**Call for evidence**

We would like to provide evidence to this consultation that bears relation to three specific Articles under the UNCRPD, which we set out briefly below:

## Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community

***c) Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.***

There are many ways in which deaf people are prevented from living independently and being included in the community, especially with regards to community services and facilities.

For instance, our research has shown that access to local information and advice services in British Sign Language (BSL) is generally very poor, with most English local authorities only offering a medium level of provision.[[1]](#footnote-1) This would indicate that local government is failing to provide services to deaf people on an equal basis and, by this measure, failing to comply with Article 19c as outlined above.

Several other studies have also evidenced how deaf people are unable to access healthcare services on an equitable basis to hearing people, for instance as the result of primary and secondary healthcare services failing to provide BSL interpreters for deaf patients.[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

***a) Providing information intended for the general public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional cost;***

***b) Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions;***

***e) Recognizing and promoting the use of sign languages.***

Deaf people continue to face significant barriers when it comes to accessing information in an equitable way to hearing people. This has been particularly brought to light during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the UK Government was found to have breached the Equality Act 2010 for failing to provide BSL interpreters for two data briefings.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Judicial Review also noted that, by failing to provide on-platform BSL interpreters, the Government had missed an opportunity to raise awareness and visibility of BSL – which would suggest a failure to adhere to Article 21e above, and the recognition and promotion of sign languages. This is just one example of many where deaf people have been denied access to critical information.

## Article 27 – Work and employment

***a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;***

***e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;***

Deaf people continue to face significant barriers when it comes to accessing skills and employment. Several factors hinder deaf people’s ability to access employment, such as a lack of deaf awareness amongst employers, communication issues and barriers to voluntary work.

According to our research, around 6 in 10 deaf people say they have not been given progression opportunities during their career.[[4]](#footnote-4) This would indicate that many employers are discriminating against deaf people under Article 27e, particularly with regards to promoting career advancement for persons with disabilities. Our same research also reveals how employers are failing to support the recruitment of deaf people (Article 27a) by, for instance, not having a system in place that allows a deaf person to call up an employer to discuss the details of a job (which would help them to tailor their CV and application), or failing to provide an appropriate interpreter for an interview.

1. *Access Denied? Deaf people and advice services in England* (RAD, 2021):<https://www.royaldeaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Access-Denied-Report-FINAL.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Sick of It* (SignHealth, 2014): <https://signhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/THE-HEALTH-OF-DEAF-PEOPLE-IN-THE-UK-.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Briefing Note on the Judgment in the Judicial Review Rowley v The Cabinet Office (Fry Law, July 2021): <https://www.royaldeaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Rowley-Briefing-Note-of-Judgment-28.07.21.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Deaf Advance: Deaf people, employment and career progression* (RAD, 2021): <https://www.royaldeaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/DeafAdvance-Report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)