

APPG Deafness, Meeting, 07 September 2022, 10:00

Meeting held online – details circulated in advance

In attendance:

- Lilian Greenwood MP (Chair)
- Lord Bruce
- Rosie Cooper MP
- Maria Rimmer MP
- David Buxton, BDA
- Rob Geaney, RNID (Secretariat)
- Abigail Gorman, SignHealth
- Rebecca Mansell, BDA
- Franki Oliver, RNID
- James Watson-O'Neil

1. Update on the implementation of the BSL Act

Rebecca Mansell from the BDA provided the Group with an update on the progress made since the passing of the BSL Act in May. She highlighted that the Government has launched the recruitment to the non-statutory BSL Advisory which was announced alongside the BSL Act. At the moment there are no concerns or doubts about the Government's commitment to implement the Act in full – and therefore there were no direct calls to the APPG at this point.

However it was agreed that it was useful for the APPG to continue receiving updates on the progress of the Act and that the Group was prepared to intervene if the progress towards implements stalls.

2. Access to NHS Wax Removal Services

Franki Oliver from RNID informed the group of the increasing concerns about the difficulties that patients across England are having accessing NHS wax removal services. An increasing number of people are being denied a service in primary care and instead told to pay for the service privately. Additionally, many people are attempting to self-treat excess ear wax and recent research from RNID has shown that a number of people are using dangerous methods which could cause lasting damage.

The meeting agreed that Lilian would write to the relevant health minister (TBC at the time of the meeting) to raise concerns and ask for a meeting to discuss.

3. NHS England Review of the Accessible Information Standard

Abigail Gorman from SignHealth gave a presentation of the implementation and review of the Accessible Information Standard. She presented evidence to show that the NHS was still regularly failing to meet the needs of Deaf patients, with a particular focus on the failure to provide interpreters to BSL users.

There was a lengthy discussion afterwards which considered some of the failings at both a national level and examples from the constituencies of those present.

Abigail highlighted that SignHealth and other disability charities were involved in some ongoing policy work with NHS England on the Standard, and it was agreed that SignHealth would provide the APPG with updates and advice on the support it could provide.

4. AOB

No items were raised in this part of the meeting.