

# Learning legacy

Lessons learned from planning and staging the London 2012 Games



## Accessibility review for deaf and deafblind people

## Abstract

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The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) was mandated to ensure that it delivered the most accessible Games possible. As part of this, LOCOG aimed to establish new equality and inclusion standards for future sport event organisers to aspire to and achieve. The overarching aim of this deaf-led report is to share deaf people's experiences with sport event organisers and suppliers to improve communication access for deaf people at future sporting events.

The report also provides a breakdown of recommendations, approved by a consortium of deaf-led organisations and organisations working with deaf people. The most pertinent lesson that LOCOG has learned is the need to work closely with these organisations at the commencement of any projects in order to avoid deaf people enduring negative experiences at later stages.

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### Author

**Josef Baines MSc**

Chair of Deaf Community  
Outreach Team, LOCOG

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The accessibility review for deaf and deafblind people focuses on lessons learned both prior to and during the London 2012 Games. This report outlines highlights and successes of the London 2012 Games, as well as key challenges that future sport event organisers and suppliers can learn from.

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**‘Deaf people in the UK are still experiencing communication barriers that prevent them being able to participate fully in society’.**

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## Background

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Deaf people in the UK are still experiencing communication barriers that prevent them being able to participate fully in society. The overarching aim of this deaf-led<sup>a</sup> report is to continue to break down communication barriers for deaf people,<sup>b</sup> both in the UK and internationally. It was positive that the London 2012 Games gave deaf people opportunities to participate as Games Maker volunteers and ceremony performers as well as to attend as spectators.

Prior to, during and after the London 2012 Games, deaf people’s experiences were collated through group forums, face-to-face meetings and emails in order that this report could provide readers with first-hand insights into the challenges and highlights that deaf people encountered during the lead up to the London 2012 Games and throughout the Games themselves. All face-to-face sessions (whether group or individual) were conducted in British Sign Language (BSL). This qualitative-based report is a culmination of gathering more than 300 deaf people’s views and experiences of LOCOG events and meetings attended in the past four

years. Although much of the feedback was from respondents who are BSL users, the participants are people with a variety of different hearing levels and who thus rely on a diverse range of communication methods.

Much care has been taken to ensure that the report also supports the communication requirements of deafened, hard of hearing and pre-lingually deaf people who do not use BSL. The report also includes feedback given by some of the sign language interpreters who provided services to the London 2012 Games. The content of this report has been fully supported by a consortium of deaf-led organisations and organisations working closely with deaf people.

The report focuses on four key parts. The first covers highlights of the London 2012 Games to give readers a positive overview of deaf people’s experiences during the Games, before focusing on the specific challenges and achievements leading up to and during the Games. The second and third parts cover situations leading up to and during the Games and the final part covers recommendations based on lessons learned prior to and during the Games. The recommendations do not necessarily follow the same order as the report contents. The detailed aims of this report are:

- To share knowledge and experience of what deaf people and Games-time service providers encountered during the Games for future improvements, both nationally and internationally.
- To provide sport event organisers and clubs with ideas of how to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 (or equivalent equality legislation applied in other countries) for future events.
- To share with the rest of the world the successes of staging an accessible Games for deaf people.
- To maintain the momentum of breaking down barriers for deaf people to enable them to participate fully in future local, national and international sport events as part of the London 2012 Games legacy.
- To educate sport event organisers, Organising Committees of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (OCOGs), National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport and local sport organisations about the reasons behind making future sport events and ceremonies accessible for deaf people.
- To inspire the next generation of young deaf people to take up sport by making events more accessible.

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<sup>a</sup> For the purpose of this report, the phrase ‘deaf-led’ means deaf people leading something on behalf of other deaf people.

<sup>b</sup> For the purpose of this report, the words ‘deaf people’ and ‘deaf community’ will be used throughout to refer to Deaf (that is, culturally Deaf BSL users), deafblind, pre-lingually deaf non-BSL users, deafened and hard of hearing people in order to encompass all types of deafness more readily in the report.

‘There are an estimated 10 million deaf people and, from that total, 356,000 deafblind people in the UK’.

LOCOG worked closely with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport prior to the London 2012 Games and produced a legacy plan for deaf and disabled people<sup>1</sup>. The legacy plan aims to harness the power of the London 2012 Games to initiate real social change towards

attaining social parity by 2025 for deaf and disabled people. This report will help contribute to this social change by providing recommendations to enhance access for deaf people. The legacy plan sets out three overarching objectives:

- Influence the attitudes and perceptions of people to change the way they think about disabled people.
- Increase the participation of disabled people in sport and physical activity.
- Promote and drive improvements in business, transport and employment opportunities for disabled people.

This report will also become a reference tool for future sport event organisers in preparation for the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, 2015 Rugby World Cup in England, Rio de Janeiro 2016 Summer Olympic Games, 2017 IAAF World Athletics Championships in London, and beyond. Further major sport events in the UK can be found in Appendix 1.

The recommendations outlined in this report are not restricted to major sport events; they are also for local sport organisations, NGBs of sport, international sport organisations and deaf communities to enhance their understanding of deaf people’s access requirements prior to and during sport events.

This report will help organisations to follow the Equality Act 2010 as effectively as possible. The Equality Act 2010 is a British law that ensures organisations and individuals do not put deaf and disabled people in a position of substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people when using the same level of service<sup>2</sup>. Organisations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public are obliged to make reasonable adjustments in three key areas: i) physical features; ii) auxiliary aids; iii) service provision<sup>2</sup> in order to meet deaf and disabled people’s access requirements.

There are an estimated 10 million deaf people<sup>3</sup> and, from that total, 356,000 deafblind people<sup>4</sup> in the UK. It is also worth noting that the prevalence of deafness increases with age<sup>5</sup>. The market in connection to deaf and disabled people is large but has not yet been fully recognised by businesses<sup>5</sup> and sport organisations. Deaf and disabled people have an estimated spending power of £80 billion per year<sup>5</sup>. Businesses which have made themselves accessible to deaf and disabled people are more likely to have a rapidly expanding customer base, greater profits and have stronger competitive advantage compared to inaccessible enterprises<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, they are also more likely to retain customers and sport participants<sup>5</sup>.

Sport England, Sport Wales, Sport Scotland and Sport Northern Ireland work closely with NGBs of sport with the objective of enhancing deaf people’s participation in sport through their sports strategies. By following the recommendations of this report and implementing changes to make activities and sport events more accessible, more deaf people would be enabled to watch, volunteer and/or participate in sport.

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'...members of the deaf community felt that the Opening and Closing Ceremonies were more accessible and inclusive than expected.'

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## Highlights of the London 2012 Games

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Members of the deaf community acknowledged that there were three key highlights of the London 2012 Games which had a huge impact on them.

The first was that members of the deaf community felt that the Opening and Closing Ceremonies were more accessible and inclusive than expected, and they were pleasantly surprised to see deaf performers and other performers using sign language in the Olympic Stadium. Members of the deaf community were most impressed by seeing Her Majesty The Queen deliver her opening address with a BSL interpreter working next to her during the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony.

The second was that deaf people were able to volunteer as Games Makers and work as equals alongside their hearing peers. This served as a perfect demonstration of an integrated volunteering system. The public and members of the deaf community felt inspired by the Games Makers because of their dedication, enthusiasm and positive attitude, and the impact they had upon the success of the Games.

The third highlight of the Games was the involvement of deaf Torchbearers, which encouraged deaf people to attend Torch Relays to watch their deaf friends take part. Many said it was a 'spine-tingling moment' watching hearing and deaf Torchbearers pass on the Flame to each other, a great demonstration of everyone being a part of the event together as equals. The Torch Relay provided a huge public relations opportunity for deaf people and allowed them to raise their profile within their local communities.



Registered sign language interpreter next to Her Majesty The Queen.

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'...LOCOG's Communications and Public Affairs team decided to establish an Accessible Formats Group tasked with identifying communication issues that would affect deaf people...'

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## Situation leading up to the London 2012 Games

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### Media and communications

#### Achievements

The first achievement was the LOCOG Deaf Day in March 2011 and the media briefing day for deaf media organisations. These events gave deaf people the chance to find out how they could be involved with the Games. Furthermore, the Chair of the London 2012 Forum attended a London 2012 reception hosted by Harrow Asian Deaf Club to update the local deaf community. These events were organised specifically for deaf people to ensure they did not miss out on any relevant information.

The second achievement was that during the City Lit College Deaf Day more than 300 deaf people each year (from 2010 to 2012) approached LOCOG's stall to find out about the London 2012 Games and how they could be involved. LOCOG chair Seb Coe also visited Oak Lodge School for Deaf Children to discuss the London 2012 Games with pupils.

The third achievement was that deaf members of the LOCOG Deaf Community Outreach Team (DCOT) felt appreciated when LOCOG asked them to create sign names for Wenlock and Mandeville, the London 2012 mascots. DCOT members got together and spent hours debating suggested signs to best depict Wenlock and Mandeville. These name signs were then broadcast during a short animated film called 'Out of a Rainbow', based on Michael Morpurgo's story; a version of which was released with BSL in-vision interpretation.

With regard to BSL in-vision interpretation, LOCOG's Communications and Public Affairs team decided to establish an Accessible Formats Group tasked with identifying communication issues that would affect deaf people along with other accessibility issues. As a result of this work, BSL videos with subtitles<sup>c</sup> were initially incorporated on some sections of LOCOG's website until a webpage was created specifically for deaf people.



**LOCOG chair Seb Coe visiting Oak Lodge School for Deaf Children to launch London 2012 Speakers for Schools Week**

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<sup>c</sup> For the purpose of this report, the word 'subtitles' will be used throughout to refer to subtitles and speech-to-text transcriptions.



### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

Deaf people said that they would like to see any important publicity materials released in BSL format with subtitles so that they could understand information being sent out to the general public. Deaf people felt that most publicity materials were not in plain English and were not easy to understand.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

Deaf people who rely on BSL need to have information that is tailored to their communication requirements. By making communication materials accessible and easily digestible, deaf people would have been much more engaged and involved prior to the London 2012 Games

### **Procurement**

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### **Achievements**

The establishment of procurement specifically for organisations which deliver communication and media services to the deaf community was welcomed by deaf people.

This procurement opportunity demonstrated LOCOG's open-minded approach in making the Games inclusive and accessible and gave deaf people and deaf businesses the chance to win supplier contracts.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

Although the procurement opportunity was welcomed by members of the deaf community, deaf people felt that more could have been done to enhance the procurement process. The criteria for selecting high quality, Registered Sign Language Interpreters (RSLIs)<sup>6</sup> were not properly taken into account and the deaf community were not properly consulted in advance of the procurement process. The introduction of CompeteFor by the Greater London Authority to make procurement opportunities more accessible to businesses<sup>7</sup> still did not make it accessible for deaf people. The procurement process was deemed over-complex and unclear due to the procurement language

used during the pre-assessment stage, which generated communication barriers.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

A procurement system that is not accessible to deaf-led enterprises can preclude them from the tendering process. Awarding tenders to deaf organisations can help catalyse the breakdown of social barriers by securing services that are inclusive and accessible to the public in general. Consulting widely with the deaf community prior to the launch of contract opportunities will ensure that deaf-led businesses are given an equal opportunity to secure supplier contracts.

### **London 2012 Games planning, staff awareness and secondments**

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### **Achievements**

LOCOG staff members took part in deaf awareness training courses delivered by deaf-led organisations to help enhance their understanding of working with deaf people. A significant number of LOCOG staff members even went on sign language courses to learn basic communication with deaf people. This is a considerable achievement because once LOCOG disbands as an organisation, former staff members will be able to spread their knowledge and skills in their new roles elsewhere.

The establishment of the LOCOG DCOT was a good strategy, which helped LOCOG gain an understanding of how to account for deaf people's needs and to ensure effective buy-in following input from the deaf community.

Providing secondment and volunteering opportunities to deaf people and deaf-led organisations was a beneficial move by LOCOG because working alongside deaf volunteers and deaf staff members allowed LOCOG staff members to understand more about the impact their work would have on the deaf community. In return, deaf people were given the opportunity to develop and diversify their skills in a fast-paced and highly driven

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**‘Deaf people were impressed with how proactive, open-minded and positive LOCOG staff members were in ensuring that access was in place in their projects for deaf people.’**

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environment. The skills deaf people developed while working in LOCOG in turn benefited their own organisations by offering different perspectives to the projects they deliver.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

Members of the deaf community felt that a number of LOCOG projects did not initially budget for or take into account the needs of deaf people. A project budget or plan that did not include deaf people's access requirements at initial stages generated difficulties at later stages, which in turn made projects challenging for deaf people to access.

Deaf people were impressed with how proactive, open-minded and positive LOCOG staff members were in ensuring that access was in place in their projects for deaf people. However, deaf people felt that when they worked with each LOCOG department, there was a lack of inter-departmental interaction regarding access for deaf people. This meant that deaf people had to repeat the reasons for making projects accessible for deaf people, which was a challenge when working in a fast-paced environment.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

Planning and consulting with deaf people and deaf-led organisations at the initial stages of a project ensure that it is more inclusive to deaf people and help reduce accessibility costs at later stages. Considering and incorporating deaf people's needs in project plans help generate the right project working habits and reduce the potential for the project to encounter challenges at later stages. By working and communicating more often with other departments, deaf people's access barriers will be removed. Additionally, resources and knowledge of making projects more accessible will be shared more effectively.

### **Games Makers interviews and training**

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### **Achievements**

A significant number of deaf people applied for Games Maker volunteering roles prior to the London 2012 Games. This demonstrated the successful reach of LOCOG's publicity to the deaf community.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

Although the Games Maker roles attracted a significant number of deaf people, members of the deaf community felt that the Games Maker interview process was stressful due to issues with sign language interpreter bookings. In some cases unqualified 'sign language interpreters' who were not registered with the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) were booked to interpret the interviews and were unable to communicate effectively with deaf candidates. Furthermore, some deaf people who turned up for their interview were asked to come back on another occasion, sometimes more than twice, because a RSLI was not available at that time.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

LOCOG and members of the deaf community will always welcome and actively encourage BSL language learners. Individuals who are learning BSL can often provide valuable volunteer assistance at community events. However, these individuals will have only basic language skills and should never be engaged in situations where an NRCPD RSLI is required. An interview system that had been established in consultation with deaf people and experienced RSLIs at the early stages of the Games Maker project would have resolved the challenges deaf people encountered during the interviews.

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'60 per cent of deaf and disabled people would recommend a service to their family and friends if they perceive it to be deaf or disability-friendly.'

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### **Ticketing**

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### **Achievements**

LOCOG worked closely with Ticketmaster to ensure that the ticketing system was accessible to deaf people by incorporating Text Relay, Minicom, SMS numbers and email contact details on the Ticketmaster website and in other publications to enable deaf people to contact Ticketmaster effectively if they encountered issues with the ticketing process.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

Although significant numbers of deaf people went to watch the Games, deaf people felt that the ticketing process was complex and that there was a lack of explanation of the process in BSL. BSL videos had been produced and provided but not directly on the London 2012 website which was an issue.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

An accessible and simplified ticketing process would have allowed more deaf people to apply for tickets and greater deaf community participation in watching the Games. Further, it would help future sport event organisations to achieve their targets of having more deaf people watching the Games because deaf and disabled people are highly likely to share their experiences about customer services and application processes with their deaf and disabled peers. In addition, 60 per cent of deaf and disabled people would recommend a service to their family and friends if they perceive it to be deaf or disability-friendly.<sup>5</sup>

### **Accreditation process**

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### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

Sign language interpreter suppliers felt that the overall accreditation process was rushed and that being asked to organise interpreter bookings and supply RSLs' names to LOCOG one week before the start of the Olympic Games was unrealistic, challenging and, in some cases, impossible.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

Securing and booking RSLs is difficult because there is a shortage, which creates a high demand for RSLs. Deaf people who are not watching the Games or volunteering continue to require RSLs for their daily needs, such as medical appointments and access to their employment. A last-minute accreditation process for RSLs created challenges in organising effective interpreter bookings since interpreters need to be booked well in advance in order to secure their services. To ensure that appropriate RSLs are booked to provide optimal interpreting services at Games time, effective accreditation processes and booking arrangements need to be completed well in advance of any interpreted event.



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'Members of the deaf community believe that the key achievement of LOCOG's communication work was the dedicated BSL webpage with daily updates of the London 2012 Games delivered in BSL.'

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## Situation during the London 2012 Games

### Subtitles during sport competitions

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### Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community

Members of the deaf community felt that there was a lack of communication access at the Olympic Stadium and other venues (including the screens at the Live Sites) throughout competitions during the London 2012 Games. Most sports had a commentary prior to the start of competition, again during, and for the victory ceremonies. A deaf spectator said that she enjoyed watching the Games but benefited from having her hearing mother with her to tell her what was happening. She realised that had she been with her deaf friends then they would not have understood and would not have been able to participate in crowd activities during competition breaks. Deaf spectators generally felt that subtitles should have been provided to ensure equitable access to what was happening prior to and during competitions. Many RSLs who went to watch competitions with their deaf friends had to give up their unpaid time and interpret informally because of the lack of access provided.

Not all Live Sites throughout the UK, including the one in the Olympic Park, had subtitles during the Games. If there were subtitles, deaf people and sign language interpreters often mentioned that it was not synchronised with what was happening during events.

Lastly, not all pre-recorded videos shown before the start of competitions and other events had subtitles, and deaf people felt left out and less able to enjoy and participate fully in the events.

### Why are these challenges important to deaf people?

The majority of deaf people in the UK rely on subtitles to access theatre, cinema and similar events<sup>8,9,10</sup>. Many people also rely on subtitles to access television and video content. Research with deaf children found

that the use of subtitles is beneficial regardless of whether they use a signed or a spoken language<sup>10</sup>. Results also found that subtitles aid both deaf and hearing children because it helps improve their literacy, spelling and turn-taking in conversations, and enhances their desire to read. In addition, being able to read subtitles allows deaf children and adults a better chance of parity with their hearing peers because they receive the same or similar information<sup>10</sup> (minus vocal intonation). Lastly, there is an increase in the number of people with a hearing loss<sup>3</sup> due to an ageing population and younger people who have caused damage to their hearing by listening to loud music through in-the-ear devices. Both are more likely to rely on subtitles during live events.

Even at events with no formal speeches, subtitles are still a useful way to inform deaf people about the mood of the event, such as letting them know of pauses, silence and environmental sounds and music. Subtitles should always be synchronised closely with the audible environment to avoid putting deaf people in a position of disadvantage.

### Media and communications

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### Achievements

Members of the deaf community believe that the key achievement of LOCOG's communication work was the dedicated BSL webpage with daily updates of the London 2012 Games delivered in BSL. A variety of sport events were also summarised in BSL, which helped to enhance the accessibility of the sports news during the Games.

### Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community

Although the daily updates in BSL on the London 2012 website were highly appreciated by members of the deaf community, there were a number of areas where they felt improvements could be made. Firstly, some but not all films produced by LOCOG were subtitled during the Games. Secondly, deaf people frequently commented that the presentation

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**'Deaf volunteers and performers featured during all four ceremonies and were involved in most performances.'**

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style of the daily BSL video updates was unsatisfactory because there were no pictures or films of the events to make the sports news more vibrant and relevant. Members of the deaf community felt that embedding BSL translations throughout the London 2012 website would have been more effective rather than placing this content on one separate page.

Lastly, members of international deaf communities felt that they missed out on Games-time daily updates because the information was shown in BSL, a language not universally understood. Throughout the London 2012 Games, deaf people also commented that there was a lack of deaf sign language media presenters employed; deaf people are no different from members of other minority groups, whereby they feel much more engaged with an event if they see themselves reflected at every level.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

Presenting information in BSL and International Sign (IS) with subtitles on most aspects of the website prior to and during the Games would help avoid segregation and make deaf people feel included in Games-time communications. Incorporating BSL and IS with subtitles would help raise the profile of the deaf community and help catalyse the breakdown of negative social perceptions of deaf people within the wider community. It also encourages greater deaf community engagement and ensures that deaf people do not miss out on information at Games time. Engaging the services of deaf presenters and reporters using sign language during future Games would take the concept of inclusiveness to a new level, an approach that worked successfully during the Paralympic Games when disabled people presented and reported on events.

### **Opening and Closing Ceremonies**

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### **Achievements**

The key highlight of the London 2012 Opening and Closing Ceremonies was how open-minded the Ceremonies production team were in genuinely wanting to ensure they achieved the right communication access for deaf people. Another highlight was the Ceremonies production team's decision to appoint deaf Creative Co-Director, Jenny Sealey, for the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony, and to have Dame Evelyn Glennie, the profoundly deaf percussionist, perform at the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony. The Ceremonies team also brought in the Kaos Signing Choir, a group of deaf and hearing children who simultaneously sing and sign songs during their performance.

Deaf people were pleased to see the opening address by Her Majesty The Queen being interpreted by an experienced RSLI during the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony. This communication access was broadcast worldwide, which helped raise the profile of sign language. RSLIs provided access to the audience for the warm-up sessions prior to the ceremony and to the speeches during the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony. Sign language during the ceremonies was provided as integrated performances by deaf people, which helped take communication access for deaf people to a new level. The design of the Olympic Stadium with large video screens visible from all angles helped to enhance the viewing experience. Pre-recorded subtitles were broadcast onto these screens for some of the songs and speeches but not consistently throughout the ceremonies. Members of the deaf community felt this had, at least sometimes, been well considered during the planning stages.

Deaf volunteers and performers featured during all four ceremonies and were involved in most performances. Deaf people often remarked at how inclusive and integrated the ceremonies were and felt that it was a fantastic once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



**Deaf performer on the sway pole during the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony**

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**'Interpreters were generally not provided with any information, such as call sheets, lyrics, speeches and announcements prior to the start of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies to help them prepare fully.'**

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The success of the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony was that it sent out powerful messages about the concept of inclusion, which will hopefully help catalyse lasting social change and influence people to adopt inclusive attitudes and change their perceptions of deaf people.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

With the exception of the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony, there were many inaccessible announcements throughout the proceedings, such as who the performers were during the ceremonies. This was core information that deaf audience members could not access since neither subtitles nor BSL interpretation were provided. In addition, subtitles were not provided for songs and short speeches, which resulted in varying access for deaf audience members. At the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony the issue was compounded as the initial plan was for the Olympic Truce message and other speeches to be subtitled only in French with no BSL or English subtitles, which would have rendered it totally inaccessible to deaf people. In the end, the RSLI team persuaded the production team to subtitle the live speeches in English as well as French to make them more accessible; however, as the Olympic Truce message had been pre-recorded, it was not possible to add English subtitles at such a late stage and, for technical reasons, neither was it possible for a BSL interpreter to be projected as an in-vision service onto this film. Therefore, it was broadcast to the stadium in spoken English with French subtitles only.

During the final dress rehearsals and the ceremonies themselves, RSLIs had issues with not being able to hear what was going on either from the phonic channel aid, headphones, or through the speakers. In one of the ceremonies, the interpreters were allocated a room in the Stadium with a film camera and a small video monitor screen. This room was known to have poor audio reception and these issues greatly affected communication between the interpreters and the stage team. Interpreters had no control over how

they were framed on the Stadium video screens for the in-vision interpretation. Camera operators with little or no previous experience of in-vision interpreting will often frame the sign language interpreter too tightly, not realising that there should be space given to each side of the body and above the head to accommodate signs articulated away from the body. Lastly, there was little or no communication from the production team with regard to where interpreters would be working and the type of background colour that would be used for the BSL in-vision interpretation prior to the ceremonies.

RSLIs who were providing the in-vision interpretation for the Olympic Games Closing Ceremony were initially asked to wear a costume of light-coloured overcoat and trousers printed with a newspaper pattern, similar to some of the cast in the ceremony. Interpreters had to inform the production team prior to the ceremony that BSL in-vision interpreters generally require darker plain clothing with a light blue or green background so that there is a good level of contrast with the interpreter's skin tone in order that signs can be seen clearly. Instead, an aubergine background was used. In addition, last-minute interpreter provisions for the Olympic ceremonies were organised only for the audience warm-up acts, not for protocol speeches or throughout the ceremonies. Interpreters were generally not provided with any information, such as call sheets, lyrics, speeches and announcements prior to the start of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies to help them prepare fully. This affected the delivery of information from interpreters to the deaf audience. At the Olympic Games Closing Ceremony pre-show, interpreters had to rely on a monitor that was not synchronised with real-time information to attempt to interpret information to the deaf audience. The camera crew also kept fading down the interpreters then forgetting to fade them back up, leaving deaf audience members with intermittent access. Lastly, the in-vision image at the bottom right corner of the

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**'...subtitles are important because the majority of deaf people in the UK rely on subtitles to follow proceedings during events'**

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Stadium screens was too small, which rendered it difficult for deaf people to access.

When the deaf sign singers were on the stage for the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony, the television camera kept moving away from them thus generating communication barriers for deaf people watching the event. Lastly, the Olympic and Paralympic Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies had different production teams and there was no effective transfer of information between the production teams about providing effective access for deaf people.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

As mentioned above, subtitles are important because the majority of deaf people in the UK rely on subtitles to follow proceedings during events<sup>8, 9, 10</sup>. It is important to ensure that subtitles synchronise with event proceedings to avoid miscommunication.

The lack of communication from the production team with regard to where RSLs would be working in the Stadium and the type of background colour that would be used for the BSL in-vision interpretation affected RSLs' preparations in determining the best clothing for the event to allow effective colour contrast for deaf and deafblind people. The aubergine background used for the BSL in-vision

interpretation at the Olympic Games Closing Ceremony was not the recommended colour and contravened accepted practices expected by the interpreting profession and the deaf community. The aubergine background combined with dark clothing worn by interpreters for the BSL in-vision interpretations made it challenging for deaf people to see the sign language produced by the interpreter. This challenge was exacerbated when combined with the inadequate space given to the in-vision interpreter. The recommended guidelines for the size of in-vision images must not be less than one-sixth of the video screen<sup>11</sup> to allow effective viewing for deaf people. Lastly, the colour of clothing worn by BSL in-vision interpreters is important because it allows appropriate contrast for deaf people, thus dark, solid colour clothing (for example, no bold patterns, polka dots or stripes) for interpreters who have light skin or light solid colour clothing (for example, peach, beige or off-white colours) for interpreters with dark skin<sup>12</sup> with a light blue or green background is recommended.

As mentioned below in the 'Sign language interpreters and sign language interpreter suppliers' section, interpreters, just like performers or presenters, require time to rehearse vocabulary and linguistic structures suitable for the type of



**BSL in-vision interpretation (right hand corner) during the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony warm-up**

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**‘Smooth transfer of knowledge and resources between production teams when there are different ceremonies or events is necessary to prevent communication issues arising.’**

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event and environment in which it is taking place, in order to ensure effective interpreting. Interpreters do not simply ‘relay’ or ‘pass on’ information; interpreters use cognitive processing to interpret between two languages and also act as cultural mediators to facilitate communication between deaf and hearing communities.

Smooth transfer of knowledge and resources between production teams when there are different ceremonies or events is necessary to prevent communication issues arising. This transference of information would allow the Ceremonies production teams to use best practice, seek appropriate advice on making ceremonies accessible and avoid repeating similar mistakes.

### **National Olympic and Paralympic Committees**

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### **Achievements**

During the London 2012 Games it was encouraging to see some deaf athletes competing for their countries. Watching deaf athletes such as Laurentia Tan of Singapore, Tadhg Slattery of South Africa, Tamika Catchings of USA and Claire Harvey of Great Britain competing was inspiring and they are role models for deaf people in the UK and worldwide. These deaf athletes’ participation during the Games demonstrated that deaf athletes have the capability to perform at elite level at major events like the London 2012 Games.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

During the Games deaf athletes either had no access to sign language interpreters or had to personally pay for their own interpreters for competitions and team meetings. Tadhg Slattery, the South African deaf swimmer, met media reporters after his event and found it challenging to speak to them while on live television without a sign language interpreter present. This challenge prevented him from gaining full media exposure.

For future Games and sporting events, organisers would need to remind each country’s National Paralympic and National Olympic Committees, or similar committees, about the communication access of their own deaf athletes.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

Elite deaf athletes are rarely recognised for their performances straight after competitions due to the lack of communication access for media interviews. As part of the London 2012 legacy plan, it is imperative to ensure that future deaf athletes are recognised in the media and throughout their sport in order to inspire a younger generation of deaf athletes. Without high media exposure of deaf role models, the sport participation rate of future young deaf athletes will remain low and make it challenging for sport organisations such as NGBs to expand deaf people’s participation in sport.



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**'A key achievement identified by members of the deaf community was the establishment of a sign language interpreter budget by LOCOG.'**

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### **Games Makers**

[Click here for BSL](#)

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### **Achievements**

Throughout the London 2012 Games, deaf people were impressed with how approachable, positive and friendly the Games Makers were. In addition, their attitudes were inclusive and open towards deaf people, which made deaf people feel appreciated and at ease during the Games. The success of achieving an inclusive and positive Games-time environment was down to Games Makers' training prior to the Games. Part of this training was to learn the BSL alphabet and become aware of the challenges deaf people face. Deaf Games Makers who participated in the training thought the whole experience was positive and enjoyable. Furthermore, deaf people had RSLs with them during training and at Games time to allow them to communicate with their Games Maker peers and spectators, which made their volunteering experience worthwhile.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

The challenges deaf Games Makers felt were connected to issues already outlined in the 'Accreditation' section above. Some RSLs with accreditation passes had to obtain or wait for another accreditation pass in order to gain access to deaf Games Makers' specific work-sites. Most deaf Games Makers arrived on time for their shifts but had to wait for a significant period of time before their RSLs could join them for work after sorting out their passes. The delayed time was due to last-minute interpreter bookings and the accreditation system.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

The reasons are similar to the reasons outlined in the 'Accreditation' section above, in that it is important for future sport event organisers to organise RSL bookings with sign language interpreter suppliers well in advance of the Games. Streamlining the system would prevent deaf volunteers from waiting and missing out important information during their daily team meetings, and to prevent them from having a negative volunteering experience.

### **Sign language interpreters and sign language interpreter suppliers**

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### **Achievements**

A key achievement identified by members of the deaf community was the establishment of a sign language interpreter budget by LOCOG. This success demonstrated that the provision of RSLs was considered at an early stage prior to the Games. Deaf Games Makers and deaf performers were able to gain access to communication and were mostly able to participate in the Games.

### **Key challenges identified by LOCOG and members of the deaf community**

As mentioned earlier in the 'Accreditation' section, most RSLs were booked at short notice due to late confirmation of work from LOCOG despite supplier contracts being in place much earlier. There was no draft timetable of required interpreting provision provided, which made it challenging for sign language interpreter suppliers to plan ahead. When full provision was requested suppliers were then unable to fulfil 100 per cent of the bookings.

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**'Booking RSLs at the last minute leaves them little time to prepare, which affects their quality of interpretation during global events such as the London 2012 Games.'**

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As there were some shortages of RSLs at Games time some interpreters had to work very long hours, which contravened recommended professional guidelines<sup>13,14</sup>. In conjunction with the working hours issue, there was a lack of monitoring of sign language interpreters and working practices at Games time to protect interpreters' wellbeing.

According to the providers of the Park Live screen, budgetary considerations forced them to omit a chroma-key (blue/green) background and camera operator for in-vision interpretation, thus limiting the value of the viewing experience for deaf BSL users. The Park Live platform interpreters provided were also of limited value due to poor positioning and bad lighting caused by the spectator viewing position being on the canal bank a distance too far from the platform for effective communication. This issue was rectified for the Paralympic Games, where an in-vision interpreting service was provided on the screen, but members of the deaf community felt that this service needed to be better signposted within the Olympic Park.

### **Why are these challenges important to deaf people?**

To provide optimum service with a high degree of accuracy, RSLs rehearse and learn lines to ensure their interpretation is as effective as possible and that deaf BSL users get parity of access. Booking RSLs at the last minute leaves them little time to prepare, which affects their quality of interpretation during global events such as the London 2012 Games. Working longer than the recommended times also affects the quality of the interpretation that can be rendered by RSLs, which is detrimental to the right to equality of deaf BSL users.

## Recommendations

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Recommendations in this report have been approved by a consortium of deaf-led organisations and organisations working with deaf people who have sponsored this report. The recommendations outlined below should help sport event organisers and sport organisations ensure that any projects they deliver are as accessible and inclusive as possible for deaf people, and ensure that they are meeting their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (or other similar international equality laws).

The overarching recommendation of the following points is to work with deaf-led organisations and organisations working closely with deaf people to understand more about deaf people's access requirements. These organisations should be involved right from the beginning of any sports event planning process until the completion of events in order to prevent challenges from occurring at later stages.

### Recommendation 1: Opening and Closing Ceremonies– sign language

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- 1.1 Appropriate contrast background colours should be used for television in-vision interpretation and appropriate clothing worn by RSLs, such as dark solid colours (for example, no bold patterns, polka dots or stripes) for interpreters who have light skin, or light solid colours (for example, peach, beige or off-white colours) for interpreters with dark skin.
- 1.2 For any signed songs or any sign language performances, camera operators should focus on these without moving away.
- 1.3 In addition to recommendation 1.2, ensure that deaf performers are more prominent during the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.
- 1.4 In-vision images of sign language interpreters should not be less than one-sixth of the video screen size. Ofcom guidelines should be followed<sup>11</sup> (or equivalent guidelines in country of origin).
- 1.5 Production teams should transfer their experience and knowledge to all other production teams about access for deaf people if there is going to be more than one ceremony within a short space of time.
- 1.6 There should be good working relationships between production teams, camera crews and sign language interpreters to ensure effective sign language in-vision interpreter access.
- 1.7 Sign language interpreters should work near the film crew and stage team in an area of excellent signal reception for all performance audio feeds and to ensure effective communication regarding the in-vision images so that the requirements of the deaf audience are met.
- 1.8 Ensure that deaf performers have access to sign language interpreters on or near the stage for any communication requirements.

1.9 Ceremonies teams should work with sign language interpreters and deaf people well in advance of the events and ceremonies to resolve any interpreting access issues for deaf audiences.

1.10 Appoint an experienced 'interpreter coordinator'. S/he should be a qualified RSL (or equivalent in country of origin) who has several years of experience working in event, media and broadcast settings. They would oversee the interpreting provision at all of the ceremonies, and would select a team of appropriately eminent professionals who would then advise each production team on the requirements of the deaf audience.

1.11 Appoint an experienced 'deaf access media coordinator'. S/he should have several years of accessibility experience working in event, media and broadcast settings. They would oversee the accessibility of media and broadcast provision at all of the ceremonies and advise each production team on the requirements of the deaf audience.

### Recommendation 2: Opening and Closing Ceremonies– subtitles

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- 2.1 All events, with or without speeches, must be subtitled and care taken to subtitle any other sounds and music to allow equitable access for deaf people.
- 2.2 Subtitles should be consistent throughout any events including the pre-show.
- 2.3 Ceremonies teams should work with Speech-to-Text Reporters (STTRs), subtitlers and deaf people well in advance of events and ceremonies to resolve any subtitling access issues for deaf audiences.
- 2.4 Subtitles and BSL in-vision interpretation with experienced RSLs should be provided throughout any events and ceremonies and not just for the pre-show.

2.5 Subtitles during any events and ceremonies should be in solid block black background with white, cyan, green or yellow letters to allow contrast for deaf people. Ofcom guidelines should be followed<sup>11</sup> (or equivalent guidelines in country of origin).

2.6 Ensure that the timing of subtitles synchronises with events and ceremonies by following Ofcom's guidelines<sup>11</sup> (or equivalent guidelines in country of origin).

### **Recommendation 3:** **Subtitles during sport competitions**

[Click here for BSL](#)

[Click here for International Sign](#)

3.1 All competitions should be subtitled.

3.2 Any big screens or 'Live Sites' should have subtitles during competitions.

3.3 Ensure that 'Live Sites', stadium or venue screens are suitable for subtitles.

3.4 Ensure that there is effective synchronisation between event proceedings, sport competitions and subtitles.

3.5 Ensure that all pre-recorded films are subtitled.

3.6 Ensure that professional subtitlers and STTR have been consulted with during early planning stages.

### **Recommendation 4:** **Media and communications**

[Click here for BSL](#)

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4.1 Ensure that future publicity material content is provided in BSL to make it accessible to the deaf community.

4.2 Printed/electronic materials should be in plain language, such as plain English (or similar in country of origin), and not too wordy.

4.3 All pre-recorded films should include BSL (or similar in country of origin) in-vision interpretation and subtitles.

4.4 BSL films (or similar in country of origin) should be incorporated in

most aspects of the website and any subsequent new material uploaded should also be provided in BSL (or similar in country of origin).

4.5 Ensure that daily updates in BSL (or similar in country of origin) at Games time are shown in conjunction with other news on the website to make it more engaging for deaf people.

4.6 Ensure that International Sign translation is included on the website for international deaf communities.

4.7 Encourage future television broadcasters to employ deaf presenters who are fluent in sign language for any sport events and ceremonies.

4.8 Ensure that the communication access budget has been thoroughly considered at an early stage with regard to publicity materials prior to and during the Games.

4.9 Work closely with deaf-led media organisations to identify the best communication approach for deaf people at early planning stages prior to the release of any publicity materials.

### **Recommendation 5:** **Games Makers**

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5.1 NRCPD RSLIs (or equivalent registered interpreters in other countries), subtitlers and STTRs should be booked in advance of the Games to interpret during the volunteer interview process to meet the diverse range of deaf people's communication requirements.

5.2 Recruiters should liaise with deaf people on a regular basis prior to interviews with regard to communication access.

5.3 Recruiters should work closely with deaf people, deaf-led organisations, RSLIs, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI), National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf

and Deafblind People (NRCPD) and the Association of Verbatim Speech-to-Text Reporters (AVSTTR), or similar organisations in country of origin, to enhance the recruitment system for deaf people prior to the start of any recruitment process.

### **Recommendation 6: Games planning, staff awareness and secondments**

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6.1 Any future projects should take into account deaf people's communication requirements and ensure that any costs are covered by budgets.

6.2 Deaf people and deaf-led organisations should be consulted at early stages of the project to identify solutions to minimise future communication challenges that may affect the deaf community.

6.3 Deaf access issues must be shared with different Organising Committee departments to ensure that staff are fully aware of the impact their projects may have on deaf people.

6.4 Future Organising Committee members and staff should establish appropriate work habits and attitudes that are inclusive for deaf people.

### **Recommendation 7:**

#### **Procurement**

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7.1 Prior to the commencement of the procurement process, staff should consult widely with deaf-led businesses, subtitlers, STTRs and sign language interpreter suppliers to ensure that the criteria for selection during the process is fair.

7.2 The language used during the procurement process should be in plain language, for example, plain English (or similar in country of origin). Where possible, BSL films with subtitles (or similar in country of origin) should be included to help ensure that deaf businesses understand what is required of them.

7.3 If sign language interpreter suppliers are going to be contracted prior to and during the Games, procurement staff should consult with the NRCPD and ASLI (or similar organisations in country of origin) to ensure that the correct selection criteria and interview structure is in place for the procurement process.

7.4 Any future project plans should thoroughly take into account the required scale of sign language interpreter, subtitler and STTR provision prior to and during the Games.

7.5 Procurement staff should ensure that the pre-assessment stage does not generate communication barriers for deaf businesses and organisations working with deaf people, by making information available in BSL (or similar in country of origin).

### **Recommendation 8:**

#### **Ticketing**

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8.1 During the ticket application or ticket purchase process for events of a similar scale to the London 2012 Games, consideration should be given to simplify the process for deaf people.

8.2 Members of staff responsible for the ticket process should work closely with deaf-led and deafblind organisations to ensure that the process is accessible for deaf people.

8.3 Ticketing information should be made available in BSL (or similar in country of origin) right at the beginning to enable deaf people to understand the process.

8.4 Alternative ticket purchase arrangements should be made available for deafblind people should they request it.

### **Recommendation 9:**

#### **Accreditation process**

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9.1 Future sport event organisers should take into account the difficulty in booking sign language interpreters, STTRs and subtitlers at the last minute.



- 9.2 Future sport event organisers should ensure that sign language interpreters, subtitlers and STTRs are booked by providing a draft timetable of the required communication provision to sign language interpreter, STTR and subtitle suppliers well in advance of the Games.
- 9.3 During the accreditation process sport event staff should ensure that there will be no issues with regard to sign language interpreters gaining accreditation passes and that they are given greater flexibility to work in most areas of the sports event.
- 11.2 An appropriate monitoring system for sign language interpreters, subtitlers and STTRs should be established to ensure their quality and welfare and prevent them from working unsuitably long hours. Future sport event organisers should consult with sign language interpreter suppliers, subtitlers, ASLI and AVSTTR (or similar organisations in country of origin) beforehand.
- 11.3 Prior to ceremonies or similar events any sign language interpreting or subtitling are to be provided with meeting or event information, lyrics or speeches in order to help subtitlers, STTRs and interpreters fully prepare for their deaf clients or deaf audience<sup>12,15</sup>.
- 11.4 Future sport event organisers should consider creating a pool of roaming sign language interpreters to respond to any ad hoc situations that require sign language communication.
- 11.5 Organisers must ensure that all interpreters working during sport events and ceremonies are registered with the NRCPD<sup>6</sup> or equivalent registration bodies that exist in the country where the event is taking place.

### **Recommendation 10:** **National Olympic and Paralympic Committees, or similar committees**

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- 10.1 Future sport event organisers should remind visiting National Olympic and Paralympic Committees (or similar committees) of their deaf athletes' communication requirements during media interviews and competition events.
- 10.2 Future sport event organisers should consider being flexible in providing or covering costs of sign language interpreters should there be no sign language interpreters provided for deaf athletes by their respective National Olympic and Paralympic Committees (or similar committees).

### **Recommendation 11:** **Sign language interpreters, sign language interpreter, subtitle and STTR suppliers**

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- 11.1 Draft or fully complete a timetable of communication provision required that can be given to sign language interpreter, STTR and subtitle suppliers three months in advance of the Games.

## Organisation profiles

The following organisations have supported this report. In alphabetical order, these organisations are:



**Action Deafness**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

We offer a diverse range of services to Deaf, hard of hearing, deafened, deafblind and hearing people throughout the UK. Our organisation aims to improve quality of life by promoting independence and equality of opportunity for deaf, deafened, deafblind and Hard of Hearing (D/deaf) people.

We aim to do this by:

- Promoting effective communication and improving access to services
- Increasing the status and participation of D/deaf people from diverse backgrounds
- Providing specialist support, learning and community services

The organisation is based in Leicester but we provide services across the UK including Community Support Services, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Services, Advocacy, Interpreting Services and much more.

[www.actiondeafness.org.uk](http://www.actiondeafness.org.uk)



**Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI)**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

ASLI is the professional association and support network for British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Membership includes those who work as interpreters and Deaf and hearing people who support our aims.

The aims of the Association are to encourage good practice in sign language interpreting and to represent the interests and views of BSL interpreters and the interpreting

profession in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

[www.asli.org.uk](http://www.asli.org.uk)



**British Deaf Association**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

The mission of the British Deaf Association (BDA) is to ensure a world in which the language, culture, community, diversity and heritage of Deaf people in the UK is respected and fully protected, ensuring that Deaf people can participate and contribute as equal and valued citizens in wider society. This will be achieved through:

- Improving the quality of life by empowering Deaf individuals and groups
- Enhancing freedom, equality and diversity
- Protecting and promoting BSL

[www.bda.org.uk](http://www.bda.org.uk)



**Communication ID**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

We are an interpreting and training service based in north London. Established in January 2005, the Directorship team now consists of Ian Hodgetts, Andrew Green and Colette Hogan.

We have a strong community ethos and believe in supporting the Deaf community and the BSL interpreters that work with them. As a result of this, we established CommunityID in 2009 to provide activities and services beneficial to the Deaf and Interpreting communities on a non-profit basis.

We have successfully been funded by the Big Lottery Fund to run a five-year 'Community Cohesion' project.

[www.communicationid.co.uk](http://www.communicationid.co.uk)



### Deaf Parenting UK

[Click here for BSL](#)

Deaf Parenting UK is the first ever charity and small unique national organisation run by Deaf parents for Deaf parents, representing the needs of Deaf parents in the UK, of whom 90 per cent of them are likely to have hearing children.

The focus of Deaf Parenting UK's work is to:

- Empower and support Deaf Parents and enable them to be confident
- Highlight and address gaps in services in the UK
- Work with various organisations within health, social services, Deaf and mainstream parenting organisations to improve access to information and services for Deaf Parents

[www.deafparent.org.uk](http://www.deafparent.org.uk)



### deafPLUS

[Click here for BSL](#)

deafPLUS has delivered information and advice to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for over 40 years through centres in Bath, Birmingham, London, Hampshire, Somerset and Surrey.

In 2011-2012 the charity assisted deaf, hard of hearing and visually impaired service users with over 17,000 matters from general information to assistance with tribunals, through advocacy, employment services and specialist

projects such as Inspiration 32 for the 2012 Games.

Over 70 per cent of deafPLUS staff are sign language users or hard of hearing themselves which enables us to empathise with our user groups. Our deaf staff are therefore excellent role models for service users.

[www.deafplus.org](http://www.deafplus.org)

## Inclusion London

Promoting Equality For London's Deaf and Disabled People

### Inclusion London

[Click here for BSL](#)

Inclusion London is a pan-London disability equality organisation.

We provide policy, campaigning and capacity-building support for Deaf and disabled people's organisations (DDPOs) in London. Inclusion London promotes equality for London's Deaf and disabled people. Our work is rooted in the Social Model of Disability and the Cultural Model of Deafness.

Our approach to work is informed by the knowledge that together Deaf and disabled people are stronger. We are determined to ensure that our voices, raised in unison, will be heard. We acknowledge the hard and varied work of the broad range of Deaf and disabled people's organisations today and the rich and proud history of the movement that has gone before.

[www.inclusionlondon.co.uk](http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk)



### International Committee of Sport for the Deaf (ICSD)

[Click here for BSL](#)

The overall mission of the ICSD is to cherish and value the spirit of Deaflympics, where Deaf athletes strive to reach the pinnacle of competition by embracing the motto of 'Per ludos aequalitas' ('Equality through sports'), and adhering to the ideals of the Olympic Games.

The objectives of the ICSD are:

- To supervise the organisation of successful Summer and Winter Deaflympics
- To contribute to and promote the development of sport opportunities and competitions, from grass-roots to elite level, for Deaf athletes
- To support and encourage educational, cultural and scientific research activities that contribute to the development and promotion of the Deaflympics
- To fully enforce a drug-free sport environment for all Deaf athletes in conjunction with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)
- To promote the rights of Deaf athletes to take part in sport without discrimination on the basis of political, religious, economic, disability, gender or race reasons

[www.deaflympics.com](http://www.deaflympics.com)



### National Deaf Children's Society

[Click here for BSL](#)

The National Deaf Children's Society is here to create a world without barriers for the 45,000 deaf children and young people in the UK. We also support the many children who experience temporary deafness, due to conditions such as glue ear. Deaf children can do anything other children can do if they get the right support from the start – at home, in school and in their wider community.

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)



### National Registers of Communication Professionals Working With Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD)

[Click here for BSL](#)

NRCPD is the UK regulator of communication professionals who work with deaf and deafblind people. Our job is to safeguard the wellbeing and interests of people who rely on those professionals. We do that by checking that every communication professional is properly trained to do their job safely and consistently. We set standards of professional practice and make sure only professionals who meet those standards can carry an NRCPD photo ID card. We promote the importance of registration and make sure it is seen to add value to the vision of a society in which deaf people can be full and active citizens. We want deaf and deafblind individuals and the general

public to be able to locate a communication professional that best suits their needs at any time. To allow this to happen we publish free to use online registers which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[www.nrcpd.org.uk](http://www.nrcpd.org.uk)



**Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD)**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

RAD works mainly with Deaf people: those who have been Deaf since birth or before acquiring language, and for whom British Sign Language (BSL) is their preferred or only language. Our services include:

- Advocacy: including our specialist London BMER advocacy team
- Children, Youth and Families services
- Communication services: BSL interpreters, Deaf interpreters, Deafblind communication support, Lipspeakers, Speech-to-text reporters
- Deaf Culture and Community: support of Deaf Clubs and Deaf culture
- Deaf Law Centre: legal and money advice in BSL, face-to-face and via webcam
- Employment: improving employability, and access to employment
- Information, Advice and Guidance: on benefits, debt, housing, etc
- Social Care: for Deaf people with additional needs, and their carers

[www.royaldeaf.org.uk](http://www.royaldeaf.org.uk)



**Remark!**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

Remark! are the largest Deaf-run company in the UK specialising in all aspects of television/video production, British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting, training and translation – including subtitling, in-vision and audio description, and multimedia development.

We really are a diverse and busy bunch. We boast a broad variety of skills – combining innovative ideas and technology – striving to give the very best service, at affordable prices.

Through our services we continuously aim to support and enhance the lives of Deaf, hard of hearing and blind individuals. To help us achieve our goal we re-invest profits into our charity, Remark! Community. The charity was created to offer support via a broad range of events and initiatives, and the sponsorship of individuals and clubs.

[www.remark.uk.com](http://www.remark.uk.com)



**Sense**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

Sense is a national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind. We provide tailored support, advice and information as well as specialist services to all deafblind people, their families, carers and the professionals who work with them. We also support people who have a single-sensory impairment with additional needs.

[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)





**Signature**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

Signature is a registered charity that promotes excellence in communication with deaf and deafblind people. Formally established as the Council for Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACPD) in 1982, our vision is one of a society in which deaf people have full access. Our primary work is as a recognised awarding body offering nationally accredited qualifications that cover the whole range of languages and communication methods used by deaf and deafblind people. We have developed qualifications and achieved some major public policy shifts leading to better service access for deaf and deafblind people.

[www.signature.org.uk](http://www.signature.org.uk)



**Sport England**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

Sport England is focused on helping people and communities across the country to create a sporting habit for life.

We will invest over £1 billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding between 2012 and 2017 in organisations and projects that will:

- Help more people have a sporting habit for life
- Create more opportunities for young people to play sport
- Nurture and develop talent
- Provide the right facilities in the right places
- Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- Ensure real opportunities for communities

We are accountable to Parliament through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)



**sportscotland**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

sportscotland is the national agency for sport. We are the lead agency for the development of sport in Scotland.

We passionately believe in the power of sport and the unique contribution it makes to Scotland's economy, health and identity. We invest our expertise, our time and public funding in developing a world-class sporting system at all levels.

We work with partners to develop this sporting system, investing in and joining up the people, places, partnerships and planning that make sport happen.

Ultimately, we see a Scotland where sport is a way of life. In everything we do we act in the best interests of Scottish sport – putting sport first.

[www.sportscotland.org.uk](http://www.sportscotland.org.uk)



**Sport Wales**  
[Click here for BSL](#)

From grassroots sport to the Millennium Stadium, at Sport Wales we want to unite a proud sporting nation. As the national organisation responsible for increasing participation and improving elite sport in Wales, we have a clear vision for sport in Wales. We work with our partners to achieve our shared aspirations of getting every child hooked on sport for life and Wales being a nation of champions. We want to develop sustainable sporting communities where the participant is at the heart.

We are a Welsh Government Sponsored Public Body and have responsibility for distributing funds from the National Lottery.

[www.sportwales.org.uk](http://www.sportwales.org.uk)



### STAGETEXT

[Click here for BSL](#)

STAGETEXT delivers and promotes the use of captioning and speech-to-text transcription for arts and cultural events like theatre performances and talks in museums and galleries. The service gives access to the events for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people by giving them a way of viewing the text of what's being said or sung.

[www.stagetext.org](http://www.stagetext.org)



### Total Communication

[Click here for BSL](#)

Total Communication are a team of over 20 permanent staff with unrivalled experience, knowledge and commitment. We provide exemplary training courses in Deaf, Disability and Diversity Awareness. Our interpreting team provide an outstanding service to our local deaf community, both in the workplace and in education. We are proud to include a team of Deafblind communicator guides in our service.

[www.totalcommteam.com](http://www.totalcommteam.com)



### UK Deaf Sport

[Click here for BSL](#)

UK Deaf Sport (UKDS) aims to encourage Deaf people to participate, to enjoy and to excel at sport.

UK Deaf Sport was established in June 2003 and has been a member of the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) since March 2006. Further, UKDS was granted membership of the European Deaf Sports Organisation (EDSO) in May 2006.

UKDS is currently fully engaged with Sport England's Inclusive Sport programme and is committed to working with National Governing Bodies to establish pathways for Deaf people to take part in sport.

[www.ukdeafsport.org.uk](http://www.ukdeafsport.org.uk)

## Glossary

[Click here for BSL](#)

**British Sign Language (BSL)** is the language of the British Deaf community. There are many different sign languages in the world, unrelated to the spoken languages of the surrounding hearing communities. BSL was recognised by the British Government in 2003 as a language in its own right. Readers interested in understanding more about BSL should read Rachel Sutton-Spence's article at [www.bbc.co.uk/voices/multilingual/bsl\\_today.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/multilingual/bsl_today.shtml)

**CompeteFor** is a free service often used by private and public sector buying organisations to look for the best service available. They provide contractual opportunities for business and organisations to compete against one another to win contracts and provide services.

The term '**deaf**' is a general term used to encompass all levels of hearing loss.

The term '**Deaf**' with a capital 'D' refers to those who consider themselves members of a linguistic and cultural minority, who use sign language, experience life from a Deaf perspective, seek out other Deaf people with whom to spend their time and do not consider themselves to be inherently disabled.

The term '**deafened**' is used to describe a person who has become profoundly deaf in adulthood. Wearing hearing aids does not always benefit a deafened person, who may be reliant on lipreading for communication. Deafened people may associate more with the hearing community than the Deaf community.

The term '**deafblind**' is used to describe someone who has a combination of hearing and sight loss. Deafblindness can affect people of all ages.

**Games Makers** were the 70,000 selected individuals who gave up their time to volunteer during the London 2012 Games. They filled various volunteering roles, including providing customer service assistance, coordinating the media at competition venues and ensuring that the sand was of the right texture and height for the Beach Volleyball competition.

The term '**hard of hearing**' is used to describe someone who has some form of partial hearing loss. Most people with age-related hearing loss are hard of hearing. The majority of hard of hearing people rely on hearing aids and lipreading and communicate using speech, but each person has their own communication preferences.

**In-vision** signing is a service that involves a sign language interpreter superimposed onto a film or television screen to render it accessible for sign language users. The in-vision image normally appears at the bottom-right corner.

**International Sign (IS)** is a form of communication used when Deaf people who know different sign languages meet.

**Live Sites** were sites throughout the UK that consisted of big screens used to broadcast sporting action, pre-recorded films and ceremonies from the London 2012 Games, together with space for cultural activities.

**London 2012 Games** is the term used to describe both the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games held in London during 2012.

**Prelingually deaf** means being born deaf or losing hearing before acquiring language.

**Registered Sign Language Interpreter (RSLI)** is an interpreter registered with the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPPD). S/he is highly skilled in BSL or another sign language and a second language which can be English or a different sign language. RSLIs are required to attain interpreting qualifications and criteria to demonstrate they have achieved National Occupational Standards in Interpreting (CILT). RSLIs are signed up to a professional code of conduct.

**Speech-to-Text Reporters (STTRs)** are professionals who supply live subtitles (unlike subtitlers who have to prepare subtitles in advance) during live events such as conferences, meetings and major events. STTRs use a special keyboard to type sounds phonetically; special software converts this to English text in order to enable deaf people to read it.

**Subtitles** (captions) are texts in films and television that provide a written version of speech (and sometimes environmental sounds), synchronised as closely as possible to make the environment or event accessible to deaf people.

**Subtitlers** are people responsible for preparing subtitles in advance of an event or films to ensure that subtitles are delivered at the same time. The prepared subtitles include both speech and environmental sounds in order to ensure that deaf people enjoy the same experience as everyone else.

**Textphone** (also called a Minicom) allows deaf people to have a real conversation with other Textphone users via the telephone line, or with a hearing person via a Text Relay service. This equipment includes a keyboard and screen, and is plugged into the phone socket.

**Text Relay** is a British telephone service that allows deaf and hearing people to communicate with each other via telephone (Textphone). A Text Relay operator reads the text sent by the deaf users of the Textphone to the hearing conversational participant, and types what the hearing participant says so that the deaf participant can read it on the Textphone.

## Appendix 1: Major sports events in the UK

Sport event	Year
Rugby League World Cup	2013
BMX Supercross World Series	2013
European Athletics Team Championships	2013
World Youth Netball Championships	2013
World Triathlon Championship Series Final	2013
Rowing World Cup Series	2013
Men's World Open Squash Championships	2013
ICC Champions Trophy (Cricket)	2013
Commonwealth Games	2014
Ryder Cup (Golf)	2014
Rugby Football World Cup	2015
World Rowing Series (Option)	2015
World Canoe Slalom Championships	2015
European Eventing Championships	2015
World Fencing Championships	2015
World Artistic Gymnastics Championships	2015
European Hockey Championships	2015
IPC Swimming European Championships (50m)	2015
World Athletics Championships	2017
Cricket World Cup	2019

There will be further bidding opportunities to host a number of European and international sport events such as the European Swimming Championships (2016), the UCI Track Cycling World Championships (2016) and the IOC Youth Olympic Games (2018) in the UK.

This report can be used to help other international sport event organisations ensure that deaf people have access to any of their events.



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### Peer reviewers

- Professor Bencie Woll, Deafness Cognition and Language Research Centre, University College London
- Liana Lloyd RSLI, Member of ASLI
- Desmond Masterson BA (Hons), RAD
- Jennifer Smith RSLI, Member of ASLI
- Karen Newby RSLI, Member of ASLI
- Dr Paddy Ladd, Centre for Deaf Studies, University of Bristol

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