



SignHealth  
The Healthcare Charity for Deaf People

Embargoed: 00:01 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2009

## LOTTERY GRANT FOR RESEARCH INTO DEAF HEALTH

There has never been an extensive survey carried out into the health of deaf people. But this is about to change following an award of £492,652 by the Big Lottery Fund to SignHealth, the healthcare charity for deaf people who will lead the project on behalf of a group of over 60 deaf organisations.

The award comes from the Big Lottery Fund's Research programme and will fund a UK comparative study into the health of deaf people.

Small scale studies in the UK show that deaf people have significantly worse physical and mental health than hearing people and experience considerable difficulties in accessing healthcare and health information. However there is no definitive research despite deaf people being a high risk group.

The project will run for three years and will build on a first round survey that the team at SignHealth are undertaking over the next few months.

Steve Powell, Chief Executive of SignHealth said " I am so encouraged by this award, as it represents an endorsement of all the work that SignHealth has been carrying out over the last few years. We hear all the time from deaf people and their experiences indicate to us that their health is worse than hearing people, they meet communication barriers throughout the healthcare system and they face delays and misunderstandings in diagnosis and treatment. I hope that this important research will provide us with the evidence we need to generate change and improvements."

SignHealth will be managing this research project and it will be delivered in partnership with Bristol University, supported by an expert research advisory committee.

Deaf people are encouraged to register to take part in the research through the SignHealth

5 Baring Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 2NB  
| Voice: 01494 687600 | Minicom: 01494 687626 | Fax: 01494 687622 |  
[info@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:info@signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signhealth.org.uk](http://www.signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signtranslate.co.uk](http://www.signtranslate.co.uk)



LOTTERY FUNDED

SignHealth is the Healthcare Charity for Deaf People. We are committed to bringing better healthcare and equality of service provision to deaf people through campaigning, working in partnership with other organisations and the provision of specialist services for deaf people. These include Health Promotion, counselling, advocacy, outreach and supported living.

research site [www.iwantbetterhealth.org.uk](http://www.iwantbetterhealth.org.uk)

## Background

An estimated nine million people in the UK experience hearing limitation and 70 per cent of people over 70 have some hearing loss.

Studies to date indicate that

- ✦ Hearing difficulties have led to poor communication when visiting the doctor or communicating generally with the surgery.
- ✦ Deaf people experience communication problems that are difficult to resolve when discussing their health – leading to missed symptoms, confusion about medication or a lack of time to exchange full information in a consultation
- ✦ Deaf people say they have difficulties because staff - both GPs and practice staff – do not consistently face them when speaking and many say they had missed appointments because they had not heard their name being called
- ✦ 30% of deaf people are long term sick or unemployed
- ✦ In general terms deaf people see their GP on many more occasions than their hearing peers. Estimates put the number of additional appointments made by deaf people at around 625,000. At an average appointment cost of £25, this equates to a cost of around £15.6m each year. SignHealth believes that spending a fraction of this cost on making services more accessible to deaf people will save millions each year.
- ✦ Deaf people are twice as likely to suffer mental health problems than hearing people

## References

- ✦ RNID 'A Simple Cure'2004
- ✦ 'Why do you keep missing me' a SignHealth report following the 2008 GP Patient survey
- ✦ 'Why do you still keep missing me' – a SignHealth report following the 2009 GP Patient survey
- ✦ Report October 2009 – '1/2 of deaf patients can't communicate with their GP' a report following an on-line survey of patients through the website [www.patient.co.uk/hsresults.asp](http://www.patient.co.uk/hsresults.asp) in partnership with SignHealth

## Notes to Editors

1. Please note: it is the convention adopted within the Deaf community of using an upper case D when referring to those who identify themselves culturally and linguistically as members of the Deaf community. Typically they are prelingually deaf and use British Sign Language [BSL] as their first language.
2. **SignHealth** is the only UK charity focussed on improving the mental and physical health of Deaf people. SignHealth has a track record of delivering change in care and treatment and in providing supported living, advocacy, outreach, counselling and health promotion, all within a BSL supported environment. Projects are located in London, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham. SignHealth also

5 Baring Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 2NB  
| Voice: 01494 687600 | Minicom: 01494 687626 | Fax: 01494 687622 |  
[info@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:info@signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signhealth.org.uk](http://www.signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signtranslate.co.uk](http://www.signtranslate.co.uk)

SignHealth is the Healthcare Charity for Deaf People. We are committed to bringing better healthcare and equality of service provision to deaf people through campaigning, working in partnership with other organisations and the provision of specialist services for deaf people. These include Health Promotion, counselling, advocacy, outreach and supported living.

works with service providers to improve health services for Deaf people and with other health and Deaf charities to provide health information and education. SignHealth in partnership with Deaf organisations across the UK, will conduct the largest survey of the health of Deaf people in the UK starting in 2010.

3. For more information on SignHealth, contact Rowena Dean on 01494 687600 or visit [www.signhealth.org.uk](http://www.signhealth.org.uk) or [rdean@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:rdean@signhealth.org.uk)
4. SignTranslate is a wholly owned subsidiary of SignHealth. [www.signtranslate.com](http://www.signtranslate.com)
5. The Big Lottery Fund distributes half of the National Lottery good cause funding across the UK. The Fund is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need.
6. The organisations who are partners in this research are:

5 Baring Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 2NB  
| Voice: 01494 687600 | Minicom: 01494 687626 | Fax: 01494 687622 |  
[info@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:info@signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signhealth.org.uk](http://www.signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signtranslate.co.uk](http://www.signtranslate.co.uk)

SignHealth is the Healthcare Charity for Deaf People. We are committed to bringing better healthcare and equality of service provision to deaf people through campaigning, working in partnership with other organisations and the provision of specialist services for deaf people. These include Health Promotion, counselling, advocacy, outreach and supported living.

## DEAF HEALTH RESEARCH – PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Aberdeen & North East Deaf Society	Gloucestershire Deaf Association	Sussex Deaf Association
Action Deafness	Hampshire Deaf Association	South Gloucestershire Deaf Association
Alpha Hospitals	Hearing Dogs for Deaf People	Wakefield Centre for Deaf People
Association of Sign Language Interpreters	Hi Kent	Blackpool Fylde & Wyre Society for the Deaf
BID Services with Deaf People	Jewish Deaf Association	East Lancashire Deaf Society
British Deaf Association	Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People	Deaf Connections
British Society for Mental Health and Deafness	LINK Centre for Deafened People	Tayside Association for the Deaf
Signature	Manchester Deaf Centre	Cornwall Deaf Association
Cued Speech Association UK	Merseyside Society for Deaf People	Bristol Centre for the Deaf
Cumbria Deaf Association	NADP	Deaf Action
dDeaflinks - Staffordshire	National Centre for Mental Health & Deafness (Manchester)	York Deaf Society
Deaf Access	National Deaf Mental Health Services (Birmingham)	
Deaf Action	North Wales Deaf Association	
Deaf Advice Service Sheffield	Nottinghamshire Deaf Society	
Deaf Connections	National Deaf Services London	
Deaf Connexions	REMARK	
Deaf Lincs	RNID	
Deaf Studies Trust	Royal Association for Deaf People	
Deafblind UK	Sandwell Deaf Community Association	
Deafness Research UK	Scottish Council on Deafness	
Deafness Support Network	Sense	
Deafway	St George's	
Department of Health	St George's Healthcare Group	
East Lancashire Deaf Society	TAG	
East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre	Wales Council for the Deaf	
Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education	Walsall Deaf People's Centre	
Forensic Deaf Services	West Norfolk Deaf Association	



LOTTERY FUNDED

5 Baring Road, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire HP9 2NB  
 | Voice: 01494 687600 | Minicom: 01494 687626 | Fax: 01494 687622 |  
[info@signhealth.org.uk](mailto:info@signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signhealth.org.uk](http://www.signhealth.org.uk) - [www.signtranslate.co.uk](http://www.signtranslate.co.uk)

SignHealth is the Healthcare Charity for Deaf People. We are committed to bringing better healthcare and equality of service provision to deaf people through campaigning, working in partnership with other organisations and the provision of specialist services for deaf people. These include Health Promotion, counselling, advocacy, outreach and supported living.