UNCRPD

Access to Communications

1). Have things got better or worse?

General consensus is worse.

There were no BSL interpreters at government COVID pandemic briefings.

There were no BSL or closed captions at COP26.

Organisations send PDF documents to BSL users but these are not always accessible for screen readers.

On the plus side, there is now greater awareness amongst the public of the accessibility needs for Deaf and disabled people.

BSL and closed captions are also useful for other users, not just Deaf people.

But political decision makers don’t want to understand. The UK seems to be even worse than many other countries regarding Deaf access. Deaf and disabled people are struggling to access technology, including online technology.

The BSL Act is weak. Organisations break it all the time.

Organisations such as the BBC should engage as a supposedly public body funded by Deaf and disabled people.

Government doesn’t understand equality and diversity. Pay lip service.

Organisations should give opportunities to Deaf and disabled people themselves and let make us make the decisions regarding access and communications, to build confidence in these organisations.

2). Have recommendations from the last report been listened to?

No.

DWP communications are confusing and anxiety forming. Wording is confusing and causes acute stress on top of our dealing with all the rest of the punitive, degrading ‘benefits’ process. Putting letters in white envelopes instead of brown envelopes to avoid ‘brown envelope syndrome’ is insulting. No Easy Read options. No provision for dyslexia, for example. DWP need to listen to and hear our needs, show respect! Are people even listening?

COVID messaging has been confusing and anxiety forming.

BAME and ethnic minority people are at higher risk of inaccessibility to communications. Where is their support? A large amount of tech anxiety.

None of the recommendations have been actioned.

Deaf and disabled people need to have the chance to tell our stories, they’re powerful and bring the situation to life.

We are deemed to be ‘not important,' not a priority. All this adds to general ignorance about our situation. So why are we paying taxes?

The extra work of debating and protesting is tiring.

With regard to wider communications, there is now some support re: ‘Access to Work’ but only for PAID work. Deaf and disabled people should be given the same support to participate in public life that is not attached to the caveat of paid work.

Society makes assumptions about us without reference to us.

‘Do not resuscitate’ (DNR) notices outrage. Placed on us by doctors in the pandemic without any discussion.

3.) New Issues

Digital and tech exclusion has worsened, particularly since the start of the pandemic. We very often don’t have access to good online devices, broadband. There is no backwards compatibility for access needs.

We need to train more BSL interpreters.

Need more interpreters for people with English as a second or other language.

Screen to text is not acceptable.