



'You Have the Right to Remain Silent'; Current Provisions for D/deaf People within Regional Police Forces in England and Wales.

Journal:	<i>The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles</i>
Manuscript ID	Draft
Manuscript Type:	Articles
Keywords:	D/deafness, Communication, Police, PLOD
Abstract:	Five years ago, advice stated that regional Police Link Officer for the Deaf (PLOD) schemes (Walton, Morgan & Wells, 2011) should be increased to enhance access for D/deaf people. This study investigated D/deaf awareness, attitudes towards D/deafness and awareness of PLOD schemes amongst Police Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Police Officers. A general lack of awareness of PLOD schemes was revealed. Feedback from the D/deaf community also found differences between their communication preferences and those being used by the police. These findings highlight a need for further investigation into the awareness of and nature of services for the D/deaf.

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Introduction

D/deafness

Action on Hearing Loss explain that 11 million people within the UK are affected by hearing loss and this is expected to rise to 15.6 million by 2035 (Action on Hearing Loss, 2016). This is in line with the ageing population. With this in mind, it becomes important to consider how we perceive deafness and hearing loss and the ways in which we approach working with people affected by it. Paijman-Baines created a visual diagram (Baines, 2007) conceptualising D/deafness on a continuum. On one end D/deafness is regarded as an identity ('D') whereas it is regarded as a medical condition ('d') on the other. This can be a useful tool when approaching D/deafness as it explains how differently the D/deaf community can perceive themselves and also how they can be perceived by others. For example, the disability model ('d') is medically focussed and regards D/deafness as simply being unable to hear whereas the cultural model ('D') regards D/deafness as a culture rather than a disability (O'Rourke & Grewer, 2005). Predominantly using the disability model can produce and exacerbate problems for the D/deaf community as it disregards any additional educational needs, mental health needs (Paul & Quigley, 1990) and linguistic challenges.

D/deafness and Access

The Equality Act (2010) was implemented to tackle equality and access issues by overseeing the protection from discrimination for people with protected characteristics; age, gender, race, disability, gender reassignment, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation. It aims to ensure

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3 individuals who have protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are
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5 treated equally within society (Action on Hearing Loss, 2015). However, the general
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7 availability of services for the D/deaf community currently appears to be sparse and
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9 inconsistent.

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14 The National Registers of Communication Professionals Working with Deaf and
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16 Deafblind People (NRCPD) documented a total of 883 registered sign language
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18 interpreters in 2013-14 (NRCPD, 2015) to provide for the needs of 800,000
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20 severely/profoundly D/deaf individuals. When registered interpreters are not available,
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22 alternative methods are often used such as using family members to interpret information,
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24 even if young children are the only available family member. This can result in
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26 significant problems (Baines, 2007; Reeves, Kokoruwe, Dobbins, & Newton, 2003) due
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28 to increased risk of miscommunication or misdiagnosis because of limited understanding,
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30 as well as potentially breaching confidentiality.
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36 Statistics from Action on Hearing Loss stated that 24,000 people across the UK use sign
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38 language as their preferred language (Action on Hearing Loss, 2016). This leaves the
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40 remaining D/deaf individuals primarily using other communication methods. Therefore,
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42 matching the communication needs of D/deaf individuals is not as simple as providing
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44 BSL interpreters.
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49 Similarly, variations in language and dialect between the individual and interpreter will
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51 affect how much information is understood, as will the educational level of the
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53 individual. Some, not all, pre lingual, profoundly D/deaf individuals may not have an
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55 established, formal method of communication due to minimal language access, or as a
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3 result of using 'home signs' which may not be understood by others. Similarly, their
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5 understanding of English could be minimal. Underlying mental health issues or learning
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7 disabilities may not overtly present themselves; therefore understanding proceedings via
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9 interpreters is not always guaranteed. To overcome these difficulties and to ensure
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11 information is understood fully, an appropriately trained interpreter should be present
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13 who has the capability to comment on any uncertainties surrounding an individuals'
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15 communication (Denmark, 1994).
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21 The Charter for British Sign Language was proposed in 2003 in an attempt to improve
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23 access to services for D/deaf people and to improve D/deaf awareness (British Deaf
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25 Association, 2014). It incorporates five pledges that organisations and local authorities
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27 can choose to sign up to:
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- 31 1. Ensure access for D/deaf people to information and services
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33 2. Promote learning and high quality teaching of BSL
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35 3. Support D/deaf children and families
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37 4. Ensure staff working with D/deaf people can communicate effectively in BSL
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39 5. Consult with the local D/deaf community on a regular basis.
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50 Further to the Charter for BSL, in September 2015, Scotland passed the BSL bill. This
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52 was originally proposed in 2012 by Mark Griffin in an attempt to raise awareness of BSL
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54 as a language. The hope is to increase the profile of this language in order to allow its
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56 users to have an equal voice in how policies and services are delivered (Scottish
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3 Parliament, 2014a). By passing this as a bill, it means the Scottish Government now have
4
5 a duty to ensure BSL is promoted and its use becomes more widespread within policies
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7 and service delivery. There was some opposition as it was argued by some that hearing
8
9 loss/D/deafness is already covered under the Equality Act (2010). However, it is not
10
11 aimed at addressing specific needs of this community, rather ensuring that the profile of
12
13 this language is equal to others such as Gaelic (Macpherson, 2015). The focus on
14
15 language is a result of a divide within the D/deaf community with regards to how they
16
17 perceive their hearing loss. Many see it as a cultural difference whilst others regard it as a
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19 disability requiring communication support (Macpherson, 2015). Regardless, like many
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21 other cultural minorities who do not use English as a first language, the D/deaf
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23 community should have access to information and services without having to refer to
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25 themselves as disabled.
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33 Finally, an increase in technology has also impacted D/deaf communities across the
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35 country, seeing active membership of D/deaf clubs declining and, in some cases, closing
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37 completely (Austen & Crocker, 2004). Despite providing easy ways for younger
38
39 generations to communicate, the increase of new technology is paving the way towards
40
41 social isolation for many older members of the D/deaf community. This is due to limited
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43 opportunities for socialisation, as well as the challenge of familiarising themselves with
44
45 the changing world of technology (Hawthorn, 2000).
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50 ***D/deafness and Access to the Police***

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54 In 2011, a Strategic Command Course was published for Sign Health stating that services
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56 for D/deaf people within the criminal justice system needed improving. This advised
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3 increasing the number of regional PLOD schemes within police forces (Walton, Morgan
4 & Wells, 2011). PLOD schemes provide D/deaf awareness and basic sign language skills
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6 for police officers in an attempt to ensure D/deaf people can communicate when they
7
8 enter a police station or contact the police. The PLOD scheme was initially established in
9
10 Hampshire in 1999 as a way to link the D/deaf community and the police (Hampshire
11
12 Constabulary, 2014). It also suggested that Sign Health should incorporate specific
13
14 sections in their website for criminal justice related issues and how to communicate with
15
16 local police forces. A number of police forces throughout the UK have also signed up to
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18 the Charter for British Sign Language. Leicestershire police were the first force to sign
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20 the charter agreeing to make improvements within their force (Leicester Mercury, 2014)
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22 and Nottinghamshire police have followed (British Deaf Association, 2015).
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30 Similarly, research has advised that police forces should receive D/deaf awareness
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32 training to avoid miscommunication or misunderstandings relating to behaviour such as
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34 being uncooperative, rude or insulting (LaVigne & Rybroek, 2011). To expand on this, it
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36 is generally acknowledged within research that language deficits can negatively impact
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38 social interactions within children, resulting in difficulties initiating and maintaining
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40 conversations (LaVigne & Rybroek, 2011).
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45 These can manifest throughout adulthood and can be mistaken for a learning disability,
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47 mental illness, or general rudeness. This highlights how imperative D/deaf awareness is
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49 and how it could reduce misunderstandings and lead to better working relationships
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51 between the police and the D/deaf community. Previous research by Hogue and Race
52
53 (2012) found that D/deaf awareness training was linked to more positive attitudes
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55 towards D/deafness in mental health professionals, though the cause and effect remains
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3 unclear.
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6 PCCs were introduced to bridge the gap between the police and the public with the aim of
7 providing a voice in which the public can be heard (Green, 2013). A provision such as
8 this is especially important for minorities such as the D/deaf community because of
9 existing vulnerabilities regarding potential social isolation (Arlinger, 2003). An example
10 of bridging the gap comes from Leicestershire, where PCC Sir Clive Loader uploaded a
11 BSL video to the website explaining the police crime plan. This video included both BSL
12 and subtitles to ensure optimum accessibility.
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24 In line with the Equality Act (2010), regional police forces distribute yearly equality
25 reports including specific references to hearing loss and D/deafness. Reports include
26 having PLOD schemes, signposting to appropriate services (Avon and Somerset Police,
27 2013), providing BSL DVDs to explain rights and procedures, organising conferences to
28 liaise with the D/deaf community (Avon and Somerset Police, 2014) and asking PCCs for
29 specific funding (Essex Police, 2015). Now, we begin to see a hierarchy emerging with
30 regards to service provision and implementation, with PCCs having power over police
31 officers and the D/deaf community.
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44 Moving on from 2011, there remains improvements to be made, especially with regards
45 to understanding the specific needs of the D/deaf community when accessing services.
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48 The JUSTSIGN project (Fitchett, 2016; Napier, 2016) gathered information from focus
49 groups and interviews with police officers, interpreters and members of the D/deaf
50 communities from the UK, Switzerland, Belgium and Ireland. Findings from this study
51 indicated a lack of understanding from police officers with regards to specific needs of
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3 D/deaf people and also that there are not enough interpreters to meet the needs of this
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5 population (Napier, 2016). One of the products of this project was the facilitation of
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7 classes and workshops for police officers and interpreters in relation to working with the
8
9 D/deaf community (Napier, 2016).
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14 This highlights why further study was needed, to assess the current awareness of
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16 specialist services and schemes such as the PLOD schemes and to assess existing D/deaf
17
18 awareness amongst the police. Though this study covers some of the points raised by
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20 Napier (2016), it also looks at the priority of this area amongst PCCs which is important
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22 due to the influence they have over funding allocation and where resources can be
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24 focused.
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28 29 **Method**

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32 A National exploration was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire. It aimed to
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34 investigate current relationships between the D/deaf community and regional police
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36 forces within the UK. Using the existing literature as a base for exploration, it was
37
38 important to research how factors such as communication and awareness of D/deaf
39
40 related issues impacted on the services received by individuals. Similarly, it was
41
42 important to assess the attitudes of police officers and police crime commissioners in
43
44 relation to deafness. A hierarchical framework underpinned participant selection which
45
46 related to the level of perceived influence over local police focus. Perceived influence
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48 was not investigated but a hierarchical underpinning resulted in Police Crime
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50 Commissioners, Police Officers and members of the D/deaf community being included in
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52 the study. It was important to investigate any differences between the groups in order to
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3 obtain valuable data which can be used to inform future work practice.
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6 7 *Participants and questionnaires* 8

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10 Participants were grouped into three population samples: PCCs, Police Officers and
11 members of the D/deaf community. There were three different questionnaires tailored to
12 each population sample and were available online for 6 weeks (see appendices A, B & C
13 for copies of each questionnaire).
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19 An online link to the PCC questionnaire was sent via email to PCCs covering the 46
20 regions across England and Wales who were also asked to forward the link to the Police
21 Officer questionnaire to Police Officers in their region. Members of the D/deaf
22 community were recruited through social networking sites such as Facebook where a
23 BSL video was uploaded, explaining the study and how to participate. Participants were
24 also recruited via word of mouth and via D/deaf organisations; DeafVision, Carlisle
25 Access Group, Eden Access Forum, British Deaf Association, InterpreterNow, and
26 DeafHope.
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40 PCCs were asked about their areas of priority with regards to police resources and
41 funding to establish whether D/deafness would enter onto their radar. They were also
42 asked about their awareness of general services such as D/deaf clubs and if they knew of
43 any police officers who are trained specifically in D/deaf awareness. The final section
44 addressed in this questionnaire focused on attitudes towards D/deafness and this was
45 assessed using the Attitudes Towards Deafness Scale. The Attitudes Towards Deafness
46 (ATD) Scale was originally created to assess the attitudes of mental health professionals
47 in relation to D/deaf people (Cooper et al, 2004). The scale was based on previous reports
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3 and lived experiences of D/deaf individuals. It was developed to ensure that it was
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5 applicable to all professionals working with D/deaf individuals, not just specifically
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7 within mental health settings. The scale consists of 22 items which are scored using a 1
8
9 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree) likert scale as used in Nagakura (2014).
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14 Frontline members of staff (police officers) were asked about communication confidence,
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16 contact frequency with the D/deaf community and reasons for contact with the D/deaf
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18 community. Attitudes were also assessed in this questionnaire using the ATD scale.
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22 The main focus of the questionnaire for the D/deaf community was to assess the
23
24 accessibility to services by asking questions surrounding the D/deaf awareness of police,
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26 communication preferences and also, their awareness of PLOD and their overall
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28 experience of contacting the police. As well as being available in written English, a
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30 D/deaf sign language teacher translated this questionnaire including answer choices into
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32 British Sign Language.
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37 Other qualitative information was obtained via email and was used to support other
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39 results and add depth to existing information.
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42 43 ***Data Analysis*** 44

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46 Data analysis was done using SPSS. T-tests were used to highlight any significant
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48 differences between the PCCs and Police Officers with regards to attitudes. A pearson's
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50 correlation was performed to test the hypothesis that deaf awareness training would
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52 correlate with attitudes towards deafness.
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55 56 57 ***Ethical Considerations*** 58 59 60

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3 This study passed through the University of Lincoln's ethics procedure. In addition to
4 confidentiality, informed consent, debrief, psychological distress and personal
5 information, specific measures were implemented to account for communication barriers.
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8 As a D/deaf population was being recruited into the study, a British Sign Language
9 version of the questionnaire had to be included. By including a BSL translation, this
10 ensured the information relating to the content of the study was understood and meant
11 informed consent was given prior to starting the questionnaire.
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20 21 **Results**

22 23 *Demographics*

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27 Eighteen PCCs, seventy five police officers and fifteen members of the D/deaf
28 community were included in the data analysis for this study (see Table 1). Of the 46
29 regions across England and Wales, sixteen had representation from PCCs and twenty had
30 representation from police officers. South Wales had the highest number of police officer
31 respondents. An additional thirty-four participants consented to participate in the study
32 but did not continue to answer any questions and were thus discounted from data
33 analysis. A total of eight participants did not consent to take part in the study.
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44 Respondents who answered 'unknown' for hearing loss were included in the 'no hearing
45 loss' category due to the assumption that no hearing loss was present. For those within
46 the D/deaf community sample it is possible that a hearing individual working within a
47 D/deaf organisation (e.g. support worker) answered the questionnaire thus explaining the
48 7% (one participant) without hearing loss.
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56 57 *Awareness and priority of services*

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3 The reported areas of focus for PCCs included, victim focus, protection of vulnerable
4 people, community engagement, better responses to the needs of victims and enhancing
5 access to police services. The specific needs of D/deaf people were not addressed as an
6 area of focus, though some may argue that they could come under 'vulnerable people'
7 and/or 'community engagement'.
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16 63% of the PCC sample, 78% of the police officer sample and 64% of the D/deaf
17 community sample were unaware of PLOD. In total, 74% of all participants were
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21 **unaware** of PLOD.
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23 24 *Communication*

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28 67% of PCC respondents thought that enough police officers were trained to
29 communicate with the D/deaf community. Over half (67%) thought that D/deaf people
30 are dealt and communicated with appropriately by the police. However, different
31 opinions surfaced when PCCs were asked if individuals from the D/deaf community
32 would feel confident when liaising with the police (see table 2).
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40 The police were asked about their confidence levels when communicating with the
41 D/deaf community. Only 15% of police officer respondents felt that they would be able to
42 communicate with a member of the D/deaf community without any problems. 6% said
43 they would not feel comfortable without an interpreter present. Other information
44 obtained from email replies revealed that some forces were currently working towards
45 improving access to information for the D/deaf community by adding BSL videos to
46 websites, enforcing SMS text messaging services, signing up to the BSL charter and
47 using existing links with the D/deaf community to disseminate information (Dyfed
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3 Powys, South Yorkshire, Cumbria, Cambridgeshire and West Yorkshire).

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8 The communication preference of this sample of D/deaf people was sign language which
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10 is different to what the police officers in this sample would choose to use. The difference
11
12 in communication method reflects why none of the D/deaf people in this study had
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14 encountered a police officer who chose to use sign language. Unlike the D/deaf sample,
15
16 the police officers would prefer to communicate by writing.
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21 In terms of additional comments about service provision, one participant reported having
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23 to request a sign language interpreter, whilst others had to wait over 2 hours for an
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25 interpreter to arrive. Another individual commented:
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28 *'Sometimes police can't be bothered and speak to next person who may be able to*
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30 *understand better'.*
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33 ***Attitudes***

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37 Looking at the scores on the ATD, PCCs agreed the most with item 20 'I would like to
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39 see more D/deaf people at the clubs/societies I attend' (mean=4.29) whereas police
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41 officers agreed more with item 'More research should be done to find cures for
42
43 D/deafness' (M=3.79).
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48 A series of t-tests revealed significant differences in attitudinal scores on items 2 'D/deaf
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50 children should learn to speak to communicate with hearing parents (R)', 12 'D/deaf
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52 people should learn to lip read (R)', and 20 'I would like to see more D/deaf people at the
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54 clubs/societies I attend'. PCCs scored significantly higher on these items.
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3 The overall means for the ATD ranged from 65-98, which is indicative of neutral to
4 positive attitudes. The results did not indicate any overall negative attitudes towards
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8 D/deafness. Police officers had more positive attitudes ($M = 79.58$, $SD = 8.37$) than
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11 PCCs ($M = 78.14$, $SD = 7.03$).

14 *D/deaf Awareness*

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17 Being the bridge between the police and the community meant it was important to assess
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19 how many PCCs knew of local deaf clubs. Over half (63%) of PCCs were aware of
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21 regional D/deaf clubs. Due to the emphasis of providing officers with D/deaf awareness
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23 training, police officers were asked if they had taken part in a course before. 26% of
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26
27 police officer respondents had participated in a D/deaf awareness course (see table 3).

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29 There was a significant negative correlation between police officers who had participated
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31 in a D/deaf awareness course and scores on the ATD ($r(62)$, $- .442$; < 0.001). The results
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33 show that those participating in D/deaf awareness courses displayed more positive
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35 attitudes towards D/deafness which supports earlier recommendations.

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39 Following on from this, 89% of participants from the D/deaf community said that the
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41 police had not displayed any D/deaf awareness when engaging with them. It was
42
43 important to investigate this to see how the D/deaf community felt about police
44
45 engagement. Under half (44%) of the respondents stated that their hearing loss had been
46
47 recognised by the police. 8 out of 15 (53%) respondents reported using aids such as
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49 hearing aids or cochlear implants which are usually visible to others. Of this sample, one
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51 person reported that their hearing loss had not been recognized by the police despite
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53 wearing a visible hearing aid.
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Contact Frequency

Half of respondents from the police officer sample reported that they come into contact with a member of the D/deaf community less than monthly. Only 5% reported never having come into contact with members of the D/deaf community as part of their job. The most common reason for coming into contact with members of the D/deaf community was reported to be individuals seeking information from the police. This was followed by 29% being victims of crime. Whereas, the D/deaf community reported the most common reason for contacting the police was to report a crime in addition to reporting information and lost property.

Other Information

All six PCCs who answered the question ‘More could be done to support the D/deaf community in relation to crime prevention and the reporting of crimes’ agreed with the statement. Suggestions included providing accessible information, targeting support, raising awareness and developing online reporting systems. One individual revealed they would seek assurance and ask questions regarding access for the disabled.

Overall Experiences

The overall experiences of the D/deaf community found that 44% reported a ‘somewhat poor’ experience, with 11% reporting a ‘good’ experience. Other experiences were reported during the distribution of the questionnaire but could not be included in the analysis due to a lack of informed consent.

Discussion

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3 As mentioned previously, the D/deaf community can be perceived as suffering from a
4 medical condition, or as a cultural/linguistic minority. Regardless of which end of the
5 continuum they lie, the barrier remains unchanged: access to services and information.
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7 Limited D/deaf awareness amongst the police can lead to an increased chance of
8 mistreating individuals due to misunderstandings, a lack of appropriate processing of
9 potential crimes and a lack of trust in the police. The barriers to access are not invisible
10 and this is evidenced through the implementation of policies and legislations which
11 attempt to guide the police within their roles and ensure fair and equal access to services.
12 Like many other cultural minorities who do not use English as a first language, the
13 D/deaf community should have access to information and services without having to refer
14 to themselves as disabled. This is why PLOD schemes were introduced, as an attempt to
15 ensure easy access to the police.
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32 *Links with the D/deaf Community*

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36 This study found that 63% of PCCs, 78% of police officers and 64% of the D/deaf
37 community were **unaware** of PLOD schemes. The schemes are clearly advertised on the
38 police websites and information can be obtained via a Google internet search. Similarly,
39 it is possible that specially trained officers exist but the region lacks a recognised PLOD
40 scheme, explaining low awareness levels. Regardless of the reasons, it is important to
41 raise the awareness and publicity of these schemes whilst highlighting their purpose as
42 recommended in the Strategic Command Course (Walton, Morgan & Wells, 2011). These
43 schemes provide opportunities for the D/deaf community to access the police and give
44 information using BSL. Whilst not every D/deaf person will use BSL, it does support
45 other findings from this study relating to communication preference and is a step towards
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3 improving relations between the two groups. Another recommendation would be that
4 police officers who are trained in D/deaf awareness and sign language should receive
5 recognition by gaining the additional title 'PLOD'.
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10 11 *Communicating* 12

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14 Another prominent finding within this study was the vast difference in communication
15 methods being used by the police and those preferred by members of the D/deaf
16 community. The most common choice of communication method for the D/deaf
17 community within this study was sign language. The study did not specifically indicate
18 BSL as a choice on the questionnaire but used 'sign language' in a more general sense to
19 highlight the separation from other communication sources such as writing or lip reading.
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21 Of the 11 million people with some degree of hearing loss, there are approximately
22 24,000 BSL users across the UK who prefer BSL as a language option. Though this is a
23 fraction of the total population of people experiencing hearing loss, it still indicates a
24 need to recognize it as a language choice for people. This is in vast contrast to the
25 methods that would be chosen by the police, such as writing. This difference could be
26 used to argue a lack of D/deaf awareness in our police forces. However, to make such a
27 sweeping statement would be unfair. Other police officer respondents reported using
28 interpreters to communicate which shows a level of awareness and adherence to policies
29 such as the Equality Act. What these findings can provide us with is the justification for
30 increasing the number of D/deaf awareness training courses being provided and also to
31 enhance the profile of PLOD schemes.
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56 The inconsistencies between communication methods that would be used, are currently
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3 used, and those preferred by the D/deaf community requires further investigation. The
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5 results from this study indicate that contact frequency for this sample with the D/deaf
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7 community is usually less than monthly and is predominantly to report crimes to the
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9 police. Though the frequency of contact is low, it still highlights that the police should be
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11 equipped to communicate basic information to this community and be aware of cultural
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13 differences. Basic information should be provided in an accessible format, or individuals
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15 should be equipped to signpost if necessary. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact
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17 that we already know of the scarcity of available interpreters (NCRPD, 2015; Reeves et
18
19 al, 2003) and the length of time it could take for an appropriately trained one to arrive. It
20
21 may not always be financially viable to obtain an interpreter for short contact periods
22
23 where an individual is seeking information, therefore it would be more appropriate to
24
25 create collections of staff with basic signing skills in order to communicate simple
26
27 information to or those seeking information and to provide appropriate contacts if
28
29 necessary. These recommendations could be met with development of further PLOD
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31 schemes.
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40 Additional findings state 67% of PCCs felt the police communicated with the D/deaf
41
42 community appropriately. As frontline staff, it was important to investigate the
43
44 confidence levels of police officers surrounding communication, as well as the methods
45
46 being used. Only 11% of officers felt they would be confident in communicating with the
47
48 D/deaf community, contradicting the earlier statement from PCCs suggesting enough
49
50 officers were appropriately trained. This supports the research conducted as part of the
51
52 JUSTSIGN project which revealed how police officers hold a dearth of information
53
54 surrounding the specific needs required by the D/deaf population (Napier, 2016). Low
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3 confidence levels within the police are also alluded to in a comment from one of the
4
5 participants when stating the 'police can't be bothered and speak to next person who may
6
7 be able to understand better'. However, we cannot determine whether this was due to low
8
9 confidence, or whether it was a general avoidance strategy. Regardless, the individual
10
11 who experienced this clearly felt that the police were apathetic in this instance. This
12
13 raises the issue of initial, first point of contact. Officers should not portray the impression
14
15 they cannot be bothered.
16
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20 So despite PCCs stating enough officers were trained to communicate with the D/deaf
21
22 community and that the communication methods being used were appropriate, there
23
24 exists a large discrepancy amongst respondents when asked if the D/deaf community
25
26 would feel confident when liaising with the police. There should be no discrepancy if
27
28 opinions are that the police are doing their jobs effectively and using appropriate
29
30 communication methods.
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36 This suggests that PCCs should also be a focus when implementing further training. Once
37
38 training needs have been addressed, PCCs could then look at annual equality reports to
39
40 ensure a consistent, appropriate approach is used when communicating with the D/deaf
41
42 community. Moreover, PCCs could advocate the Charter for BSL (British Deaf
43
44 Association, 2014) and encourage forces within their regions to sign up to various
45
46 pledges in order to raise awareness of the issues faced by the D/deaf community. By
47
48 signing up to this charter, -improvements in access and relations between the D/deaf
49
50 community and the police would be expected.
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54 55 56 *Attitudes and Cultural Awareness* 57 58 59 60

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3 Overall, police officers had more positive attitudes towards D/deafness though they were
4 not strong attitudes. It is unclear why they had more positive attitudes but it could be
5 hypothesised that if more police officers receive D/deaf awareness training as a result of
6 previous recommendations (Denmark, 1994; LaVigne & Rybroek, 2011), this could
7 contribute to an increase in positive attitudes towards D/deafness. Evidence to support
8 this is encompassed within the results of this study and corroborate earlier findings by
9 Hogue and Race (2012). These results can be used to justify existing rationale to increase
10 the amount of deaf awareness training (Denmark, 1994) and could increase positive
11 attitudes amongst forces and improve relationships with the D/deaf community.
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26 Within this study, 19% of the police officer sample had participated in a D/deaf
27 awareness course. As indicated in the responses received, only one force (Dyfed Powys)
28 within this sample, provides training for its own officers. This is much lower than would
29 be expected for frontline staff after the recommendations that have been made (Denmark;
30 1994; LaVigne & Rybroek, 2011). Therefore, it may not be surprising that results found
31 that 90% of the D/deaf community within this sample had encountered police officers
32 who had displayed no D/deaf awareness. Being D/deaf is not something that is always
33 immediately obvious and combined with the reported lack of D/deaf awareness, this does
34 not represent a good relationship between the police and the D/deaf community. Not only
35 this but it raises questions about the levels of D/deaf awareness that exist in order to be
36 able to appropriately manage a situation after hearing loss has been uncovered and also,
37 how the individual is communicated with thereafter. The concern is that due to a lack of
38 awareness, misunderstandings such as those mentioned by LaVigne and Rybroek (2011)
39 will continuously occur and will continuously disrupt relationships between the police
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3 and the D/deaf community.
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6 The policies, legislations and guidelines being implemented to ensure equality (Equality
7 Act, 2010, Green, 2013, Scottish Parliament, 2014e) have the potential to improve access
8 to services for the D/deaf community. However, it is important that communities such as
9 the D/deaf community are liaised with regarding the effectiveness of such policies and to
10 highlight any areas of weakness.
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19 As a cultural/linguistic minority, communication preferences should be recognised so
20 needs can be catered for within services. Similarly, highlighting the variety of
21 communication methods used and additional complexities that are associated (Paul &
22 Quigley, 1990) would enhance access and understanding. These results provided
23 evidence to show the differences in communication between the preferences of the
24 D/deaf community and those that would be chosen, or are currently used by the police.
25
26 This difference indicates a need to improve the awareness of communication preferences
27 of the D/deaf community as well as methods that are not favoured. Other methods that
28 were reported being used were SMS text messaging services and webcams, some of
29 which do not always work. As mentioned previously, older members of the D/deaf
30 community may struggle to use technology (Hawthorn, 2000) and therefore may be
31 unable to contact the police in these instances. This may further exacerbate any negative
32 feelings towards the police and also any pre-existing mental health problems due to an
33 increase in social isolation (Arlinger, 2003). Another factor to consider is the health and
34 safety of individuals. Only one respondent reported experiencing a police station with
35 specialist alert systems for alerting individuals to an emergency. This is something that
36 requires urgent attention, especially if D/deaf individuals are waiting in police stations
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3 without adequate communication.
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7 The overall experiences of contacting the police were recorded by 44% as somewhat
8
9 poor, with only 11% stating a 'good' experience. However, the means obtained often
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11 related to one participant from a particular region, therefore the results would not be
12
13 replicable to the rest of the D/deaf community within the regions.
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16 17 **Limitations**

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19
20 The findings of this study offer valuable information about the current provision of
21
22 services for the D/deaf community across England and Wales and suggestions about
23
24 ways in which services might need to be improved. However, conducting the study as
25
26 part of the requirements for an MSc created challenges which in turn affect the
27
28 generalisability of the study's findings.
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33 The study was successful in obtaining feedback from 18 of the 46 PCCs in the regions
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35 surveyed but although 75 police officers (from 20 regions) responded to the survey, it is
36
37 unclear what this number represents of the total police force across these regions. Future
38
39 research would benefit from a longer timescale to ensure police officers have sufficient
40
41 time to complete questionnaires and to disperse to other forces/colleagues.
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46 Probably the main limitation of the study, however, surrounds the relatively low response
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48 rate from members of the D/deaf community. When initial contact was made with the
49
50 D/deaf community via social media, comments about the police were largely negative.
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52 These negative experiences meant that individuals were reluctant to participate in the
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54 study rather than seeing it as a platform to share their opinions.
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3 To address this difficulty, additional, qualitative methods such as focus groups could be
4 used to obtain richer data sets, allowing free discussions, rather than choosing from a
5 quantitative selection of answers. Such methods may also allow greater participation
6 from older members of the D/deaf community who may not have access to computers, or
7 the internet. This would also provide a wider range of responses from areas
8 underrepresented within this study.
9

10
11 Moreover, the D/deaf community would benefit from an extended timescale as additional
12 communication support may have been required.
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15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 **Conclusion**

25
26 To conclude, this study accomplished what it set out to do. It highlighted areas that may
27 require further consideration such as levels of training and D/deaf awareness amongst our
28 police forces and how this may impact on attitudes in relation to the D/deaf population.
29

30 The confidence of our police when communicating with the D/deaf community should be
31 investigated to assess what other support could be provided. This could be extended out
32 to other non-English speakers.
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35 Similarly, we should question how we advertise and share good practice such as the
36 implementation of PLOD schemes. By raising the awareness, more people are likely to
37 use them, more people will become aware and the less likely it will be that schemes will
38 dissolve in the future.
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43 Addressing these issues could begin by highlighting the presence of the Charter for BSL
44 (British Deaf Association, 2014) and asking more forces to sign up to some of the
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pledges, or if they are already signed up, to publicize this. As we have seen, progress is happening but there are many improvements to work towards.

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Table 1
 Showing the demographic information collected from the Police Crime Commissioners, Police Officers and D/deaf Community.

	Police Crime Commissioners	Police Officers	D/deaf Community
N	18 (17%)	75 (69%)	16 (15%)
Gender			
<i>Male (N)</i>	12 (67%)	40 (53%)	9 (56%)
<i>Female (N)</i>	6 (33%)	35 (47%)	7 (44%)
Age range (mean)	25-70 (47.9)	23-64 (42.6)	17-65 (36.5)
Hearing Loss (Personal)			
<i>None</i>	18 (100%)	74 (92%)	1 (7%)
<i>Hearing Loss</i>	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	14 (93%)
Hearing Loss (Know others with)			
<i>Yes</i>	6 (75%)	59 (81%)	NA
<i>No</i>	2 (25%)	14 (19%)	NA

NA: Not Applicable

Table 2

Showing the mean scores for the individual items on the ATD for PCCs, Police Officers and overall. Significant differences between the results for PCCs and Police Officers are included in the last column.

ATD Item	Means for Police Crime Commissioners	Means for Police Officers	Overall Mean Score	Significant Difference?	
				t value	p value
1-D/deaf couples should receive genetic counseling to avoid having D/deaf children (R)	1.85	1.42	1.46	1.51	.138
2-D/deaf children should learn to speak to communicate with hearing parents (R)	3.00	2.33	2.39	2.64	.023*
3-I would like to have more D/deaf friends	3.29	3.15	3.16	.60	.553
4-D/deaf schools and D/deaf clubs create D/deaf 'ghettos' (R)	2.43	1.94	1.99	1.55	.150
5-D/deaf people should learn speech rather than sign language (R)	2.14	1.82	1.85	1.15	.296
6-D/deaf people are handicapped (R)	2.57	2.28	2.31	.64	.522
7-More research should be done to find cures for D/deafness (R)	3.57	3.79	3.77	-.54	.589
8-D/deaf children should be taught in sign language	3.29	3.39	3.38	-.31	.766
9-Hearing children of D/deaf parents are at risk of emotional deprivation (R)	1.86	1.80	1.81	.25	.878
10-D/deaf people are safe drivers	3.29	3.18	3.19	.34	.733
11-I would like to have more D/deaf colleagues	3.29	3.14	3.15	.61	.546
12-D/deaf people should learn to lip read (R)	3.43	2.58	2.67	3.68	.004*
13-Interpreters should be available for D/deaf	3.57	3.76	3.74	-.46	.647

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people at work						
14-D/deaf people should automatically receive help in their home environment (R)	2.29	2.80	2.75	-1.69	.117	
15-All D/deaf people should be offered corrective surgery (R)	2.43	2.74	2.71	-.81	.424	
16-Training more mental health professionals to work with D/deaf clients would be a waste of time (R)	1.71	1.61	1.62	.39	.700	
17-Having a D/deaf colleague would cause problems in the work place (R)	1.86	1.91	1.90	-.15	.884	
18-D/deaf people are physiologically impaired (R)	2.43	1.83	1.89	1.46	.149	
19-D/deaf people should not be viewed as 'impaired'	3.86	3.31	3.36	1.24	.219	
20-I would like to see more D/deaf people at the clubs/societies I attend	4.29	3.47	3.55	2.77	.009*	
21-Having a D/deaf friend would be difficult (R)	2.00	1.88	1.89	.35	.730	
22-D/deaf people have their own culture	2.86	2.88	2.88	-.15	.961	

* Statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.
 (R) indicates items that have been reverse scored, thus agreement with the item indicates a negative attitude according to the Attitudes Towards Deafness Scale (Cooper et al, 2003).

Table 3

Showing responses from PCCs, police officers and the D/deaf community relating to questions about D/deaf awareness.

	Yes	No
PCC awareness of regional D/deaf clubs	5 (63%)	3 (38%)
PCC's knowledge of specially trained officers	7 (88%)	1 (13%)
Number of police officers who have participated in a D/deaf awareness course	19 (26%)	54 (74%)
D/deaf respondents' opinion surrounding the D/deaf awareness of police officers they have contacted	1 (11%)	8 (89%)
D/deaf respondents' hearing loss was recognised by the police	4 (44%)	5 (56%)
Number of D/deaf respondents who informed police of their hearing loss	4 (75%)	5 (25%)
Number of D/deaf respondents using hearing aids/cochlear implants.	8 (53%)	7 (47%)

Table 4

Showing PCCs' responses to questions about police contact with the D/deaf community.

	Agree	Disagree
There are enough police officers trained to communicate with the D/deaf community	1 (17%)	5 (83%)
The D/deaf community are dealt with and communicated with appropriately by the police	2 (67%)	4 (33%)
Members of the D/deaf community would feel confident when liaising with the police	3 (50%)	3 (50%)

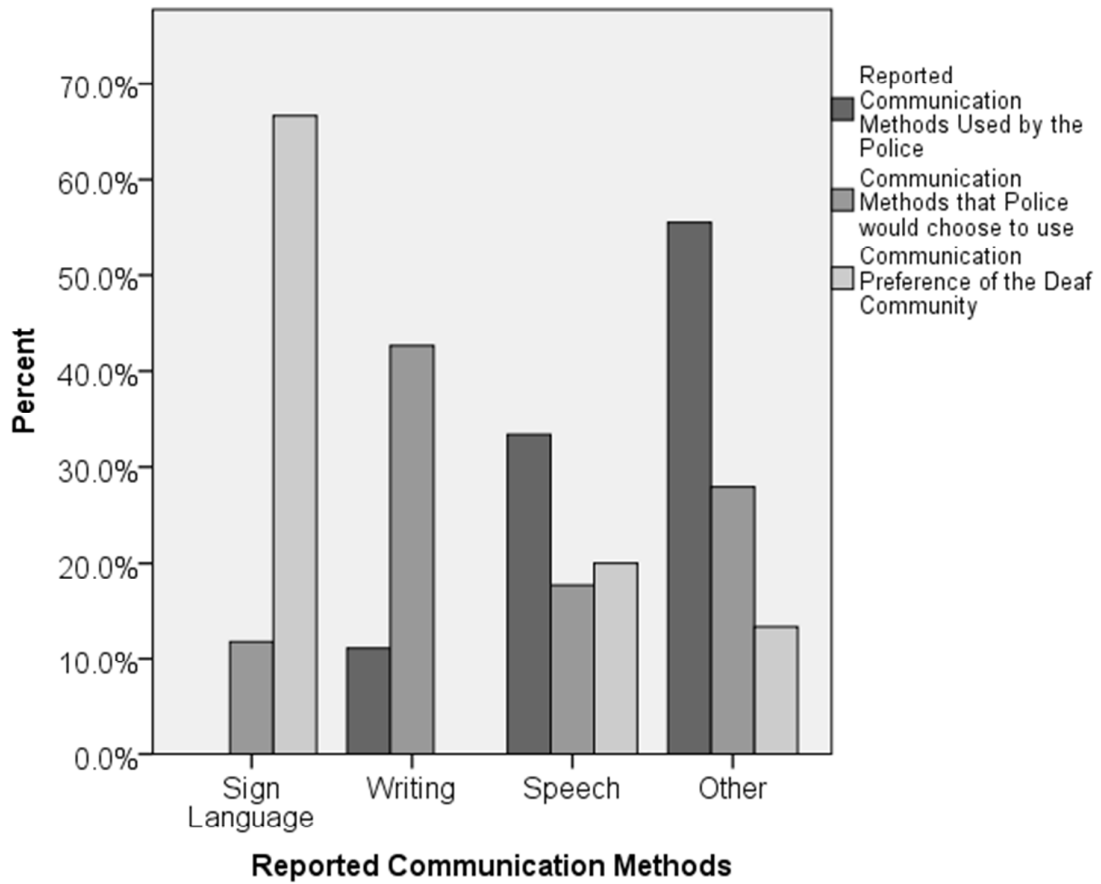


Figure 1. A graph showing the communication methods that would be chosen by Police Officers, the communication preferences of the D/deaf community and the reported communication methods used by the police as reported by the D/deaf community in this sample.

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3 **Appendix A – Questionnaire (PCC)**
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5 1. Age
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7
8 2. Gender
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11 Male
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13 Female
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16 3. Town/ region of residency.
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19 4. What has been your main area of focus since becoming Police Crime Commissioner?
20
21

22 5. What have been your main achievements since becoming Police Crime
23 Commissioner?
24
25

26 6. Do you have any hearing loss?
27
28

29
30 7. No Hearing Loss
31

32 Mild Hearing Loss (20-40dBHL)
33

34 Moderate Hearing Loss (41-70dBHL)
35

36 Severe Hearing Loss (71-95dBHL)
37

38 Profound Hearing Loss (Over 95dBHL)
39

40 Unknown
41
42

43 8. Do you know anyone with hearing loss?
44
45

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47 Yes
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49 No
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3 9. Are you aware of any D/deaf clubs in your region?
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5 Yes

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7 No

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10 10. Do you know of any police officers in your region that are specifically trained in
11
12 D/deaf awareness or sign language?
13

14
15 Yes

16
17 No

18
19
20 *Yes (please state which region they are based and what they are trained in)?*
21

22 11. Do you agree that there are enough police officers trained to communicate with
23
24 D/deaf people?
25

26
27 Strongly Disagree

28
29 Disagree

30
31 Agree

32
33 Strongly Agree

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35
36 12. More could be done to support the D/deaf community in relation to crime prevention
37
38 or the reporting of crimes?
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40
41
42 Strongly Disagree

43
44 Disagree

45
46 Agree

47
48 Strongly Agree

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53 13. Videos providing information in British Sign Language should be available on every
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55 regional police forces' website.
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3 Strongly Disagree

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5 Disagree

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7 Agree

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9 Strongly Agree

- 10
11 14. Individuals with hearing difficulties are dealt and communicated with appropriately
12 by the police

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14
15 Strongly Disagree

16
17 Disagree

18
19 Agree

20
21 Strongly Agree

- 22
23 15. Individuals with hearing difficulties feel confident when liaising with the police

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25
26 Strongly Disagree

27
28 Disagree

29
30 Agree

31
32 Strongly Agree

- 33
34 16. More could be done to support the D/deaf community in relation to crime prevention
35 and the reporting of crimes? If you agreed with this question please state your own
36 recommendations.

- 37
38 17. Are you familiar with the acronym PLOD?

39
40 Yes

41
42 No

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44 *If yes, what does this mean to you and do you have any direct experience of it?*

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18. If you would like to be informed about the outcome of this study, please provide a contact email address:

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For Peer Review

Appendix B – Questionnaire (Police Officers)

1. Age
2. Gender
 - Male
 - Female
3. Town/ region of residency.
4. What is your occupation?
 - Police Officer
 - Administrator
 - PCSO
 - Dog Handler
 - Other (please specify)
5. Do you have any hearing loss?
 - No Hearing Loss
 - Mild Hearing Loss (20-40dBHL)
 - Moderate Hearing Loss (41-70dBHL)
 - Severe Hearing Loss (71-95dBHL)
 - Profound Hearing Loss (Over 95dBHL)
 - Unknown
6. Do you use any aids such as hearing aids or cochlear implants?
 - Yes (Please state which aid you use)
 - No
7. Do you know anyone with hearing loss?

- 1
2
3 Yes
4
5 No
6
7
8 8. Have you ever participated in a D/deaf Awareness Course?
9
10 Yes
11
12 No
13
14 *If yes, who provided this?*
15
16
17 Work
18
19 Myself (please state which company you did this with)
20
21
22 9. Have you ever participated in a Sign Language Course?
23
24 Yes
25
26 No
27
28 *If yes, who provided this?*
29
30 Work
31
32 Myself (please state which company you did this with)
33
34
35 10. If you answered no to both questions, would you take part on a course in the future?
36
37 Yes (what has prevented you from doing this previously?)
38
39 No (please explain why)
40
41
42 11. How often do you come into contact with a D/deaf person as part of your job?
43
44
45 Never
46
47 Less than monthly
48
49 Monthly
50
51 Weekly
52
53 Daily
54
55
56 12. In what capacity do you come into contact with D/deaf individuals and how often?
57
58
59
60

They were a victim of crime

Never

Less than monthly

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

They were reporting a crime

Never

Less than monthly

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

They were being questioned about a crime

Never

Less than monthly

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

They were arrested

Never

Less than monthly

Monthly

Weekly

Daily

1
2
3 **They were seeking information**
4

5 Never

6
7 Less than monthly

8
9 Monthly

10
11 Weekly

12
13 Daily

14
15
16 **Other (please specify)**
17

18 Never

19
20 Less than monthly

21
22 Monthly

23
24 Weekly

25
26 Daily

27
28
29 13. Which is the most common reason for being in contact with them?
30

31
32 They were a victim of crime

33
34 They were reporting a crime

35
36 They were being questioned about a crime

37
38 They were arrested

39
40 They were seeking information

41
42 Other (please specify)

43
44
45
46 14. How effectively could you communicate with a D/deaf person?
47

48 Without problems

49
50 With a few misunderstandings

51
52 With difficulty

53
54 With great difficulty

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I would not feel comfortable communicating with a D/deaf person without an interpreter present

15. How would you communicate with them?

Sign Language

Writing

Speech

Other (please specify)

16. Are you familiar with the acronym PLOD?

Yes

No

If yes, please write the meaning.

.....

17. If you would like to be informed about the outcome of this study, please provide a contact email address:

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Appendix C – Questionnaire (D/deaf Community)

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1. Age

2. Gender

Male

Female

3. Town/ region of residency.

4. What is your occupation?

5. Please state you degree of hearing loss

No Hearing Loss

Mild Hearing Loss (20-40dBHL)

Moderate Hearing Loss (41-70dBHL)

Severe Hearing Loss (71-95dBHL)

Profound Hearing Loss (Over 95dBHL)

Unknown

6. At what age were you informed about your hearing loss?

7. Do you use any aids such as hearing aids or cochlear implants?

Yes

No

If yes, please state what aid you use.

8. What is your preferred method of communication?

Sign Language

Writing

Speech

1
2
3 Other (please specify)
4

5 9. Have you ever had to contact/communicate with the police?
6

7 Yes
8

9 No
10

11 *If you have answered yes, why?*
12

13 I was a victim of crime
14

15 I was reporting a crime
16

17 I was questioned about a crime
18

19 I was arrested
20

21 I was seeking information
22

23 I was being given information
24

25 Other (please specify)
26
27

28
29 10. Was your hearing impairment recognised by the police?
30

31 Yes
32

33 No
34

35 *If yes, how long did it take for them to recognise this?*
36
37
38
39

40 11. Did the police display D/deaf awareness?
41

42 Yes
43

44 No
45
46

47 12. How did they communicate with you?
48

49 Sign Language
50

51 Writing
52

53 Speech
54

55 Other (please specify)
56
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13. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the police?

Extremely Poor

Poor

Somewhat poor

Somewhat Good

Good

Extremely Good

14. Have you ever been to a police station?

Yes

No

If you have answered yes, why?

I was a victim of crime

I was reporting a crime

I was questioned about a crime

I was arrested

I was seeking information

Other (please specify)

15. Were you read your rights?

Yes and I understood them

Yes but I did not understand them

No

16. Were there any D/deaf aids/adaptations?

Flashing Lights

Vibrating alert system

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Loop System

Other (please specify)

None

17. Were you offered an interpreter?

Yes

No

18. Roughly how long did the interpreter take to arrive (most recent)?

Less than 1 hour

Over 1 hour

Over 2 hours

19. Are you familiar with the acronym PLOD?

Yes

No

If yes, please write the meaning.

.....

If you would like to be informed about the outcome of this study, please provide a contact email address:

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