

# Healthwatch Rochdale Report

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## Listening to d/Deaf Rochdale Residents Voices Phase 1

### About Us

Healthwatch Rochdale listens to local people about their health and care. We share these views to help make services better.

### Introduction

We heard from many d/Deaf people in Rochdale about problems using health services. The biggest issue was that interpreters were not always provided. This meant people missed or cancelled appointments.

### Main Problems

People told us about many problems:

- No BSL interpreters at GP, dentist, or hospital 🗣️
- Hard to understand letters or phone calls 📞
- Parking problems at hospitals 🚗
- Appointment times not flexible ⌚
- Problems in urgent care, maternity, and A&E 🏥
- Dental and pharmacy problems 🦷💊

### What People Said

*"I was late to my appointment because I couldn't find parking. I was refused treatment."*

*"I did not have an interpreter at hospital. I had to write notes with the doctor."*

*"I feel like a second-class citizen when my needs are not in my records."*





### **GP Appointments**

Some GPs book BSL interpreters and understand d/Deaf patients' needs. But many do not. Reception staff need more training.



### **Hospitals and Urgent Care**

Many people said BSL interpreters were not available in local hospitals or urgent care. This caused fear, stress, and poor care.



### **Dentists**

Many d/Deaf people cannot see a dentist due to lack of BSL interpreters being provided. Some residents have waited years. Parents are worried for their children's teeth.



### **Pharmacies**

People often do not get the right medicine. Staff ask them to phone the GP, which is not possible for many d/Deaf people.

### **What Needs to Change**

- Book BSL interpreters for all d/deaf patient appointments 🗣️
- Use text and email services for booking 📧
- Have clear face masks for lip reading 🗣️
- Show d/Deaf patients names on screens in waiting rooms 📺
- Record communication needs in d/Deaf patient records 📝

## NHS Responses to Deaf Residents' Recommendations



### GP Practices

- GPs will be reminded how to book BSL interpreters.
- Patient records will show when a person is d/Deaf and support needed.
- Text and online booking options will be made easier to use.
- GPs will keep clear face masks for lip reading when needed.
- Screens in waiting rooms should be used to alert patients.



### Dentists

- Dentists will also be reminded how to book BSL interpreters.
- Patient notes will clearly show if a person is d/Deaf.
- Dentists will be asked to offer text options for appointments.
- Clear masks should be available to staff for d/Deaf patients.
- Where there are no digital boards, staff must collect patients from the waiting area.



### Hospitals and Urgent Care

- Hospitals are testing TV screens in waiting rooms to call patients by name.
- Patient notes will include communication needs.
- A 'Communication Passport' will be used, so d/Deaf people don't need to repeat themselves.
- Patients can email for Northern Care Alliance support: [AIS@nca.nhs.uk](mailto:AIS@nca.nhs.uk) and [dDeafappointments@nca.nhs.uk](mailto:dDeafappointments@nca.nhs.uk)
- Patients will be told if an interpreter has been booked.
- Clear face masks are available for staff.
- Staff will have more d/Deaf awareness training.



## Conclusion

Deaf people in Rochdale face many barriers to care. Things must change so everyone gets fair treatment.

### ☑ In Short

- ✓ GPs, dentists, and hospitals all agreed to:
- ✓ Make booking interpreters easier 🗣️
- ✓ Record communication needs clearly 📝
- ✓ Use screens or collect patients in person 💻
- ✓ Offer text/email options for booking 📱
- ✓ Provide clear masks for lip reading 😬
- ✓ Give staff Deaf awareness training 🧠

