



● SignHealth Advocacy Service can also:

- Visit your organisation or clients to talk about the SignHealth service and what we can offer.
- Provide training for volunteers who wish to become Advocates.
- Provide training for Deaf people who have experienced mental health problems and who wish to become Advocates themselves.

All SignHealth Advocacy Workers are BSL users



A right to be heard

Advocacy Service

● Contact:

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Charity no 1011056



A right to be heard

The SignHealth Advocacy Service provides one to one support for Deaf people, empowering them to take greater control of their lives.



SignHealth is the national healthcare charity for Deaf people. Our concern is for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of this minority group. We provide a range of services such as Advocacy to address the shortfall in support provision for Deaf people in the UK.

SignHealth Advocacy

- Our specialist British Sign Language (BSL) advocacy services were established in 2003 with grants from the Big Lottery Fund. Since that time we have trained a team of people in generic advocacy and as IMHAs (Independent Mental Health Advocate). The majority of our advocacy team are Deaf.

What we can achieve with SignHealth Advocacy

- Equality of access for Deaf people in their encounters with the criminal justice system and other official proceedings.
- Improved social justice for Deaf people. We empower the people we work with to understand difficult situations and the choices they may have.
- Increased awareness of the rights and needs of Deaf people in relation to the Disability and Discrimination Act.
- The provision of Deaf IMHAs to support a Deaf person sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

● SignHealth Advocacy... ...how are we different?

We provide one to one BSL support for Deaf people. In most cases this is support for a Deaf person by a Deaf person.

● Why is this important?

- It is no longer acceptable to simply provide an interpreter with a non-signing advocate. Direct communication is vital to ensure the Deaf person fully understands the proceedings and the facts arising.
- It helps address DDA requirements by providing a one to one conversation in the client's own language.
- Communication problems can be eliminated. SignHealth Advocates break down language barriers and are fully aware of cultural differences.

● Also.....

- All SignHealth Advocates have a solid knowledge of criminal justice, social services and health service procedures.
- SignHealth not only provides general training for Advocates but also IMHA.
- SignHealth Advocates are based throughout England and Wales enabling us to provide a full service in these countries.

● SignHealth Advocacy is a confidential service and accepts referrals from:

- Individuals
- Families
- Health Services
- Social Services
- Voluntary organisations

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