



DEAF VOICES

Campaigning for Clear Face Masks

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@DeafVoices2020

Deaf Voices are a group of 5 deaf professionals campaigning to make transparent face masks widely available in the UK.

We are concerned about the isolating impact that face masks impose on society, and the communication barriers they throw up by preventing lip-reading, muffling speech and masking facial expressions.

In collaboration with NHS England, deaf organisations and government bodies across the UK, we aim to raise awareness for the necessity of transparent masks, to ensure their availability in medical and community settings, and promote deaf awareness.

We want to ensure that deaf people's voices and experiences are shared in these discussions.

if my mum is wearing a face mask I cannot see her facial expression or lip pattern this would make me feel nervous and worried because I don't like them and I will not be able to talk to my mum



I don't know if someone is speaking to me, let alone what is being said.

It's so important. My 10-year old hearing daughter burst into tears in A&E this morning when she encountered the assessment nurse wearing full PPE. She was so scared.

6:51 PM · May 26, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

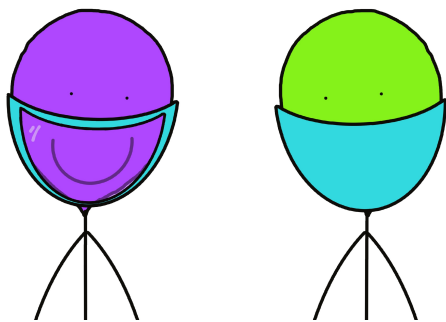


My anxiety about leaving home and risks of coronavirus infection is exacerbated by the extra effort needed for communication. Clear masks would make so much difference to me.

The pharmacist wore a mask behind a screen. I'm deaf so couldn't understand him. He spoke to my daughter, who was poorly, instead of me. She is only ten.

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Transparent masks make a difference



I am receiving cancer treatment once a week. Until the pandemic, I was quite relaxed about this and able, by lipreading with some hearing, to understand all that the staff said to me. Now that they all, quite rightly, wear masks,

I struggle to understand them.

I have never allowed my hearing loss to interfere with my hobbies and interests until now.

I find that retail and social interaction is becoming increasingly harrowing and I have had to admit that I now, for the first time, I feel disabled.

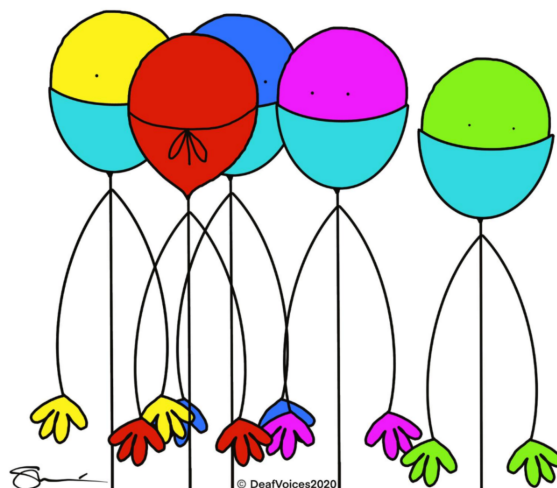
I am a communicator guide supporting Deafblind people. We can access PPE from our local authority, but I need something **accessible**, if not my job is pointless.

My line manager is supportive but says there is little he can do. I just can't find anyone selling [clear masks].

I was on a ward with several elderly people in their 80's and 90's, who are hard of hearing. I witnessed them struggling to understand very important questions they were being asked, by health care professionals wearing opaque masks. The answers to these questions could have **life threatening consequences**, when not understood and answered

Not seeing facial expressions is like a hearing person trying to understand speech with all the vowels removed...

Exclusion



Will we lose our jobs because we can't understand what others are saying?

I had seriously underestimated how much I rely on lip reading until that ability was taken away from me. As a result, **I am no longer able to work** directly on the wards to support my colleagues and work with patients.