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# How to book a British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter for Healthcare Appointments

Deaf people have a legal right, under The Equality Act 2010, to request a fully qualified British Sign Language interpreter in a healthcare setting – GP surgery, hospital, dentist – to assist with their communication needs. It is the health provider's responsibility to book and pay for the interpreter, not the Deaf patient's. It may be helpful for you to ask your healthcare provider to make a record of your communication needs on your file.

Using a fully qualified National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPP) interpreter ensures information is translated clearly meaning the patient can make fully informed decisions and the doctor can make accurate diagnoses. If you asked for an interpreter to attend your appointment but one was not provided, you can make a formal complaint.

In Bolton, in order to book a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, your GP needs to ring the Communication Services at Action for Hearing Loss on **0845 685 8000**. It's a 24 hour service and lots of organisation such as Councils, the NHS and the police use this service.

All interpreters are DBS checked (the new rating of CRB) and are registered with NRCPP (National Registers of Communications Professionals). They all comply with ISO 9001 standard and are therefore well above Level 6 in BSL and almost all of them are BSL examiners.

## **Text Relay and Tynetalk:**

Deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people who use a textphone can contact Carers Direct on the textphone/minicom number 0300 123 1004. Alternatively, you can use the Text Relay service sometimes referred to as Tynetalk. This is the UK's text to voice relay service. To use the service you simply type a prefix before the telephone number you want to call (18001 if you're calling from a textphone, 18002 from a telephone and 18000 for emergency numbers). To contact Carers Direct from a textphone via the Text Relay Service you should call 18001 0300 123 1053. There is no charge for using this service. For

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more information on Text Relay, please contact 0800 7311 888 or visit the Text Relay website at [www.ngts.org.uk](http://www.ngts.org.uk). People with communication difficulties or impaired hearing are able use the NHS 111 service via a text phone by calling 18001 111.

**NHS 111:** NHS 111 is a new service that's being introduced to make it easier for you to access local NHS healthcare services in England. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation. **For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.** Calls to 111 are recorded. All calls and the records created are maintained securely, and will only be shared with others directly involved with your care.

### **Further Information**

#### **NHS Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group**

Engagement Officer  
St Peter's House  
Silverwell Street  
Bolton  
BL1 1PP  
Tel: 01204 462000

#### **Bolton Deaf Society**

Bark Street  
Bolton  
BL1 2AX  
Tel: 01204 521219  
Fax: 01204 521073

#### **Useful Links:**

**NRCPD:** <http://www.nrcpd.org.uk/>

**Signhealth:** <http://www.signhealth.org.uk/>

**Our Health in Your Hands:** <http://www.ohyh.org.uk/>

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