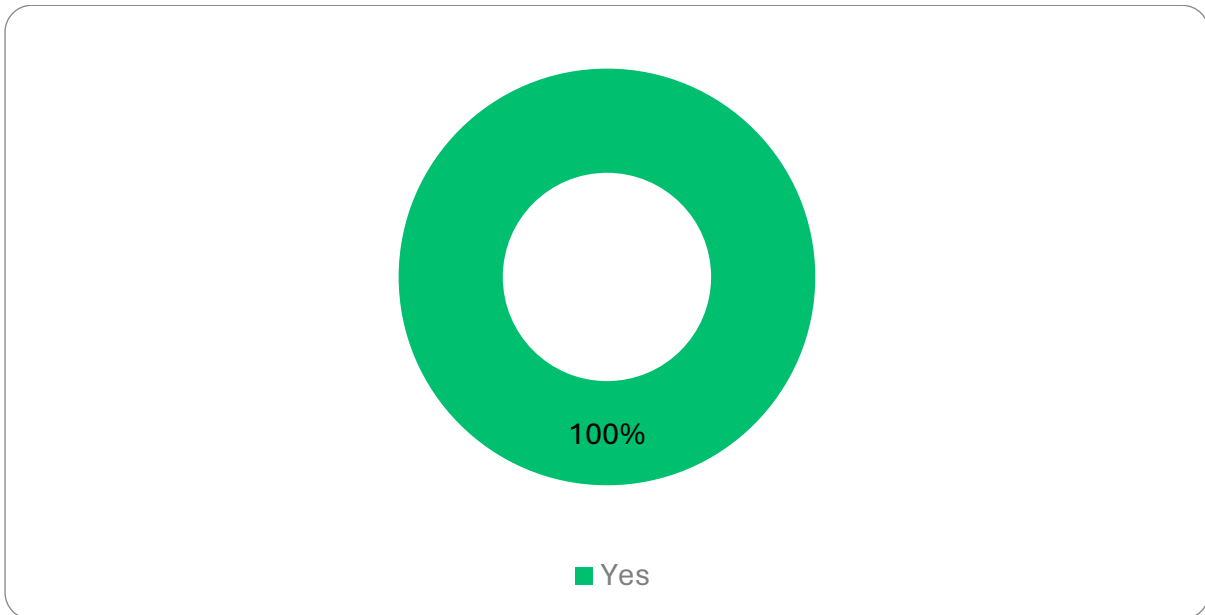
Q4: Have you had a hospital appointment cancelled because there was no interpreter arranged?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5



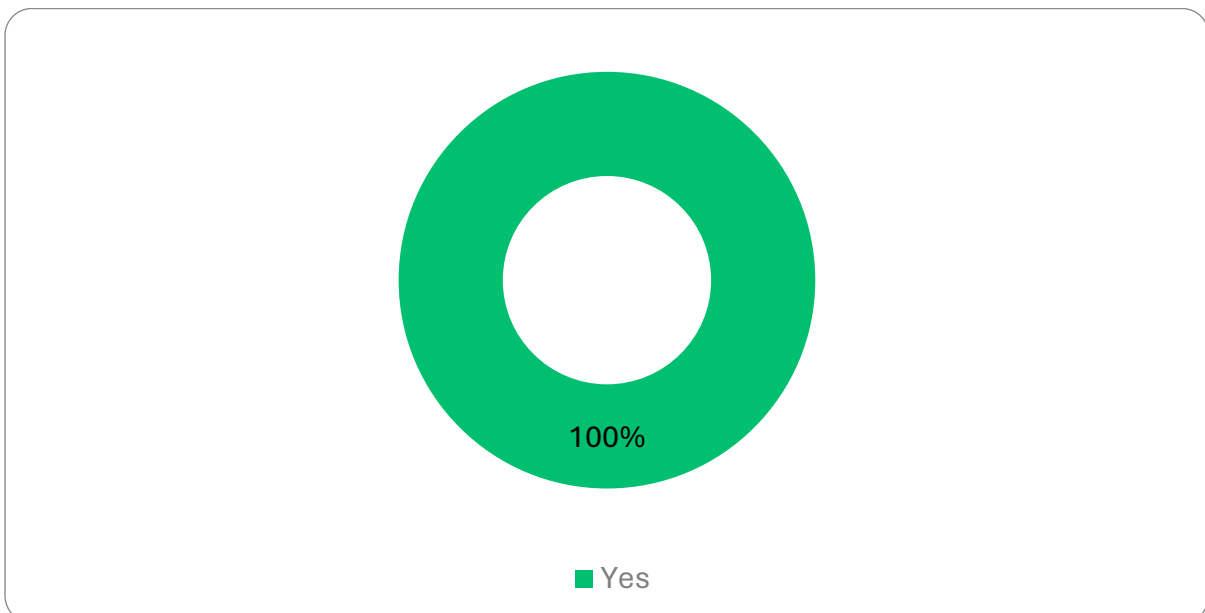
Q5: If yes, has this happened more than once?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 5



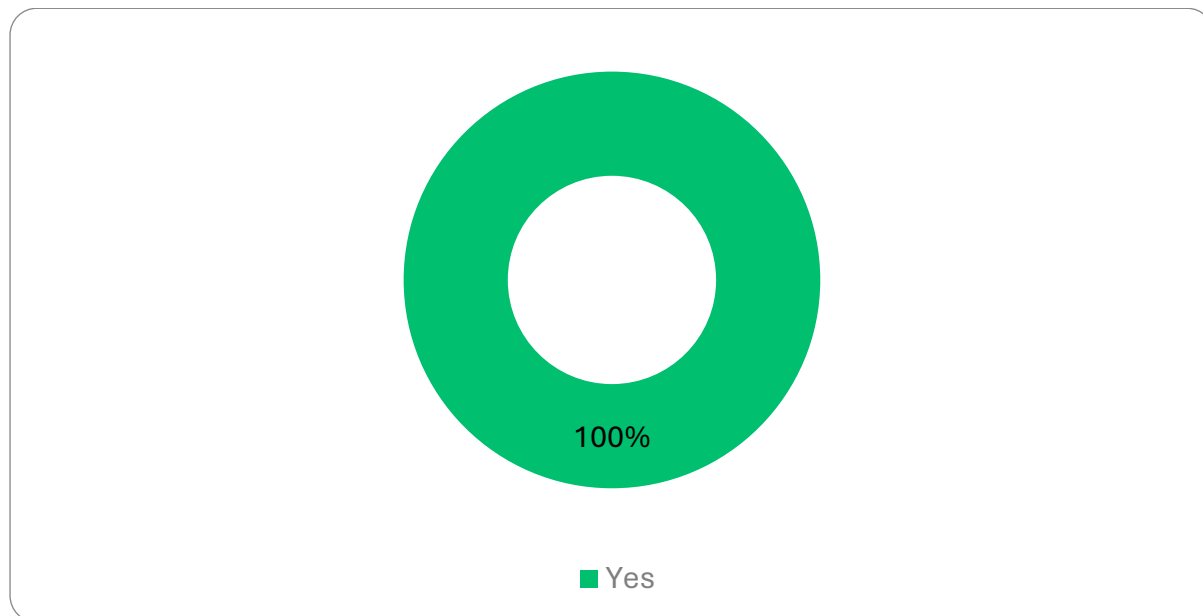
Q6: Do you need support with hospital letters?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Q7: Would it be beneficial if your hospital, GP, and dentist provided information and health advice in British Sign Language? For example on videos in surgeries or in BSL videos through QR codes on letters and posters etc.

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Comments and Suggestions

- Don't shout out name. need Deaf awareness. Need Interpreters. Interpreter needs to be in person, online can freeze due to poor internet. Adds stress and can't understand. Medical problems getting worse as not being treated because needs not understood. Need information in language understand - feel oppressed, assaulted. Needs are expressed but then ignored - attitude.
- Southport hospital knee issue - asked for interpreter but was refused and procedure went ahead. Had an injection regardless and felt that was forced into this, In hospital for 2 weeks (abused, no informed consent/no interpreter) stuck a tube in and I didn't know what for.
- There have been many occasions when Southport hospital has not booked interpreters for my wife and me causing stress and frustration. We are lucky and have a personal package with Sign Live (a VRS service) as this helps me contact Southport Hospital to make sure they book a BSL interpreter. If they have not booked an interpreter or I arrive, and an Interpreter is not present, I demand that my appointment be postponed.
- I was in Southport Hospital for two weeks with no Interpreter. Southport Hospital and DA Languages are awful. Every day, I demanded an interpreter, and I was ignored; I was treated without knowing what was going on, I felt abused.

- There have been many occasions when Southport Hospital has not booked interpreters, causing stress and frustration. Now I am lucky, I have a personal package with Sign Live (a VRS service) as this helps me contact Southport Hospital to make sure they book a BSL interpreter. If they have not booked an interpreter or I arrive and an Interpreter is not present I demand that my appointment is postponed; an unfair system which heightens my anxiety. Renacres Hospital in Ormskirk never book BSL interpreters and I struggle to understand what is going on.
- The agency and hospital need work together and take the stress off me.
- Aintree Hospital - I had no interpreter throughout my 3-week stay in ward 8. A family friend contacted the agency, RNID. She spoke to the ward and informed them of my rights; they then booked weekly interpreters. Southport Hospital (July 2023) I had no interpreter access for 2 weeks whilst in hospital. No access to what was going on.
- Southport Hospital always lets Deaf people down.
- Can click on many websites to go straight to Interpreter (VRS), why can't hospital do this? This would help, but not always best as hospital internet can be unreliable. In person always best, but VRS rather than cancel.
- Lots of time is wasted trying to sort out interpreters. They shouldn't shout out names in waiting rooms They need to make sure the information they hold on patients is correct and that they act on it. They shouldn't assume my communication needs: I wear hearing aids and speak but I'm not hard of Hearing, I'm Deaf and need an interpreter.
- Please don't shout out names in waiting rooms
- get interpreters
- Ormskirk always provide interpreter. During covid I was able to lip read as doctor was willing to lower mask.
- Please don't shout out names.
- require face to face interpreters as technology for VRS isn't always suitable.
- The agency and hospital work together, booking interpreters to relieve my stress.

- I attend Ormskirk A&E with my child - they didn't know how to book an interpreter so I didn't know what was happening with my child. My wife had to follow us up there. I couldn't support my child as an independent parent. I now take them to Alder Hey, if needed, as that hospital has a good contract with a reliable agency. In the summer of 2022, I injured my eye and attended the Royal Liverpool Hospital eye clinic. I was told by the receptionist they could not provide an interpreter in an emergency. I panicked as I can not hear and couldn't see out of one eye. I tried to video call my wife. She spoke to them and explained my rights and a face-to-face interpreter was booked ASAP. Where was my right to access the health service as a human being?
- Confirmation texts are the best way to reassure the Deaf community an Interpreter is booked. Signalise now have the contract at my GP and the Royal Liverpool Hospital, they liaise with the services and keep me updated and send confirmation.
- DA Interpreter not good better signlisa they are more better
- When try phone hospital ask for interpeter for me when arriving hospital no interpreter there
- Lots of time is wasted trying to sort out interpreters.They shouldn't shout out names in waiting roomsThey need to make sure the information they hold on patients is correct and that they act on it - why do I need to contact the hospital to say I need an interpreter, especially when I can't ring them because I'm Deaf. They shouldn't assume my communication needs: I wear hearing aids and speak but I'm not hard of Hearing, I'm Deaf and need an interpreter.
- Don't know if Interpreter will arrive or not. Don't know if male or female (could be personal appointment) This causes lots of anxiety and uncertainty. Should be better communication before appointment so we know there is an interpreter and who it is.
- Never know if the interpreter is going to arrive or not, or if they are male or female (could be a personal appointment). This causes so much anxiety and uncertainty.
- Please don't shout out name in waiting rooms
- Southport hospital said would only provide interpreter at assessment and then at the end of my treatment - refused continuous support. Needs more continuity at hospital. Also, find some departments give interpreters others don't.

- Can click on many websites to go straight to Interpreter (VRS), why can't hospital do this? This would help, but not always best as hospital internet can be unreliable. In person always best, but VRS rather than cancel.
- They shout names out...need to come and get you.
- Please don't shout out names.
- don't shout out names. Need interpreters, difficult to lip read some medical staff due to different lip patterns of foreign doctors.
- Difficult to lip read some medical staff due to different lip pattern of foreign doctors. don't shout names out. get interpreters
- The agency works with the hospital to book Interpreters and sends texts to confirm an interpreter is booked taking the stress off Deaf people. (suggestion)

Suggestions about better ways the hospital could contact Deaf people

- Service icon to connect to interpreter through website to ask for advice or confirm hospital booking and need for interpreter support. More independence for Deaf as not having to go through someone else.
- Service icon to connect to interpreter through website to ask for advice or confirm hospital booking and need for interpreter support. More independence for Deaf as not having to go through someone else.
- Could be contacted by hospital interpreter service in BSL about appointments. They could also then arrange interpreter and give all details to the patient. Text is OK but limited as only one way communication.
- Contact by BSL Interpreter with hospital interpreter service. Text is OK but usually this is only one way communication.
- contact in BSL using hospital interpreter service.
- Contact in BSL using hospital interpreter service and then interpreter can be arranged with them too.
- contact in BSL using hospital interpreter service

- Contact in BSL using Interpreter service.

- Text OK

- The hospital to take on responsibility to provide accessible information.

- Yes, QR codes on letters, working with the interpreter agency who could explain my letters.

- The agency and hospital work together and take the stress off me.

- The agency to explain hospital letters. QR codes for all letters, leaflets and posters so that information is accessible to Deaf people.

- The agency and hospital arranged Interpreters and send text of interpreter confirmation.

- Text OK

- Hospitals/ GPs need to work with the Interpreter agency and book interpreters between them to take the stress off Deaf people. QR codes so that Deaf people can click on a link and have access to information in BSL to support them in understanding generic leaflets and posters; eventually, QR codes on all hospital letters so that written English is accessible to all Deaf people. This would be the hospital needs the accessible information standard 2014.

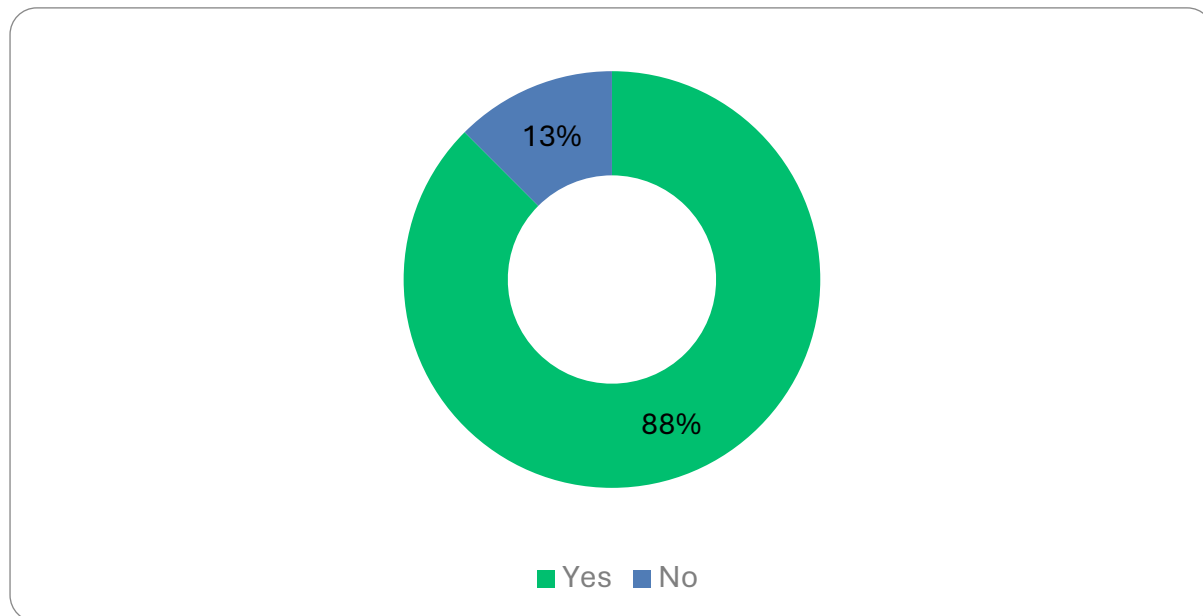
- Text only

- The hospital to take on responsibility to provide accessible information. Could contact in British Sign Language using their interpreter service.

SURVEY RESULTS – AINTREE HOSPITAL

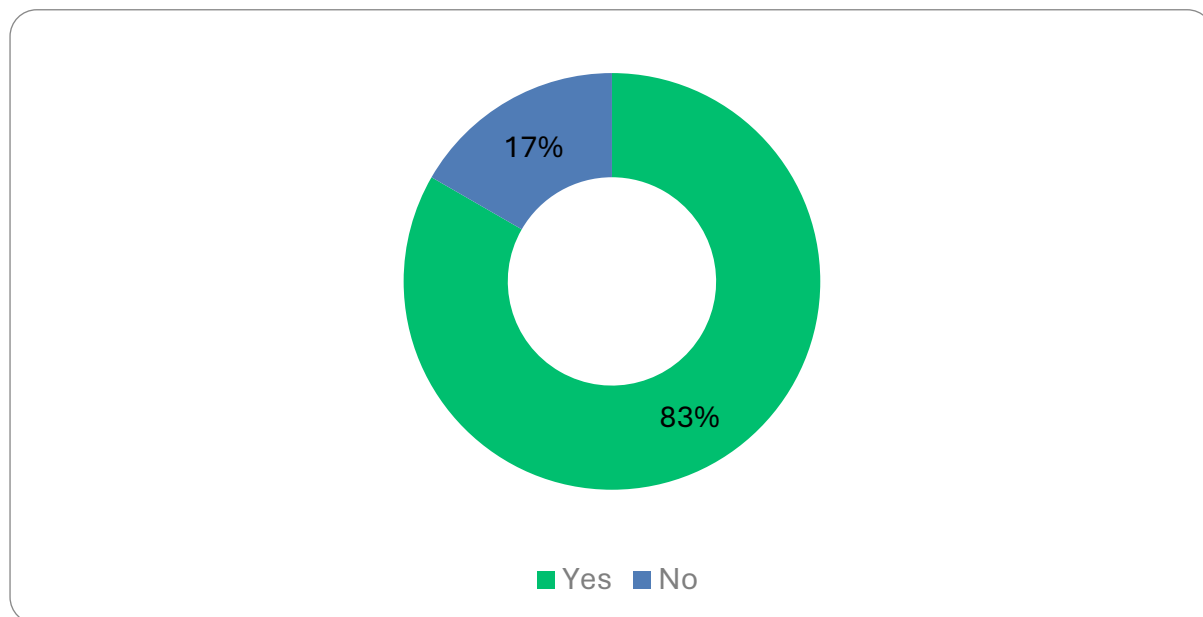
Q1: Do you need an interpreter for hospital visits?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



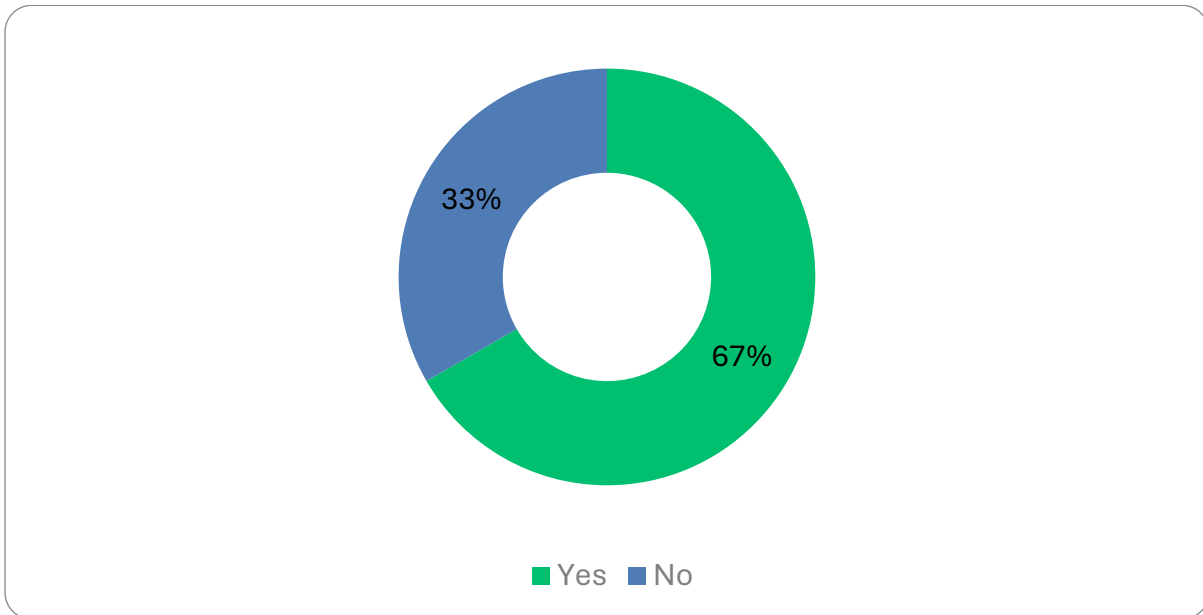
Q2: Have you attended an appointment at hospital where there has been no interpreter?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 2



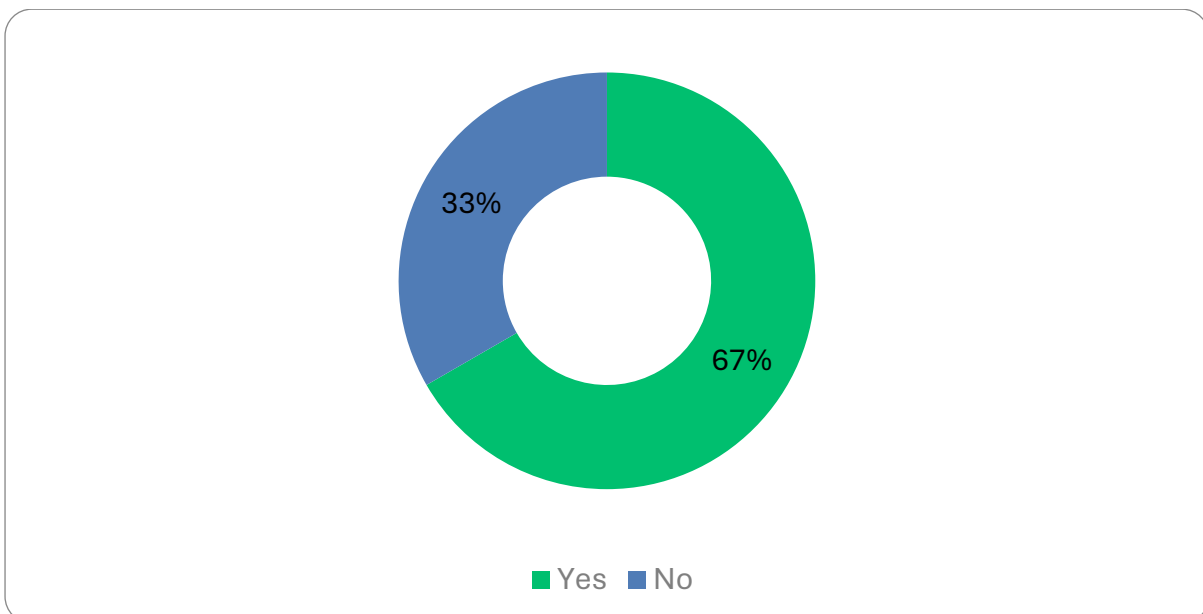
Q3: If Yes, has this happened more than once?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 2



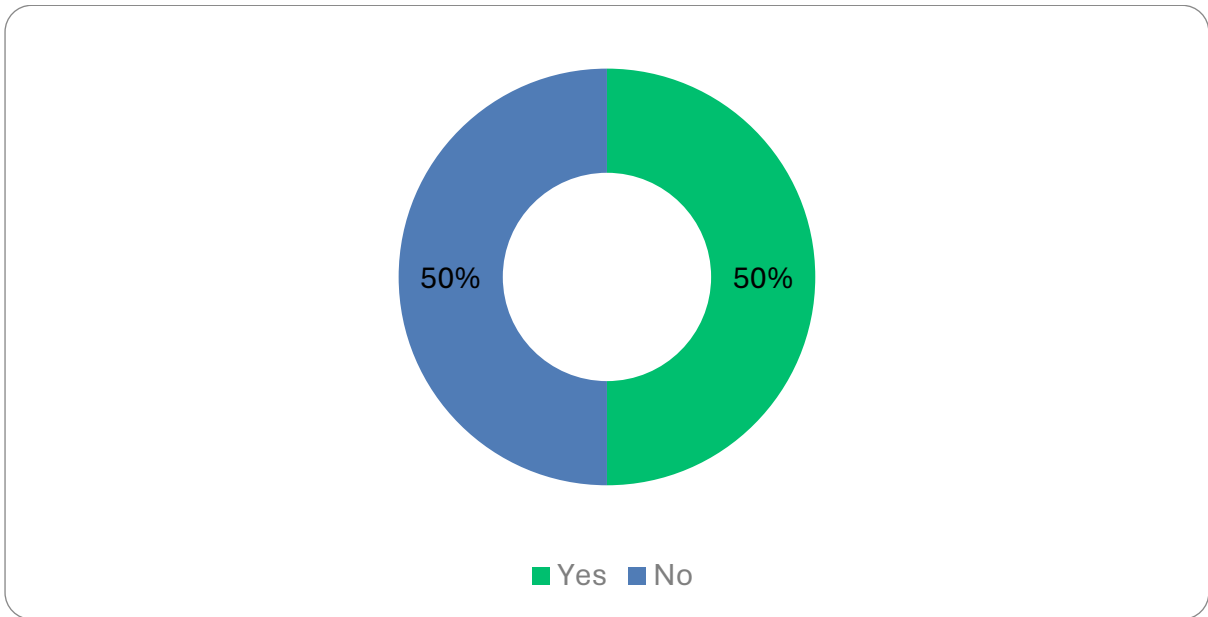
Q4: Have you had a hospital appointment cancelled because there was no interpreter arranged?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 2



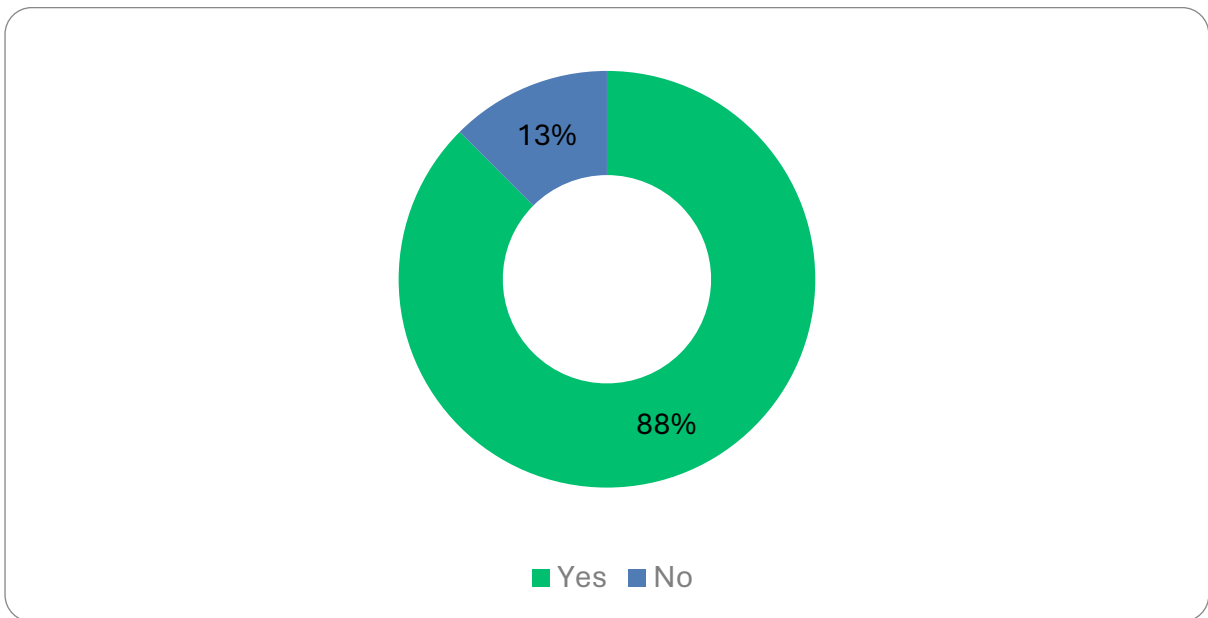
Q5: If yes, has this happened more than once?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 2



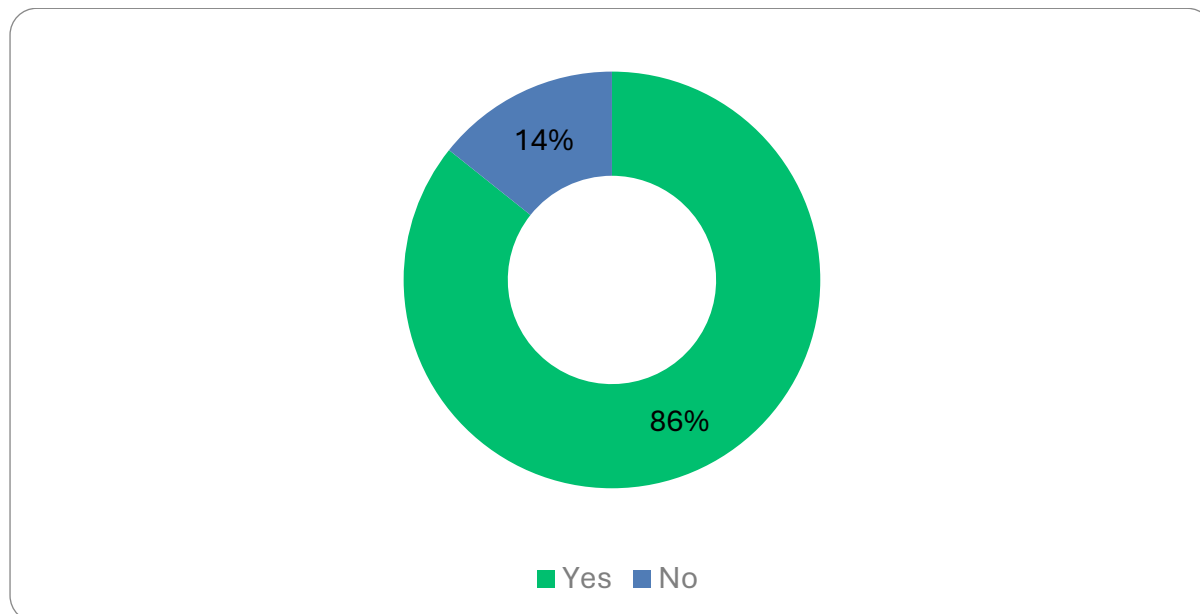
Q6: Do you need support with hospital letters?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Q7: Would it be beneficial if your hospital, GP, and dentist provided information and health advice in British Sign Language? For example on videos in surgeries or in BSL videos through QR codes on letters and posters etc.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



Comments and Suggestions

- Acknowledge me first before the hospital appointment.
- Lots of time is wasted trying to sort out interpreters. They shouldn't shout out names in waiting rooms. They need to make sure the information they hold on patients is correct and that they act on it - why do I need to contact the hospital to say I need an interpreter, especially when I can't ring them because I'm Deaf. They shouldn't assume my communication needs: I wear hearing aids and speak but I'm not hard of hearing, I'm Deaf and need an interpreter.
- Need to make sure there is an interpreter if they book one. Need to let patient know that there is one and their name. At the moment we don't know if an interpreter will arrive or not - who monitors this? Also, don't know if male or female - should have a choice as the appointment could be personal.
- Staff need to be more Deaf aware. Don't shout out names when waiting in reception - have missed appointments because of this.
- At hospital I was deprioritised to elderly people. I was there for 4 months with no interpreter access. Hospitals don't always use the displays to call a patient - shouting no good.

- Lot improvement by texting me who and when, time where for next appointment. I would rather to know which male or female interpreter first for personal issues.
- We shouldn't be responsible for booking interpreters. Sometimes I've got this booked through my support worker but am always unsure if someone will be there to interpret. I get lots of letters expecting me to phone in (I'm Deaf!) I need someone to interpret these.
- Signalise service is excellent. Send confirmation of interpreter with a photo. If not happy with that interpreter can say and sometimes get offered 2 or 3 and get to choose
- Always get an interpreter - Signalise
- On computer system it need to have flag when access patient name
- Chose female or male interpreter
- Need a big improvement access

Suggestions about better ways the hospital could contact Deaf people

- Could be contacted by hospital interpreter service in BSL about appointments and discuss interpreter needs. They could also then book interpreter and confirm with patient. Text is OK but can be limiting as it is usually only one way communication.
- Contact via hospital interpreter service in BSL. Text Ok, but need it 2 way so can reply.
- I would be happy for the hospital interpreter service to contact me and all communication in British Sign Language.
- Happy with letters
- Text or email
- Text message with reply not noreply that hard
- Keep texting for appointments dates, that is very useful for me

RESPONSES TO GP AND DENTAL SERVICES

47 people commented on GP access

38 people commented on dental access.

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

- never ask for interpreter. dentist is aware of my communication needs and adapts.
- So many locum doctors. Surgery doesn't use display screens anymore to call people through, now shout out names. This is not good.
- Never ask for interpreter, Dentist knows my communication needs and adapts as necessary.
- So Many locus doctorsThe GP surgery doesn't use the display screen anymore to call patients in they come and shout the names out, this is not good.
- Written message by communicating.Problem is our medical health centre used to have regular GP's no problem to communicate. But all GP's had left due dispute. Now the centre have GP locums. Difficult to communicate due foreign lucoms
- Like hospital, GP also shout out names in waiting rooms. But, at my GP's, the nurse knows me and will point to me when my name is called out.I'm Ok to have things written down.
- Need more Deaf awareness - don't shout out names for people in waiting room.
- They shout out names to call you in.have to ring for appointment (can't as Deaf), have to find someone else to do it. ask for interpreter, then no interpreter
- If take mask off I'm OK
- They call out name in waiting room which isn't good, but the nurse knows me and will point to me when my name is called.I'm OK to have things written down.
- When they take their masks off then I'm OK
- appointment by phone only, but I can't hear.In waiting room they shout out your name to go in.If get in person appointment then Dr is wearing a mask and refuses

to lower it so I cannot lip read. Dr will turn to my friend and ends up talking to my friend the entire appointment and I am having to lip read my friend to try to find out what's going on.

- Like hospital they shout out names.
- No interpreter provided. Stopped using display for names and just call people in now. Don't know when being called in.
- dentist knows me & don't need interpreter.
- No interpreter provided.stopped using the display for names and just call people in, so don't know when being called.
- Don't need an interpreter as my dentist is familiar with how I communicate and adapts.
- They shout out your name to call you in, can't hear (Deaf)have to ring for appointment, can't ring (Deaf)have to get someone else to ring.ask for interpreter, then no interpreter at appointment.receptionist says know you're Deaf but what's the problem.
- don't need interpreter, dentist familiar with how I communicate.
- Have to ring (can't as Deaf). need to get someone else. If get appointment, ask for interpreter and then no interpreter at appointment.Shout names out. receptionist says know you're Deaf but what's the problem.
- Need in person interpreters.
- Shouts out name.delayed treatment as can't understand my needs. get frustrated, angry.struggle to access service and can't understand when don't have interpreter. If had an interpreter, feel treated as huma
- dentist use to provide interpreter but suddenly stopped. dentist says don't book interpreters anymore, said can't book as don't have funds. dentist wears a mask and uses an iPad - wanted me to read it.
- Dentist says there is no funding available for interpreters. Curious to know if provide spoken language interpreters.

- like hospital they shout names out.
- Need BSL Interpreters and Deaf awareness of staff.
- My Gp provides interpreters.
- dentist says there is no funding available. curious to know if they provide spoken language interpreters.
- dentist refusing to book an interpreter even when my support worker reinforces the reason why.
- Crown Dental Surgery, Liverpool, Rd, Southport, PR8. My dentist never books interpreters and refuses to do so. I try to communicate, but it is very difficult; I don't always understand what is going on.
- My GP surgery now books interpreters all the time.
- Once, my GP surgery did not book an interpreter, and I was so angry; they now book one every time I visit.
- I don't attend.(dentist)
- My GP surgery always books interpreters.
- No access to interpreters.
- I rarely attend my dental service.
- I was not confident in my GP service understanding my rights as a Deaf person, so I was pleased to discover that Signalise won the contract. I can now attend my GP independently with an impartial interpreter.
- Arrangement interpreter properly. they need learn deaf awareness
- never i get appointment

- deaf aware course need to all gp and hospital staff
- I go to private dentist and not sure if they would book an interpreter for me. They use mime or lip speak to me
- GP usually good book interpreter for me and send me text of when appointment. Just problem when making appointment I have to rely on others to make phone call for me.
- Deaf awareness training for health and social care staff.
- Always same dentist, every time lipread
- Generally use wife or sister to interpret
- GP good - book interpreters
- My Daughter attends with me and I ask the dentist to remove their masks
- No issues as my Daughter interprets for me (GP)
- No interpreter at dentist. Current dentist quite rough and get anxious, needs lots of reassurance (Edge Lane Dentist)
- Was like hospital with family going (Dad) But has now changed. Signalise have the contract and now get an interpreter. Now feel less anxious going to GP as know there will be an independent interpreter (Manor Farm)
- Always have an interpreter (Penketh Health Centre)
- My son attends with me
- Prefer an interpreter at Dentist
- Don't provide interpreter Need interpreter (Church Dental Practice, Church Road)
- Voice door bell (Intercom) - cannot hear so don't understand

- Phone can't use
- Online not full accessible (GP)
- Dentist writes things down for me , knows my English is limited. Don't book interpreters (Dentist - Queens Drive, Liverpool)
- Never good. Never have interpreter. Will always ask to book but never provide (no GP details given)
- No problem (dentist)
- Written communication or lipreading
- I wish my GP had a led screen to call patients for appts - I cannot hear them call my name and sometimes I don't want to take my mother with me - I'm 40+ after all.
- N/A - The interpreter provision is now Signalise, and I have no issues. Interpreters are always booked.
- Not good without interpreter gp write down not understand
- County Road Dental – Signalise
- Broadway - No interpreter. Has had the same dentist for years and lip reads him - work together
- Breeze Hill - Walton Surgery & Priory Medical Centre Both use Signalise - excellent
- NA Signalise has the contract and all is good.
- Need interpreter in hospital, gp and dentist
- better as my name comes up on a screen in waiting room. (GP)
- No dentist, can't find one. Can't ring around - deaf

- When went to GP sometimes had interpreter, sometimes didn't. Once confusion over having bloods done as no interpreter. When eventually had bloods done, blood sugar very high (Diabetic). Now new interpreter service in place - signalise and service is excellent and they keep you informed e.g. confirmation of interpreter by text (Manor Farm)

Would it be beneficial if your hospital, GP, and dentist provided information and health advice in British Sign Language? For example on videos in surgeries or in BSL videos through QR codes on letters and posters etc. comments:

- need much more information in BSL - health advice etc.
- QR codes on leaflets etc with BSL video would be very useful.
- need more information in BSL.
- more information. seen example of QR codes and this would be useful for leaflets etc.
- could send letters with BSL videos in QR codes. more BSL videos in hospitals, GP, and dentist. Deaf people need same information as hearing people. Also have 'red flag' system on receptions. Logos for BSL Interpreter, hearing loop, lip read etc, so person can make their communication needs known.
- Could provide information in BSL videos in QR codes on letters. Could have more BSL videos in Hospital, GP, Dentist. We need same information as hearing people. Could have 'red flags' on reception areas, stating different needs - logo for BSL Interpreter, hearing loop, lip read etc. So can alert staff to communication needs.
- I would welcome QR codes to be available in all NHS settings to give Deaf people access to vital information. I would love to see this on individual letters, too.
- Oh yes, this would allow me to access information in my language.
- BSL videos would provide life-saving and or informative information for patients.
- That would be amazing. English is a barrier to health
- Useful for information, Posters etc

- QR codes would be amazing and allow me to feel like a human being accessing health in my own language.
- QR codes would be amazing, technology advances with information in BSL would aid me to be independent and understand my health conditions.
- Yes, this would open up a world of information and stop Deaf people unnecessarily suffering from health and mental health issues.
- This would be extremely useful
- Would be very helpful
- I can use both BSL and SSE, I also have my Daughter. For people who only use BSL this is a good idea
- Amazing. Need health information, health equality, feel more empowered

Summary

Overall, the experiences of the respondents show that although there are some examples of good practice, there is a need for improvement when supporting patients who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Services continue to be provided without consideration of the needs of Deaf people. Many GP's have systems requiring patients to phone at 8am. Deaf people continue to receive appointments for phone consultations. Letters, test information etc continue to be provided in written English.

When attending for hospital appointments, no one communicates with the patient to confirm that an interpreter has been booked, leading to heightened anxiety.

A lack of staff awareness results in staff shouting patients names, and often, in the absence of an interpreter placing the responsibility on the patient to accept conversation in writing, lip reading, or using a relative/friend. This reduced level of understanding has a profound effect on the patient being able to make any informed decision and give informed consent.

'Need information in language understand - feel oppressed, assaulted.'

'Had an injection regardless and felt that was forced into this, In hospital for 2 weeks (abused, no informed consent/no interpreter) stuck a tube in and I didn't know what for.'

Furthermore a reliance on family members to act as interpreters is a potential safeguarding risk and should not be allowed under any circumstances.

Recommendations

Identifying needs of patients	Ensuring flags are on patient records identifying their communication requirements. Ensuring staff are aware and act upon them.
Lack of staff awareness	Staff to be appropriately trained, with key Deaf awareness knowledge and training in Accessible Information Standards.
Methods of communication	Review communication systems to ensure that Deaf people can access the services. For example, an alternative to telephoning for appointments at 8am. At appointments: avoiding shouting names in reception. The use of TV screens with name and location added has been suggested by patients. Text or email communications depending on patients preference or communicate through interpreter service.

Access to qualified
Interpreter services

Better access to interpreter services in all settings and departments.
Ensure internet supports VRS service.
Ensure staff know how to access Interpreter support.
Confirmation systems in place to ensure there is an Interpreter in attendance.
Interpreters to fit the needs of the patients, e.g. gender.
Monitoring of Interpreter provision and quality, by asking the patient about their experiences.
Internal monitoring of interpreter provision, with systems in place for staff to escalate to management when interpreter provision is absent.
Health providers to monitor and report cancellation or delays in appointments as a result of absence of interpreter support.
Systems in place to inform the patient of Interpreter support before appointment.

Information to be provided in BSL

Using QR codes and BSL video in letters, information leaflets etc.

Please send your response to this report to:

Signing Solutions CIC
Warrington Deaf Centre
11-13 Wilson Patten Street
Warrington
WA1 1PG

Or

contact@signingsolutions.org